

Grammaticalization of the Definite Article in Armenian

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Abstract The Classical Armenian definite article system is unusual for Indo-European, but paralleled in prehistoric common Kartvelian. It may represent an intermediate stage in grammaticalization between demonstratives and definite articles. The Kartvelian articles progressed further down the path of grammaticalization, becoming markers of argument status, and eventually being incorporated into the case system. It has been suggested that the modern Armenian definite article has also progressed further than the stage of definiteness marking, becoming a marker of specificity, but in fact, its non-definite uses are better described as associated with nominalisation, and in particular with core argument status, than with specificity.

Keywords Armenian. Indo-European. Kartvelian. Language Contact. Definite article. Definiteness. Specificity. Grammaticalization.

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1 Introduction

The grammaticalization of definite articles from demonstratives is a cross-linguistically common process, which is said to have occurred separately in various branches of Indo-European. The Classical Armenian definite article system seems to be unique in old Indo-European, and has been described by Vaux (1994-95) as an intermediate stage of grammaticalization between demonstrative and definite article. A similar system is proposed to have existed in prehistoric common Kartvelian (Harris 1985), so it is possible that language contact in prehistoric times could have played a role in this development.¹ The common Kartvelian definite articles were eventually lost, but before their loss, they seem to have developed into markers of argument status, which were ultimately incorporated into the case system. This type of process, whereby demonstratives are grammaticalised into definite articles, which are ultimately further grammaticalised so that they lose their association with definiteness and become purely functional elements such as noun markers or case markers, is cross-linguistically common, and was first identified by Greenberg (1978). The modern Armenian definite article, which developed from the distal form of Classical Armenian, has also been suggested to have progressed somewhat further down the path of grammaticalization than the stage of pure definite article. Sigler (1996) describes it as a marker of specificity, representing stage III on Greenberg's (1978) grammaticalization pathway. However, closer investigation of the data reveals that, while it is still used to mark definiteness in all the main functions identified by Lyons (1999), it cannot be straightforwardly described as a marker of specificity. It does, however, have some uses that are associated neither with definiteness nor specificity, but can be described as marking argument status, showing restrictions on appearing with particular case forms. Thus it appears to be following a pathway similar to that taken by the prehistoric common Kartvelian articles.

¹ For discussion of the possibility of Kartvelian influence on the early development of Armenian, see e.g. Schmidt 1992; Gippert 2005; Aslanov 2018. The close similarity of the consonant system of Armenian to that of Kartvelian and the loss of IE contrastive vowel length and grammatical gender are features that have been linked to this influence. There are few confirmed ancient lexical borrowings from Kartvelian into Armenian, but Thorsø (in this volume) presents possible examples of early borrowings from Armenian into Kartvelian. Note that in cases of substrate influence, it is common to find structural influence (phonological and syntactic, sometimes also morphological) without extensive lexical borrowing, as, for example, in the case of Dravidian influence on Sanskrit (see e.g. Thomason, Kaufman 1988).

2 Definite Articles in Classical Armenian

Proto-Indo-European is thought to have lacked a definite article, with those found in daughter languages resulting from separate developments from demonstrative elements. Classical Armenian had an unusual system, whereby the article, which was enclitic on the noun, showed a three-way deictic distinction parallel to the system of demonstratives (see also the paper by Aghababian in this volume):

(1)	այր-ս	այր-դ	այր-ն
	ayr-s	ayr-d	ayr-n
	‘the man [close to the speaker]’	‘the man [close to the addressee]’	‘the man [close to neither]’

Vaux (1994-95, 21) proposes that this situation represents an intermediate stage in the development from demonstratives to definite articles.

There was also a parallel series of demonstrative pronouns, formed with these same ‘deictic suffixes’ and a demonstrative stem *ay-* (2), as well as a number of other deictic adverbs which showcase the same tripartite distinction:

(2)	այս	այդ	այն
	ays	ayd	ayn
	proximal	medial	distal

The Classical Armenian article system is quite different from those that are found in Greek or Semitic, where the article does not have deictic distinctions. In Greek, Classical Arabic, and Biblical Hebrew, the article precedes the noun, although in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires, therefore presumably the main written language used by Armenians before the 5th century AD, it was a suffix (Doron, Khan 2015, 46). Hurrian and its later relative Urartian, which were most probably in contact with pre-Classical Armenian (see e.g. Greppin, Diakonoff 1991), also had a suffixal article, although this, too, lacks the deictic distinction we find in Armenian, and it precedes case endings, rather than following them, as in Armenian:

(3)	<i>tiwē-na-še</i>
	object-ART-GEN.PL
	‘of the objects’.
	Hurrian

(Wegner 2000, 54-5)

- (4) *Argište-šə Menua-ḫi-ne-šə*
'Argišti (ergative), son of Menua (ergative)'.
Urartian (Wilhelm 2008, 112)

