A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics: A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian

Zaal Kikvidze
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi
State University, Georgia

Email:zaal.kikvidze@tsu.ge

2023

Z. Kikvidze, *A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics: A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian*

22, 2023

pp. 10-24

Zaal Kikvidze

Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics: A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian

ABSTRACT

The paper is an attempt to reflect on various aspects of a reversible binomial form of address, a Georgian equivalent of the English formula for addressing an audience *Ladies and Gentlemen*. The discussions of its constituent terms within the system of Georgian forms of address, of their etymology and semantic development, of some aspects related to its combinability with other terms lay a foundation for establishing explications of both its individual constituent terms and the reversible binomial form of address (including its both feminine-first and masculine-first variants, the ordering principles of which hardly pertaining to a speaker's gender preferences) based on the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach. All of these aspects of the investigation facilitate identification of various, normally both language- and culture-specific peculiarities of the form and terms in point.

Keywords: forms of address; Georgian; reversible binomial; gender; Natural Semantic Metalanguage

Introduction

In the present paper I aim to discuss some address-related problems in language and society. To state that address is how we refer to our collocutor(s) is to say just a little about this rather complex and diverse phenomenon, regularly manifesting a number of language- and culture-specific properties. This is due to the fact that address is a locus whereby language and culture come together. I will specifically deal with a binomial form of address, a Georgian equivalent of *Ladies and Gentlemen*. A binomial is understood as a stable collocation, consisting of a pair (sometimes a set) of words pertaining to the same part of speech and connected by some link like *and*. The English formula for addressing an audience *Ladies and Gentlemen* is an irreversible, that is, a fixed binomial form of address because it occurs only in this ordering pattern in present-day English. In the literature, its ordering has mostly been observed with respect to gender-related preferences:

> *But naming practices are social practices and symbolic of an order in which men come first, as can be seen in the conventions followed in expressions going back to Adam and Eve, such as man and woman (wife), husband and wife, boys and girls, etc. (a notable exception being ladies and gentlemen). Women are the second sex (Romaine, 2000, p. 105).*

The collocation in question has also sometimes been discussed with respect to ordering preferences in binomials at large:

> *While some binomials like linguistics and anthropology are observed in both orders, native speakers often exhibit a preference for a particular order of the two conjoined elements of the binomial even though the two orders have the same semantics. This means that the phrase ladies and gentlemen is preferred over the semantically equivalent gentlemen and ladies and this preference can be attested by a higher corpus frequency of the former phrase. In some cases, the preference is so strong that the binomials are considered irreversible (Kumar, 2012, pp. 1-2).*

Another framework within which the binomial has been considered is its change in reversibility, and it "is probably the most noticeable of all, namely a reversal in the preferred order" (Mollin, 2013, p. 175); as the author goes on to say, "address terms in Chaucer's texts mention *gentil men* before *ladies*, while in the modern address formula the female term precedes the male" (ibid.). Therefore, *Ladies and gentlemen* can be treated as reversible only within a diachronic process and not at the present synchronic stage.

Now we should have a look at the Georgian equivalent of *Ladies and gentlemen* which is as follows:

(1) *kalbat'on.eb.o da bat'on.eb.o*

    lady.PL.VOC and gentleman.PL.VOC

What is specific about the formula in question? The ordering pattern is the same as in English and the majority of European (and not only European) languages. Is it about the vocative case? Certainly, not; it has been common in a number of languages all over the world (see, for instance, Sonnenhauser & Noel Aziz Hanna, 2013). Actually, the most specific feature about the form is that it occurs in a reverse ordering pattern as well:

(2) *bat'on.eb.o da kalbat'on.eb.o*

    gentleman.PL.VOC and lady.PL.VOC

In order to describe and account for this peculiar form of address, I will initially provide an overview of the Georgian system of forms of address, proceeding with a discussion of the etymology and semantic development of the constituent terms of the form in point, and finalizing with their semantic analyses based on the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach.

