

# Possessive Constructions in Central Kurdish: A Cognitive Grammar Account

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**Abstract**— This paper seeks to study possessive constructions in Central Kurdish (CK henceforth) from the cognitive grammar perspective. One of the tenets of construal theory is that the speakers of a language deploy alternate constructions to express different conceptual contents. To do so, the humans use construal mechanism to portray and interpret a certain scene from their perspectives. To achieve the objective of the present paper, we apply reference point model, Construal and Figure and ground theories to CK possessive constructions. Possessive constructions are relational structures established by human mental ability to invoke one entity as the reference point and relate it to another entity which is described as the profile determinant. In applying construal theory to CK possessive construction, we argue that different interpretations can be assumed from *ezafe* (-i) and possessive clitics in conveying possession. With the application of these three theories, a new perspective has been put forward to possessive constructions in CK.

**Index Terms**— CK possessive construction, cognitive grammar, construal, reference point, figure and ground, possessive clitics, *ezafe* construction.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Possessive is one of the basic and universal linguistic categories that can be found in every language. Possessive is commonly used to serve different grammatical functions. Prototypically, it conveys ownership, kinship and part-whole relations that are salient to our daily experiences (Langacker, 1995, 51). Essentially, the way in which the possessive constructions hold various interpretations has prompted scholars to propose that the meanings of possessive constructions are indeterminate. The idea of possession appears to be easy in use, but a network of different meanings can be conveyed within the constructions. Many scholars and linguists have tried to analyze possessive constructions from different linguistic perspectives. For instance, the advocates of generative approach tackle the form and syntax of possessive constructions and they neglect the meaning distinction of different possessive structures. The following sections start with a literature review and then discuss possessive constructions in CK in addition to the applications of three cognitive grammar theories to show a new perspective concerning possessive constructions in CK.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In most of the studies that have been conducted in Kurdish literature, possessive constructions are studied rather simply. For instance, the scholars have not delved thoroughly into the possessive constructions. Noticeably, the studies mostly focus on the forms and syntax not the meanings. The following attempts represent how Kurdish grammarians discuss possessive constructions in CK.

Qadir (2003, 48) regards possessive as a syntactic unit that is accomplished through the use of *ezafe* (-i) and forms a noun phrase that can function as a subject or object. The possessors can be nouns or pronouns. More importantly, the speaker can change nouns or pronouns to the possessive clitics and remove the *ezafe* (i).

Amin (2003, 316) maintains that when one entity is related to another entity within a construction, this relation is called possessive. He discusses the possessive from two aspects: first, possessive can be found within a noun phrase through which two nouns are linked by the *ezafe* (-i) as seen below:

(1) *klil -i derg -eke win bu.*  
*Key Ezf. door Def. lost was*  
*The key of the door was lost.*

Both nouns ‘key’ and ‘door’ are linked by *ezafe* (-i) and form a part-whole relation; the first noun ‘klil’ is part of the second noun ‘derga’.

Second, possessive can be conveyed through the verb stem ‘bûn’ with the prefix ‘ha’ which becomes ‘hebûn’ and with the addition of the personal pronouns clitics, it forms possessive relation as the following:

(2) *he-m-e* *he-man-e*  
*PX. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl. Cop.* *PX. 1<sup>st</sup> Pl. Poss. Cl. Cop.*  
*I have* *we have*

Marrouf (2005, 50) studies the formation of phrases in CK and discusses the occurrence of possessive constructions from

two aspects. First, the possessor and possessee are naturally connected because for instance ‘dest’ (hand) in the following example is part of the human body that is why it is naturally connected.

<b>(3)</b> <i>dest-i min</i>	<i>hile-i asip</i>
<i>hand Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg.</i>	<i>neigh Ezf. horse</i>
<i>My hand</i>	<i>neigh of horse</i>

Second, a possessive construction that is made by humans i.e. possessor and possessee are linked by humans. In this construction, the speaker willingly possesses any entities that he/she wants.

<b>(4)</b> <i>cantake-i min</i>	<i>xanweke-i to</i>
<i>bag Def. Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg.</i>	<i>house Def. Ezf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sg.</i>
<i>My bag</i>	<i>your house</i>

Ahmed (2018, 145) studies the forms of phrasal possessive constructions and classifies them into common possessives, absolute cliticized possessives, and reflexive possessive, and peripheral possessives. He analyzes all forms of possessive and argues that the ezafe (-i) is a dummy morpheme and has a syntactic function only and the major element within possessive construction is the possessed element. Essentially, he discusses possessive clitics and ezafe (-i) and applies the generative approach and government and binding theory to analyze the possessive constructions in addition to using tree diagram to disambiguate the obscurities within the construction.

Tahir (2018, 21) mentions the two forms of ezafe constructions: AP ezafe and NP ezafe. The NP ezafe is found in genitive construction and states that the ezafe (-i) is considered clitics rather than affixes and provides data to support his claim. He also maintains that the existence of ezafe (-i) is totally dependent on the occurrence of a post nominal modifier which is phonologically cliticized with the preceding noun. He also argues that the ezafe (-i) is a syntactic and dummy morpheme the occurrence of which does not contribute to the compositional meaning of the nominal phrase.

From the literature review, it can be observed that the forms and the syntax of possessive are points of focus. In addition, ezafe (-i) is regarded as a syntactic and dummy morpheme; it is used only for the syntactic function. In addition, the possessee is regarded as the major element in possessive constructions. In the following sections, possessive constructions are analyzed from a different perspective. Based on the theories of cognitive grammar, each possessive construction is analyzed and the different meanings they convey are shed light upon.

### III. COGNITIVE GRAMMAR

Cognitive grammar is a specific name that Langacker (2009, 3) suggests for his theory of language. Clearly, these two basic claims of cognitive grammar make it distinct from the other approaches. First, it asserts that grammatical structure is symbolic in nature in the sense that conceptual contents are

symbolically conventionalized. Second, the constructions (rather than rules) are the basic tool of the description. A construction consists of a group of symbolic structures; lexicon, morphology and syntax form symbolic units which is called form-meaning pairings linked by correspondence.

