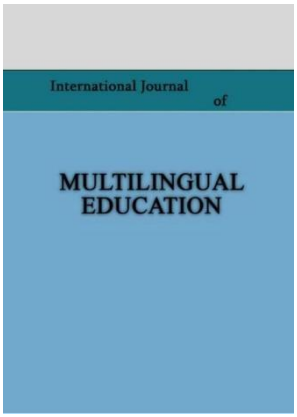

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Linguopolitological Analysis of Thematical Speeches by Georgian Politicians (Ukraine Thema in Georgian Politician discourse)

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Linguopolitological Analysis of Thematical Speeches by Georgian Politicians (Ukraine Thema in Georgian Politician discourse)[1]

ABSTRACT

The development of modern technologies has led to improved scientific activities. A complex use of the traditional and innovative methods of research offers broad opportunities for the analysis of topical issues from diverse viewpoints. The paper is an attempt of linguopolitological analysis of topical issues like political communication in general and the speeches of Georgian politicians in particular. Modern technologies offer the opportunity to observe the linguistic behavior of politicians. Hence, different aspects of political speech have fallen within the focus of scholars. The gender issue is among these aspects because it is extremely important to carry out the research of the dynamics of activities of female politicians and identify the linguistic peculiarities of speeches of female politicians as compared to those of male ones.

The necessity for gender research of oral Georgian political speech is due to several factors. It should be mentioned that in the past two decades the number of female members of Parliament has increased significantly in Georgia. The regulations of the 10th Parliamentary elections of Georgia in 2021 underline that 1 out of every 4 candidates in the party lists should be female.[2] Active involvement of female politicians has changed the political culture and improved the environment that used to be affected by gender stereotypes.

The aim of the paper is to implement gender research of oral Georgian political speech using a new method – linguopolitological analysis. On the one hand, this will enable complex research of the language means used in political speeches. On the other hand, the research will identify the relationship between political speeches and political processes.

Key words: *political linguistics; linguopolitological analysis, gender.*

Introduction

Political speech is an object of political science, sociology, conflictology, psychology, history and social sciences. It is also an object of linguistic research, because the linguistic behavior of politicians is studied on the basis of linguistic analysis of their speech.

[1] This research was supported by „Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG) [YS-22-348]“.

[2] See Paragraph 2, Article 203 of “The Georgian Election Code”.

In the beginning of the past century, the works of W. Lippmann, H. Lasswell and P. Lazarsfeld prepared grounds for a new interdisciplinary direction – **political linguistics.** This field was further developed in Armin Burkhardt's work „Politolinguistik. Versuch einer Ortsbestimmung" published in 1996. Political linguistics studies the mechanisms, strategy and technique of political communication on the language level and analyzes their influence on the society.

Political discourse is a multidisciplinary field; hence, it is an object of interdisciplinary research. In oral political speech, the lexical and structural means are selected deliberately, with the aim of obtaining and/or preserving political power. Oral political speech, as a means of influence on the society, is efficiently used by politicians as well as other people who discuss political issues. Hence, research of political speech is extremely important for the analysis of linguistic behavior and its influence on the society. It should be noted that in the process of research of political discourse, special significance is attached to extralinguistic factors such as background knowledge of the speaker and hearer, the existing political situation and so on. Therefore, as Van Dijk notes, "analysis of political discourse should not be confined to the structural peculiarities of text and speech. It is also important to take into consideration the context and its relation with the discourse structures" (Dijk, 2006, p. 377).

In Georgia, scientific analysis of political communication started in the 21st century. Currently, numerous scholarly papers in Georgian and foreign languages have been published in this field. However, political linguistics is still in the process of development and there is a need for large-scale theoretical research as well as the improvement of methods and approaches (Tandashvili, Tsetskhladze 2023).

Systemic research of the Georgian political speech, collection of empirical resources for digital research and development of technologies in this direction are implemented by **the Academy of Digital Humanities - Georgia**. With this aim, there is a publication of series **"Oral Georgian Political Discourse – A Collection of Political Texts"**. Until now, four volumes of the series have been published. They offer texts of political talk shows, speeches of MPs, pre-election speeches of members of Parliament and local governance bodies and their linguopolitological analysis.