3 Definite Articles in Kartvelian

Although the modern Kartvelian languages lack a definite article, it is proposed that prehistoric common Kartvelian had a very similar system to that of Armenian, traces of which can be seen in the case-marking systems of the modern languages (Harris 1985). It is thus possible that contact with prehistoric Kartvelian could have played a role in the development of the Classical Armenian system. Georgian case endings have two forms, a 'bare' form, and an 'articulated' form, which consists of the bare form plus an additional element, which is thought to derive from the bare form plus the old definite article, distal *-i* or proximal *-a*: *-i* is associated with a "deictic prefix *i-* [...] reconstructed for the remote demonstrative in [Common Kartvelian]" (Harris 1985, 77), *-a* is identified with "the deictic prefix of the proximal article, *-a*" (Harris 1985, 84):

(5)	Bare	Articulated	
NOM	<i>ḳac</i> 'man'	<i>ḳac-i</i>	(Harris 1985, 80)
DAT	<i>ḳac-s</i>	<i>ḳac-s-a</i>	
GEN	<i>ḳac-is</i>	<i>ḳac-is-a</i>	(Harris 1985, 84)
INS	<i>-it</i>	<i>-it-a/-it-i</i>	(Harris 1985, 86)

The narrative (ergative) articulated form *-man* is proposed to have been the narrative case of the distal demonstrative/article, while *-i* is derived from its nominative form. The non-articulated narrative is unmarked, like the non-articulated nominative (Harris 1985, 83).

Although there is some variation as different forms have been generalised to different extents, the basic generalisation is that the 'articulated' forms are used for core arguments such as subjects and objects (except for inherently definite elements such as proper names and pronouns, which cross-linguistically often do not receive the definite article), while the 'non-articulated' forms are found in adverbial expressions such as time and location, compounds, incorporated objects etc. (Harris 1985, 80-5).

Old Georgian, like Armenian, developed independent demonstrative pronouns based on the same deictic elements proposed to have been found in the old article:

(6)	Proximal <i>ese</i>	Medial <i>ege</i>	Distal <i>igi</i>
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As in Classical Armenian, these could either follow or precede the noun:

(7)	<i>այն</i> <i>ayn</i> <i>igi</i> DEM3	<i>այր-ն</i> <i>ayr-n</i> <i>կաւ-ի</i> man
	<i>այր-ն</i> <i>ayr-n</i> <i>կաւ-ի</i> man	<i>այն</i> <i>ayn</i> <i>igi</i> DEM3

After the old articles had ceased to be used as such (as we can see, in Old Georgian the supposed old distal article has become a case ending), the same grammatical process begins to repeat itself, as the postposed forms of the demonstrative begin to be used as definite articles in Old Georgian:

(8)	<i>igi</i> DEM3 'that man'	<i>կաւ-ի</i> man-NOM	<i>կաւ-ի</i> man-NOM 'the man'	<i>igi</i> DEF
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(Harris 1985, 77)

Thus we have a system of postposed definite articles with a three-way deictic distinction, directly parallel to that of Classical Armenian:

(9)	<i>կաւ-ի ւսե</i> <i>այր-ն</i> <i>այր-ս</i> man DEF.PROX	<i>կաւ-ի ւսե</i> <i>այր-ն</i> <i>այր-տ</i> man DEF.MED	<i>կաւ-ի ւսի</i> <i>այր-ն</i> <i>այր-ն</i> man DEF.DIST
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However, these articles gradually became less obligatory, and died out around the 12th century. Harris (1985, 78) proposes that before they disappeared, they had developed from markers of definiteness to markers of specificity:

(10)	<i>նաւս</i> boat.DAT	<i>մաս</i> ART
	'into a (certain) boat'.	

5.2 Personal Article

In modern Armenian, the proximal and medial articles have become associated with first and second person respectively. They may be used to mark person on nouns or adjectives. This usage is also found with the old distal article, in addition to its usage as a true definite article:

(12)	1SG	1PL
	որդի-ս	ամենք-ս
	<i>ordi-s</i>	<i>amenk'-s</i>
	'I, the son'	'all of us'
	2SG	2PL
	որդի-դ	ամենք-դ
	<i>ordi-d</i>	<i>amenk'-d</i>
	'you, the son'	'all of you'
	3SG	3PL
	որդի-ն	ամենք-ն
	<i>ordi-n</i>	<i>amenk'-n</i>
	'he, the son'	'all of them'

According to Petrosyan (1976), this usage was quite widespread in Classical Armenian. It is still current in modern Armenian, though not particularly frequent. Ačar'yan (1952, 183-4) suggests that the link between the originally essentially spatial deictic distinction and person, which gave rise to the 'personal article' use, was reinforced by a) the use of the distal demonstrative as a third-person personal pronoun, and b) the fact that the proximal and medial forms coincidentally share the same consonant with the first and second person singular personal pronouns *es* and *du*.