1. The Georgian system of forms of address

As in most languages, the Georgian system of forms of address concentrates on items pertaining to the following word classes: 1. pronoun, 2. verb, 3. noun. It goes without saying that all the classes are interconnected in one way or another; however, items pertaining to the first two ones are not just interconnected but rather intertwined syntactically. The pronominal terms of address in Georgian

Z. Kikvidze, *A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics:*
A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian

22, 2023

pp. 10-24

correspond to the common division between T and V pronouns; thus, there are *šen* (1st person singular pronoun) used as familiar form of address for a single addressee and *tkven* (2nd person plural) used as a familiar form of address for multiple addressees and as a polite form for one or more. Hence, *šen* is a T pronoun and *tkven* is a V pronoun. As already stated above, pronominal and verb forms of address are closely connected, and this is common practice in all languages, nothing to say about Georgian as a morphologically rich one. One of the manifestations of this kind of richness is its highly inflected verbal morphology including polypersonalism; hence, it is a pro-drop language whereby a single verb form can render the person and number of both the subject and the object. Therefore, whenever T and V forms of address are dealt with in Georgian, we should mention both pronouns and verbs. It is noteworthy that, morphologically, a plural form and a V form coincide: they both take on the suffix -*t*. However, these meanings can be distinguished at other levels; relevant rules have already been established in the literature:

> [I]f a nominal part of a VP is in singular, while a verb is marked with -**t**, we are here dealing with an honorific only. This is a clear-cut syntactic mechanism presenting the formal boundaries between the plural and honorific -**t**'s (Kikvidze & Tchantouria, 2003, p 54).

> The examples cited are as follow:

> (3) *tkven k'etil.i pirovneba.Ø.Ø x.ar.t*

>   you(HON) [a] kind.NOM person.NOM.SG 2.be.HON

>   'You are a kind person.'

> (4) *tkven k'etil.i pirovneb.eb.i x.ar.t*

>   you(PL) kind.NOM person.PL.NOM 2.be.PL

>   'You are kind people.'

It goes without saying that no such rules are needed whenever a speech act includes a nominal term of address. The third and the most numerous and diverse class comprises nominal forms of address. This seems to be a certain linguistic universal, and Georgian is no exception to the rule; it has a whole array of nominal terms and forms of address (see Braun, 1988; Apridonidze, 1991). A remarkable peculiarity of Georgian nominal terms of address is that their overwhelming majority are marked in the vocative case taking on the suffix -*o* (its allomorphs being -*v* and -*Ø*). What makes it particularly noteworthy is the fact that, apart from common nouns, it is some proper nouns, adjectives, numerals, and even some pronouns that are also inflected for vocative when they are used in address (Boeder, 1985; Abuladze & Ludden, 2013).

As for the relationships between pronominal and verb forms of address, on the one hand, and nominal forms, on the other, they should be interpreted with respect to the notions of bound forms of address and free forms of address. Notably, the distinction between aforementioned terms of address "does not exactly correspond to the distinction of syntactically bound forms (integrated parts of sentences) and syntactically free forms (forms "outside" the sentence construction: preceding,

succeeding, or inserted into the sentence)" (Braun 1988: 11). It is certainly true that they may not "exactly" correspond to that distinction, although they definitely display the properties of syntactically free forms:

> *The position of vocative (or any other form of address) in a Georgian sentence is by no means determined: it may come at the beginning of a clause, at its end or in the middle of it, i.e. interpolated into various points of a clause. Vocatives in Georgian are typically separated from the rest of the clause by a break in the intonation, the so-called comma intonation, which means that they are isolated from other parts of the sentence; their reference is limited to the addressee. They occur with all types of clauses, and do not necessarily correspond to an argument (Abuladze & Ludden, 2013, p. 35).*

As for their position, they, of course, occur "outside" the sentence construction and have no syntactic relationship with respective pronominal and/or verb forms of address; however, there are regular alternations of pronominal and verb T/V forms, on the one hand, and of specific nominal forms, on the other, and it infers, as a result, that they are sociolinguistically bound (Kikvidze, 2015, pp. 200-201), that is, pronominal and verb T forms regularly co-occur with informal and neutral nominal forms of address, while pronominal and verb V forms regularly co-occur with formal and polite ones.

The aforementioned Georgian binomial form of address ((1), (2)) is one of the polite nominal collocations used to address an audience in formal situations. As it is readily observable even by a naked eye, its core element is the stem *baton-*. Its formal and semantic modifications, having taken place through time, are rather informative with respect to the point in case in the present paper. Therefore, in the following section I will dwell upon some of the aspects of its diachronic development.