Linguistic behaviour in general, and political speech in particular, is distinguished by a high degree of motivation. The reason for this is that the speeches of politicians, as a rule, are aimed at persuasion of the hearers, obtaining of their favourable attitude and increase of the political rating. Thus, political speeches represent a specific type of communicative act – **persuasive act** (Tandashvili, 2020, p.15). On the one hand, linguopolitological analysis of political speech aims to research the linguistic means of manipulation used by politicians. On the other hand, it aims to identify the linguistic peculiarities

of political speech and create their language profile. The methodological framework of linguopolitological analysis has been successfully used recently for the analysis of political platforms and pre-election debates on the media (Khakhutaishvili 2022, Tsetskhladze 2022, Tandashvili 2022).

According to Burkhardt, political language includes not only the language used by politicians in specific situations, but also a) the language used when expressing one's opinion regarding politics in printed media or oral speech (in the election period, at demonstrations, during a political crisis etc.) and b) the speech used in political media (talk shows, debates, political statements and so on) (Burkhardt, 1996, p. 81). Based on linguopolitological analysis, the paper focuses on the media speeches of Georgian politicians made in 2022 regarding the theme of Ukraine. The theme of Ukraine was selected due to the topicality of the issue. We have also taken into account gender balance. Hence, we have selected two male and two female Georgian politicians: Giorgi Gakharia, Giga Bokeria, Eka Kherkheulidze and Tina Khidasheli.

Gender-based research of oral Georgian political speech is conditioned by the fact that in the past two decades the number of female MPs has increased significantly. The regulation of the 10th Parliamentary elections in 2021 underlines that one of every four candidates in the party lists should be female. Thus, the number of female politicians has increased. Nowadays they play an important role in Georgian politics. Therefore, it is necessary to research the gender peculiarities of the Georgian political speech. Research has proved that the differences in the speeches of male and female politicians, as well as differences in the speeches of the representatives of the governing party and the opposition, underline the significance of gender and political position in the research of political speech. The above-mentioned factors influence not only the selection of linguistic and rhetorical strategies, but also the involvement and persuasion of the audience by the speakers (Tsetskhladze, Kamarauli 2024, p.193).

Methodology

The research is based on the traditional methods (statistical, quantitative and qualitative analyses of the empirical data) and theoretical approach, as well as corpus linguistic analysis of the empirical material (linguopolitological analysis) aimed at systemic processing of the resources.

The selection of texts was, above all, based on the balance of political orientation and gender. We have equally analyzed the texts of the representatives of the governing party and the opposition, male and female politicians. With the aim of balanced content, we have selected thematically similar resources.

Outcomes and Arguments

1.1. Quantitative Analysis

In order to implement quantitative analysis, we have applied the method of automatic processing of the text, namely, indexation program KWIC[3], which enables efficient research of the contextual meanings of words and the token-type ratio in the text (TTR), the frequency of usage of parts of speech (nouns, verbs, pronouns and adjectives) and functional elements.

1.1.1. Token-Type Ratio

A token "is the smallest constituent element of the corpus. In traditional linguistics, its correlate term is a "word-form". **A type** is "a unit of corpus linguistics used for statistical purposes and, as a rule, equal to n-token" (Tandashvili, Kamarauli, 202, p.125).

Token-Type-Ratio is a ratio between the number of words and the number of types. High index of the token-type ratio means that the speaker uses diverse lexical units. Low ratio means that the speaker has poor vocabulary and often repeats the same words and phrases.

Table1. The statistics of TTR in the speech of selected politicians

	Token	**Type**	**TTR**
Giga Bokeria	1226	652	0.53%
Gioegi Gakharia	3669	1401	0.38%
Tina Khidasheli	1550	807	0.52%
Eka Kherkheulidze	925	474	0.51%

As the statistics of TTR in the Table above has proved, in Giga Bokeria's speech, there are 1226 tokens and 652 types, TTR index is 0,53 %; in Giorgi Gakharia's speech, there are 3669 tokens and 1401 types, and TTR comprises 0,38 %; in Tina Khidasheli's speech, there are 1550 tokens and 807 types, hence, the TTR is 0, 53%; in Eka Kherkheulidze's speech, there are 925 tokens and 474 types, whereas the TTR comprises 0,51 %. Based on this statistics, we have revealed the peculiarities of speech of the selected politicians. In particular, high index of TTR points to ample information, diversity of themes (topics) and lexical diversity, while low index of TTR points to dominant style of speech and frequent usage of forms belonging to the informal style.

