


## Materials on the Phonetics of the Iron Dialect of the Ossetic Language from the Dialects of the Eastern Branch of the Iranian Languages (Case Study Based on Russian Sources)

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### Abstract

Using names of "Alan"/ "Aas", that are a phonetic form of "Arya", about the Ossetes, indicates that they are speakers of "Iron dialect". The Ossetic language belongs to the Iranian group of Indo-European languages. The current written form of the Ossetic language with the Cyrillic alphabet dates back to 1844, and was founded by A.M. Shegren, and later V.F. Miller, completed it. The basis of entering the field of linguistic research about Ossetic is being familiar with this language and learning the correct way to read it. Therefore, in this study, we intend to make familiar Iranian readers and linguists with the vowels and consonants and phonetic system of the Ossetic. In this direction, issues such as voicelessness, metathesis, place of stress etc. have also been considered by the authors. The purpose of this study is to provide a platform for further research in the Ossetic language as a branch of Iranian languages. In the present work, Russian has become a tool for Iranian linguists to know about the linguistic research done about Ossetic language. The results showed that the alphabetic system and phonetic signs of the Ossetic can be very different compared to the phonetic system of other languages.

**Keywords:** Phonetics, Dialectology, Ossetic language, Iron dialect, Cyrillic alphabet.

### Extended abstract

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to provide a basis for familiarizing Iranian linguists with the phonetic system of the Ossetic language. The results of similar researches in the Russian Federation have been the beginning of the compilation

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of educational materials for schools and universities. Despite the fact that Ossetic language is still alive, there is no remarkable work on Ossetic language in Persian. From this point of view, the results of the present study and similar researches can help to record scientific research materials of the Ossetic language in Persian.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

The theory of the relation of the Ossetes to the Alans emerged between the 18th and 19th centuries. This theory has been endorsed by both Western European scholars and nineteenth- and first-quarter-twentieth-century Russian scholars. The people referred to as "Os" in Georgian sources are called "Alans" by the Greeks, Byzantine Romans, Arabs and Persians. The Alans mingled with the local tribes in the North Caucasus, and the "Ossetes" emerged from here. Ossetic is the language of the tribes of Central and Southern Asia, as well as the famous tribes in ancient history: the Scythians, Sarmatians, Alans, and so on. This language has genetic continuity in Scythians, Sarmatian, and Alan languages. Ossetic is a languages with a young history in writing. Since 1938, the Cyrillic alphabet has been used in North Ossetia, and the Georgian alphabet in South Ossetia for writing Ossetic. This was influenced by the political issues of North Ossetia and South Ossetia's placement in the Russian Federation and Georgia, respectively. The number of speakers of the Ossetic language is about 700,000, and this confirms that this language is not an "Extinct" language. In terms of internal structure, the Ossetic dialects are divided into two groups, Iron and Digorian: Digorian is spoken in the western part of North Ossetia and in Kabardino-Balkaria. The Iron dialect is one of the dialects of the Ossetic ethnic group. Most of the people of North Ossetia (most of Ossetia) as well as the valleys of Kurtat, Tagaur and Alagir speak that dialect. In the Iron dialect of North Ossetia, the number of words adapted from the Georgian language, and in North Ossetia the number of words adapted from the Russian language is high.

## **3. Research method**

This research has been done by using the works of Ossetic linguists written in Russian. These works cover issues such as the etymology, the writing system, the phonetic system, and the auditory phonetic system of the Ossetic language. While selecting the sample words for the phonetic description of the Ossetic language, an effort has been made to select as many words as possible, equal or similar to Persian words in the semantic system. The purpose of such a selection is to address some of the similar words in the Ossetic and Persian languages in the context of this research, which of course does not apply in all cases. Also, since the first and second authors of this research are Iranian and not fluent in the Ossetic language, to avoid possible errors, the same linguistic examples have been used that have been mentioned in the linguistic researches of the Ossetic scientists.

This research is presented in two parts: in the first part, we deal with the phonetic system of Cyrillic letters in the Ossetic language that will be understood by everyone - anyone who is unfamiliar with the Ossetic language, and in the second part (final part), we present some cases of voicelessness, metathesis and the place of stress, for familiarity.

The collaboration of Veronika Dzahova, a colleague of the North Ossetian State University after Kosta Khatagorov, as an Ossetic speaker and a researcher fluent in the phonetic system of the Ossetic language, has helped the authors of this article to find correct interpretations of the phonetic system of this language.

#### **4. Results & Discussion**

In this study, the following phonetics features were identified in the Iron dialect of Ossetic:

Vowels are divided into two main groups: long and stressed or short.

The phonetic difference between vowel /æ/ and vowel /a/ is that the latter is long and stressed, and the former is short and without stress.

The letter ы [ə] in the Ossetic alphabet is distinct from the sound it has in Russian; it is a short vowel that is produced when the tongue and lips are inactive.

The letter y consists of two phonemes, vowel [u] and consonantal [w]. This letter becomes consonant while it is placed next to other vowels.

The letters ц [ʃ] and з [z̥] have different forms of reading from the Cyrillic alphabet. These letters are generally the distinguishing feature of the various Ossetic dialects.

There is no affricate дж [j] in the Cyrillic alphabet. This letter is pronounced similar to the phoneme /j/ in English.

The consonant дз refers to phoneme [z].

ц [tse] does not appear as an affricate in the Ossetic language in all cases: it can be read as the phonemes c [c] and [s].

The role of the symbol ъ in the Cyrillic alphabet in the Ossetic language is different and distinctive: this letter in the same role that occurs in the Russian language is seen only in those words that are adapted from the Russian language. This letter in addition, in combination with some letters represent a new phoneme in the Ossetic phonetic system and they are the following digraphs: гъ [h], къ [kʰ], пъ [pʰ], тъ [tʰ], хъ [q], цъ [čʰ], Чъ [hč].

#### **5. Conclusions & Suggestions**

Learning the alphabet of any language is the beginning of research in that language. For this purpose, in this research, an attempt was made to address the basics of entering to research in the Ossetic language, specifically in the field of the Iron dialect - the phonetic system of the Ossetic language and the Cyrillic alphabet used to write the Ossetic language. Also, in order to facilitate the reading of words for Iranian linguists, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) system Along with meanings in Persian was used.

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