

## ენობრივი იერარქიისა და ენისადმი დამოკიდებულების საკითხი ქართულ პოლიტიკურ დისკურსში

### THE MATTER OF LANGUAGE HIERARCHY AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDE IN THE GEORGIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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**Keywords:** political discourse, code-switching, code-mixing, style-shifting, register-switching

## ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the matter of language hierarchy and language attitude through examining code-switching used by Georgians in Georgia, in the context of current political situation depicted in media discourse. Code in this research may refer to a language, a register and style. The study investigates 1. how language hierarchy is constructed and reconstructed by examining CS in political discourse; 2. how a change in audience/ addressee influences CS; 3. how CS as a naturalistic and interactive phenomenon in spoken discourse is used to project speakers' identity and their affiliation to their community. The three aims, being mutually inclusive, are explored in connection to intraspeaker CS in the interactional construction of identity. In particular, emphasis is placed on how speakers perform, project and negotiate their different personae at the individual or collective level. Data presented in this research was collected over a period of 12 months (July, 2023–July, 2024). 3210 videos were found from various internet media sources: TVFormula; MtavariTV; BM.GE; Rustavi2TV;

ImediTV; and RadioTavisupleba. Out of which we randomly picked 400 videos. Out of which we grouped 55 example of style-shifting, 46 examples of register-switching and 14 examples of code-mixing; 5 examples of code-switching. These are the primary results; We are in the process of conducting matched-guise test (questionnaire) by using the collected examples. The final results will be introduced at the conference. As for the language hierarchy, the speakers' attitudes towards the above-mentioned languages are vivid, namely, although English is mostly used positively (9 examples), it sometimes has a function of expressing ridicule (4 examples). Russian is used sarcastically (5). Surprisingly, German is also used (1 example) sarcastically. The Georgian language has a dominance, primarily because it is a mother tongue, but most logically, the speakers' messages should be immensely comprehensible for different social classes in Georgia. It is often used to persuade and manipulate the voters, express sarcasm and insult the opponents.

**The Scientific Novelty of the Research** is using a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) and modifying the existing research methods (matched-guise experiment). Although there are some studies done on CS and CM spoken behaviours in the Georgian higher and general educational settings (Buskivadze, 2021, 2023), not much has been done in terms of studying language behaviours in spoken political discourse. However, there are some studies on pragmatic, functional and structur-

al peculiarities of political discourse (Amaglobeli, 2017; Matchavariani, 2020).

## RESEARCH METHODS

Quantitative data presented in this research was collected over a period of 12 months (July, 2023–July, 2024). 3210 videos were found from various internet media sources: TVFormula; MtavariTV; BM.GE; Rustavi2TV; Imed-

iTV; and RadioTavisupleba. Out of which we randomly picked 400 videos. Out of which we grouped 55 example of style-shifting, 46 examples of register-switching and 14 examples of code-mixing; 5 examples of code-switching. These examples were transcribed and then recorded by the native speakers of unknown Georgian speakers. Our aim of using matched-guise experiment was to hide the identity of the real speaker and detect people's attitude toward "what was said" instead of "who said". So, six transcribed examples were voice-recorded by 5 unknown Georgian speakers. By using Google forms (qualitative data) and these recordings together with the questions 103 responses were collected. The online questionnaire was spread through university platforms, LMS and ARGUS, by university administrations plus social media platforms. The research ethical principles were considered and fulfilled.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Qualitative research

Out of 3210 from different media sources TVFormula; MtavariTV; BM.GE; Rustavi2TV; ImediTV; and RadioTavisupleba, we randomly picked 400 videos. There were 55 example of style-shifting, 46 examples of register-switching and 14 examples of code-mixing; 5 examples of code-switching.

Let's examine a couple of the examples with the help of interactional sociolinguistic approach, namely, one of the politician's (I.Z. – politician's initials) speeches, transcribed and analysed.

#### Example 1

An example of code-mixing, style-shifting and register-switching.

