

# Bare noun in Modern Armenian

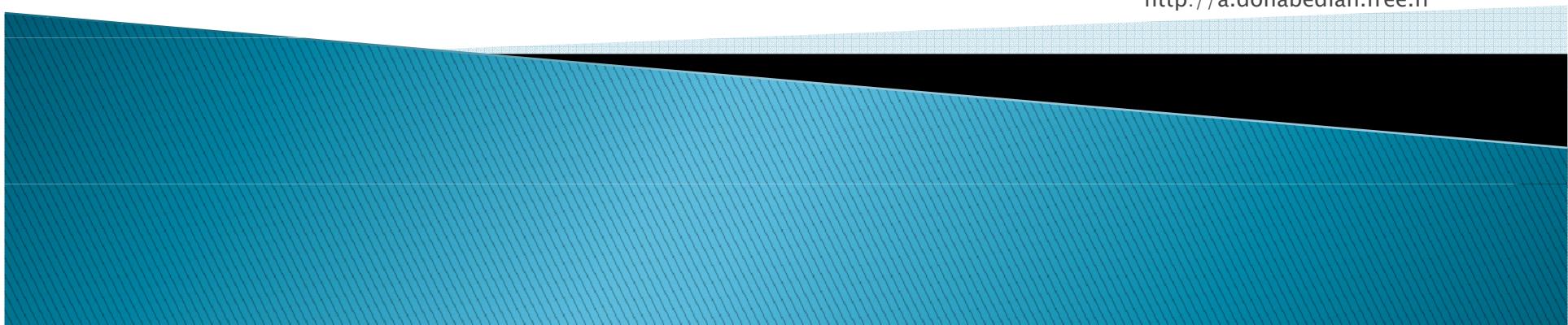
## Perspectives for Areal Typology

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# Introduction

Standard Modern Armenian (SMA) :

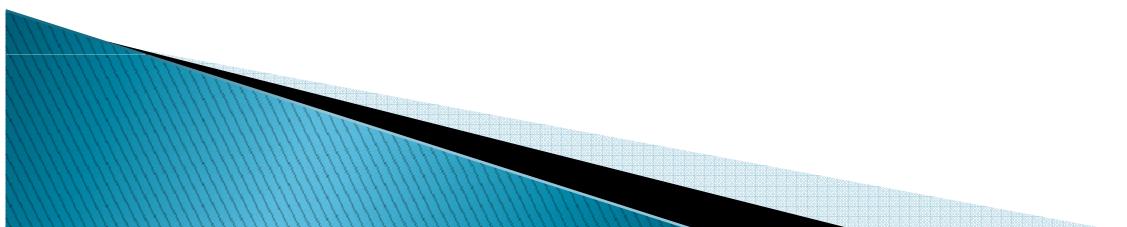
- ▶ i-e inherited features
- ▶ features from the Caucasus/Iran/Anatolia (CIA)

The scope of this paper is to study paralelly some sets of features, well known in typology (word order, morphological type, gender), and the behaviour of bare noun in SMA

Hypothesis to be explored here :

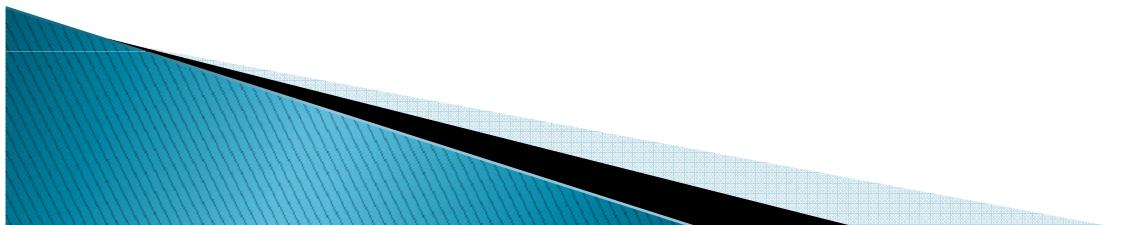
- ▶ This configuration is typologically highly congruent
- ▶ Bare noun behaviour in such a configuration is highly predictable
- ▶ Features examined here are widely spread in CIA area (although not equally consistently), but also in other SOV areas (Indian sprachbund)

Further perspectives : comparison of systems could allow to establish a scale of central/peripheral features beyond features described here, and could have high explanatory value concerning their convergence in languages of the area.