[3] http://nuchs-corpus.japanwest.cloudapp.azure.com/kwic/.

1.1.2. Functional Elements

In the process of statistical analysis of political speech, it is important to define the ratio of lexical and functional elements.

A functional element is a unit devoid of lexical meaning. In general, such elements are frequently used in the text. The ratio of functional elements and lexical elements in the analysed texts is statistically different. High ratio of functional elements points to poor vocabulary, lack of clarity and excessive expressiveness of the speaker. The table provides statistical data regarding 5 most frequently used functional elements in the speeches of the selected politicians.

Table 2. The Statistics of Functional Elements

	Giga Bokeria	**Giorgi Gakharia**	**Tina Khidasheli**	**Eka Kherkheulidze**
Token	1226	3669	1550	925
Functional elements	and (55)	and (143)	and (55)	that (40)
	that (43)	that (126)	that (51)	and (34)
	No/not (33)	No/not/neither (101)	No/not (41)	No/not/neither (29)
	yes (19)	here (31)	If/ in case (11)	because (14)
	or (10)	if (18)	or (6)	here (5)
∑	160	419	164	122

As the data in the Table above have proved, politicians frequently use the functional elements: **and, that, no/not**. Giga Bokeria, Giorgi Gakharia and Tina Khidasheli use the word **and** most frequently. Eka Kherkheulidze uses **that** more frequently than **and** or other functional elements. The functional element **that** is dominant in the speech of other politicians as well. This is due to the fact that politicians often use explanatory sentences. It is also interesting to note the frequent use of the functional element **no/not,** which is amply found in the speeches of both male and female politicians.

Statistical data have proved that politicians use the particle **არ (not)** more frequently than the particle **ვერ (can't)**. In Tina Khidasheli's speech, the particle **არ (not)** is used 37 times, whereas **ვერ (can't)** is used only 3 times. In Eka Kherkheulidze's speech, the particle **არ (not)** is used 24 times, whereas **ვერ (can't)** is used only once. As for the male politicians, Giorgi Gakharia uses the particle **არ** (not) 81 times and **ვერ (can't)** only 11 times. Giga Bokeria mentions the particle **არ (not)** 23 times

and **ვერ (can't)** only 3 times.

We have also analyzed the frequency of use of the particles **არ (not)/ვერ (can't)** with verbs. In Giorgi Gakharia's speech, the particle **არ (not)** is found together with the modal particle **უნდა (must)** 11 times, and, in each concrete example, it is used for urging the hearer: **არ უნდა მივცეთ (we must not give), არ უნდა იყოს (there must not be), არ უნდა დაგვავიწყდეს (we must not forget)...**

For instance:

(1)**We must not** let anyone involve us in the war...

(2)**We must not** let anyone isolate Georgia.

(3)Our unity is of supreme importance, and the citizens of Georgia **must not** forget this...

The modal verb **შეიძლება, expressing permission** is often used with the particle **არ (not).** This combination is found 5 times in Gakharia's text in the meaning of prohibition or criticism:

(4)**We cannot allow** such degree of opposition and heat; we should not apply to protest march because our enemy is waiting for this.

(5)No, today it is impossible, today, when there are critical problems of security, economy, I don't know, problems of identity and independence, **we cannot allow** everything to turn around Misha Saakashvili.

(6)Oh, come on, people, **we cannot allow this**.

The use of the particle **ვერ (can't)** with the verbs in the future tense expresses either forecast or evaluation:

(7) The government based on authoritarian principle **can't** become part of the European family;

(8) They permanently try to prove that we are a small nation. We should be quiet, we are an object of politics and we **can't** become a subject.

In Giga Bokeria's speech, the particle **არ (not)** is used 26 times. In most cases (4 times), this particle is used with an auxiliary verb and expresses assumption, prediction or fact.