2. Etymology and semantic development

It is of utmost significance to make it clear how it came to be the way it is in our days; its origin, formal and semantic modifications, and usage provide noteworthy evidence for shedding more light on its essence. I should initially make it clear that it is a lexical borrowing adopted from Latin. The loan is the word *patronus* "the protector, defender, patron of a body of clients; the patron or powerful friend at Rome of a state or city; a defender, advocate before a court of justice" (Marchant & Charles, 1953, p. 396). Hence, the primary question to be answered is the following: how *patron-* was transformed into *bat'on-*?

The answer should start by stating that the word in question seems to have also been borrowed by Megrelian (ISO 639-3: xmf), an unwritten sister language of Georgian; it is still present in Megrelian: *p'at'on-i* (Kajaia, 2002, p. 478).[1] Normally, the Romance and Germanic voiceless stops

---

[1] The word also occurs in the following forms: *p'at'ei, p'at'ini' p'at'əni* (ibid.).

Z. Kikvidze, *A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics:*
A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian

22, 2023

pp. 10-24

spelled as *p, t, (c)k, c*, are rendered into the Kartvelian languages as respective voiceless ejectives: /p'/, /t'/, /k'/; hence, the ejectives in the Megrelian borrowing. As for the deletion of the /r/, it is due to the phonotactic incompatibility of the */t'r/ cluster in Megrelian. Thus, we have figured out how the Latin *patron(us)* came to be the Megrelian *p'at'oni*. This is the form which later was adopted by Georgian: the word is documented in *Georgian Lexicon* (compiled in 1685-1716) by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani (1884, p. 238). Incorporated into Georgian, the word underwent further phonetic modifications; as a result of dissimilative voicing of ejectives, a well-attested phonetic process in the Caucasian languages and Kartvelian among them (Gamkrelidze & Ivanov, 2010, p. 46), the /p'/ turned into the /b/; hence, *bat'on-i*. Thus, below I present the scenario of the aforementioned transformations:

patron- (lat) → *p'at'ron-* (xmf) → *p'at'on-* (xmf) → *p'at'on-* (geo) → *bat'on-* (geo)[2]

In the early period, starting from the c. 15th c., the word referred to a monarch, lord, feudal baron (Mikaberidze, 2007, p. 695) and normally occurred as part of royal and nobiliary titles: "It is interesting, too, that the title of Princes of Muxrani was *baton* (*muxran-baton*), an equivalent of the Palaeologan *δεσπότης*; and the early Kings of Kakhetia were likewise referred to by that title in some Georgian sources" (Toumanoff, 1951, p. 216). Thus, it was used as a title to refer to and address kings and princes (the meaning persists in present-day Georgian). Later, by the end of the 18th century, it gained currency as a generalized term of address, being initially used as a synonym of *upalo* (a previously widespread term) and gradually having ousted it, and eventually became a polite and generic (gender-inclusive) term used to refer to and to address superiors and strangers.

(5) *bat'on.i*

 lord.NOM

(6) *bat'on.o*

 lord.VOC

These meanings are still presented in dictionaries; for instance, "**1** lord, overlord, ruler, master, landowner: *didi* ~ senior lord: ~ *brʒandebit*! @ You're the boss, OK by me; *šen/tkven xar(t) čemi* ~ @ Know what I mean? **2** gentleman, mister: *bat'ono*! Sir!, Excuse me!, Sorry, what did you say?; *bat'onebo*! Ladies and gentlemen!" (Rayfield, 2006, p. 160).[3] It should be noted that in our days the word in Meaning 1 ("lord, overlord, ruler, master, landowner") occurs only either in historical texts or in fiction in which the plot takes place in a setting located in earlier times.

Normally combined with a collocutor's first name, the term was used to address both women and men:

(7) *bat'ono elisabed*

---

[2] It should be noted that the same Latin word was directly adapted in Georgian as a written borrowing (*p'at'ron.i*) and mostly retained its original meanings in the donor language: "**1** feudal lord, serfowner; seigneur; lord; master; **2** owner; **3** protector, patron, guardian (*to relatives, clients etc*)" (Rayfield, 2006, p. 1070).
[3] Cf. Tschenkéli (1960, p. 69): *bat'ono!* "mein Herr! (als Anrede; vgl. fr. "Monsieur!")" and *bat'onebo!* "meine Herren! meine Damen u. Herren! meine Herrschaften!"