The main usage of these 'personal articles' in modern Armenian is to denote a possessor:

(13)	որդի-ս	որդի-դ	որդի-ն
	<i>ordi-s</i>	<i>ordi-d</i>	<i>ordi-n</i>
	'my son'	'your son'	'his/her son' (or 'the son')

A unique development of the ‘personal article’ is found in Khoy dialect, where it may attach to verbs and function as an object clitic:

- (14) *əmnor t'p'el=i=s*
 every.day beat.IPT*=3SG.PRS=ART1
 ‘s/he beats me every day’.
 * IPT = imperfective participle (անկատար դերբայ)
 PPT = past participle (վաղակատար դերբայ)
 RPT = resultative participle (հարակատար դերբայ)

- (15) *oroxkec'-əs üres tun-ə*
 send.3SG.AOR=ART1 3PL.GEN house.DEF
 ‘s/he sent me to their house’.

- (16) *yür i oroxkeli=t*
 where be.3SG.PRS send.IPT=ART2
 ‘Where is s/he sending you?’

(Asatryan 1962, 136)

Ačaryan (1911, 284) proposes that the influence of Persian object clitics (e.g. *didem-et* ‘I saw you’) played a role here:

- (17) (a) POSSESSOR
barādar=at
 brother=2S
 ‘your brother’.
- (b) DO
mī-bīnam=at
 ind-see.PRS.1S=2S
 ‘I see you’.
- (c) IO
goftam=at
 say.PST.1S=2S
 ‘I told you’.

(Khan 2019, 393)

A similar situation, with multifunctional clitics used for both possessor and object, is found in other languages of North-Western Iran, including Talyshi, Sorani-Mukri, and (only for certain verb forms) some dialects of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (Stilo, Noorlander 2015, 474; Khan 2019, 393). It seems likely that the use of the ‘possessive article’ cliticised on the verb to express a direct object in Khoy dialect is an example of borrowing this pattern of usage, i.e. extending the

functions of the Armenian possessive clitics to match the scope of functions of the equivalent form in the bi/multilingual speaker's other language(s).

In the standard modern Armenian languages, these 'possessive articles' could be described in more general terms as genitive clitics, as they are used to express other kinds of genitive elements than just possessors, for example, postpositional object:

- | | | | | |
|------|-----|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| (18) | (a) | իմ հետ | քո հետ | նրա հետ |
| | | <i>im het</i> | <i>k'o het</i> | <i>nra het*</i> |
| | | 1SG.GEN with | 2SG.GEN with | 3SG.GEN with |
| | (b) | հետ-ու | հետ-դ | հետ-ը |
| | | <i>het-s</i> | <i>het-d</i> | <i>het-ə**</i> |
| | | with-ART1 | with-ART2 | with-ART3 |
| | | 'with me' | 'with you' | 'with him/her/it' |

* Note that 1st and 2nd person objects of many postpositions appear in the literary language with dative case, but in some dialects, including the spoken language of Erevan, they generally appear in genitive case, like 3rd person.

** The '3rd person' article in Classical Armenian always has the form *-n*, as seen, for example, in (1), but in modern Armenian its equivalent takes the form *-ə* when preceded by a consonant and not followed by a vowel.

This also applies to the genitive subjects of participial verb forms:

- | | | | | |
|------|-----|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| (19) | (a) | իմ | կարդացած | գիրքը/ու |
| | | <i>im</i> | <i>kardac'ac</i> | <i>girk'-ə/s</i> |
| | | 1SG.GEN | read.RPT | book-DEF/ART1 |
| | (b) | կարդացած | գիրք-ու | |
| | | <i>kardac'ac</i> | <i>girk'-s</i> | |
| | | read.RPT | book-ART1 | |
| | | 'The book I read'. | | |

In Standard Western Armenian (WA), 1st and 2nd person possessive pronouns must be accompanied by the appropriate possessive clitic on the possessed noun, as in (20a). In Standard Eastern Armenian (SEA) this is not obligatory; the ordinary definite article (originally the distal/3rd person article) may be used instead, as in (20b):²

² As Bert Vaux (personal communication) points out, the form with the ordinary definite article is preferred in SEA (EANC has 610 examples of *im tun-ə* vs 54 examples of *im tun-s*).

- (20) (a) իմ տուն-ս
im tun-s
 1SG.GEN house-ART1
- (b) իմ տուն-ը
im tun-ə
 1SG.GEN house-DEF

5.3 Definite Article

5.3.1 Article as Definiteness Marker

5.3.1.1 General Overview

This usage developed from the Classical Armenian deictic article use described in section 2. Petrosyan (1976, 31) notes that in Classical Armenian, the personal function of the *-n* article, as opposed to the *-s* and *-d* articles, was weak, while the deictic function was dominant. This led to the emergence of the *-n* article as a definite article in the post-classical period, while *-s* and *-d* were eventually confined to personal/possessive use. Lyons (1999, 28) describes grammatical definiteness as essentially the grammaticalization of the pragmatic property of *identifiability*, i.e. that the addressee is assumed by the speaker to be able to identify the referent. He divides the various uses of definite articles into three main groups (Lyons 1999, 158), here presented with examples from modern Eastern Armenian (EA).