Politician I.Z.: **ამ ქვეყანას აქვს უფლება, დაიცვას თავისი ინტერესები.**

MtavariTV Journalist: ხო, მაგრამ მოლაპარაკებები ვერ [გაგეხსნებათო ბატონო ი.]

Politician I.Z.: [ჩვენ ასე გვეუბნებოდნენ] ესენიც, ისინიც, ყველანი, რომ თუ სააკაშვილს არ გამოუშვებთ გამორიცხული არისო, არ გამოვუშვით, **ღირსებით, მოვიპოვეთ კანდიდატის სტატუსი./ghirsebiT, movipoveT kandidatis statusi.** (With honor, we were granted the candidate status) = ჩვენ გვაქვს სამართლიანი მიდგომის//იმედი. იქ არიან ადამიანები, ევროპაშიც, ვინც სამართლიანად მსჯელობენ, ობიექტურად და ამ ქვეყანას არ სჯიან იმისთვის, რომ თავი დაიცვას.

MtavariTV Journalist: აჰამ

Politician I.Z.: და ერთი კითხვა მაქვს, **თუ ამერიკას აქვს უფლება თავი დაიცვას, თუ საფრანგეთმა მიიღო ეხლა უფრო მკაცრი,/Tu amerikas aqvs ufleba Tavi daitsvas, Tu safrangeTma miiRo ekhla ufro mkatsri**

(If America has the right to defend itself, if France has adopted a stricter) = მე მივმართავ გერმანულად არ ვიცი, ეს ვიცი ერთი Verstehen? (Do you understand?) = აეს ვიცი ერთი, გაიგე? - ეგ არის თემა რომ **იმას თუ აქვს უფლება რომ დაიცვას, ფრანგებს, ამერიკელებს, კანადელებს, საქართველოს რატომ არ გვაქვს უფლება?/imas Tu aqvs ufleba rom daitsvas, frangebs, amerikelebs, kanadelebs, saqarTvelos ratom ar gvaqvs ufleba?** (If they have the right to protect, I mean, French, Americans, Canadians, why don't we (Georgia and Georgians) have the right?) აი, ეს მინდა რომ ვკითხო ბატონ ელჩს (იგულისხმება გერმანიის ელჩი - ფიშერი.)

The given example illustrates 1. Speakers' identity (bold text); it is the identical message of each and every politician belonging to Georgian Dream. Style-shifting, in this case, has a communicative function. It is aimed to spoon-feed not the real addressee (in this case, German Delegate - Fischer), but the supporters of the speaker's political party. Thus, change in the addressee determines the style-shifting behaviour. 2. A register-switching example; the verb, "Verstehen? /გაიგე? (Do you understand?)", used in second person singular show an informal and impolite attitude towards the real addressee. However, this message was also intended to the supporters of Georgian Dream. There are some pauses between sentences, which depicts the conscious switches between register and style.

#### Example 2

An example of code-switching.

Politician: ეხლა ხაბე არ მოსწონთ, ხაბემ რა არი იცოდა რო ინგლისური?! ხაბემ მშვენივრად იცის // ხაბე, do you speak English, bro?!. იცის კარგად, მაგრამ ხაბე არ აწყობთ, იმიტომ რომ ხაბეა რა, და ხაბე მთავარ ოპოზიციურ ლიდერად არ გამოადგებათ. // ხაბე რა შუაშია, **თქვენ ხართ უკვე განულებული, რადიკალური ოპოზიცია, იმიტომ რომ გაგშიფრათ საზოგადოებამ./Tkven kharT ukve ganulebuli, radikaluri opozitsia, imitom rom gagshifraT sazogadoebam.** (You are already annulled, the radical opposition, because society has deciphered you.)

The given example illustrates 1. Speakers' identity (bold text); it is the identical message of each and every politician belonging to Georgian Dream. Register-switching ('Khabe' a nickname instead of Khabeishvili; 'bro' - addressing another politician) within a code-switching behaviour, in this case, has a communicative function. It expresses ironic attitude towards the addressee and towards the matter (knowing The English language). Moreover, this message was also intended to the supporters of Georgian Dream. There are some pauses between sentences, which depicts the conscious switches between register and style.