(8) *bat'ono aleksandre*

Even under the Russian rule (both the tsarist and communist regimes) when the customary Russian pattern of address consisting of a person's given name and patronymic was forcibly imposed on speakers of Georgian, (6) *batono* and and its derivative terms demonstrated steadiness and preference; the FN+Patronymic pattern as a form of address was not natural in Georgian (Kaladze, 1984, pp. 317-318). As it was already demonstrated in the above cited dictionary entry, its pluralized form was also used as a term for addressing an audience (including a mixed-gender one):

(9) *bat'on.eb.o*

gentleman.PL.VOC

'Ladies and gentlemen!'

Thus, the term in question was used both individually and in combination with woman's and man's first name to address individual persons and, in its pluralized form, to address an audience; since it consists of only a single term, it is a monomial form of address.

3. The binomial form of address

In the period, when (5) *bat'on.i* was a nobiliary title, it had a feminine counterpart

(10)   *kal-bat'on.i*

     woman-lord.NOM

referring only to a serfowner's and/or a landowner's wife; hence, whenever it was used as a term of address, it by all means implied an addressee's marital status.

Later, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, having lost its meaning of a noble-class title, it came into use as a gender-marked counterpart of (6) *bat'ono*; hence,

(11)   *kalbat'on.o*

     lady.VOC

     'Madam!'

Subsequently, following the European tradition (Narsia, 2014, p. 93), the latter was used to form a widespread formula for addressing an audience:

(1) *kalbat'no.eb.o da bat'on.eb.o*

lady.PL.VOC and gentlemen.PL.VOC

'Ladies and gentlemen!'

As already mentioned, the form occurs in the reverse word order as well:

(2) *bat'no.eb.o da kalbat'on.eb.o*

gentleman.PL.VOC and lady.PL.VOC

'Ladies and gentlemen!'

Clearly enough, (1) and (2) are variants of a single binomial (consisting of two terms) form of address which is reversible.

Z. Kikvidze, *A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics:*
A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian

\# 22, 2023

pp. 10-24

Since the mixed-gender binomial displays both female-first and male-first preponderances, it should be emphasized that this is about female-before-male and male-before-female ordering patterns and not about preferences of and/or hierarchical relations between their referents, that is, by opting for either (1) or (2), an addressee does not demonstrate his/her gendered preferences, neither is it a linguistic representation of either females' or males' quantitative dominance within a target audience. However, is there any constraint that affects the ordering of the terms in this reversible binomial form of address? Given that both versions consist of the same constituents occurring in the same grammatical forms, one might assume it to have been caused by certain extralinguistic factors. Actually, the male-before-female pattern (2) displays the linear ordering determined by the Shorter-Precedes-the-Longer principle (as it has already been established for Georgian, the gradual rule for the ordering constraint implies that a preceding constituent consists of (a) "less syllables," (b) "less phonemes," etc. (Kikvidze, 2011)); *bat'onebo* has four syllables while *kalbat'onebo* has five. Therefore, the pattern in point (2) is more natural for Georgian owing to its prosodic structure.[4] On the other hand, the female-before-male pattern (1) seems not to comply with the aforementioned rule; it becomes possible owing to its compliance with the ordering in the western-like formulas like *Ladies and gentlemen*.

Of course, it is in no way insignificant to have a look at frequencies of their occurrence. For the sake of this, I mined the Georgian National Corpus (GNC) for both variants; the queries yielded the following data:

Table 1. (1) and (2) in GNC[5]

Binomial address form	Search results
(1) *kalbat'onebo da bat'onebo*	232
(2) *bat'onebo da kalbat'onebo*	138

As it is seen, the occurrences of the female-before-male pattern (1) clearly outnumber those of its male-before-female counterpart (2). This is due to the fact that the GNC is predominantly based on written sub-corpora. Therefore, in formal situations, particularly in written texts, authors normally display their awareness of and adherence to more ceremonial and allegedly more politically correct linguistic formulas; hence, (1). On the other hand, the male-before-female pattern (2) also occurs in formal settings, although it seems to happen when less control is imposed on a speaker's speech performance; hence, a prosodically regular pattern: (2) *bat'onebo da kalbat'onebo*.

Thus, the two ordering patterns of the binomial form of address have the same social force.