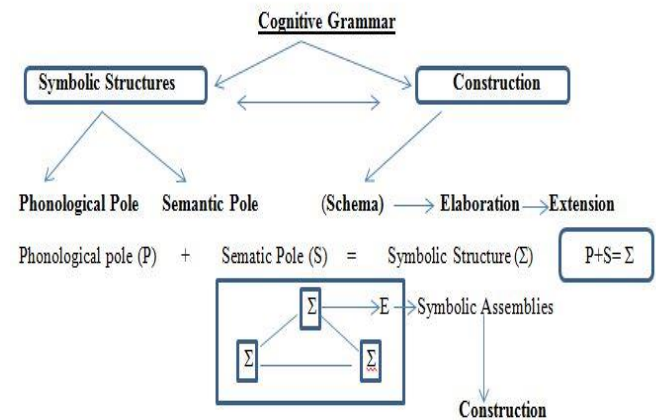


Fig. 1.Components of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker, 2009, 3)

### IV. COGNITIVE TERMINOLOGIES IN POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

An expression or construction can be regarded as a thing or relationship. Thing is not limited to objects and physical entities; a thing can be a person. Moreover, relationship does not necessarily include multiple participants. For instance, possessive at phrase level expresses only a thing i.e. a person who owns something. However, possessive at clause level expresses relationships because it involves tense, aspect and participants. When a construction profiles a relationship or a thing, levels of prominence exists between the participants: *primary focal participant* described as *trajector* and the *secondary focal participants* the *landmark*.

A component structure (i.e. a construction) is basically composed of two major elements: a salient schematic element labeled as **profile-determinant** and an element that elaborates the salient element labeled as **elaboration site** or **(e-site)**. To make it clear, in a possessive construction such as *baxe cwaneke(m)* (*my beautiful garden*) the word *baxe* (*garden*) acts as a profile-determinant or salient schematic element and the other word *cwaneke-m* (*my beautiful*) is the elaboration site for the schematic element which modifies or elaborates the schematic element.

### V. COGNITIVE GRAMMAR THEORIES SPECIFIC TO POSSESSIVE

The following sections tackle the three theories of cognitive grammar that are used to analyze possessive constructions.

#### A. Reference Point Model

Possessive expresses a relation between two entities; these relations can be ownership, kinship and part-whole

prototypically. These relations are clear examples of reference point organization. Essentially, reference point model is the abstract scanning of mental path through which the conceptualizer directs attention firstly to an entity as an anchor so as to reach at another entity and this is how possession formed. In other words, it is the ability to initiate the conception of one entity and thereafter establishing the mental contact with another entity. Naturally, we, as humans, have the ability to control or access a range of different possessions and think of the world as being populated by people not by possessions because the possessions such as car, house, and wallet and so on are not considered as possession unless we refer to a person. An uncle (maternal) is not an uncle unless we attribute it to a person. Therefore, reference point is the establishment of that relation between the entities and that relation is an abstract scan used by humans to mentally access or control a range of possessions. Importantly, this reference point is a cognitive salience that facilitates the identifications of the possessions to the owners (Langacker, 1993, 5).

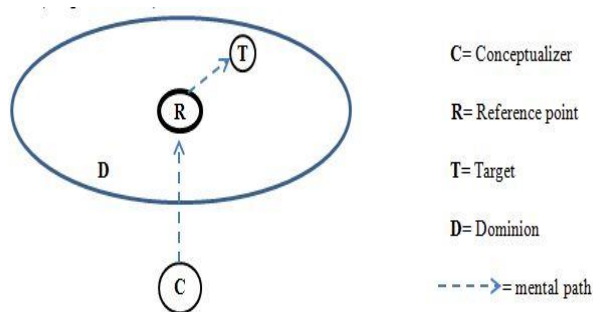


Fig. 2. Description of Reference Point Model (Langacker, 1993, 6)

In a prototypical instance, the conceptualizer (C) creates a mental scanning path through (R), the reference point, setting it as an anchor to control or own the possessed (T). The (R) manipulates (T) and decides that (T) is kept. In this regard, (T) is owned and can be used if desired. Effectively, this possession or control has conventionalized components: socially and experientially. Others know about this privilege. In addition, (T) can be a cluster of owned entities and once an entity's ownership is determined then (D) is established, i.e. the domain of the possession belongs to a specific person and as long as the possession is formed, the privilege of (T) is exclusive to (R).

### B. Construal Theory

According to Langacker (2008, 55), the meaning of a construction is characterized in two aspects: conceptual content and construal. Conceptual content is the linguistic elements of language and construal is the use of linguistic elements, provided by grammar, to state the construction in alternate ways. In this regard, the main point about construal is the idea of structuring a specific situation mapped into different mental experiences by different conceptualizers.

(5) The car was fast. / The car drove 200 km/h. / The car was like X15.

In the example above, it can be easily noticed that the above situation is merely one idea, but with the help of construal the situation is mapped into different mental experiences.

Effectively, this confirms that we, as humans, conceptualize a certain scene according to how we experience it. Also, we have the same conceptual contents, but by the use of construal, we organize different structures and convey the message.

To carry out the process of alternations with the help of construal theory, the theory puts forward four basic dimensions: **Specificity, Focusing, Prominence** and **Perspective**. Each of these dimensions carries their own specialties to state the alternations of a construction.

**Specificity dimension** maintains that the meaning of the words is extracted into some degrees, i.e. narrowing down the meaning into a specific manner to meet specificity in language which all in all testifies that a situation could be comprehended in alternate ways and that is how the cognitive ability operates in the mind (Langacker, 2008, 55).

(6) *thing* → *object* → *tool* → *hammer* → *claw hammer*

**Focusing dimension** is more about the selection of conceptual contents within the constructions, and that selection can be categorized into two basic aspects: **foregrounding** and **backgrounding**.

(7) A. *Karzan would win the election I believe.*

B. *I believe Karzan would win the election.*

The two instances above confirm that it is the role of the conceptualizer to foreground and background a certain part from a scene. In example 7 A, the conceptualizer **foregrounded** the first part of the scene and **backgrounded** the rest. However, in 7 B, the process is vice versa. Overall, this process highlights the importance of focusing dimension of construal theory and also verifies that the conceptualizer has the ability to alternate choices of figure within a profiled scene.

As for **prominence dimension**, the structure of language manifests different compositions of the same idea i.e. displaying an idea within two different structures. Significantly, this diversity in structure is all the matter of prominence.

**Prominence** can be categorized into two important parts: **profiling and trajector/ landmark aliments** (Langacker, 2008, 66).

(8) A. *Where is the vase?*

i *The vase (tr) is above the table. (lm)*

ii *The table (tr) is below the vase. (lm)*

B. *Where is the table?*

i *the table (tr) is below the vase. (lm)*

ii *the vase (tr) is above the table. (lm)*

**Perspective** (or viewpoint) is the last dimension of construal theory that involves the way the speaker describes a view or an object in terms of his/her viewpoint. Perspectivization is one of the tools of construal which shows the viewpoints of the speaker in relation to the physical world. Fundamentally, the act of construal is undertaken by the speaker to form an image in the cognition of the listener (Langacker, 2008, 73).

(9) A. *John bought a car from Marry for a good price.*

B. *Marry sold a car to John for a good price.*

The above instances could refer to different interpretations of the same idea in terms of different speakers' viewpoints. *Good*

*price* is interpreted as a **low price** in the first instance 9, A. However, in the second one 9, B is interpreted as a **high price**.