As for the language hierarchy, the speakers' attitudes towards the above-mentioned languages are vivid, namely, although English is mostly used positively (9 examples), it sometimes has a function of expressing ridicule (4 examples). Russian is used sarcastically (5). Surprisingly, German is also used (1 example) sarcastically. The Georgian language has a dominance, primarily because it is a mother tongue, but most logically, the speakers' messages should be immensely comprehensible for different social classes in Georgia. It is often used to persuade and manipulate the voters, express sarcasm and insult the opponents.

However, qualitative researches using interactional sociolinguistic (Gumperz, 2015). and conversational analytic (Auer, 1998) approaches are considered subjective. Thus, to substantiate our hypothesis over language attitudes, with the help of matched guise test (Loureiro-Rodríguez,

2022), we conducted quantitative research. The data (103 responses) analysed with SPSS statistics program is presented below. Out of 103 there were 52 Female and 51 Male respondents. Most of the respondents (37.9%) were 31-40 years old. There was only one respondent 51-60 years old. Majority of the respondents (52.4%) have Master's degree completed. Then comes Bachelor degree (37.9%); People with PhD (8.8%); and 1 person with only General Education certificate. They were all Georgians with their nationality and citizenship. Majority of the respondents (44.7%) have spent their lifetime in Tbilisi. Then comes people from urban areas (39.8%) and the least amount goes to people from rural areas (15.5%) From the data given above, we can assume that most of the respondents have higher education degree and have lived in either in Tbilisi or urban areas. Considering their age, majority of them are mature enough to have long established views about current political atmosphere in the country.

Table 1. A comparison of mean between speakers.

| Means comparison | Speaker 1 | Speaker 2 | Speaker 3 | Speaker 4 | Speaker 5 | Speaker 6 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Friendly         | 1.26      | 1.32      | 1.35      | 2.35      | 1.29      | 1.31      |
| Honest           | 1.59      | 1.60      | 1.64      | 2.44      | 1.59      | 1.50      |
| Enthusiastic     | 3.48      | 3.57      | 3.50      | 3.52      | 3.68      | 3.55      |
| Polite           | 1.47      | 1.53      | 1.47      | 2.70      | 1.41      | 1.43      |
| Trustworthy      | 1.39      | 1.47      | 1.44      | 2.37      | 1.44      | 1.39      |
| Educated         | 1.44      | 1.49      | 1.54      | 2.45      | 1.47      | 1.43      |
| Respectable      | 1.37      | 1.42      | 1.42      | 2.36      | 1.39      | 1.37      |
| Ridiculous       | 2.81      | 2.93      | 2.98      | 3.55      | 3.36      | 3.06      |
| Ironic           | 4.35      | 4.38      | 4.31      | 1.84      | 4.68      | 4.63      |

The table shows the measurement of attitudes towards what the unknown speakers said in the recordings. The research question was the following: 'based on what was said, do you think the speaker is...'. Laker's scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) was used

to measure the Georgians' attitudes towards the speeches. Based on the analysis, Georgian politicians' speeches are rather Ironic (mean more than 4) and ridiculous, but enthusiastic than friendly, polite, educated, respectable and trustworthy (less than 2).

