This study proposes that the Central Kurdish nominal phrase contains two DP layers, with one containing – and the other being contained by – the projection of Number (NumP). It argues that two markers of definiteness are realized in the nominal phrase, -eke (1a) and –e (1b).

(1) a. esp-eke b. em esp-e
horse-DEF ‘the horse’ this horse-DEF ‘this horse’

I argue that –eke realizes a different D, lower than the D spelled out by -e. The clearest syntactic evidence substantiating the two-DP-layer analysis is that the two Ds occur on different sides of Number.

(3) a. ew esp-an-e b. esp-ek-an
that horse-PL-DEF ‘those horses’ horse-DEF-PL ‘the horses’

Semantically, the featural make-up of the two D categories is different: –e is arguably the spell-out of a D that merely bears specificity, while – eke realizes a D carrying definiteness proper, comprising both specificity and uniqueness. Here, definiteness is defined as the grammaticalization of specificity and uniqueness (See Enç 1991 and Lyons 1999).

Adopting Chomsky’s (1995) Minimalist bottom-up derivational theory, the nominal phrases in (3a and 3b) are assumed to derive as shown in (4a and 4b), respectively.

(4) a. [DP [NumP [NP ew esp]i –an tì]k –e tk]
   b. [NumP [DP espi [DP -eke tì]]k -an tk]

Accordingly, two structurally different DP projections occur in the Central Kurdish nominal phrase, with the projection of Number (NumP) intermediate between them.