# 1. Typological properties of Armenian

- ▶ Meillet (1921) about Classical Armenian (CA):  
*l'arménien est, dans une large mesure, un parler indo-européen adopté par des populations de langue caucasique*  
(cf. Substratum interference Thomason&Kaufmann)  
Non-typical features for an i-e language :
  - ▶ Object differential marking by a preposition
  - ▶ Genitive subject of participe
  - ▶ Traces of agglutination in morphology
  - ▶ Weak agreement rules in NP



Word order in Modern A		Correlated pairs (cf. Dryer)	
1	Objet	Verbe	+
2	sujet	Verbe	+
3	syntagme nominal	Adposition	+
4	Prédicat	copule	+
5	syntagme verbal	auxiliaire ‘vouloir’	+ (pas exclusif)
6	syntagme verbal	auxiliaire de temps/aspect	+
7	syntagme verbal	auxiliaire négatif	+/-
8	Complétive	joncteur	- (+ dialecte)
9	Proposition	particule interrogative	- (+ dialecte)
10	subord. circonstancielle	subordonnant	- (+ dialecte)
11	N	article	+
12	N	mot pluralisant	+
13	Génitif	nom	+
14	Relative	nom	+ / -
15	complément du comparatif	adjectif comparatif	+
16	syntagme adpositionnel	verbe	+
17	adverbe de manière	verbe	+
Pairs non correlated to SOV order			
1	Adjectif	nom	+
2	Démonstratif	nom	+
3	Intensifieur	adjectif	+
4	particule négative	verbe	+
5	particule temps/aspect	verbe	+

# 1.1. A radically consistent WO

*Remark : SOV order, but informative structure changes are marked by word order + intonation, so all alternative orders are possible*

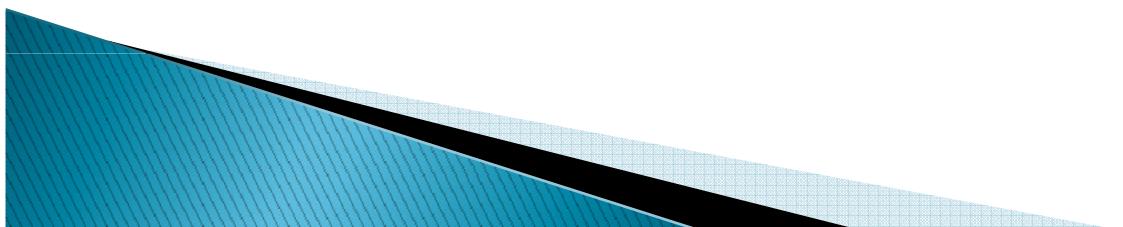
In this table, exceptions all concern embedded clauses. But they all have alternative (and WO consistent) structures :

- ▶ Widely spread participle constructions
- ▶ Cf. dialectal postponed conjunctions
  - hypothetic *ne* 'if' (*uzes ne* instead of *yet'e uzes*),
  - quotative ou final *deyi* (*uze deyi*);
- ▶ Colloquial Western SMA is more radical in this regard
  - progressive particle *gor*: *g'ude gor* 'he is eating',
  - indefinite article *mẽ* is postponed (=eastern *mi*)



# 1.2.Morphological type : strong tendency to agglutination and analyticism

- ▶ Noun morphology :
  - CA-like flexions are kept only in a limited number of nouns
  - Dominant model : LEXEME–Plur–Case–Article (+Postp)
- ▶ Verb morphology :
  - Tense/aspect/person still flexional
  - Valency marking (highly productive **passivization**, **causativization**, **inchoative derivation**, etc.) could be seen as agglutinative, but root selection (present/past) depends from verb class, what is not compatible with agglutination *stricto sensu*
  - Mood : mainly analytic forms (particles, auxiliary, etc.)



