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**DISCOURSE AND PRAGMATIC MARKERS
IN AMERICAN AND GEORGIAN
PRE-ELECTION DISCOURSE**

1. INTRODUCTION

Political actions heavily rely on the use of language, whether in speeches, articles, press conferences, or peace negotiations. Language is crucial in transforming political will and power into social governance, making it a central medium for political actions. Politics can be interpreted either narrowly, as the actions of powerful institutions, or more broadly, as the interdependence of various groups, including these institutions, within a society. Similarly, political language can be narrowly defined as the language used by political institutions to conduct business, to communicate with other institutions, and to engage with society. Broadly, it can be understood as the discourse produced by societal groups dealing with issues of power and governance. Both definitions apply to the study of political language, particularly when analysed through corpora.

Politicians use spoken language as a tool to gain and maintain power. Through language, they express power, convey their political views, and persuade listeners of the necessity of particular political actions. Political

discourse is a genre confined to the political sphere, characterised by a specific linguistic thesaurus with defined functions and purposes aimed at impacting society. This function is powerful in pre-election discussions, when persuading people to support a candidate or a party is crucial for the success of any political campaign.

To be persuasive and influential, a speaker must engage listeners on both intellectual and emotional levels. Additionally, the speaker should convey a positive character and show respect for the audience. Politicians address various social groups in political interactions, which can elicit different reactions. Van Dijk (2015) emphasises that "...various types of discourse structure may influence the formation and change of mental models and social representations. If dominant groups, especially their elites, largely control public discourse and its structures, they thus also have more control over the minds of the public at large" (Van Dijk, 2015: 358).

The primary function of a political discourse is to influence people's minds. Additional sub-functions should also be mentioned:

1. Identification function (integration and differentiation): Language serves as a "unifying symbol", strengthening group identity in contrast to others.
2. Management function: Politicians purposefully and strategically use linguistic means (morpho-syntactic and lexical units) to manage the audience's attention, thoughts, and behaviors. Matchavariani (2020) highlights that language becomes a key component of political propaganda, especially during pre-election campaigns, when public opinion management is vital.

The discourse and pragmatic markers intersect in interesting ways when it comes to influencing listeners in a political discourse. Discourse markers are multi-category language units that are not essential for a sentence but help to organise the discourse effectively. Pragmatic markers, on the other hand, are "short" language units with minimal meaning and no clear grammatical function. While they are also not mandatory, their use from a pragmatic standpoint aids speakers in managing a discourse.

The use of a discourse and pragmatic markers plays an essential role in politicians' speeches, as their main goal is to maintain semantic and pragmatic coherence, express mental and emotional states, and execute speech acts. A political campaign aims to inform and persuade people, making the study of politicians' linguistic strategies highly relevant for linguists.

Schiffrin (2001) and Fraser (1996) describe discourse and pragmatic markers as essential for managing a discourse, for organising information, and engaging the audience. These markers serve textual functions – connecting discourse elements – and interpersonal functions – expressing speaker attitudes. This framework positions discourse and pragmatic markers as tools for emotional and rhetorical influence in political communication.

Political discourse is a social process in which politicians use various linguistic units to lend credibility to their speeches and to establish successful communication with the public. Statements made during a pre-election campaign aim to convince the public of the correctness of the politician's discourse and to secure the majority of votes.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Corpus linguistic research examines the linguistic features used by specific political groups through the analysis of a collection of texts. This method explores the language structures that politicians employ to express politically relevant ideas, to achieve specific objectives, and to fulfil particular goals (Partington, 2012). Corpus-based approaches (CBA) are commonly used to analyse written and spoken texts.

The key characteristics of the research are:

- The empirical nature of corpus linguistics is emphasised, focusing on authentic pre-election speeches from Georgian and American politicians.
- Both quantitative and qualitative methods are employed to analyse discourse markers in the speeches, considering their frequency (quantitative) and their pragmatic roles (qualitative).
- Corpus-based research is empirical, concentrating on the selected pre-election speeches of American and Georgian politicians that highlight the emotions and intentions of the speakers.

The analysed corpora consist of similar text types and proportions to ensure valid comparisons. The texts were chosen from Internet sources, comprising 56 examples from Georgian political speeches and 56 examples from speeches by American politicians. A core feature of this approach is its reliance on the authentic language, using large, systematically organised collections of written and spoken texts for analysis. We started our corpus

research by collecting texts to obtain specific information and insights. The texts of speeches were selected from prominent Georgian and American politicians whose opinions significantly influenced voters and whose speeches were characterised by expressiveness and the use of discourse markers.

