

DIGOR-OSSETIC DEFINITE PARTICLE *i*

In Digor-Ossetic definiteness can be expressed by the definite particle *i* to emphasize the noun or to prevent ambiguity and misunderstanding. Bailey (1946: 46) reconstructs the particle as Proto-Iranian relative pronoun **ya-*. The definite particle is described by Erschler as “optional and very rare in discourse and written texts” (2019: 9).

(1) Digor
[...] 'ma ibæł ni-ccijnæ 'j i xuarz læg [...]
CONJ CL.3SG.ADES PV-happiness COP.3SG.PRS DEF.PTCL good man
“[...] and **the good man** was happy by this [...]” (mlæw)

In Iron-Ossetic this definite particle was lost. Definiteness in an “accentual complex” (Testen 1997: 729-730) could be expressed by an accent movement onto the preceding syllable, since the lost definite particle *i* would make up the first syllable in this case and thus a new accent arrangement would be necessary.

The loss of *i* in Iron-Ossetic and its preservation in Digor-Ossetic can be observed on regular basis. For instance did Iron-Ossetic lose the initial unaccentuated short *i-* which is still existent in Digor-Ossetic and which is reconstructed as **vi-* by Bailey (1945) and Bielmeier (1977).

In my presentation I will talk about the usage of the definite particle *i* in written and spoken language and discuss the possible development that lead to its loss in Iron-Ossetic. Furthermore, I wish to give a first insight into the observations I made while evaluating the data from my research stay in North Ossetia-Alania.

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