C. *Figure and Ground Theory*

Figure and ground are the two basic terms used by cognitive linguistics and were borrowed from Gestalt psychology to explain various linguistic phenomena. Figure and ground could be regarded as a feature of human perception and interpretation of reality. Importantly, this feature could be interpreted as two components of a scene. For instance, when we, as humans, perceive a scene, one namely component is brought to the forefront labeled as **figure**, and this has some kind of significance to the conceptualizer. Additionally, the rest of the scene is seen as fuzzy continuum labeled as **ground**, i.e. it has a secondary form of attention to the conceptualizer (Petrova, 2016, 1).

For instance, imagine a scene like looking out from a window and seeing a house opposite to it, in this instance, one could see different sorts of arrangements out there with some aspects of the scene that carry special attention. For instance, the house would be smaller, more defined, and clearer in comparison with the other broader scenes like the sky and the landscape. This kind of relation is a dynamic one because the attention shifts from one thing to another. Again, this time we see a tree located in front of that house, so our focus shifts to the tree and it is foregrounded, and the house remains backgrounded. This process confirms that we tend to give more attention to smaller and particular objects in comparison to other objects. Essentially, these kinds of arrangements help us notice how figure (the entity which stands out) is different from ground (entity remaining in the background). Therefore, figure can be smaller, brighter, and more specific, and it also has a kind of cognitive salience.

The theory of figure and ground would operate grammatically. For instance, we would normally say ‘the house in the field’ our grammar affects our conceptualization to capture a smaller entity, which stands out as first entity within the whole scene. The ‘house’ is smaller compared to the ‘field’ and could be captured immediately by our conceptualization rather than the field. Therefore, it is less normal to give attention to the ground such as saying ‘the field around the house’ (Talmy, 1975, 419).

VI. POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN CENTRAL KURDISH

Kurdish grammarians have not investigated the topic of possessive in detail and what has been found in this literature review does not include the approach of cognitive grammar. This paper focuses on introducing possessive constructions through the theories of cognitive grammar. Typologically speaking, different languages employ various mechanisms to express possession. In CK, possessive constructions are divided into two main parts: possession at the phrase level and clause level. Prototypically, possession at the phrase level can be conveyed from two ways: possessive clitics and *ezafe* (-i). Possession at clause level can be expressed through the verb of possessive ‘*heya*’ and integration with a copular verb. Different meanings ranging from prototypical senses to peripheral ones are anchored around the possessive constructions. Nonetheless,

possessive linguistic devices are semantically polysemous and grammatically applicable to numerous structures, and this proves subjectification.

A. *Possessive Constructions at Phrase Level*

1) *Possessive Pronouns Clitics*

Due to the typological differences in language, CK employs different constructions to express possessive relations within a noun phrase. The typical mechanism is the juxtaposition of possessee and the possessor without requiring any involvement of morphological morphemes. Significantly, possessive constructions convey different meanings ranging from prototypical senses of ownership, kinship and part-whole salient to our daily experiences, peripheral senses of association, belonging, etc. They are employed as the result of subjectification. The possessive pronouns clitics in CK are shown in the table below:

TABLE 1  
THE POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS CLITICS IN CK

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	M → My	T → Your	y → His/her
Plural	Man → Our	Tan → Your	yan → Their

The basic linguistic mechanism that conveys possession in CK is the process of attaching the cliticized possessive pronoun to the possessee nominals, and this is described as the juxtaposition. The followings manifest prototypical instances of possessive pronoun clitics:

(10)

A. *bawke-m* → (Kinship) B. *xaw-eke-y* → (Ownership) C. *desit-y* → (Part-whole)

*father* 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.    *house* Def. 3<sup>rd</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.    *hand* 3<sup>rd</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.  
*My father*                      *her/his house*                      *her/his hand*

In 10 A, the possessive pronoun clitics (-m) is directly attached to the possessee and form the possessive construction. However, this is not always the case because definite article sometimes comes at the intervention and possessive clitics are attached to the definite article because it is the feature of clitics that closes the word as in 10, B.

From the schematic aspect, possessive pronouns clitics can be regarded as the highly schematic linguistic elements because a range of different meanings are involved with them. For instance, possessive pronoun clitics can be used to express endearments and in vocative cases.

(11) A. *bawkeke-m*                      B. *maleke-m*                      C. *brake-m*

*father* Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.    *home* Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. cl.    *brother* Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.  
*My dear*                      *my darling*                      *my dear*

In 11, A, B and C, we may imagine a situation in which a speaker explains something important to the hearer and he/she

wants to get the attention of the hearer regarding the subject and saying *bawkeke-m* to mean ‘my dear’ or *brake-m* in vocative cases. Another interpretation is the instance in B where the speaker seems to hold himself in a high status such as being a father, boss and motivational person and says *maleke-m* (my darling) to the hearer whom he/she views as low status.

Definite article can be used in two ways with kinship terms in CK. First, if we normally express the kinship terms, we do not use the definite article.

- (12) *xali-m*                      *mami-m*                      *puri-m*                      *bapir-m*  
*uncle 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*    *uncle 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*    *aunt 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*    *grandfather 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*  
*My uncle (maternal)*    *my uncle (paternal)*    *my aunt*                      *my grandfather*

Second, we use (in) definite article with kinship terms in two ways: A. In a context when we do not want to identify the exact kinship terms. For instance, *xaleki-m* ~~one of~~ my uncles, *brayeke-m* ~~one of~~ my brothers and etc.

B. Using them for plural nouns, for instance, *xalekani-m* my uncles (maternal), *mamekani-m* my uncles (paternal).

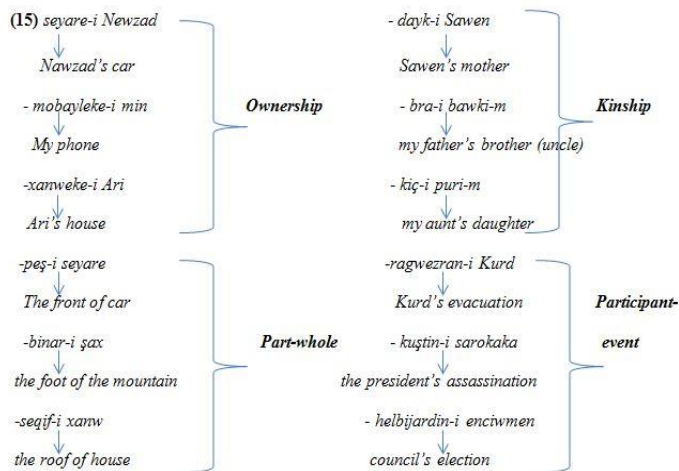
We use (in) definite articles with ownership relations:

- (13) *xanweke-m*                      *sayareke-m*                      *cantake-y*                      *pelaweke-t*  
*house Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*    *car Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*    *bag Def. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*    *shoes Def. 3<sup>rd</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*  
*My house*                      *my car*                      *his bag*                      *your shoe*

- (14) *Pelaweke-m*    *Jantayeki-m*  
*shoes Indef. 3<sup>rd</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*                      *bag Indef. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.*  
*One of my shoe*    *one of my bag*

2) *Ezafe (-i) as Relational Marker*

Central Kurdish employs *ezafe (-i)* to form possessive construction through which the possessor and the possessed are linked together via the morpheme (-i), and this could be regarded as possession at phrase level. Significantly, this *ezafe* covers other different semantic domains. *Ezafe* conveys meanings including prototypical senses and peripheral ones:



It can be noticed in 15 that the *ezafe (-i)* expresses possessive relations from ownership to participant and event relations. Fundamentally, *ezafe (-i)* is regarded as a highly schematic morpheme that participates in the formation of different grammatical and semantic aspects. For instance, *xanw-i spy* (white house), *ezafe (-i)* does not convey possession here. Moreover, the order of the possessive construction with *ezafe* construction is irreversible because it is a conceptual co-occurrence and ungrammaticality, and meaning changes may occur. We cannot say *Ari xanw* to mean *xanw-i Ari* because we know that the world is populated by humans not by possessions.

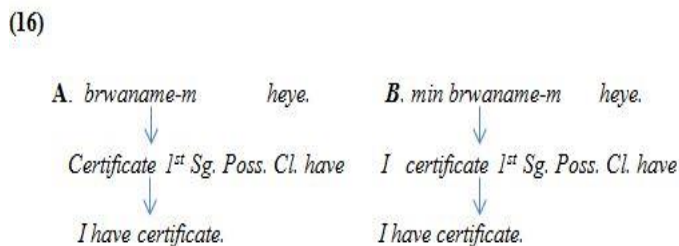
Amin (2003, 226) maintains that two nominal nouns form a possessive construction through *ezafe (-i)*. The first noun preceding the morpheme (-i) is the event of the construction and directly linked with the second noun through *ezafe*. The second noun is the significant noun within the construction (see section 6.2.1 reference point, instance no. 17). Notably, if more than two nouns are added to the construction, each noun is linked with the noun that follows.

3) *The Verb Stem of 'hebûn' as a Possessive Marker*

*Ezafe* and possessive clitics express possession at phrase level in CK. Possession can be formed at the clause level through the verb stem ‘*hebûn*’. The verb stem ‘*hebûn*’ changes its form according to the tenses of the sentence and profiles a subject of experience or control where the possessor is in active control with the possessed entity. The verb ‘to have’ In English as Langacker (2009, 64) maintains that verb ‘to have’ conveys an imperfective process that intends to construe the situation as stable within the expression’s temporal scope. In other words, the verb profiles a temporal relation. Based on this, this stem verb ‘*hebûn*’ in CK has the same characteristics of the verb ‘to have’ because it behaves the same. The possessor is in active control with the possessed and the process is an imperfective one within the expression’s temporal scope.

Amin (2003, 316) claims that the stem verb ‘*bun*’ forms possession through the prefix ‘*he*’ and together with possessive clitics form a possessive construction.

Based on the fact that CK is a pro-drop language, sometimes the possessor is covertly expressed through the possessive clitics as in 16 A and this is used more frequently. However, we sometimes emphasize on the possessor and overtly expressed the possessor as in 16 B.



It is worth mentioning that possession at clausal level starts from the existence of the verb stem ‘*hebûn*’ because with the intervention of ‘*hebûn*’, the relation is formed between possessor and possessee. To make it clear, the possessee is regarded as **B** and the possessor as **A**, and with the existence of the verb stem ‘*hebûn*’ **A** owns **B** or control **B**.

**B. The Application of Cognitive Models to Ezafe (-i) and Possessive Clitics**

Below is the application of the aforementioned cognitive theories to possessive construction in CK.

**1) Reference Point Model**

The reference point model is applied to both possessive clitics and ezafe (-i). The application of this model is significant because the model initiates a profiled relation i.e. the conceptualizer mentally links the possessed entity to its owner-the possessor. In clear terms, for instance, the entity *seyare* (car) does not mean anything unless we attribute its ownership to a person, and *seyara* (car) is an object in the physical world. Cognitively speaking, the conceptualizer mentally initiates the conception of *seyare* as the first entity and mentally reach at another entity described as reference point through which the possession's ownership is established i.e. the target entity is kept because **R** manipulates **T** in the figure below and specifies the **D**; that is, **T** is not any *car* rather it belongs to **R** or (-m). The reference point has some kind of control either socially or physically over the target entity and others acknowledge this privilege as possession.

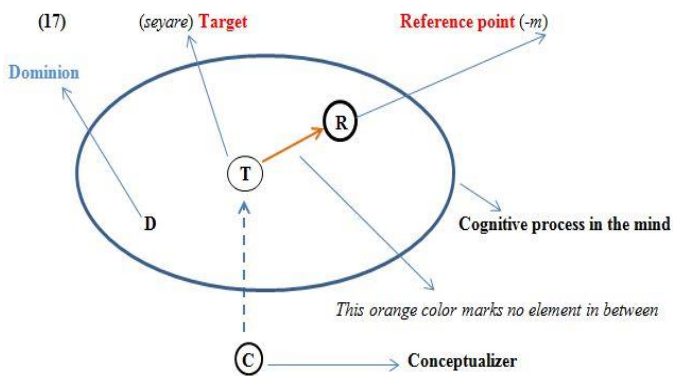


Fig.3. Possessive Clitics Construction for (*seyareke-m*)

In the instance above, *seyareke* (the car) is a **profile-determinant** because it profiles or determines the status of the reference point (-m) and modifications can be added to elaborate the target entity and in order to establish what is called **e-site**. For instance, *seyare cwane spieke-m* meaning *my beautiful white car*, the elaborations by *cwan* (beautiful) and *spi* (white) make the target entity more specific.

Langacker (1995, 58) maintains by using reference point model, the speaker invites the hearer to first conceptualize (establish mental contact) with an entity (the possessor) guaranteeing the identification of the target entity (the possessee).

The reference point model is applied to ezafe (-i) construction. The distribution is the different from possessive clitics because the morpheme (-i) intervenes between the possessee and possessor establishing difference in meaning between the two entities (see section 6.2.2 construal theory). Essentially, the benefits of ezafe (-i) construction is summarized in the following points:

- Names of people and things can be expressed after (-i) morpheme.
- Sometimes, it can be used for emphasis to stress on the possessor.
- It can be considered as a productive linker that contributes to the compositionality of the possessive construction and gives different meanings to the construction.
- A stronger sense of control or power could be expressed more with ezafe (-i).