5.3.1.2 Main Uses of Definite Articles

a) Anaphoric, in which the context in which the referent is to be identified is linguistic, i.e. the discourse:

- (21) Մեր շենքում ապրում է մի
Mer šenk'-um aprum ē mi
 1PL.GEN building-LOC live.IPT be.3SG.PRS one
 ոստիկան և մի ուսուցիչ: Ուսուցիչը
ostikan ew mi usuc'ič'-ə Usuc'ič'-ə
 policeman and one teacher Teacher-DEF
 դիմացի դպրոցում է աշխատում:
dimac'-i dproc'um ē ašxatum.
 opposite-GEN school-LOC be.3SG.PRES work.IPT
 'In our building live a policeman and a teacher. The teacher works at the school opposite'.

This also includes *cataphoric* uses, where the referent may be introduced into the discourse following, rather than preceding, the definite expression, as in the case of the relative clause below:

- (22) (այն) աղջիկը, որը սիրում է ինձ
 (ayn) aljik-ə, vor-ə sirum ē inj
 DEM3 girl-DEF which-DEF love.IPT be.3SG.PRS 1SG.DAT
 ‘the girl who loves me’.

b) Situational, in which the referent is to be identified in the physical situation:

- (23) Դուռը փակիր:
Dur-ə p'akir.
 door-DEF close.2SG.IMP
 ‘Close the door’.

c) General knowledge, in which the addressee is assumed to be able to identify the referent using general background knowledge not necessarily related to the discourse:

- (24) Արևը փայլում է:
Arew-ə p'aylum ē.
 sun-DEF shine.IPT be.3SG.PRS
 ‘The sun is shining’.

Lyons also identifies a fourth group:

d) Associative definites, in which a combination of anaphoric and general knowledge information is used to identify the referent:

- (25) Մենք կարող ենք ծորակը բաց
 Menk' karot enk' corak-ə bac'
 1PL.NOM able be.1PL.PRS tap-DEF open
 անել և ուղղակի ջուրը խմել:
 anel ew uttaki jur-ə xmel
 make.INF and just water-DEF drink.INF
 ‘We can turn on the tap and just drink the water’.

We identify the water as the water that comes out of the previously mentioned tap, based on our knowledge that water comes out of taps.

In a corpus of spoken Eastern Armenian texts collected by the author and discussed in Hodgson (2012), we find examples of use of the definite article in stories, for referents that have not been mentioned before:

(26)	իսկ	Հիսուսը	հանում	է	իր
	<i>isk</i>	<i>Hisus-ə</i>	<i>hanum</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>ir</i>
	and	Jesus-DEF	take.out.IPT	be.3SG.PRS	3SG.GEN
	գրպանից	թաշկինակը,	սրբում	է	իրա
	<i>grpan-ic'</i>	<i>t'aškinak-ə</i> ,	<i>srbum</i>	<i>ē</i>	<i>ira</i>
	pocket-ABL	handkerchief-DEF	wipe.IPT	be.3SG.PRS	3SG.GEN
	երեսը	էր	թաշկինակով		
	<i>eres-ə</i>	<i>ēd</i>	<i>t'aškinak-ov.</i>		
	face-DEF	DEM2	handkerchief-INS		

'and Jesus takes the handkerchief [not previously mentioned] out of his pocket, he wipes his face with that handkerchief'.

(27)	Նա	թողել	ա	թռչունին	և
	<i>Na</i>	<i>t'otel</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>t'ič'un-i-n,</i>	<i>ew</i>
	3SG.NOM	let.PPT	be.3SG.PRS	bird-DAT-DEF	and
	նա	գնացել	ա	բերել	ա
	<i>na</i>	<i>gnac'el</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>berel</i>	<i>a</i>
	3SG.NOM	go.PPT	be.3SG.PRS	bring.PPT	be.3SG.PRS
	հետը	տերևը			
	<i>het-ə</i>	<i>terew-ə</i>			
	with-ART3	leaf-DEF			

'He let the bird go, and it went and brought with it the leaf [not previously mentioned]'.

According to one consultant, the reason why these are definite is because they are such well-known stories that it is taken for granted that the hearer is familiar with the entity in question, so that these would be essentially general knowledge definites; she claimed that if the speaker was telling a new story, he would not use the definite article in these cases.

5.3.1.3 'Inherently Definite' Expressions

However, it is indeed the case that the definite article in modern Armenian is used in some instances where it would not be present in English, for example. One category of such uses involves expressions that could be described as 'inherently definite'. Languages possessing a definite article vary as to whether it is used for such expressions or not.

a) Proper nouns always take the definite article in literary EA, but not in Classical Armenian and some other dialects.

b) Personal pronouns generally do not take the definite article, with the possible exception of the third person *ink'ə*.

c) Demonstratives adjectives: *ays* (close to speaker), *ayd* (close to hearer, also often anaphoric), *ayn* (distal, also cataphoric use with heads of relative clauses) require the presence of the definite article on the noun they modify:

(28)	այս/ <i>ays</i> / DEM1	այդ/ <i>ayd</i> / DEM2	այն <i>ayn</i> DEM3	մարդը <i>mar-d'*(ə)</i> person-DEF
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'this/that person'.

d) Possessives

Lyons (1999) points out that semantically, possessives are not inherently definite. This is shown by the fact that in some languages, including Modern Greek, they can occur in indefinite expressions with the indefinite article:

(29)	<i>énas</i> a	<i>fílos</i> friend	<i>mu</i> my
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'a friend of mine'.

