

## EMPHASIS ON THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** The article draws the attention to a phenomenon observed in the public speech, mostly in the electronic media, of educated native speakers of Bulgarian: placing the accent on the definite article in cases where it ought to be unstressed according to the rules of accentuation of articulated forms. This particular accent is categorized as sentence stress, the lexical stress of the respective word being preserved in its place. This is an unusual option in comparison with the more common case of coincidence of the sentence (logical) stress with the lexical stress of the relevant lexeme. The emphasized semantic content is a stronger version of the more abstract grammatical meaning signaled by the definite article, paraphrasable as “it is precisely he/she/it/they”, “it is precisely [to] him/her/it/them”. Historically the Bulgarian definite article is the result of the grammaticalization of the weak form of the demonstrative pronoun but here we see the reverse process of resurrecting the meaning of the emphatic demonstrative pronoun, a “degrammaticalization” or “lexicalization” of the definite article. The connection between this type of accentuation and the rhythmic structure of the utterance is also touched upon. The unusual choice of accentual emphasis on a unit smaller than the word results in its markedness, including stylistically. This solution may be described as somewhat affected. Cases of similar unusual accent on other clitics, mostly short possessive pronouns, are also mentioned. A brief parallel is drawn with the use of the strong form of the definite article in English.

**Keywords:** Bulgarian, definite article, emphasis, sentence stress, grammaticalization/degrammaticalization

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