The following figure expresses the reference point model with ezafe (-i) and ezafe is marked in the figure through the dashed arrows:

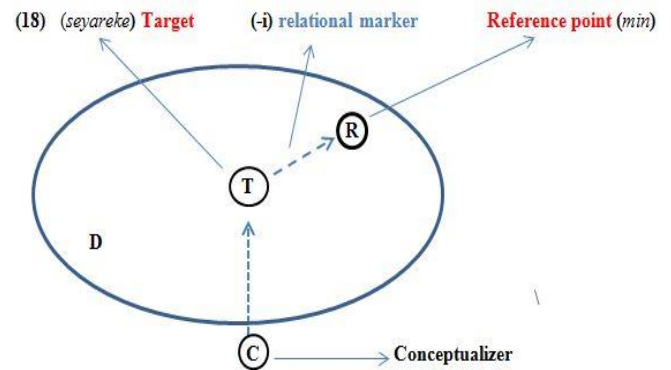


Fig.4. Reference Point Model for ezafe (-i) (*seyareke-i min*)

In figure (4), the conceptualizer creates a discrete mental path from the target entity *seyareke* (the car) and establishes a mental contact with the reference point (*min*) through the ezafe (-i). *Seyareke* is the profile-determinant as it determines the profile of (*min*) and modification can be added in the **e-site**. For instance, *seyare gewre cwane reseke-i min* means *my beautiful big black car*.

Another benefit of ezafe (-i) construction is that double possessions can be found within one construction. Each noun is linked with the others through ezafe (-i) as clarified in the following figure:

(19) *bonid-i seyareke-i Aram* → *the bonnet of Aram's car*

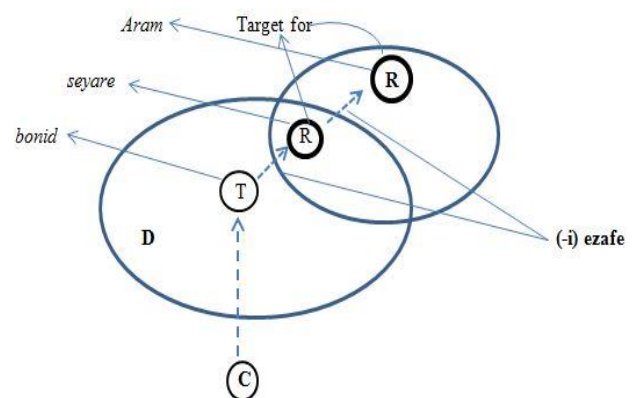


Fig. 5. Double possessions in the same construction (*bonid-i seyareke-i Aram*)

In figure (5), the conceptualizer initially starts with the first target entity bonid (bonnet) and through the reference point a mental contact is established; bonid is part of seyare (car) and this is also an instance of part-whole relation. Then, the conceptualizer establishes another mental contact with the reference point Aram. Each of bonid and seyare can be of any type and size, but as the conceptualizer reaches at the reference point Aram, the ownership of both bonid and seyare is determined and the dominion is established. The listener concludes that this privilege belongs to Aram, not others. Each entity, in this construction, depends on the reference point to establish the connection, and this highlights the significant aspect of reference point organization in possessive construction.

Amin (2003, 316) mentions a lengthy instance of possessive construction in CK in which the nouns are linked together through ezafe (-i). He states that this instance is a part-whole relation. The first noun is part of the second and the second of the third.

(20) *min klil -i derga -i jwreke -m win kird.*

*I key Ezf. door Ezf. room Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl. lost*

*I lost the key of my room door.*

The possessive clitics and ezafe (-i) could be found in 20. In applying the reference point model, the conceptualizer starts with the optional personal pronoun (min), and this instance has the same distribution as the previous instance 18. A number of reference points are established among klil, derga, jwr, but these reference point makings are not conceptualized because each of these entities can be found in the world with any type or size. The ownership of those entities should be attached to humans. The conceptualizer reaches at the real reference point - human's ownership - the dominion is set and the possessions like klil, derga, jwr belong to the possessive clitics (-m).

It can be noticed that the reference point model is effectively significant in analyzing possessive constructions. In fact, it is the possessors that determine the status of the construction not the possessed entities. It is the role of the conceptualizer together with the reference point that initiates a mental scanning and builds a relation between the entities. The relation is formed through a subjective point of view; the relation is grounded between listener and speaker in a certain conceptual experience.

2) *Construal Theory*

Construal theory is defined as portraying the same situation in different ways through using the same or different conceptual contents. In this regard, the theory has some dimensions that are applied to express the construction in different ways. Native speakers of CK use both constructions: possessive clitics and ezafe construction to express possession from prototypical to peripheral senses. Fundamentally, it is true that both constructions are used to convey possession, but differences in meaning can be observed because different conceptualizers have distinct experiences and points of importance. We use possessive clitics not ezafe to convey a certain possession. The reason behind such use is that this construction has points of

importance together with the involvement of conceptual experiences which is not expressed by ezafe. This brings to mind vantage point by which we, as humans, use a certain construction with a sort of focus in mind, i.e. one thing is more important than the other, or we view a situation differently through using different conceptual contents.

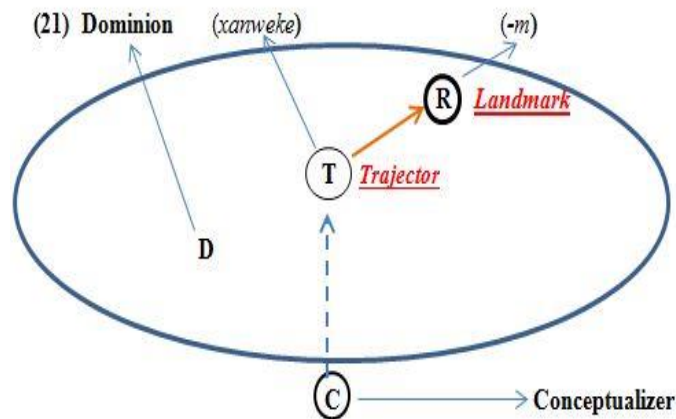


Fig. 6. Trajectory and Landmark Alignments of (xanweke-m)

In figure (6), the conceptualizer starts with first entity as the trajectory and then with the possessive clitics as landmark. We argue that the point of choosing possessive clitics by native speakers of CK is that the idea of social possession is to be conveyed. More specifically, the idea of social possession is that the speaker aims to express his possession as a sort of social status such as saying my car, my house, my villa and no reference to other things is mentioned.

However, ezafe (-i) imposes opposite distributions of trajectory and landmark alignments. Fundamentally, we argue that the ezafe (-i) assigns trajectory to the reference point and landmark to the target entity. This change is somehow inconvenient to the reader. However, Langacker (2009, 65) states that this alternation is common and conveys nothing more than our ability to alternate choice of figure within a scene. One should not be bothered by the fact that the target, rather than the reference point, is characterized as relational landmark. Importantly, this change creates difference in meaning.