Assumption, prediction:

(9)**It is not** excluded in conditions of such dictatorship as Putin's that one failure will destroy the entire system;

Fact:

(10) **This is not** just a guarantee or a legal obligation, it is a fact that any regime in Russia is threatened by physical annihilation...

(11) If you observe their propaganda, it **is not hidden;**

(12) It is a fact that he has failed. This **is not just my conclusion.**

Bokeria uses the particle **ვერ (can't)** only three times, expressing either evaluation or fact:

(13) This is a dangerous Empire of Evil, led by an insane person. **I can't** predict when he decides to implement another aggressive act against Ukraine and its people, against the free world. I have no data regarding this;

(14) I assume that they may say: there have been declarations, but they **can't protect** Ukraine;

(15) It will be wonderful, it will be great, but, as a citizen and politician, **I can't rely on this,** and I should not.

In Tina Khidasheli's interview, the particle **არ (not)** is used 40 times. This particle is used with the modal particle **უნდა (must)** three times, expressing urging or evaluation (contrast):

(16) We **must not forget** a very important element permanently mentioned by President Zelensky, the negotiators, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and everyone else;

(17) With regard to the attack on Ukraine, **we must not forget** complete armament, military forces and the closing of the sky;

(18) In fact, **I must not** talk about this in your program. Instead of me, the Foreign Minister should be sitting here.

Fact:

(19) There **are not any people thinking** about the Czech Republic, Hungary or Slovakia**;**

(20) He **does not do** anything else...

Prediction, assumption:

(21) This **will not be enough** for the decrease or termination of sanctions;

(22) I am absolutely confident that, until the last moment, when the army is withdrawn, the territories in question **will not be returned, if this is not ensured** on the legal level.

The particle **ვერ (can't)** is used three times, expressing either facts or forecast:

(23) Due to the problem of Crimea, which was so hard for Turkey to digest, or Turkey still **can't digest**;

(24) Naturally, there **can't be** any agreement unless Russia retreats;

(25) They **can't understand** that at least half a million citizens of this country have been refused.

In Eka Kherkheulidze's speech, the particle **არ (not)** is found 24 times, mostly expressing concrete facts and events and containing evaluation:

(26) **I do not know** the thoughts of the Georgian government, because **we do not know** the position of the Georgian authorities. I do not know who they support in this war;

(27) The ambitions of the Russian army and the interests of the Kremlin were completely different. On the 34th day, he decided to withdraw the troops from Kiev. I think, this agreement is very important. It is unclear whether or not Russia will stick to this agreement, because there **is not** any experience regarding betrayal;

(28) Whoever is interested in the future of our country should also be interested in Georgia's position. However, Georgia **does not have a position,** nobody can say for certain, what is Georgia's position today...

The particle **ვერ (can't)** is used only once:

(29) Georgia's current position **can't be distinguished** clearly...

The analysis of frequency of functional elements points to different styles of speech of male and female politicians and the use of different strategies of influencing the audience. Statistical analysis of functional elements, in particular, the particles **ვერ (can't)/არა (no)/არ (not)** has proved that politicians use the particle **ვერ (can't)** very rarely. This points to their political behaviour. The particle **ვერ (can't)** is used to denote the absence of ability. Politicians find it hard to admit their inability. Therefore, they avoid using such functional elements.

In addition to the functional elements, we have analyzed the length of sentences used by politicians. Research has proved[4] that the average length of sentences used by politicians in their speeches is different, namely: Giga Bokeria - 20.8; Giorgi Gakharia - 19.0; Tina Khidasheli - 23.9, and Eka Kherkheulidze - 19.0. This difference points to the differences in the culture of political speech and peculiarities of the speakers.

2.1. Frequency of Use of Lexical Units

Out of lexical units, we have selected verbs and nouns. Besides, we have analyzed the frequency of use of the pronouns "I' and "my".

2.1.1 Frequently Used Verbs

Both in written and oral political speech, verbs perform specific functions and serve specific aims. In this regard, of special interest is the use of the verb **"to be"** by male and female politicians. As a rule, members of the opposition often use the verb-form **"is".** In our research, both male and female

[4] The material has been analyzed using Voyant – a tool for the statistical analysis of the text.

politicians make the most frequent use of the verbs **"to be"** and **"to say"**.