Table 1. Selected pre-election speeches of Georgian and American politicians

Speeches of Georgian politicians	Speeches of American politicians
Kakha Kaladze • Interview about the Parliamentary Elections 2024	Joe Biden • Joe Biden's acceptance speech, 2020 • Campaign speech, Atlanta, Georgia, October 27, 2020 • Criticism of House GOP budget proposals, 2023 • State of the Union Address as Prepared for Delivery, 2023
Irakli Garibashvili • "Elections 2021" • Speech on Georgia's foreign policy and EU security, 2023 • Conservative Political Action Annual Conference speech, 2023	Donald Trump • Address to the Republican Convention, 2024
Salome Zurabishvili • "Democratic and fair elections", 2021 • 2024 election speech	Jeffrey Rosen • Speech on the importance of the Constitution, 2023
Giorgi Amilakhvari • On national enemies, 2023 • On Georgian soldiers' dedication, 2023	Robert F. Kennedy Jr. • Speech on his 2024 presidential bid
Irakli Kobakhidze • Criticism of the previous government, 2023	-

Source: authors' own elaboration.

Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques. Computers play an integral role in storing and analysing corpora. This study employed quantitative and qualitative methods for analysing the functional interpretations of discourse and pragmatic markers in pre-election speeches. Using both

quantitative and qualitative methods enhances the reliability of the findings. Quantitative analysis involves counting linguistic units, while qualitative analysis interprets these counts to provide insight into the causes and effects revealed by the language units. This combination of counting and interpreting is key to corpus-linguistic discourse analysis (O'Keeffe & McCarthy 2010).

We began the research with the quantitative analysis (e.g., frequency counts of discourse markers) and then proceeded with qualitative methods to explore discourse-level phenomena and rhetorical functions. A total of 108 Georgian and 117 English language markers were analysed, allowing the formulation of hypotheses regarding their emotional functions.

The use of **comparative corpora** facilitated the examination of discourse and pragmatic markers in Georgian and English. This approach was crucial in uncovering the semantic and pragmatic features of markers that reflect speakers' emotions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The analysis of textual and interpersonal discourse markers in Georgian and American pre-election discourse

Political discourse is linguistically interesting, especially before elections, as politicians strive to add credibility to their statements, to enhance them with linguistic tools, and ultimately, to gain public trust to secure votes. They can acquire and maintain power through spoken language. By using language, politicians express their power, articulate political views, and persuade listeners of the need for specific political actions. The pre-election discourse serves to create a socio-political picture of the country, highlighting societal problems and proposing solutions. These speeches have a strong emotional and psychological impact on society.

T. Lomadze (2016: 24) likens pre-election campaigns to a "linguistic war," where linguistic tools are used to "win." In this paper, we explore the language tools politicians use to succeed in this "war." Beard (2000) argues "...the persuasive purpose is carried out [, it] varies hugely, ranging from so-called negative campaigning, where candidates attack opponents rather than sell themselves, to more positive methods where candidates, usually not yet in power, sell themselves as a brand-new product, much better than

the old one that is currently being used" (Beard 2000: 57). The primary goal of any political party's pre-election speech is to express attitudes towards the current reality and to convince listeners, as future voters, through persuasion. The effective election success can be achieved by using relevant language units, discourse and pragmatic markers, stylistic devices, and well-crafted arguments (Keburia 2019). Politicians provide mental models of a safe, problem-free future life (Debać 2021), using numerous linguistic tools to "sell themselves" to voters.

Discourse markers are typically derived from lexical categories (e.g. verbs, verbal constructions, prepositional phrases, adverbs) and can appear at the beginning or end of a sentence. Their omission does not usually change the meaning of the discourse, but their presence adds nuance (Müller 2005). Schiffrin (2001: 54) views discourse not only as a linguistic unit but as a process of social interaction. She defines discourse markers as linguistic expressions from varied word classes, such as conjunctions (e.g. "and," "but"), interjections (e.g. "oh"), adverbs (e.g. "now," "then"), and lexicalised phrases (e.g. "you know," "I mean"). According to Frazer (1996), discourse markers have procedural meaning, specifying how a sentence relates to the preceding discourse (Frazer 1996: 325). Aijmer (2013) notes that pragmatic markers, though difficult to define due to their many functions, carry meaning. According to Erman (2001: 1339), pragmatic markers are often insignificant in isolation but acquire meaning in context. Discourse and pragmatic markers are crucial linguistic tools for organising discourse, emphasising key points, and engaging audiences. Their primary function is to manage discourse, control the conversation, and ensure coherence. These markers are vital for maintaining semantic and pragmatic consistency, allowing speakers to express their mental and emotional states. As Ghezzi (2014: 14) suggests, the functional distinction between discourse and pragmatic markers can be described as "macro-functions".