---

[4] There is a bright illustration of the rule (viz. Step 2) in the copulative compound containing both versions of the borrowing of the Latin word *patron-us*: *bat'on-p'at'ron.i* "boss, ruler, proprietor;" since the number of syllables is equal in the two stems, the initial position is taken by the constituent including five phonemes (*bat'on-*), being followed by the stem including six phonemes (*p'at'ron-*). The compound is not reversible.
[5] http://gnc.gov.ge/gnc/page (Accessed: 4 August, 2023).

Moreover, it is used as a full-fledged equivalent of the formulas for addressing an audience like *Ladies and gentlemen!*, *Mesdames et messieurs!*, *Signore i signori!*, etc. What I still have to find out is whether they and their constituent terms display that many commonalities with respect to their semantic properties.

4. Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach

A greater portion of research on address, at least in Georgian (alongside the above cited, see also Kiziria, 1963, Kaladze, 1984, Rukhadze, 2005, Rusieshvili, 2011, Levidze, 2019, Keser & Pachulia, 2021, among others), has been concentrated on discussions of address behavior rather than on semantic aspects of various terms and forms.[6] As it was already demonstrated earlier in the present paper, various historical and cultural circumstances have immensely contributed to the meanings of the terms and forms in point. Therefore, what I am going to attempt in this section is to 'paraphrase' meanings of the terms and forms under examination into Natural Semantic Metalanguage, that is, semantic primes "cannot belong to any kind of scientific or elitist jargon, but rather must be known to everyone, including children" (Wierzbicka, 1972, p. 15). Having been articulated by Leibniz as an "alphabetum cogitationum humanarum" and having still been on the agenda of scholarly discussions for a hundred or so years, "in the 19th century it [the idea] faded from philosophical discourse and eventually it was largely forgotten. In 1963, however, it was revived by the Polish linguist Andrzej Bogusławski. A few years later, it was taken up in my own work" (Wierzbicka, 2021, p. 318).

As a matter of fact, it was Anna Wierzbicka (2015) who applied this method of semantic analysis to forms of address. The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach (conceptual primes, semantic molecules, universal grammar) will allow me to see what configurations of simple concepts reveal about the Georgian forms of address in point.

Initially I will list the forms of address and their meanings under examination:

(6) *bat'ono!*

1. Sir!
2. Excuse me! I beg you pardon!
3. An addressee's response term
4. A term of answering a telephone call

(6.1) *bat'ono* + **FN/Ttl!**

Mister + FN/Ttl!

---

[6] This is in a way similar to how A. Wierzbicka (2015, p. 5) remarks on the literature on forms of address in German: "The focus of this literature, however, is usually sociolinguistic rather than semantic. If they mention meaning at all, most publications in this area are content to use technical terms invented by linguists, such as 'power,' 'solidarity,' 'formality,' 'distance,' or 'intimacy.' Such terms represent the linguists' perspective, not the insiders' meanings and understandings."

Z. Kikvidze, *A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics:*
A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian

22, 2023

pp. 10-24

(11) ***kalbat'ono***!

'Madam!'

(11.1) ***kalbat'ono* + FN!**

Ms + FN!

(11.2) ***kalbat'ono* + Ttl!**

Madam + Ttl!

(1) ***kalbat'onebo da bat'onebo!***

'Ladies and gentlemen!'

(2) ***bat'onebo da kalbat'onebo!***

'Ladies and gentlemen!'

In my interpretation I will use the following possible NSM-based semantic components:

- "I know who this someone is"

- "someone of this kind is a man"

- "I don't know this someone well"

- "people can know some good things about this someone"

Now I will deal with individual terms of address and attempt to identify adequate NSM-based semantic components:

(6) ***bat'ono!***

1. *Sir!*

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

a. "I know that this someone is a man but I do not know who this someone is"

b. "I know that this someone is a man and I know who this someone is"

(6) ***baton'o!***

2. Excuse me! I beg your pardon!

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

a. "I do not know who this someone is"

b. "I know who this someone is (either a woman or man)"

(6) ***bat'ono!***

3. An addressee's response term

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

a. "I do not know who this someone is"

b. "I know who this someone is (either a woman or man)"

(6) ***bat'ono***!

4. A term for answering a telephone call

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

a. "I do not know who this someone is"

b. "I know who this someone is (either a woman or man)"

It should be emphasized that)6) *bat'ono*! as in 2., 3., 4. does not imply a position of authority belonging either to a man or woman, either to elderly or younger ones.

(6.1) *bat'ono* + **FN!**

Mister + FN!

(6.2) *bat'ono* + **Ttl!**

Mister + Ttl!