Table 3. Index of most frequently used verbs

Giga Bokeria	**Giorgi Gakharia**	**Tina Khidasheli**	**Eka Kherkheulidze**
is 12	is 42	is 17	is 20
Will be 11	happens 19	say 9	say 8
say 4	say 15	talk 7	was 7
thank 2	move 6	are 5	negotiate 2
press 2	talk 3	thank 2	agree 2

2.1.2. Frequently Used Nouns

The selected politicians frequently use the following nouns:

Giga Bokeria: Ukraine (8), Putin (8), evil (4), danger (4), authority (4), guarantee (3), Europe (3), failure (3), propaganda (3), bloodshed (3), armament (3), Georgia (3).

Giorgi Gakharia: Georgia (32), government (27), country (13), security (9), problem (7), Giorgi (7), Ukraine (7), plan (6), choice (6), right (6).

Tina Khidasheli: America (6), Minister (5), Ukraine (4), country (4), NATO (3), President (3), Inga (3).

Eka Kherkheulidze: position (12), Georgia (10), authority (6), day (5), human (4), country (2), government (2).

Analysis of the empirical data shows that Giorgi Gakharia and Tina Khidasheli frequently use proper names (Gakharia: Giorgi – 7 times; Khidasheli: Inga – 3 times) referring to their interviewers. This means that the relation between the respondent and the journalist is informal. This is a widespread form of linguistic communicative strategy and it is considered as a means of manipulation.

Besides, it should be noted that all the four politicians speak about Ukraine, therefore, they often mention this country and the nouns related to war. Giga Bokeria uses the words "Ukraine" and "Putin" with equal frequency. He also uses equal number of the following words: evil, danger, authority, guarantee, Europe, failure, propaganda, bloodshed, armament and Georgia. In his interview, he expresses empathy towards the events in Ukraine. This is proved by the frequently used lexical units. Putin, evil, danger, bloodshed, propaganda and failure are nouns of negative connotation used by the politician with regard to the Russian regime.

Giorgi Gakharia's position differs from that of other politicians. He tries to analyze the situation subsequently and be neutral in his evaluation of both positive and negative events related to the discussed issue. When he talks about the war, he frequently uses the following nouns: Georgia, government, country. With almost equal frequency, he uses the nouns: security, problem, Ukraine, plan, choice and right. In this way, he expresses his position and opinion. One of the peculiarities of Gakharia's speech is frequent usage of proper nouns (he often mentions "Giorgi" when he addresses the interviewer). This is a strategy of expression of informal relationship with the addressee. This strategy is not applied by Giga Bokeria or Eka Kherkheulidze. Tina Khidasheli does apply this strategy, but very rarely.

As for the speeches of Tina Khidasheli and Eka Kherkheulidze, statistics has proved that they focus on foreign policy; hence, they often use the nouns: America, NATO, position.

2.1.3. Pronouns "I' and "my"

Table 4. Pronouns "I' and "my"

	Giga Bokeria	**Giorgi Gakharia**	**Tina Khidasheli**	**Eka Kherkheulidze**
Token	1226	3669	1550	925
I	13	61	7	11
My	5	30	2	1

Analysis of the data has proved that the male politicians use the pronoun "I" more frequently than the female ones. This must be due to the focus on their own opinion and dominant personal positions, firmness in their speech and influence on the audience. Giorgi Gakharia uses the pronoun "I" most frequently - 61 times; Giga Bokeria – 13 times, Eka Kherkheulidze – 11 times, and Tina Khidasheli – 7 times. It should be noted that the selected female politicians rarely use the pronoun "my"**.** Tina Khidasheli uses it only twice, and Eka Kherkheulidze uses it only once. As it seems, in their interviews, the female politicians do not express their own positions and strategies. In this way, they establish simple and direct communication with the audience and try to achieve emotional impact. In the speeches of the female politicians, the pronouns "I' and "my" are quite rare. This is sign of objectivity or lack of egocentricity.