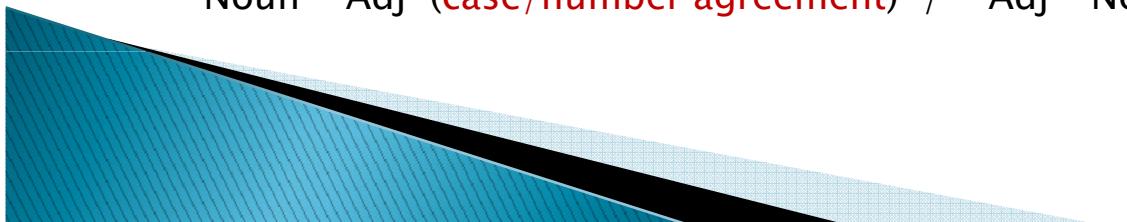
# 1.3. Noun categories : no gender in SMA (as well as in CA)

- ▶ Even no pronoun he / she (unic case in modern i-e languages)

Gender-like oppositions are motivated :

- ▶ Person +/−  
person − : *inch* ‘what’ VS person + : *ov* ‘who’
- ▶ Classifiers :
  - Yerku hogi enk’ ‘we are two’
  - yerku hat unim ‘I have two [pieces]’(but : k’ani zavak uni ? **yerku** / ? **yerku hat** / \* **yerku hogi**)
- ▶ There is no agreement class in Armenian  
Every marker in the NP is self-sufficient and may not be repeated.
- ▶ Diachrony :
  - Agreement disappear together with the rigidification of the word order. See CA tendency with concurrent word orders :

Noun – Adj (**case/number agreement**) / Adj – Noun (**no agreement**)

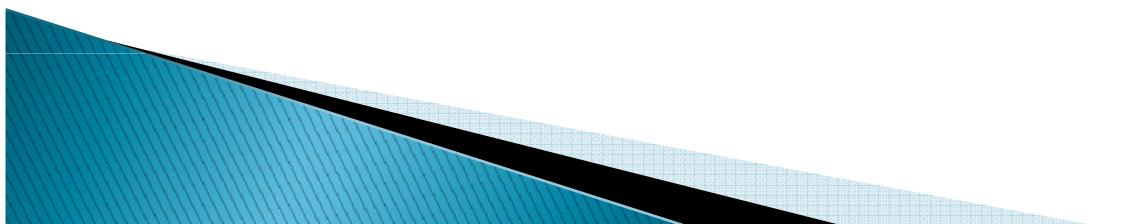


# 1.4. Weak difference between Noun and Adjective –

- No clearcut lexical and morphologic distinction between Noun and non-derivational Adjectives. *Adjective* is a bare nominal entity placed immediately before a referential noun (i.e defined by position properties rather than like a distributional class):

*karmir khnjor-ner-ē*  
red apple-PLUR-DEF  
'The red apples'

*karmir-ner-ē hamov ch'-en*  
Red-PLUR-DEF good NEG-be3PI  
'The read ones are not good'
- No agreement class (no gender)
  - NB : We can even postulate a lack of agreement in Armenian at all (see paper p. 9 for argumentation about difference between agreement and co-variancy)

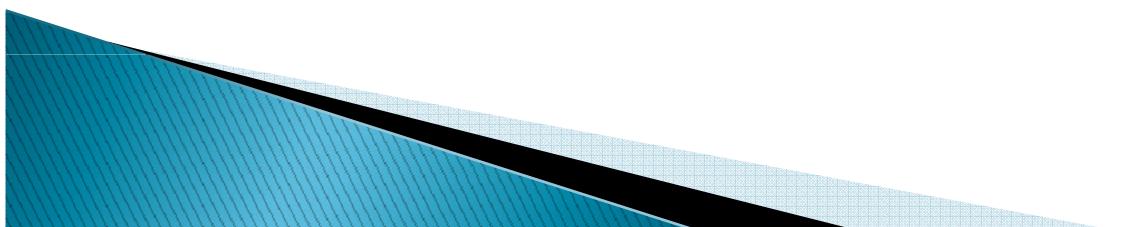


# 2.1. Bare noun in the system of SMA

Facilitating conditions in the system :

- ▶ For all regular (agglutinative) models, absolute form of N = bare noun  
khnjor = khnjor-Ø -Ø -Ø (number- case -indef)
- ▶ Nominative = Accusative = Ø  
(NB : object differential marking is still possible with dative under certain conditions, differing in Eastern and Western modern Armenian)
- ▶ Determination :
  - Definite article xnjor(-ner)-ë ‘the apple(s)’
  - Indefinite article xnjor më ‘an apple’ (mi xnjor)
  - Zero determination xnjor-ner ‘(some) apples’  
and (minimal determination degree)  
**xnjor-Ø ‘apple, (some) apples’ including partitive meaning**