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

"I know that this someone is a man and I know who this someone is"

It is noteworthy that, in case of *bat'ono*+**FN**, word order matters; this is to say that the pattern **FN**+*bat'ono* occurs though it is a more intimate form of address and, hence, is to be explicated differently from *bat'ono*+**FN**. Following the established convention in NSM research, such forms

convey the message "I think about you like this: 'I know this someone'" (plus some other component), and not "I think about you like this: 'I know who this someone is.'" The component "I know who this someone is" confers a certain dignity upon the addressee, because it implies that this someone is 'somebody' (that is, someone special and perhaps someone important) (Wierzbicka, 2015, p. 8).

It should also be noted that there is no evidence of the use of its female counterpart: *****FN**+*kalbat'ono*.

(11) *kalbat'ono!*

Madam!

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

a. "I know that this someone is a woman but I do not know who this someone is"

b. "I know that this someone is a woman and I know who this someone is"

(11.1) *kalbat'ono*+**FN!**

Ms + FN!

(11.2) *kalbat'ono*+**Ttl!**

Madam + Ttl!

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

"I know that this someone is a woman and I know who this someone is"

This explication should be followed by necessary comments about the specific peculiarities of the form in question. When discussing the English form of address *Mrs*+LN, Wierzbicka (2015: 9) provides the following explication:

"This someone is someone of one kind, someone of this kind is a woman,

someone of this kind is someone's wife"

This kind of explication is in no way relevant for its Georgian counterpart, and this is not because the Georgian term is followed by FN rather than LN, but because it does not categorize an addressee with respect to her marital status; it is used to address female human beings of respective age and social status in respective social situations (in Georgian displays no opposition similar to the English Miss//Mrs).

The fact that (6) *bat'ono* and (11) *kalbat'ono* as individual terms of address and their combinations with either a first name ((6.1) *bat'ono*+FN and (11.1) *kalbat'ono*+FN) or a title ((6.2) *bat'ono*+Ttl and (11.2) *kalbat'ono*+Ttl) are translated differently into English is due not to their polysemic nature but rather to their meanings and uses in English; as Wierzbicka (2015, p. 11) states, "*Mr* can also be used without a surname, in address phrases such as "Mr President" and "Mr Speaker." As noted by most English dictionaries, this use, which has a counterpart in *Madam*, not in *Mrs*, is a different meaning of the word." One significant circumstance to be necessarily mentioned here is that none of the above cited bilingual dictionaries of Georgian (Tschenkéli, 1960, Rayfield, 2006) provides information about their combinability in respective entries.

Finally, based on the afore-established explications, the one for the reversible binomial forms for addressing an audience can be formulated as a sum of those for (6) *bat'ono* (1.) and (11) *kalbat'ono*; thus, the explication will be as follows:

(1) ***kalbat'onebo da bat'onebo!***

   'Ladies and gentlemen!'

(2) ***bat'onebo da kalbat'onebo!***

   'Ladies and gentlemen!'

when I say this to you, I think about you like this:

   a. "I know that these [someones] are women and men but I do not know who these someones are"

   b. "I know that these [someones] are women and men and I know who these someones are"

The only difference between the explications of individual terms and of the binomial form is that, with individual terms, the explication should be assumed as a. or b., whereas, with the binomial, as a. and/or b.

Once again, it should be emphasized that the explications are adequate for the both ordering patterns.

Conclusion

Terms and forms of address are not just structural items which can solely be interpreted as a certain autonomous module of language, firstly, because they constitute a great variety of lexical units pertaining to diverse parts of speech and a plethora of inflectional, derivational and compounding devices engaged in versatile combinations, secondly, because they are most closely linked to human relations being an inseparable part of ways of life of different communities, and, thirdly, because they

present meaning and use which usually carry some imprint of relevant historical experiences.

The fact that the Georgian form for addressing an audience as a case in point in the present paper occurs in two versions, two different word orders (female-before-male and male-before-female ordering patterns), is a likely unique phenomenon. Cross-linguistically, there are two major patterns of forms to address an audience, both of them being irreversible:

a. female-before-male pattern

Ladies and gentlemen (English)

Mesdames et messieurs (French)

Bayanlar ve baylar (Turkish)

Hölgyeim és uraim (Hungarian)

b. male-before-female pattern

Boneddigion a boneddigesauv (Welsh)

Tuan-tuan dan puan-puan (Malay)

Tompokolahy sy Tompokovavy (Malagasy)

Jaun-andreak (Basque)

Some may state that the Georgian form pertains to both patterns since it occurs in both orders ((1) and (2)); however, it is its reversibility that makes the form distinguished from those similar to the above cited ones: whether male-before-female or female-before-male patterns, they are irreversible at the present synchronic stage, no matter what their diachronic sources are.