Below are given examples of the use of the pronouns **I** and **My** by each of the selected politicians:

Giga Bokeria

- **I - 11 examples:**
  - I don't think so;
  - I can't make a forecast;
  - I am saying this on my part;
  - I assume;
  - I know;
  - I am not accusing;
  - I quote;
  - I am not blaming;
  - I am afraid so, and it will be great if I am mistaken.

- **My - 4 examples:**
  - It is not my conclusion;
  - I am saying this on my part;
  - In my opinion, this is very important;
  - In my opinion, it can mean...

Tina Khidasheli

- **I - 6 examples:**
  - I can see that it is difficult;
  - I should not be talking about this in your program;
  - If I were in the government;
  - I have always supported;
  - I am of the opinion that…;
  - I am filled with hope.

- **My - 2 examples:**
  - In my opinion, there are several important issues;
  - Despite my great respect.

Eka Kherkheulidze

- **I - 6 examples:**
  - I think, his analysis is very important;
  - I don't understand;
  - I think, this agreement is very important;
  - I don't know what the Georgian government thinks;
  - I really don't know. I am expressing my position;
  - I mean victory from the political viewpoint.

- **My - 1 example:**
  - This is my sincere attitude.

Giorgi Gakharia

- **I – 15 examples:**
  - What I have said;
  - I can;
  - I want to tell you one thing;
  - I will enumerate;
  - I can't find a proper word for this;
  - In conclusion, I would like to mention;
  - I would like to ask you.

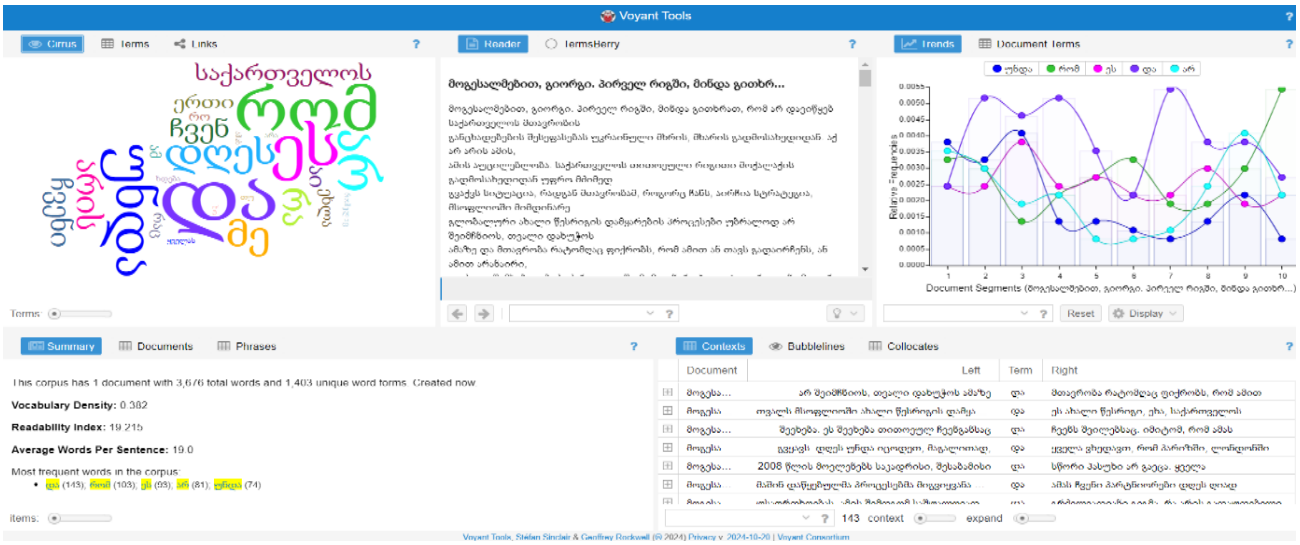
- **We - 10 examples:**
  - We watch;
  - We do not communicate;
  - We should understand;
  - We have paid the price with our own blood;
  - We are told;
  - We should be aware of the fact;
  - We cannot move forward;
  - Look here, we should distinguish;
  - We all communicate with our European colleagues;
  - We should do our best.

3. Visualization - Voyant

Voyant Tools[5] is a tool for processing linguistic data. It "is a tool for online statistical analysis of the text and visualization" (Khalvashi, 2018, p.128). This tool enables analyze texts from different viewpoints. As a result of statistical analysis of the text, it can interpret the supplied text based on various parameters.