However, in some languages, including, according to Lyons (1999, 23, 130), Armenian, the possessive construction renders the possessed NP grammatically definite. Possessive pronouns must co-occur either with the definite article (a) or a possessive article (b):

(30)	(a)	իմ <i>im</i> 1SG.GEN 'my'	տունը <i>tun-ə</i> house-DEF house'
		քո <i>k'ə</i> 2SG.GEN 'your'	տունը <i>tun-ə</i> house-DEF house'
		նրա <i>nra</i> 3SG.GEN 'his/her'	տունը <i>tun-ə</i> house-DEF house'

(b)	(իմ)	տունս
	(im)	tun-s
	1SG.GEN	house-ART1
	‘my	house’
	(քո)	տունդ
	(k’o)	tun-d
	2SG.GEN	house-ART2
	‘your	house’
	(նրա)	տունը
	(nra)	tun-ə
	3SG.GEN	house-ART3/DEF
	‘his/her	house’

However, Lyons’s assertion (1999, 130) that possessives are inherently definite in Armenian is called into question, as although the article seems to be obligatory when the possessor is expressed by a pronoun, this is not inevitably the case when the possessor is a noun in the genitive:

(31)	Աշոտը	կատարեց	Արմենի	մեկ	այլ	խնդրանք
	Ašot-ə	katarec’	Armen-i	mek	ayl	xndrank’
	Ashot-DEF	carry.out.3SG.AOR	Armen-GEN	one	other	request
	‘Ashot carried out another request of Armen’s’.					

However, it is possible to use the article in such constructions:

(32)	Հունաստանի	կառավարությունը	համաձայնվել է	կատարել	
	Hunastan-i	kařavarut’yun-ə	hamajaynvel ē	katarel	
	Greece-GEN	government-DEF	agree.PPT	be.3SG.PRS	carry.out.INF
	եռյակի	մեկ	այլ	պահանջը	
	erjak-i	mek	ayl	pahanj-ə	
	troika-GEN	one	other	demand-DEF	
	‘The government of Greece has agreed to carry out another of the troika’s demands’.				

(33)	մեկ	այլ	խնդրանքը
	mek	ayl	xndrank’-d
	one	more	request-ART3
	‘another request of yours’.		

Also note that, unlike the Turkish agreement markers, which show some parallels with the Armenian ‘possessive articles’, the article is not obligatory after genitives used as modifiers (instead of adjectives) rather than possessives:

(34)	Սա	Հայաստանի	ծիրան	է:
	<i>Sa</i>	<i>Hayastan-i</i>	<i>ciran</i>	<i>ē.</i>
	DEM1	Armenia-GEN	apricot	be.3SG.PRS

‘These are/this is (an) Armenian apricot(s)’.

Thus the association with genitive marking and definite/possessive article has not been grammaticalised totally, unlike that of genitive marking and agreement markers in Turkish, where, if there is genitive marking on a modifier, the noun must have an agreement marker agreeing in person with the possessor (according to Haig [1998], the obligatory, ‘grammatical’ nature of this relationship is a fairly recent phenomenon in Turkish).

e) Generics

For generics, the definite article is sometimes present, sometimes not:

(35)	(a)	Գինին	համով	բան	է:
		<i>Gini-n</i>	<i>hamov</i>	<i>ban</i>	<i>ē.</i>
		Wine-DEF	tasty	thing	be.3SG.PRS

‘Wine is a tasty thing’. (Generic subject)

	(b)	Գինի	սիրում	եմ:
		<i>Gini</i>	<i>sirum</i>	<i>em.</i>
		Wine	like.IPT	be.1SG.PRS

‘I like wine’. (Generic object)

It appears to be more commonly used for generic subjects than for objects, implying that some issue of topicality may be at play.

f) NPs with *all*, *every*, *each* (approximating to universal quantifiers: a formal device indicating that the open sentence that follows is true of every member of the relevant universe of interpretation – the predication of a property or relation to every member of the relevant set of entities).

The quantifier *bolor* ‘all’ always co-occurs with the definite article, both when it is modifying a nominal and when it occurs independently:

- (36) **Բոլորը / բոլոր** **ներկաները** հիացան տեսնելով
Bolor-ə / bolor **nerka-ner-ə** *hiac'an* *tesnel-ov*
 all-DEF all present-PL-DEF admire.3PL.AOR see.INF-INS
 աղջկա պարելը
atjka *parel-ə*
 girl.GEN dance.INF-DEF
 'Everyone / all those present were enraptured seeing the girl's dancing'.

Nominals modified by the distributive quantifier *amen* 'every', unexpectedly, are usually indefinite:

- (37) Այս երկրում **ամեն** **մարդ** *իր*
Ays *erkr-um* **amen** **mard** *ir*
 DEM1 country-LOC every person 3SG.GEN
 արհեստն ունի:
arhest-n *uni*.
 craft-DEF have.3SG.PRS
 'In this country, every person has a (lit. his) craft/skill'.