The Georgian reversible binomial form of address has proved to be charged with historical and cultural information; when we look at the pathway of how it came to be as it is in our days, the aforementioned becomes more than evident. Its brightest illustration is (6) *bat'ono* as a core element of the form in question. Having started as a borrowed nobiliary term,[7] it lost its social status in the course of time and was generalized as a polite and gender-inclusive term of address; moreover, its pluralized form ((9) *bat'on.eb.o*) was used as a form for addressing an (mixed-gender) audience. Its gender-inclusive meanings and usage are still present in the language.

It is particularly significant that Natural Semantic Metalanguage as an approach for analysis of the Georgian reversible binomial form of address and its constituent terms has proven to be an effective framework to track language-specific meanings and respective usages (even those that are not presented in dictionaries) and to decompose them "into configurations of simple concepts that are shared across languages […] in intelligible sentences of ordinary language, not in artificial formalisms" (Wierzbicka, 2015, p. 7). Its another advantage is that, in doing so, the NSM-based analysis did not obscure language-specific meanings but rather highlighted them. This is a first-ever attempt of treating

---

[7] It was Gerhard Deeters (1926, p. 81) who for the first time indicated that the word was borrowed from Latin; later, the prominent Georgian phonetician Giorgi Akhvlediani (1965, p. 21) provided details of its phonetic and semantic transformations.

Z. Kikvidze, *A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics:*
A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian

22, 2023

pp. 10-24

Georgian forms and terms of address within this framework; therefore, some shortcomings are likely to occur. However, the present study definitely provides some foundation for would- and should-be investigations of similar phenomena.

In her paper which has immensely influenced the present one, Anna Wierzbicka (2015) quotes Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1953, p. 222) following remark: "A whole cloud of philosophy condensed in a drop of grammar;" based on the investigation of some terms of address within the framework of Natural Semantic Metalanguage, she adapted the remark as: "A whole cloud of culture condensed into a drop of semantics" (Wierzbicka, 2015, p. 2). Based on the peculiarities of the phenomena discussed in the present chapter, my adaptation will be a somewhat complemented version of the latter and thus be worded in the following way: "A whole cloud of history, culture and society condensed into a drop of semantics."

References

Abuladze, L. & Ludden, A. 2013. The Vocative in Georgian. In B. Sonnenhauser & P. Noel Aziz Hanna (eds.), *Vocative! Addressing between System and Performance*, (pp. 25-42). Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Apridonidze, S. 1991. Literary and dialectal forms of address in Georgian. *Studia Linguistica, 45 (1/2)*, 136-145.

Akhvlediani, G. (1965). Sit'q'vas ecvleba mnišvneloba [A word changes its meaning]. *Sakartvelos kali [Georgian Woman], 5*, 21.

Boeder, W. (1985). Zur Grammatik des Vokativs in den Kartwelsprachen. In U. Pieper & G. Stickel (eds.), *Studia Linguistica. Diachronica et Synchronica. Werner Winter Sexagenario Anno MCMLXXXIII gratis animis ab eius collegis, amicis discipuliske oblata*, (55-80). Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: De Gruyter Mouton.

Braun, F. (1988). *Terms of Address: Problems of Patterns and Usage in Various Languages and Cultures*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Deeters, G. (1926). Armenisch und Südkaukasisch. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Sprachmischung. *Caucasica, 3*, 37-82.

Keser, B. M. & Pachulia, L. (2021). Gürcüce-Türkçe Nezaket ve Hitap Kullanımındaki Benzerlikler ve Farklılıklar. *Manisa Celal Bayar University Journal of Social Sciences, 19/2*, 155-170.

Gamkrelidze, Th. V. & Ivanov, V. V. (2010). *Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans: A reconstruction and historical analysis of a proto-language and a proto-culture*. Berlin & New York: De Gruyter Mouton.

Kajaia, O. (2002). *Megrul-kartuli leksik'omi [Megrelian-Georgian dictionary]*, Vol. 2. Tbilisi: Nekeri.