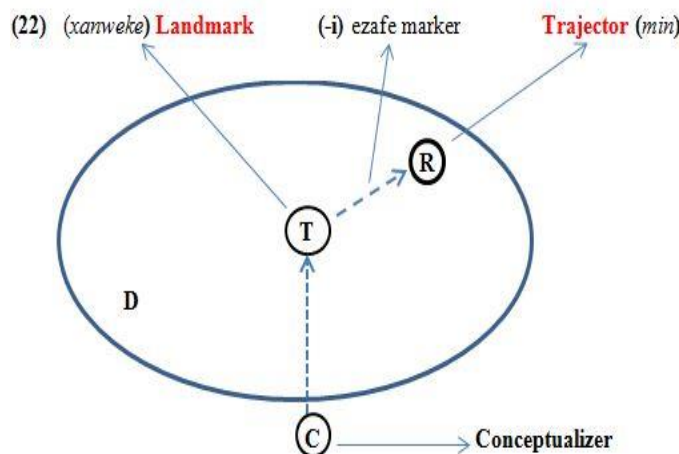


Fig. 7. Reference Point Model for (xanweke-i min)

In figure (7), *ezafe* (-i) assigns different trajector and landmark alignments, and this causes a change in meaning because we argue that native speakers of CK use this construction to convey physical power in possessing the target entity. In clear terms, the speaker wants to show that hard working and efforts were involved in gaining possession with *ezafe* construction. The choice between possessive clitics and *ezafe* (-i) mostly depends on the subjective use i.e. grounding in certain experiences because both could mean the same when used objectively.

The effects of subjective and objective use could be found with kinship terms. Different meanings are observed when we use them either objectively or with a context.

<b>(23) A.</b> <i>kurr-i min</i>	<b>B.</b> <i>kurr-m</i>
<i>son Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg.</i>	<i>son 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.</i>
<i>My son</i>	<i>my son</i>
<b>C.</b> <i>kurr-i min</i>	<b>D.</b> <i>kurr-m</i>
<i>son Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg.</i>	<i>son 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.</i>
<i>My dear</i>	<i>my dear</i>

The instances A and B are the objective use of kinship relations and they both mean my son. However, in C and D, suppose that a person in a position of authority directs his/her advice to another person in low position and says *kurr-i min* or *kurr-m* does not mean his/her son; it rather expresses endearment or advice.

Ahmed (2018, 164) argues that the possessive clitics are sometimes ambiguous in CK. He puts forwards the following argument for an instance like ‘*kurreke-t*’:

- (24) A.** *kurreke-t zirek-e* → (t) functions as possessive  
**B.** *kurreke-t biny* → (t) functions as subject

Ahmed (2018, 164) states that what makes the clitics function either as a possessive or subject in the above instances is the type of the verb. If the verb is transitive, the clitics function as a subject. However, when it is intransitive, it functions as a possessive marker.

The explanation by Ahmed (2018, 164) is still ambiguous because he analyzes both sentences through syntax. However, in both instances, *kurreke-t* may mean your own son in terms of meaning and the lexical word *kurr* stands for both a male young human and a male offspring of human being in CK. In addition, it is interpreted as son and boy, that is, the context decides on which one the speaker exactly means. To make differences in meaning, we apply specificity dimension of construal theory and add a context i.e. subjectively portraying the scene to disambiguate the phrase *kurreke-t* in the above instances.

<b>(25) A.</b> <i>kurreke-t le kompanya kar dekat.</i>	<b>B.</b> <i>kurreket bini ke karit bo dekat.</i>
<i>son Def. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl. in company work</i>	<i>son Def. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sg. see who works for you</i>
<i>Your son works in company.</i>	<i>you saw the boy who works for you.</i>

Hamawand (2020, 29) maintains that language use shapes linguistic knowledge, and linguistic structures are motivated by conceptual knowledge, which is grounded in experience. In this respect, the phrase *kurreke-t* is grounded in a certain experience specified to the degree that meets specificity dimension of construal theory. As a result, *kurreke-t* in (25, A) is interpreted as your son. However, in (B) *kurreke-t* is interpreted as the boy.

Ahmed (2018, 176) mentions that the possessive clitics originally come from *ezafe* (-i). *Ezafe* is a deep structure and the possessive clitics are surface structure. He argues that a null element acts as a head in possessive clitics construction. Moreover, he differentiates between the two constructions in the following ways:

If the focus is on the possessor, *ezafe* (-i) must be used. However, upon shifting the focus to possessee, possessive clitics are used.

<b>(26) A.</b> <i>mobail-i min</i>	<b>B.</b> <i>mobaileke-m</i>
<i>phone Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg.</i>	<i>phone Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.</i>
<i>My phone</i>	<i>my phone</i>

Based on reference point model, the significant entity within possessive construction is the status of the reference point, i.e. the possessor. According to construal theory, the choice of using *ezafe* over possessive clitics is the already mentioned idea of physical power and social possession over the possessed entities. In saying 26 A, *mobail-i min*, the conceptualizer manifests the more accurate specification, i.e. construal since *mobail* belongs to the exact speaker not anyone else. In addition, it shows the idea of physical power through working hard to buy a mobile. However, in 26 B, *mobaileke-m* the conceptualizer expresses his/her social possessions similar to saying any other possessions my house, my car, etc. Additionally, Langacker (2009, 431) mentions the occurrence of juxtaposition mechanism in possessive constructions; that is, the case of possessive clitics in CK. No reference is made to the null element at all in the possessive clitics construction.

### 3) Figure and Ground Theory

In perceiving a scene, an obvious entity directly attracts our attention i.e. this entity is a subject of focus. Therefore, based on figure and ground theory, that obvious entity is called figure, and the entity supporting the figure in the background is called ground. Beside this, our grammar affects our conceptualization to capture smaller entity, and the ground stands out as the first entity within the overall scene. In terms of features, figure can be regarded as a changeable or movable entity in comparison to the ground because the ground is more stable in addition to support the figure. In applying figure and ground theory to *ezafe* (-i), the entity before (-i) is always a figure and the other one ground.

<b>(27) A.</b> <i>Derwaze-i xanweke</i>	<b>B.</b> <i>befir-i şhaxeke</i>
<i>gate Ezf. house Def.</i>	<i>snow Ezf. mountain Ezf.</i>
<i>The gate of the house</i>	<i>the snow of the mountain</i>



In 27 A, the salient entity in this profiled scene is Derwaze because it is an observable entity in comparison to the house, and xanweke has a bigger picture in our mind that remains in the background to support Derwaze. Therefore, Derwaze is the figure and xanweke the ground. In addition, ezafe (-i) links both entities and mostly builds a part-whole relationship.