- (38) Այստեղ **ամեն** (մի) տուն հին է:
Aystel **amen** (*mi*) **tun** *hin* *ē*.
 Here every one house old be.3SG.PRS
 'Here every house is old'.

It is interesting that in Modern Greek, too, the distributive quantifier *κάθε* 'every' is the only one of the expressions Lyons (1999) designates as semantically definite that does not necessarily take the definite article.

However, nouns modified by *amen* can also take the definite article, with no obvious difference in meaning:

- (39) Հայաստանն ունի տարբեր գավառներ, տարբեր մարզեր,
Hayastan-n *uni* *tarber* *gavar-ner,* *tarber* *marz-er,*
 Armenia-DEF have.3SG.PRS various region-PL various province-PL
 ինչպես նաև **ամեն** **մի** **երկիրը**:
inč'pes *naew* **amen** **mi** **erkir-ə**.
 like also every one country-DEF
 'Armenia has various regions, various provinces, like every country'.

Yurak'anč'yur 'each, every' can be definite or indefinite, with apparently no difference in meaning:

- (40) Մոլորակի յուրաքանչյուր երրորդ բնակիչ գործազուրկ է:
 Molorak-i **yurak'anč'yur errorđ bnakič'** gorcazurk ē.
 planet-DEF each third inhabitant unemployed be.3SG.PRS
 'Every third inhabitant of the planet is unemployed'.
<https://www.tert.am/am/news/2012/01/24/jobs/426491>
- (41) Հայաստանի յուրաքանչյուր երրորդ բնակիչն աղքատ
 Hayastan-i **yurak'anč'yur errorđ bnakič'-n** atk'at
 Armenia-GEN every third inhabitant-DEF poor
 է եղել:
 ē etel.
 be.3SG.PRS be.PPT
 'Every third inhabitant of Armenia has been poor'.
<https://bit.ly/3V2B9ME>

Sigler (1996, 137) notes that in Western Armenian, *amen* and *yurak'anč'yur* require the definite article with objects, and cannot co-occur with it on subjects. For EA, such restrictions do not seem to apply: see the previous two examples for subjects, and for objects too it appears to be similarly optional:

- (42) Այս թաղամասում թափառող ամեն/ յուրաքանչյուր
 Ays t'atamas-um t'ap'arot **amen/ yurak'anč'yur**
 DEM1 neighbourhood-LOC wander.SPT every/ each
 շան(ը) կերակրում են:
 šan(-ə) kerakrum em.
 dog.DAT-DEF feed.IPT be.1SG.PRS
 'I feed every/each dog that wanders round this neighbourhood'.

Some consultants preferred this with the article, some without, but all agreed that it was essentially optional here.

5.3.2 Definite Article and Specificity

It has been claimed that the modern Armenian definite article has developed into a marker of specificity (Sigler 1996, 113 ff.), as it is said to be obligatory on nouns modified by genitives (43) (though see exceptions, e.g. 34) and partitives (44), even if these are not semantically definite:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|---|---|
| (43) | (a) | եկեղեցիին
<i>eketec' i-i-n</i>
church-GEN-DEF
'the church's roof' | տանիք*(ը)
<i>tanik'-(*ə)</i>
roof-DEF |
| | (b) | եկեղեցիի մը
<i>eketec' i-i-mə</i>
church-GEN-IND
'a church's roof' | տանիք*(ը)
<i>tanik'-(*ə)</i>
roof-DEF |

(Sigler 1996, 113)

- | | | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| (44) | օթոներէն | երեք | հատ(*ը) | զողցվեցան |
| | <i>ōt'o-ner-ēn</i> | <i>erek</i> | <i>hat-(ə)</i> | <i>gof-ts-ve-ts-an</i> |
| | car-PL-ABL-DEF | three | CL-DEF | steal-CAUS-PASS-AOR-3PL |
| | 'three of the cars were stolen'. | | | |

(Sigler 1996, 114)

However, this is in fact better described as a syntactic phenomenon, whereby the definite article is used when the nominal syntagm is modified by particular categories of elements typically associated with definiteness or specificity, such as a genitive or definite noun, a demonstrative, or certain types of quantifier (see DeLisi 2008, 49), rather than being defined by the semantic property of specificity in itself.