Kaladze, T. (1984). Saxel-mamisaxelobiti mimartvis šesaxeb kartulši [On the first name+patronymic

address in Georgian]. *Kartulis sit'q'vis k'ult'uris sak'itxebi [Issues in the Culture of the Georgian Word], 6*, 309-329.

Kikvidze, Z. (2011). The rule-governed word-order in Georgian copulative compounds: Prosodic and phonotactic factors. Paper presented at the *Conference on Caucasian Languages*, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig; 13-15 May. Available from: Available at: https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/conference/2011_caucasian_languages/pdf/Kikvidze.pdf　[last access 5 August, 2023]

Kikvidze, Z. (2015). *Essays in Sociolinguistics*. Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University Press.

Kikvidze, Z. & Tchantouria, R. (2003). Joint Parameterization of Honorifics and Terms of Address in Kartvelian Languages. In D. De Jongh, H. Zeevat & M. Nilsenová (eds.), *Proceedings of the 3rd and 4th International Symposium on Language, Logic and Computation*, (53-57). Amsterdam: ILLC Scientific Publications.

Kiziria, A. (1963). Mimartva ʒvel kartulši [Address in Old Georgian]. *Kartvelur enata st'rukt'uris sak'itxebi [Issues in the Structure of the Kartvelian Languages], 3*, 19-27.

Kumar, D. (2012). *Investigating the Feasibility of a Combined Model for Adjective and Binomial Ordering*. Cambridge: St Edmund's College, University of Cambridge, Ph.D Dissertation.

Levidze, M. (2019). Terms of endearment in Georgian: Ethnolinguistic analysis of verb forms of address. *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics, 5/2*, 76-80.

Marchant, J. R. V. & Charles, J. F. (1953). *Cassell's Latin Dictionary. Latin-English and English-Latin*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.

Mikaberidze, A. (2007). *Historical Dictionary of Georgia*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.

Mollin, S. (2013). Pathways of change in the diachronic development of binomial reversibility in Late Modern American English. *Journal of English Linguistics, 41/2*, 168-203.

Narsia, E. (2014). Anredeformen im Deutschen und Georgischen – ein kontrastiver Vergleich. In I.-A. Busch-Lauer (ed.), *Kaleidoskop der Kulturen 2: Begegnungen mit Sprachen und Kulturen*, (89-99). Berlin: Frank & Timme.

Orbeliani, S.-S. (1884). *Kartuli leksik'oni [Georgian Lexicon]*. Tbilisi: Arsen Kalandadze & Co.

Rayfield, D. (ed.). (2006). *A comprehensive Georgian-English dictionary*. London: Garnett Press.

Romaine, S. (2000). *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rukhadze, N. (2005). Tavazianobis sak'itxi da mimartvis pormebi inglisur, kartul da rusul enebši [The problem of politeness and forms of address in the English, Georgian and Russian languages]. *Saenatmecniero ʒiebani [Linguistic Papers], 20*, 186-197.

Rusieshvili, M. (2011). Modes of Address Between Female Staff in Georgian Professional Discourse: Medical and Academic Contexts. In F. Bargiela-Chiappini & D. Kádár (eds.), *Politeness Across Cultures*, (149-168). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sonnenhauser, B. & Noel Aziz Hanna, P. (eds.). (2013). *Vocative! Addressing between System and Performance*. Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Toumanoff, C. (1951). The Fifteenth-Century Bagratids and the Institution of Collegial Sovereignty

Z. Kikvidze, *A whole cloud of history, culture and society and a drop of semantics: A reversible binomial as a form of address in Georgian*

\# 22, 2023

pp. 10-24

in Georgia. *Traditio, 7*, 169-221.

Tschenkéli, K. (1960). *Georgisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Bearbeitet von Y. Marchev. Zürich: Amirani-Verlag.

Wierzbicka, A. (1972). *Semantic Primitives*. Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum-Verlag.

Wierzbicka, A. (2015). A whole cloud of culture condensed into a drop of semantics: The meaning of the German word *Herr* as a term of address. *International Journal of Language and Culture, 2/1*, 1-37.

Wierzbicka, A. (2021). "Semantic Primitives", fifty years later. *Russian Journal of Linguistics, 25/2*, 317-342.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations* (trans. by Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe; ed. by G. E. M. Anscombe & R. Rhees). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.