As for the possessive clitics, the target in the construction is always regarded as a figure because the target changes from one thing to another, but the possessive clitics remain in their positions. By using possessive clitics, the speaker intentionally bring the figure entity to the first part so as to highlight or focus on it.

(28) A. <i>paskileke-m</i>	B. <i>pişheke-m</i>
<i>Bicycle Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.</i>	<i>Career Def. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl.</i>
<i>My bicycle</i>	<i>my career</i>

The possessive clitics always stand as a ground. We, as humans, can hold different possessions. Both paskil and pişhe in 28, A and B can be changed to other entities such as house, car, mobile phone, etc. Importantly, the possessive clitics, unlike ezafe (-i) mostly show ownership relation and not part-whole relation.

C. Possessive Constructions at Clause Level

Possession at clause level can be expressed in two prototypical patterns in CK. The first pattern is the application of the verb ‘heya’ (to have) and the second one is the integration of Ezafe with copular verb (-e / be). Langacker (2009, 64) upholds that the English verb to have conveys an **imperfective process** that intends to construe the situation as stable within the expression’s temporal scope. In CK, the verb ‘heya’ profiles a temporal relation and possession at clause level, which shares some characteristics of the verb ‘to have’ in English. The possessor is in active control with the possessee. Moreover, CK is a pro-drop language and a subject can be overtly and covertly expressed depending on the context.

(29) A. <i>Kompitêrêk-i heya.</i>	yan	B. <i>Lanya kompîtêrêk-i heya.</i>
<i>computer Indef.3<sup>rd</sup> Sg Subj. has</i>	or	<i>Lanya computer 3<sup>rd</sup> Sg Subj. has</i>
<i>he/she has a computer.</i>		<i>Lanya has a computer.</i>

(30) A. <i>ewe defter-i min-e.</i>	B. <i>ewe mobayl-i min-e.</i>
<i>that notebook Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Cop.</i>	<i>that phone Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Cop.</i>
<i>that is my notebook.</i>	<i>that is my mobile.</i>

The instances 29 and 30 above are the prototypical ones and they are expressing a relationship not a thing and because time is involved. The relationship is between two entities; the verb creates a sort of control through which the possessor is in active control over the possessed entity.

1) Reference Point Model

The application of reference point model to the first pattern ‘heya’ in CK is mostly similar to the English verb ‘to have’

because the idea of the verb expresses control. Essentially, the possessor i.e. the reference point is in active control and provides the conceptualizer with a mental path to the possessed entity with the help of the verb ‘heya’. What makes CK possessive construction at clause level different from English is that both possessor and possessed are attached: an evidence of agglutinating language. The following diagram explains the idea of reference point at clause level for possessive construction:

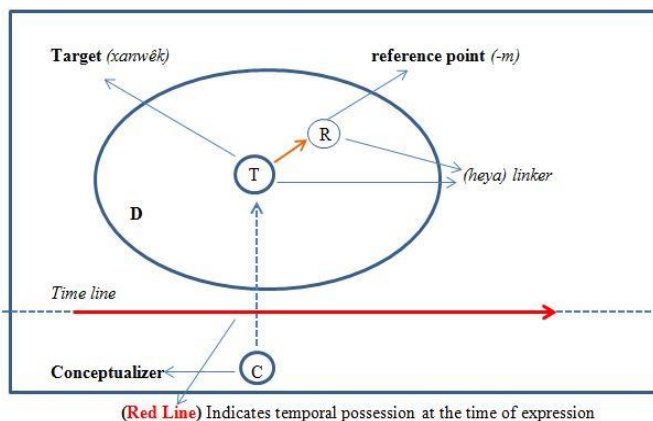


Fig. 8. The Application of Reference Point for (*xanwêki-m heya*)

In figure (8), the conceptualizer creates a mental path through the target entity and reaches the reference point. The target entity (*xanwêk*) is a profile-determinant because it determines the profile of the reference point (-m). This construction up to *xanwêk* (*my home*) is incomplete. Therefore, the conceptualizer continues to reach the verb of possession ‘heya’ to complete the thought and expresses the relation at a certain time. The verb ‘heya’ acts as a linker to give a complete thought on the construction. From a cognitive standpoint, this instance conveys an **imperfective process** that intends to construe the situation as stable within the expression’s temporal scope.

The verb ‘heya’ is present tense and the past tense is ‘hebu’, and this is a perfective process because the action of the verb is completed. In the negative case, the verb changes to ‘niye’. The following instances show the verb changes according to the tenses:

(32) A. <i>xanwêki-m hebû.</i>	B. <i>seyare-m niye.</i>
<i>house Indef. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl. had</i>	<i>car 1<sup>st</sup>Sg. Poss. Cl. don't have</i>
<i>I had a house.</i>	<i>I do not have car.</i>

Clearly, it can be stated that both possessor and possessee exist and through the appearance of the verb ‘heya’. The possessor owns the possessee. Consider possessor is X and possessee Y and through the existence of the verb ‘heya’, X owns Y.

It is worth noticing that the kinship terms are different with the application of this model. For instance, applying reference point model to ‘heya’, the sense does not convey control; the relationship is rather biologically imposed as seen in the instance below:

- (33) *min dw xalli-m heya.*  
 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. two uncles 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl. have  
 I have two uncles.

Another construction of possessive is the insertion of *ezafe* (-i) with the addition of copular verb (-e / be). In this construction, the reference point is made as the conceptualizer initially starts with the possessed entity linked by *ezafe* (-i) with possessor plus a copular verb. Sometimes, a personal pronoun may be added to the beginning for the sole purpose of emphasis, and the different meaning of possession can be conveyed ranging from ownership to part-whole.

- (34) A. *eve xanw-i min-e.*    B. *eme ktéb-i min-e.*    C. *eve kurr-i min-e.*  
*that house Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Cop.*    *this book Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Cop.*    *that son Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Cop.*  
*that is my house.*    *this is my book.*    *that is my son.*

The reference point model is applied to 34. The conceptualizer creates a mental path through a demonstrative pronoun followed by the target entity then linked by *ezafe* (-i) together with the reference point to establish the dominion of the construction. The construction ends up with a copular verb to give a complete thought and create a relationship between these two entities.

It can be concluded that applying reference point is definitely crucial. CK employs different mechanisms to establish possession through the reference point model. First, it employs juxtaposition of both possessor and possessed. Second, it employs *ezafe* (-i) to establish possessive construction at phrase level. Third, it employs the verb of possession and copular verb to form possessive at clause level. Each of the constructions is irreversible because it causes changes in meaning. Therefore, the model is entirely dependent on the conceptualizer and the context to employ different constructions.