We admit that discourse markers are lexical units that are used in any text, as every thought expressed using these connectors is logically bound to the current discourse. As for the pragmatic markers, they do not change the discourse in terms of the content, but the main function is to give an expressive-emotional touch to the content of the discourse. Accordingly, the main distinguishing mark between pragmatic markers and discourse markers is that the discourse markers establish a logical, meaningful connection between the sentences, while the pragmatic markers express the speaker/writer's attitude towards the given issue or event. One of the basic

features in which the scientists agree about the markers is that "...there are some markers [the]... function [of which] seems to be more cognitive in nature, such as in the establishment of Coherence Relations, and other markers that appear to have more pragmatic functions, such as in the management of interactional features of communication, the expression of mental and emotional states, and the production of speech and other actions" (Villegas 2019: 2).

Table 2. Macro-functions. Discourse and pragmatic marker

Macro-function	Description	The marker
Textual cohesion and coherence	Discourse structure and speech act: markers indicate the relationship between the sentences of the text and the content expressed.	Discourse markers
Social cohesion	Social Aspect: Markers indicate the relationship between speakers.	Pragmatic markers
Personal position	Markers indicate the speaker's attitude towards the current discourse.	Pragmatic markers

Source: authors' own elaboration.

The conceptualisation of a discourse marker combines three main aspects of its pragmatic meaning, namely: subjective, interactional, and textual (Šiniajeva 2005: 28). The subjective aspect of the pragmatic meaning involves showing the relationship between the speaker and the expressed idea. According to Anderson (2001: 65), "...any utterance of the speaker expresses his characteristic". As for the interpersonal function, it is characterised by the expression of attitudes, feelings, and evaluations; in other words, discourse markers are listener-oriented linguistic units. And, the textual function aims to maintain relevance and connection with the current discourse (Šiniajeva 2005: 28). Andersen (ibid.: 64) argues that the distinction between these functions is not always effective, as markers can perform both roles simultaneously. Although defining their lexical meaning is challenging, these markers play a vital role in connecting discourse elements and in expressing the speaker's attitude towards the topic.

To analyse the empirical material, we relied on the classification of the markers by Ken Hyland and Polly Tse (2004: 156–177). Discourse markers are categorised into two main groups: textual and interpersonal. The textual

or discourse function indicates the connection between the previous and current discourses, and the interpersonal function shows the speaker's or writer's attitude towards the discourse. We selected the pre-election and inaugural speeches of politicians, in which politicians' speeches are largely characterised by logic and psycho-emotional influence on the audience. It integrates textual and interpersonal discourse markers, using a comparative corpus-based approach to highlight the linguistic structures used by politicians.

Table 3. Types of textual and interpersonal markers

Types of markers	
Textual discourse markers:	Reminders
	Code glosses
	Illocutionary Markers
Interpersonal discourse markers:	Hedges
	Certainty Markers
	Attitudinal Markers (Deontic Verbs)
	Attitudinal Markers (Adverbs)
	Attitudinal Markers (Adjectival constructions)
	Attitudinal Markers (Cognitive verbs)

Source: (Hyland, Tse 2004: 156–177).

These markers enhance the expressiveness of the current discourse; for instance, the function of interpersonal markers is to convey the subjective attitude and expressive weight of the ongoing discussion. Part of the markers' aim is to show the connection between the sentences and the communication goal of the addressee. These markers mainly belong to the group of textual discourse markers.

Textual and Interpersonal Markers:

- The distinction between textual discourse markers and interpersonal discourse markers provides a clear framework for the analysis.
- Textual discourse markers (e.g., reminders, code glosses) are employed to structure the discourse logically, linking ideas and clarifying communication.

- Interpersonal discourse markers (e.g., hedges, certainty markers, attitudinal markers) serve to express subjective evaluations, certainty, and attitudes towards the content being communicated, which aligns with political objectives to persuade and connect with the audience emotionally. The use of discourse markers is crucial in helping politicians organise their speeches, highlight points, and engage the audience, which is vital in pre-election settings where the goal is to influence the public opinion.

3.2. The analysis of textual discourse markers in Georgian and American discourse of elections

3.2.1. Use of reminders to assert authority

Reminders are used to reiterate or emphasise a previously mentioned idea or fact, making it more memorable for the audience.

1. Kakha Kaladze:

კიდევ ერთხელ გავიმეორებ ჩვენ გვაქვს აბსოლუტურად სხვა სტანდარტი.

*I will repeat it. We have a completely different standard*¹ (1TV 2020, Kakha Kaladze on parliamentary elections)

2. Irakli Garibashvili:

თუმცა, მე ერთს, ძალიან კონკრეტულ ფაქტს შეგახსენებ, მოსახლეობას ვეტყვი, იმიტომ რომ ეს ვიცი დარწმუნებით, როცა იგი ჩასვეს ციხეში უკრაინაში, შეგახსენებთ, მაშინ სულ რაღაც 24 სთ ვერ გაძლო ციხის საკანში...

