

დამაბალანსებელი ფაქტორის გათვალისწინებით კი, შედეგები 8111-დან 16790-მდე იზრდება, რაც იმას ნიშნავს, რომ სიხშირე გაიზარდა 48%-ით.

ჩვენი ვარაუდით, განუსაზღვრელობა ყოველთვის იყო ქართული ენისათვის შინაგანად განპირობებული კატეგორია, განსაზღვრელობა კი არა. განუსაზღვრელობის კატეგორია ყოველთვის იყო წარმოდგენილი ნაცვალსახელებით რადმე და ვინმე, მაშინ როდესაც ჩვენებით ნაცვალსახელებს სჭირდებოდათ დამატებითი სინტაქსური მახასიათებელი: პრეპოზიციურად გამოყენებულნი, ისინი ფუნქციონირებენ, როგორც ჩვენებითი ნაცვალსახელები, პოსტპოზიციურად გამოყენებულნი კი - როგორც არტიკლი.

## A Diachronic Analysis of Definiteness in Georgian Based on the GNC<sup>1</sup>

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The Georgian language can look back on an uninterrupted written tradition of more than 1500 years (the oldest written evidence are inscriptions from the 5th century CE), it is ideal for diachronic analyses. A distinction is usually made between an Old Georgian (approx. 5<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century), a Middle Georgian (approx. 12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century) and a Modern Georgian period (since the 18<sup>th</sup> century). The topic of definiteness and its representatives, especially articles, is counted among the most interesting research areas. These definite articles, which were mostly present and functional in Old Georgian, are identical to demonstratives aside some morphosyntactic and typological changes, e.g. 1. as an article, Old Georgian mostly uses the demonstrative pronoun *igi* (3<sup>rd</sup>-level deictic) but the other demonstratives appear in this function, too (though much less frequently than *igi*); 2. when placed postnominal, they function as definite articles; in prenominal placement, they maintain their function as demonstratives; 3. articles mostly take the second position (also called Wackernagel position) in the NP (which can be simultaneously the last position if the NP consists only of a noun and an article); 4. within an NP in the nominative, if the head of the article is marked for plural, the article typically stays in the singular. Nonetheless, a few examples with the head and article agreeing in the plural can be found (from the 10th century):

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<sup>1</sup> This publication is part of a project that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the **European Union's Horizon 2020** research and innovation programme (Grant agreement No. 101019006).



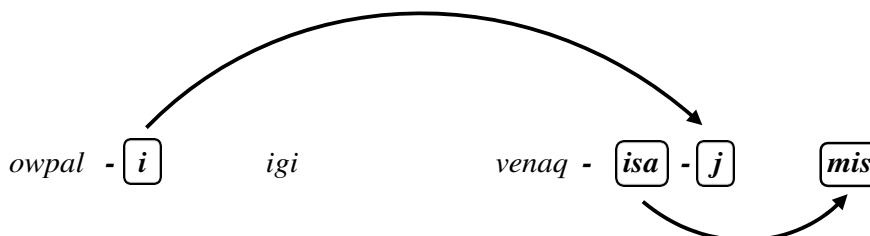


Figure 2

Thus, formulating the last feature of definite articles in Old Georgian: within an NP, where the article takes the last position, it is the last non-clitic element of the NP that receives the *suffixaufnahme*, and the article following it, receives only adnominal case marking.

Demonstratives in Middle Georgian differ in the same way as in Old Georgian when it comes to their placement: prenominally placed, they function as demonstratives, postnominally as articles. However, a drastic change is noticeable in the frequency of definite articles: the NP structure [QUANTIFIER + ARTICLE + NOUN; e.g. *qovelni igi sitquani* ‘all the words (NOM.PL)’], which is quite frequent in Old Georgian with 1,269 examples, decreases in Middle Georgian to 11 examples (Middle Georgian and Law texts subcorpora). This significant decrease could be explained with the loss of the definite article, which firstly appeared in biblical texts and other translations in Old Georgian but lost its grammatical function in Middle Georgian because it was not a “natural” component of the Georgian language. This presupposes that the article in Old Georgian emerged with the translations, for which it was needed: when the translators saw that the biblical texts of Ancient Greek had a definite article and intended their translations to be accurate (word-by-word), an element was needed that fulfilled the same function in Old Georgian, and no element was closer to that than the demonstrative pronoun. If the article in Old Georgian first appeared in translations, it may have remained limited to the written language, whereas Middle Georgian reflects the spoken language which had no article. It is true that this assumption remains hypothetical; for concrete proof separate research would have to be performed.

For a concrete analysis, I searched in the Old and Middle Georgian (including the subcorpus of Law texts) for the very simple type of NPs consisting of [N<sub>case</sub> + ART<sub>case</sub>]: the Old Georgian subcorpus shows 61,689 hits for the NP structure [N<sub>case</sub> + ART<sub>case</sub>] while the same NP structure is reduced to 627 hits in Middle Georgian and to 1,832 hits in the subcorpus for Law texts. Of course, the size of the subcorpora must be considered here: while the Old Georgian subcorpus comprises 6,062,122 tokens, the Middle Georgian subcorpus has not even a quarter of that amount (1,432,262 tokens), and the same is true for the subcorpus of Law texts (1,495,985 tokens). Thus, **the balancing factor 2.07** (the size of the Old Georgian subcorpus divided by the size of the Middle Georgian subcorpus plus that of the Law texts;  $6,062,122 / 2,928,247 = 2.07$ ) must be applied. The resulting relation is illustrated below:

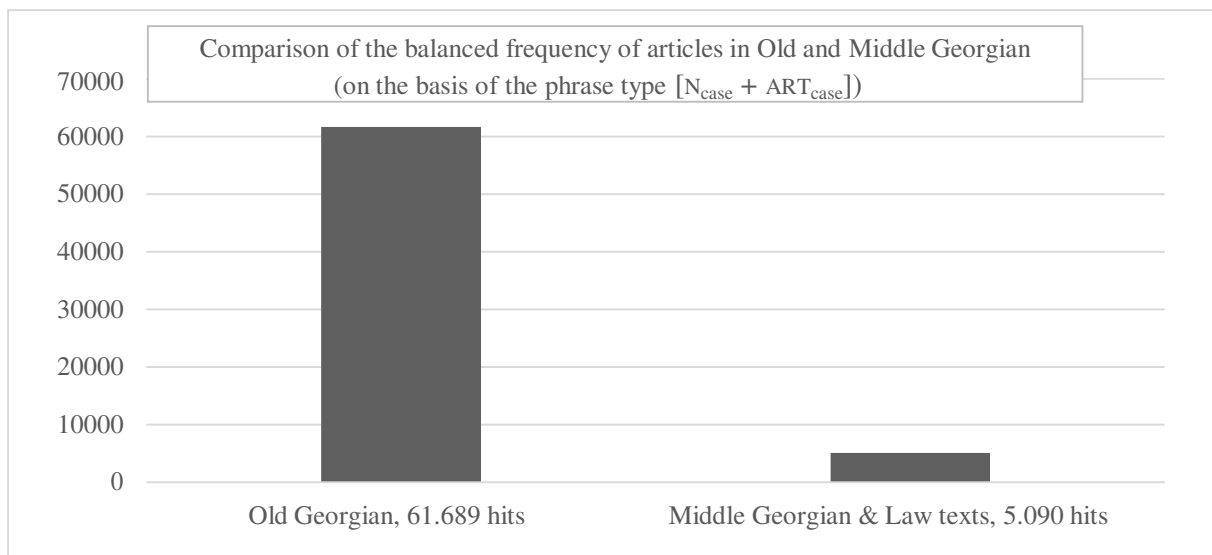


Figure 3 (Kamarauli 2022: 51)

Even if the results from Middle Georgian and Law texts subcorpora are multiplied with the balancing factor of 2.07, the decrease of the prototypical phrase  $[N_{\text{case}} + \text{ART}_{\text{case}}]$  is still at over 91% – and thus simply too radical if the article had been a “natural” and original component of the Georgian language.

In contrast to definite articles, the frequency of indefinite article (postpositioned numeral *erti* ‘one (NOM.SG)’) and indefinite pronouns (*ra(j)me* ‘something (NOM.SG)’, *vinme* ‘someone (NOM.SG)’) increased:

- the frequency of the numeral *erti* functioning as an indefinite article in simple NPs  $[N_{\text{case}} + \text{erti}_{\text{case}}]$  in the Old Georgian subcorpus amounts to 2,492 hits (absolute frequency), while the results from the Middle Georgian and Law texts subcorpora amount to 1,647 hits (absolute frequency) → after applying the balancing factor, the frequency of the indefinite article increased by over 36% (relative frequency in Middle Georgian: 3,409 hits);
- While the indefinite pronouns *vinme* ‘someone (NOM.SG)’ and *rame* ‘something (NOM.SG)’ with their declined forms appear 11,315 times in the Old Georgian subcorpus, the frequency dropped to 8,111 (absolute frequency) in the Middle Georgian and Law texts subcorpora (combined) – with the balancing factor, the results change from 8,111 hits to 16,790, which means that the frequency increased by 48% (the increase of the indefinite pronouns can be explained by the grammaticalized forms *vinme* and *rame* and their declension).

In my opinion, indefiniteness has always been an inherent category of the Georgian language while definiteness has not. The category of indefiniteness has always been represented by *ra(j)me* ‘something (NOM.SG)’, *vinme* ‘someone (NOM.SG)’, while the demonstrative pronouns *ese/ege/igi* needed a special syntactic feature (being placed postnominally) for their additional functions as definite article.