Table 2. The Georgian language is used by the speaker to express... (recording 2)

|                                         | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Friendly attitude towards the addressee | 103 | 1.38 | .716           | .071            |
| Honesty towards the addressee           | 103 | 1.54 | .926           | .091            |
| Enthusiasm towards the matter           | 103 | 3.61 | 1.345          | .133            |
| Politeness towards the addressee        | 103 | 1.44 | .763           | .075            |
| Trustworthiness                         | 103 | 1.56 | .859           | .085            |
| His or her competence                   | 103 | 1.50 | .850           | .084            |
| Respect towards the addressee           | 103 | 1.42 | .748           | .074            |
| His or her humour                       | 103 | 2.09 | 1.307          | .129            |
| Irony towards the addressee             | 103 | 4.27 | 1.214          | .120            |

Table 3 The Russian Language is used by the speaker to express... (recording 4)

|                                         | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Friendly attitude towards the addressee | 103 | 2.16 | .988           | .097            |
| Honesty towards the addressee           | 103 | 2.64 | .948           | .093            |
| Enthusiasm towards the matter           | 103 | 3.63 | 1.421          | .140            |
| Politeness towards the addressee        | 103 | 2.41 | .994           | .098            |
| Trustworthiness                         | 103 | 2.83 | .919           | .091            |
| His or her competence                   | 103 | 2.75 | 1.017          | .100            |
| Respect towards the addressee           | 103 | 2.31 | 1.010          | .100            |
| His or her humour                       | 103 | 4.24 | 1.302          | .128            |
| Irony towards the addressee             | 103 | 4.68 | .831           | .082            |

Table 4 The English language is used by the speaker to express... (Recording 6)

|                                         | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Friendly attitude towards the addressee | 103 | 1.33 | .648           | .064            |
| Honesty towards the addressee           | 103 | 1.47 | .826           | .081            |
| Enthusiasm towards the matter           | 103 | 3.41 | 1.498          | .148            |
| Politeness towards the addressee        | 103 | 1.32 | .630           | .062            |
| Trustworthiness                         | 103 | 1.41 | .720           | .071            |
| His or her competence                   | 103 | 1.49 | .839           | .083            |
| Respect towards the addressee           | 103 | 1.31 | .657           | .065            |
| His or her humour                       | 103 | 3.23 | 1.585          | .156            |
| Irony towards the addressee             | 103 | 4.61 | .921           | .091            |

Table 5 The German Language is used by the speaker to express.... (Recording 2)

|                                         | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Friendly attitude towards the addressee | 103 | 1.33 | .706           | .070            |
| Honesty towards the addressee           | 103 | 1.50 | .884           | .087            |
| Enthusiasm towards the matter           | 103 | 3.59 | 1.389          | .137            |
| Politeness towards the addressee        | 103 | 1.40 | .758           | .075            |
| Trustworthiness                         | 103 | 1.56 | .859           | .085            |
| His or her competence                   | 103 | 1.59 | .912           | .090            |
| Respect towards the addressee           | 103 | 1.38 | .742           | .073            |
| His or her humour                       | 103 | 2.34 | 1.280          | .126            |
| Irony towards the addressee             | 103 | 4.43 | 1.053          | .104            |

As we can see from the above given tables (2, 3, 4, 5) the speakers, in our case, from the given examples, politicians use Georgian mostly for showing enthusiasm towards the subject and irony towards the addressee. English is used by politicians to show their humour (3.23) and enthusiasm (3.41) towards the subject and irony towards the addressee. German is associated with illustrating irony (4.43) towards the addressee and enthusiasm towards the matter. As for the Russian language, it is mostly used to show irony (4.68) and humour (4.24), but trustworthiness and competence are also more or less expressed by the Russian language in contrast to the European languages: German and English. In probability theory and mathematical statistics, **the standard**

**deviation** is a measure of the amount of variation of the values of a variable about its mean. A low standard deviation indicates that the values tend to be close to the mean (also called the expected value) of the set, while a high standard deviation indicates that the values are spread out over a wider range. **The standard error of the mean**, or simply standard error, indicates how different the population mean is likely to be from a sample mean. It tells you how much the sample mean would vary if you were to repeat a study using new samples from within a single population.