However, I will remind you of one very specific fact, I will tell the population because I know this for sure when he was put in prison in Ukraine, let me remind you, he could not last 24 hours in the prison cell... (Elections 2021)

3. Irakli Garibashvili:

მე ერთხელ ვთქვი და მინდა გავიმეორო, მე ვფიქრობ, შეიძლება უკეთესი იყოს, ათჯერ უკეთესი რომ ერთხელ და სამუდამოდ დაისვენოს ჩვენმა ქვეყანამ და მანაც დაისვენოს ციხეში ჩასმით.

¹ All Georgian examples were translated by K. Ardzenadze.

I have said it once and I want to repeat it, I think it might be better, ten times better, if our country rests once and forever, and he also rests by being put in prison. (Elections 2021)

In the examined speeches, we also found the focus marker “მე ერთს, ძალიან კონკრეტულ ფაქტს შევახსენებ” (I will remind you of one very specific fact) and the attitude marker “ეს ვიცი დარწმუნებით” (I know it for sure), which add an element of conviction and focus, enhancing the persuasive impact of the discourse.

In the following examples, reminder markers are used to strengthen the speaker’s argument by referencing prior statements, thereby adding weight to their current discourse.

4. Joe Biden:

As I said many times before, I’m Jill’s husband. I would not be here without the love and tireless support of Jill and my son Hunter, and Ashley, my daughter, and all our grandchildren and their spouses, and all our family. (Al Jazeera 2020)

5. Donald Trump:

The fact is I’m here, what’s the name of that building? But I’ll say it differently. The fact is we’re here and they’re not. (NPR. 2020)

6. Joe Biden:

And this is the most important election in any of your lifetimes. It’s a battle, as I said at the outset, for the soul of America. (Rev.com 2020)

3.2.2. Code glosses

Code glosses clarify, explain, or exemplify what has been said to ensure the audience understands the speaker’s point.

7. Salome Zurabishvili:

გუშინ მოვუსმინე ყველას და, მინდა ხაზგასმით აღვნიშნო იმ პარტიების პასუხისმგებლობით აღსავსე დამოკიდებულება, რომლებიც ამ შეთანხმების საფუძველზე შევიდნენ პარლამენტში...

Yesterday, I listened to everyone and I want to emphasise the responsible attitude of the parties that entered the parliament based on this agreement... (1TV 2021)

8. Giorgi Amilakhvari:

თლად განიმარტა, რომ არცერთი თეთრი ირაკლი ღარიბაშვილს ბიუჯეტიდან არ გამოუყენებია მისი პირადი ვიზიტისთვის.

It was clearly explained that Irakli Gharibashvili did not spend any tetri from the budget for his visit. (1TV 2023)

These markers indicate the speaker's intention to ensure the audience grasps the significance of certain points by providing explicit explanations or emphasising key ideas.

9. Joe Biden:

So look, look, I got a job to do. Everybody always asked about impeachment. I get up every day, not a joke, not focused on impeachment. I've got a job to do. I've got to deal with the issues that affect the American people every single solitary day. (CNN 2023)

10. Donald Trump:

But the fact is, this is where they're coming from. Like it or not. This is where they're coming from. (NPR. Trump's Address 2020)

11. Jeffrey Rosen:

What people know about – people have a sense of what the five freedoms of the First Amendment are, but not everyone can name all of them because there are five. (C-SPAN 2023)

These markers help the speaker clarify their message, ensuring the audience receives the intended interpretation or emphasis. Repeating the code glossers mainly shows that the speaker tries to make an emotional influence on the listener while focusing on one specific fact. The phrase “the fact” is repeatedly used in the provided examples.

3.2.3. Illocutionary markers

Illocutionary markers indicate the speaker's intent behind a statement, often highlighting the argumentative or emotional force of the discourse.

12. Irakli Garibashvili:

მე ვიტყვოდი, პირდაპირ ასე უნდა ითქვას, რომ შეიძლება პოლიტიკოსი, მმართველი მოგწონდეს ან არ მოგწონდეს, მაგრამ როცა გაქვს მმართველის მიმართ, ასე ვთქვათ, ზიზღი და აგრესია, ეს რჩება სამუდამოდ.

I would say, it should be said directly that you may or may not like the politician, the ruler, but you have a grudge against the ruler, contempt and aggression remain forever. (Irakli Garibashvili 2021)

13. Irakli Garibashvili:

მე მინდა გითხრათ, დაგარწმუნოთ, ