

## Early articles in Archi

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The use of the numeral ‘one’ for introduction of a new character and the use of deictic pronouns in anaphorical – reference tracking – function is typologically extremely common. However, this use is traditionally judged to be grammatical only after it becomes obligatory. Typically, this includes alternative use of definite and indefinite articles, the use of zero articles (e.g. plural indefinite in French) and sometimes also formal specification of the markers (e.g. French definite, English definite and indefinite, Armenian indefinite articles). Important is whether the speaker has to choose one of the patterns, i.e. the obligatoriness is understood in the Jakobsonian, late structuralist sense. It is obvious, however, that in the functionalist, grammaticalization paradigm nothing becomes obligatory in one day. Acquiring obligatoriness means a gradual shift in ditributional properties.

In Archi, a Lezgetic language of Central Daghestan, the use of the numeral *os* ‘one’ and of the demonstrative *tu-CL* ‘this’ in many contexts reminds of the indefinite and definite articles. However, these elements obviously do not qualify as articles, because they are far from being obligatory. ‘One’ is on its way into indefiniteness from the itroductive function, where it is used quite consistently, while ‘this’ is often but far from obligatorily used in non-deictic contexts. In this paper, I will consider the ‘early articles’ of Archi from several distributional points of view, including functional distribution (showing that ‘one’ is limited to introductory function and ‘this’ seems to develop into an Armenian type of article, combining with proper names), general frequency counts in the corpus (as compared to paradigmatically similar elements of Archi and articles and demonstratives in other languages) and specific counts in the contexts where the articles might be expected to determine their contextual obligatoriness.