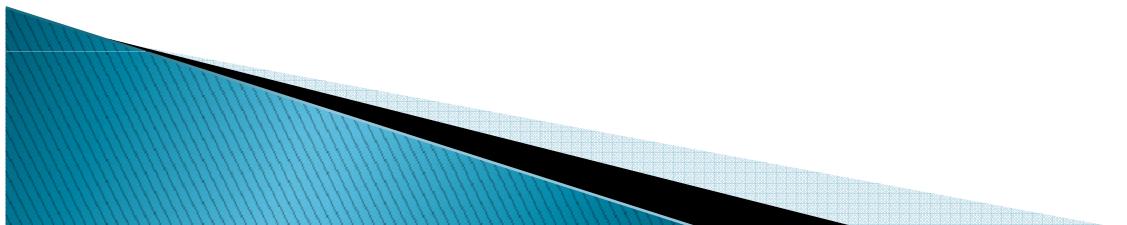
Lack of plural marker does not mean singular when without article (cf. Donabedian 1993), but some kind of non referential notion (qualitative and not quantitative according to Culioli).



## 2.2. Bare noun positions

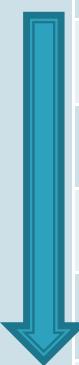
- ▶ Adjective-like noun : the bare noun is in the same slot as the adjective or the genitive determinant.
  - *Varpet dasakhos* teacher (who is a real) master ; *Avazak khanutpan* thief shop-owner
- ▶ Bare object : the most frequent
  - *Xnjor caxel, namak grel*  
apple sell-inf, letter write-inf ‘to sell apples’ (to be an apple seller); to write letter(s)
  - *Zavak uni*  
child have-pst3sg ‘she have child(ren)= she is a mother
- OV = activity or property. O is a semantic specifier of V, not an autonomous participant.
- ▶ Bare subject : (more rarely) (cf. Donabedian Typschool 2005)  
In specific semantic clause types (existential, apparition, meteorological, passive, **thetic**;
  - *Anjrew ku ga* ‘rain comes’ ; *ashakert ka* ‘there is/are student(s)’.

Bare subject is not a segmented *theme*, it is bounded with the verb inside the *rheme*.  
**Again bare noun is not an autonomous participant and is not quantified**



## 2.3. Bare noun and adjective : from formal to functional and semantic analogy

Qlt-Qnt continuum (cf. A. Culoli : Qnt and Qlt as two potentialities for the noun)			
Not argumental (not participant)	Adjective (predicate or determinant)	Qlt	(= not quantified, pure notion applied to a referential noun)
	Bare noun (predicate or determinant)	Qlt	
Argumental (participant)	Bare subject or object	Qlt+ Qnt-	(referential noun)
	Determined subject or object	Qlt Qnt	

Autonomy continuum			
	Not bare noun (subject or object)	<i>Tun-ë kë shine</i>	'He built his house'
	Bare object of a typically dynamical verb	<i>Tun kë shine</i>	'he built houses'
	Bare object of stative verb ( <i>to have</i> )	<i>Tun uni</i>	'he has a house'
	Bare subjects of existential or apparition verb	<i>Tun kay?</i>	'is there any house'
	Predicative bare noun or adjective	<i>Vartanë hognats e/bzhishk e</i>	'Vartan is tired/is a doctor'
	Compound forms of the verb	<i>Vartanë yekac/yeker e</i>	'Vartan has come pft/evid.'

# 3. Conclusions and perspectives

- ▶ Convergence of *harmonic* typological features in SMA :
  - SOV – Da/Dé (mainly an innovation)
  - Agglutination (+ direct case = bare root) (mainly an innovation)
  - Lack of gender (as in classical armenian)
  - Weak opposition between noun and adjective (mainly an innovation)
- ▶ Excepting lack of gender (already in CA), all of them are in CA as marginal phenomena (traces of substrat ?), allowing further typological switch by contact – see paper p. 10 for arguments against simple influence of Turkish)
- ▶ All these features are very widespread among Caucasus/Iran/Anatolia area, but not only (see Indian area).
- ▶ Hypothesis : this set of features is **highly diffusable** (cf. Aikhenvald about Evidentiality, or Enfield about *Linguistic epidemiology*) but not ridigly correlated (see p. 11).
- ▶ An areal map of these features would help to understand how they are correlated (is there any hierarchy among them), and possibly to reveal other features facilitating or disturbing such a configuration.



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