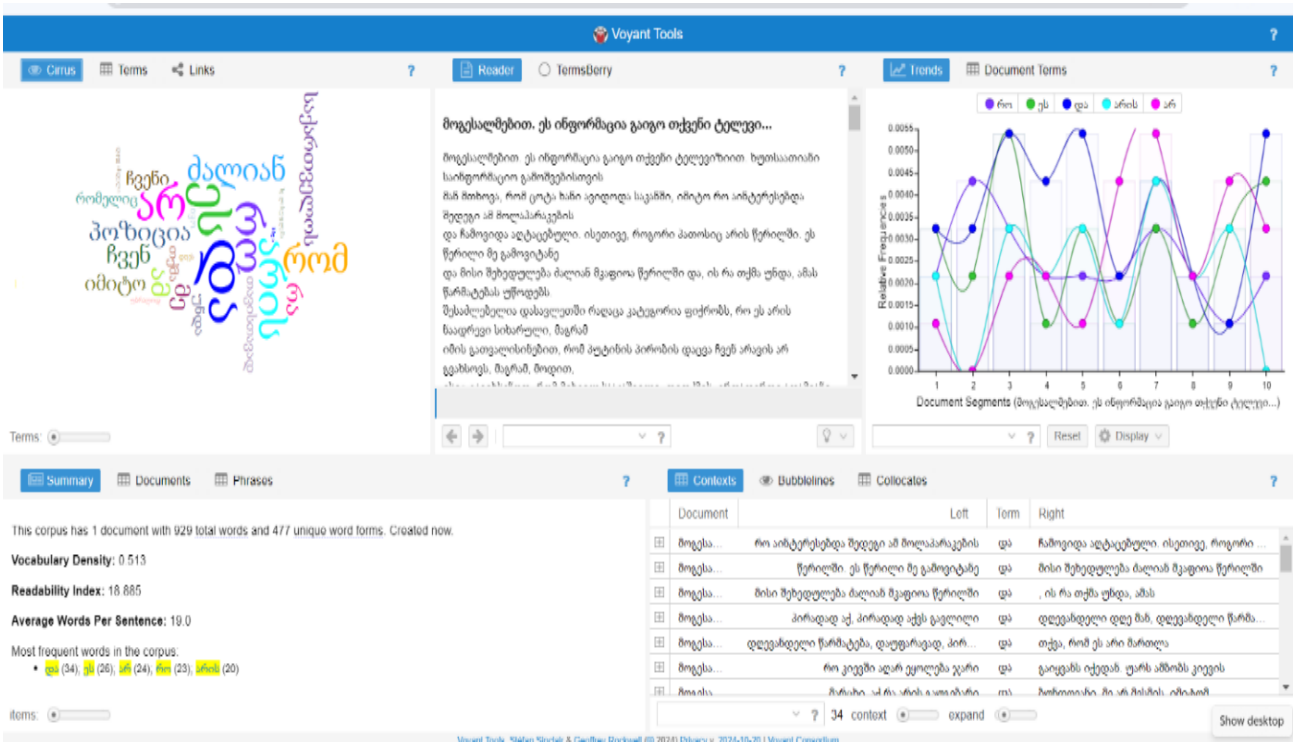
Picture 1. Giga Bokeria

Picture 2. Giorgi Gakharia

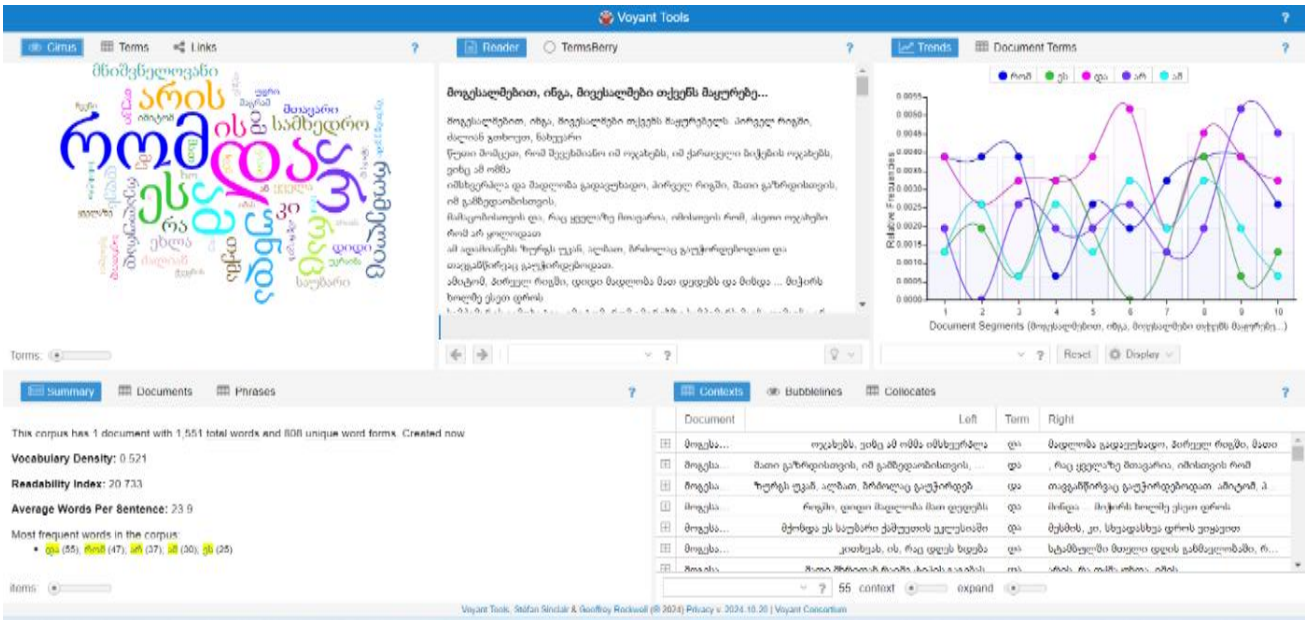


[5] https://voyant-tools.org/

Picture 3. Eka Kherkheulidze



Picture 4. Tina Khidasheli



Analysis has proved that the index of reading of sentences differs among the male and female politicians, namely, Giga Bokeria - 18.2; Giorgi Gakharia - 19.2; Eka Kherkheulidze - 18.8, Tina Khidasheli - 20.7.

As for the density of the sentence, there is a notable difference. In case of Giorgi Gakharia, it is 0.3, in case of Giga Bokeria, it is 0.5, while the statistical data regarding the female politicians are

equal. In both cases, they comprise 0.5. The low index of reading of sentences and a large number of short sentences in the speeches of the male politicians point to their style of communication: they prefer their speeches to be clear and comprehensible.

The differences in the speeches of the male and female politicians have proved the importance of gender and political position in the process of linguistic analysis. These factors prove that politicians attach priority to the involvement of the society and persuasion of the audience.

Conclusion

Thus, based on the empirical data, we can conclude that there are significant differences in the speech of the male and female politicians. These differences are caused by gender, the discussed themes and political orientation. Female politicians mostly use short, laconic sentences in an attempt to express their opinions clearly and vividly. Male politicians prefer more complex constructions. Besides, they often use first person singular pronouns for the purpose of personalization; they focus on personal abilities and attempt to establish personal contacts.

Frequent usage of first person pronouns by male politicians (Gakharia - 25, Bokeria - 15) is caused by their wish to establish personal relations with the audience. Low statistics of usage of first person pronouns by the female politicians (Khidasheli - 8, Kherkheulidze - 7) points to collectiveness and lack of egocentrism. This is a kind of strategy and their style of communication.

Unlike the male politicians, female politicians avoid words of negative connotation. Besides, the female politicians ground their arguments on present-day facts and events. Their criticism also refers to the current period. However, the male politicians often criticize the existing situation and focus on future improvements. This might be a marker of their speech strategy.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the discourse of representatives of various professions differs in structure, content and goals. Besides, the differences in the discourse are due to the differences in the target audience. Therefore, when analyzing any professional discourse, especially the discourse of politicians, we should take into account the background knowledge of the speaker and hearer, the common cultural space, the existing political situation and other factors.

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