2) *Construal Theory*

All dimensions of construal theory are not necessarily applied to the constructions of possessives. Some constructions require prominence dimension while others require focusing and etc. In the construction that contains the verb of possession ‘*heya*’, the prominence dimension is applied. The trajector is the first noun in the construction followed by the landmark and linked by ‘*heya*’. The focus of the conceptualizer is on the target entity because of the status of possessive clitics. The following diagram clarifies this point:

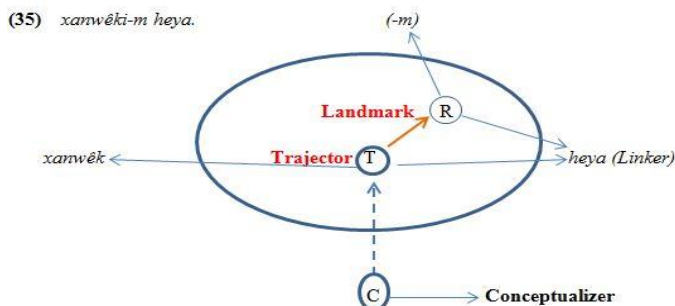


Fig. 9. The Application of Prominence Dimension of Construal Theory for (*xanwêki-m heya.*)

In figure 9, the relationship is built through the status of the verb ‘*heya*’ and it is an imperfective one with the expression temporal scope. The nature of the possessive clitics is that the focus of the conceptualizer is on the possessed entity because the meaning of the construction is to express social possession not the idea of physical control.

For the construction containing *ezafe* (-i) together with copular verb, the distribution of trajector and landmark is shifted, i.e. the target entity is landmark and the possessive pronoun is trajector because as clarified earlier *ezafe* (-i) imposes different alignments of trajector/landmark. Therefore, the focus of the conceptualizer is on the reference point: the person who owns the property. In this respect, it can be regarded that both constructions are not interchangeable as it results in difference in meaning and focus. The use of the verb ‘*heya*’ expresses social status. The idea of showing physical control is to be expressed through *ezafe*.

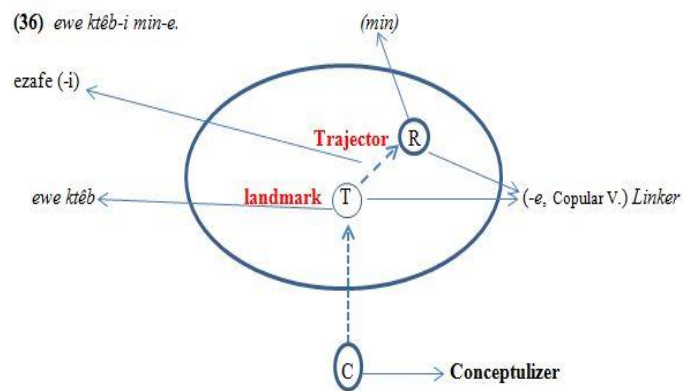


Fig. 10. Trajector and Landmark Alignment of (*ewe ktéb-i min-e.*)

In figure 10, both trajector and landmark are linked through *ezafe* (-i) and this link creates difference in meaning as mentioned earlier. Then, the possessive construction is once more linked with the copular verb to form the relationship giving a complete thought about the construction.

It can be noticed that using each of these mentioned constructions is dependent on the conceptualizer and the context collectively. The vantage point is very significant to consider because it is a cognitive mechanism used to construe a scene from the view point of the conceptualizer i.e. physical perception (embodiment). In this regard, a different CK speaker uses distinct possessive constructions depending on how he/she conceptualizes or perceives a scene. This also verifies the subjective positioning of the conceptualizer in relation to an event.

3) *Figure and Ground Theory*

According to the basic point of figure and ground theory, the clause level of possessive construction, specifically with both constructions verb ‘*heya*’ and *ezafe* (-i) with a copular verb, can be described in this way: the reference point can be regarded as the ground and the target of both construction is the figure because it conveys new information or profiles the status of the reference point.

(37)

A. <i>xanweki-m heya.</i>	B. <i>dukaneki-m heya.</i>	C. <i>ewe mal-i min-e.</i>
<i>House Indef. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl. have</i>	<i>shop indef. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Poss. Cl. have</i>	<i>that home Ezf. 1<sup>st</sup> Sg. Cop.</i>
<i>I have a house.</i>	<i>I have a shop.</i>	<i>that is my home.</i>

In 37, A and B, the figure is the target entities such as (xanw and dukan) because these entities are changeable from one entity to another. In addition, the base entities, i.e. the groundings are the possessive clitics. When the listener observes the speaker, he/she already knows about the speaker-the possessive clitics, but different properties and objects owned by the speaker are new to the listener.

The same is true of the instance 37, C. The figure element is mall (home) because it is a new entity that attracts the attention of the listener. And, the grounding entity is the personal pronoun (min).

The figure is foregrounded. That is, it is the entity that attracts our attention immediately and it is considered to be new information to the ground. In these constructions of possessive at clause level, the figure entities are linked to the ground entities through the existence of the verb. The significant part of the construction is the status of the ground entity because it acts as a base, and the figure entity is introduced through it.

#### CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the three theories of cognitive grammar are applied to CK possessive constructions. Each theory has its own significance and analyzes each construction as best as possible in addition to the different forms of CK possessive constructions. Both levels: phrase and clause, the application of reference point gives a new view of how the conceptualizer starts to initiate the mental access through the target to the reference point and ends up with establishing the dominion of the construction. With this model, it is easier for the conceptualizer to connect two or more entities together and establish a connection through which the possessions are related to the owners. Based on construal theory, differences in meaning could be noted because the dimensions are applied to the constructions and the results clarify where to use ezafe instead of possessive clitics or vice versa. According to prominence dimension, the trajector /landmark alignments are given to the entities of possessive constructions which involve the primary and secondary sorts of focus in a profiled scene. The subjectification process enables different conceptualizers to use different conceptual contents to portray the same scene i.e. the idea of vantage point. Figure and ground theory, as the final theory, establishes the arrangements of the entities through foregrounding and backgrounding in a certain scene. This theory enables the conceptualizers to easily mark the arrangements of figure and ground in a scene, that is, how to identify the observable entity and the base entity- supporting the observable entity. To be more specific, possessive constructions can be realized in CK through ezafe (-i)

and possessive clitics at phrase level and the verb 'heya' and the integration of copular verb at clause level. These constructions have some distinct features: the domain of both ezafe (-i) and possessive clitics is spatial and the instances are virtual not actual ones. However, the domain of the verb 'heya' involves temporal in addition to actual instances. Shifting trajector/landmark alignments is noticed from possessive clitics and ezafe (-i). Possessive at phrase level expresses a thing while possessive at clause level expresses a relationship. The decision of choosing one construction over the other is totally dependent on the conceptualizer and the context and this verifies the process of subjectification and vantage point.

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