This can be understood from the fact that specific indefinites which do not appear in such constructions do not receive the definite article. In Eastern Armenian, there is a grammatical phenomenon that is sensitive to the semantic property of specificity, namely differential object marking. Animate direct objects receive dative case marking if they are definite (45a), but also if they are specific indefinite (45c), while non-specific indefinites are not marked in this way (45b):

- | | | | | |
|------|-----|---|-------------------------------|--|
| (45) | (a) | Ոստիկանին
<i>Ostikan-i-n</i>
policeman-DAT-DEF
'I am looking for the policeman'. | եմ
<i>em</i>
be.1SG.PRS | փնտրում.
<i>p'ntrum</i>
look.for-1PT |
| | (b) | Ոստիկան
<i>Ostikan</i>
policeman | եմ
<i>em</i>
be.1SG.PRS | փնտրում
<i>p'ntrum</i>
look.for-1PT |
| | | բայց չեմ
<i>bayc' č'-em</i>
but NEG-be.1SG.PRS | կարող
<i>karot</i>
able | գտնել:
<i>gtnel.</i>
find.1NF |
| | | 'I am looking for a policeman, but I can't find one'. | | |
| | (c) | Մի ոստիկանի(*ն)
<i>Mi ostikan-i(*-n)</i>
one policeman-DAT(*-DEF) | եմ
<i>em</i>
be.1SG.PRS | փնտրում
<i>p'ntrum</i>
look.for-1PT |

որի	անունը	Պողոս	է:
<i>or-i</i>	<i>anun-ə</i>	<i>Potos</i>	<i>ē:</i>
which-GEN	name-DEF	Poghos	be.3SG.PRS

'I am looking for a policeman whose name is Poghos'.

As seen in (45c), this does not coincide with the distribution of the definite article. Thus the latter cannot be straightforwardly described as a marker of specificity, as proposed by Sigler (1996).

5.3.3 Definite Article, Nominalisation, and Core Argument Status

Asatryan (2004, 96) states that the definite article may be used simply as a marker of nominalisation, converting non-nominal parts of speech to nominal use. In this role, it is not necessarily associated with definiteness, as seen in the following example (46), where the nominalised adjective *nor-ə* 'a new one' has a (non-specific) indefinite interpretation:

(46)	Եթե	մտադրվել	ես	մեքենա	գնել,
	<i>Et'e</i>	<i>mtadrvel</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>mek'ena</i>	<i>gnel,</i>
	if	decide.PPT	be.2SG.PRS	car	buy.INF
	ավելի	լավ	կլինի	նորը	գնել:
	<i>aveli</i>	<i>lav</i>	<i>klini</i>	<i>nor-ə</i>	<i>gnel.</i>
	more	good	FUT.be.3SG	new.DEF	buy.INF

'If you have decided to buy a car, it will be better to buy a new one'.

If Greenberg's (1978) grammaticalization pathway is considered to be universal, it appears that we have a violation here, as the definite article is used as a noun marker (stage VI) but not as a marker of specificity (stage III). However, it appears that what we are dealing with could be more accurately described as a marker of argument status, rather than simply of nominalisation. Thus it could be said to represent stage III on a different grammaticalization pathway, that proposed by Doron and Khan (2015). One possible piece of evidence for this comes from restrictions on the occurrence of the definite article with certain cases. There are two main restrictions, both of which apply in SEA. One of these concerns genitive case: the definite article may not appear on nouns in genitive case (used for nouns that modify another noun, i.e. entities conceived of in relation to another entity; the relationship can be of various kinds, including possession, origin, material, part, also subject of nominalised verb forms and object of true nouns derived from verbs), as opposed to the oth-

erwise identical dative case, which is mainly used for arguments of the clause (direct and indirect objects, also some adverbials, mainly denoting endpoint or resting place). The restriction (47a) is found in Ararat (inc. SEA), Mush, Van and Khoy dialects, not Karabagh, Agulis, or mainstream WA (47b):

- | | | | |
|------|-----|---|--|
| (47) | (a) | քաղաքի(*ն)
<i>k'atak'-i(*-n)</i>
town-GEN | կենտրոնը
<i>kentron-ə</i>
centre-DEF |
| | (b) | քաղաքին
<i>k'atak'-i-n</i>
town-GEN-DEF
'the centre of the town' | կենտրոնը
<i>kentron-ə</i>
centre-DEF |

The other restriction concerns ablative, instrumental and locative cases, which are typically associated with adverbial elements rather than core arguments of the clause. The definite article is not used with these cases in SEA:

- | | | |
|------|-----|--|
| (48) | (a) | քաղաքից(*ը)
<i>k'atak'-ic'(*-ə)</i>
town-ABL(*-DEF)
'from the town' |
| | (b) | քաղաքով(*ը)
<i>k'atak'-ov(*-ə)</i>
town-INS(*-DEF)
'by the town' |
| | (c) | քաղաքում(*ը)
<i>k'atak'-um(*-ə)</i>
town-LOC(*-DEF)
'in the town' |

Thus in SEA, the definite article is restricted to use with nouns in nominative and dative case, i.e. the cases that are associated with core arguments of the clause (there is no separate accusative case in modern Armenian, except on some WA pronouns). Note, however, that the link between this phenomenon in SEA and core argument status is not direct, as the restriction is completely grammaticalised, so that the objects of verbs that take ablative or instrumental objects do not take the definite article, even though they may be considered core arguments:

- | | | | | | |
|------|----------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| (49) | Ես | հիանում | եմ | այս | մարդով(*-ը): |
| | <i>Es</i> | <i>hianum</i> | <i>em</i> | <i>ays</i> | <i>mard-ov(*-ə)</i> |
| | 1SG.NOM | admire.IPF | be.1SG.PRS | DEM1 | man-INS(*-DEF) |
| | 'I admire this man'. | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| (50) | Ես | վախենում | եմ | այս | մարդուց(*-ը): |
| | <i>Es</i> | <i>vaxenum</i> | <i>em</i> | <i>ays</i> | <i>mard-uc(*-ə)</i> |
| | 1SG.NOM | be.afraid.IPT | be.1SG.PRS | DEM1 | man-ABL(*-DEF) |
| | 'I am afraid of this man'. | | | | |

However, there is further evidence that also suggests a link between the definite article and core argument status. This involves certain essentially adverbial elements that take nominative (i.e. zero) case but do not receive the definite article even if semantically definite, notably elements denoting destination (51a) and location (51b):

- | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|--|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| (51) | (a) | Վարդանը | գնում | է | Երևան/ | խանութ: |
| | | <i>Vardan-ə</i> | <i>gnum</i> | <i>ē</i> | <i>Erewan/</i> | <i>xanut'.</i> |
| | | Vardan-DEF | go.IPT | be.3SG.PRS | Erevan | shop |
| | | 'Vardan is going to Erevan / to the shop'. | | | | |
| | (b) | Վարդանը | Երևան/ | խանութ | է: | |
| | | <i>Vardan-ə</i> | <i>Erewan/</i> | <i>xanut'</i> | <i>ē.</i> | |
| | | Vardan-DEF | Erevan | shop | be.3SG.PRS | |
| | | 'Vardan is in Erevan / at the shop'. | | | | |

The definite article is also, as expected, not used with nouns in existential predications formed with the existential verb 'to be' (see Apresjan, Polinsky 1996, 25):

- | | | | |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| (52) | սենյակում | շուն(*-ը) | կա |
| | <i>senyak-um</i> | <i>šun(*-ə)</i> | <i>ka</i> |
| | room-LOC | dog(*-DEF) | exist.3SG.PRS |
| | 'in the room there is a dog' | | |

Thus it can be seen that the article is particularly associated with subject and object roles. Apresjan and Polinsky (1996, 25) state that it is obligatory even with indefinites when these are what they describe as 'topical' subjects (53) or indirect objects (54):

(53)	մարդը <i>mard-ə</i> man-DEF 'a man/the man came'.	եկավ <i>ekav</i> come.3SG.AOR		
(54)	ես <i>Es</i> 1SG.NOM	կատվին <i>katv-i-n</i> cat-DAT-DEF	կաթ <i>kat'</i> milk	տվեցի <i>tvec'i</i> give.1SG.AOR

(Apresjan, Polinsky 1996, 24)

Donabédian-Demopoulos (2010) interprets this type of data in terms of semantics rather than the pragmatic property of topicality alone, stating that when bare nouns do appear in subject or object position, their main function is to modify or complete the meaning of the verb, similar to the role of an adjective with regard to a noun. Similarly, Kalomoiros (2021) states that bare nouns in Armenian denote kind-level, not object-level properties, thus the definite article can function to convert an element denoting kind-level properties to one denoting object-level properties, which can fulfil the role of a true argument of a verb rather than an adverb-like modifier.

6 Conclusion

The classical Armenian definite article system is typologically unusual, showing a suffixal article with a three-way deictic distinction. Such a system is unique within ancient Indo-European languages, but shows parallels with that proposed for prehistoric Kartvelian, implying that language contact could have played a role in its development. In modern Armenian, the definite article has lost its deictic distinctions, but continues to function as a marker of definiteness as defined by Lyons (1999). However, there are some instances of its usage which cannot be associated with definiteness, implying that it is being grammaticalised further. It has been proposed that it is more appropriately described as a marker of specificity (Sigler 1996). However, comparison with the distribution of EA differential object marking, which is sensitive to semantic specificity, shows that this is not the case, as the article is not used with specific indefinites in general, but in fact its usage appears to have been grammaticalised when the noun is associated with particular categories of modifiers. It has also been described as a marker of nominalisation (Asatryan 2004), which, if it is not a marker of specificity, would mean that it has skipped a stage on Greenberg's (1978) grammaticalization pathway. However, a closer look at the data, notably its association with case-

marking patterns, reveals a possible link with core argument status, suggesting that it may be following a different grammaticalization pathway, that cited in Doron and Khan (2015), in which stage 3 corresponds to ‘marker of argument status’, rather than ‘specific article’.

Abbreviations

ABL	ablative
AOR	aorist
ART	article
ART1	1st person/proximal article
ART2	2nd person/medial article
ART3	3rd person/distal article
CAUS	causative
CL	classifier
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
DEM1	proximal demonstrative
DEM2	medial demonstrative
DEM3	distal demonstrative
DIST	distal
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative
IND	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
IPT	imperfective participle
LOC	locative
MED	medial
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PPT	past participle
PROX	proximal
PRS	present
PST	past
RPT	resultative participle
SG	singular
SPT	subject participle

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