Therefore, we created the hierarchy of languages in terms of Georgians' attitudes towards them based on mean (from completely disagree – 1 to completely agree 5)

Table 6. Hierarchy of languages used in Georgian political media discourse

| Languages/functions                     | Georgian | English | Russian | German |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|--------|
|                                         | mean     |         |         |        |
| Friendly attitude towards the addressee | 1.38     | 1.33    | 2.16    | 1.33   |
| Honesty towards the addressee           | 1.54     | 1.47    | 2.64    | 1.50   |
| Enthusiasm towards the matter           | 3.61     | 3.41    | 3.63    | 3.59   |
| Politeness towards the addressee        | 1.44     | 1.32    | 2.41    | 1.40   |
| Trustworthiness                         | 1.56     | 1.41    | 2.83    | 1.56   |
| His or her competence                   | 1.50     | 1.49    | 2.75    | 1.59   |
| Respect towards the addressee           | 1.42     | 1.31    | 2.31    | 1.38   |
| His or her humour                       | 2.09     | 3.23    | 4.24    | 2.34   |
| Irony towards the addressee             | 4.27     | 4.61    | 4.68    | 4.43   |

As for the language hierarchy, the speakers' attitudes towards the above-mentioned languages are vivid, namely, although English is mostly used positively (9 examples), it sometimes has a function of expressing ridicule (4 examples). Russian is used sarcastically (5). Surprisingly, German is also used (1 example) sarcastically. The Georgian language has a dominancy (considering frequency of using), primarily because it is a mother tongue, but most logically, the speakers' messages should be immensely comprehensible for different social classes in Georgia. It is often used to persuade and manipulate the voters, express sarcasm and insult the opponents.

Here is the transcript of the example (CS behaviour from Georgian into Russian).

### Example 3

Journalist: მე ისტორიის სახელმძღვანელოს თემაზე სასაუბროდ პარლამენტის დეპუტატსა და განათლების კომიტეტის თავმჯდომარის მოადგილეს თ. ტ.-საც მივაკითხე.

Politician: ვეთანხმები [თუ არა]

Journalist: [რომ არის] ქვემოქმედი, მეცენატი

Politician: [კი ბატონო]

Journalist: [საქართველო] დააყენა ევროპულ რელსებზე, ეთანხმებით თუ არ ეთანხმებით? და მოგწონთ თუ არა რომ ამ ფორმით არის ბიძინა ივანიშვილი ისტორიის სახელმძღვანელოში ამ ფორმით წარმოდგენილი.

Politician: ის არ არის ჩვეულებრივი მეცენატი, ეს შეიძლება ითქვას საერთაშორისო მასშტაბით, რადგან უნიკალური ფერწერული ტილოები, რომლებიც ასევე დააბრუნა ბატონმა ბიძინა ივანიშვილმა საქართველოში, ასევე რაგბის თუ სხვა სპორტის მიმართულებების განვითარება.

Journalist: ცოტა რომ შევისვენოთ და მერე გავაგრძელოთ თუ გნებავთ.//

Politician: ადამიანი, რომელმაც 10 მილიარდი ლარი საკუთარი ჯიბიდან, საკუთარი შემოსავლისა, მოახმარა, [თავისი ქვეყნის კულტურას]

Journalist: [თვითონ ეს თქვენი ტექსტიც] ხომ არ ჩაგვემატებინა ისტორიის სახელმძღვანელოში?

Politician: მე გეუბნებით კონკრეტულ ფაქტებს.

Journalist: ძალიან დიდი მადლობა

Politician: მადლობა.

Journalist: ეტყობა ქალბატონ თ.-ს არ სმენია ბიძინა ივანიშვილის ცნობილი სიტყვები, (იმონმებს ბიძინა ივანიშვილს) საერთოდ გადაჭარბებული არაფერი არ ვარგა თუ გახსოვთ ძველი ბერძნების სიბრძნე, *ничего хорошего*. (Too much of a good thing is a bad thing).

The example of the code switching (switching from Georgian into Russian) given as a recording illustrates how attitude towards the speaker determines the attitude towards the language. As the journalist quoting Georgian politicians' words, and what was said are estimated to be neither positive nor negative since the means are closer to 3 – neither agree nor disagree.

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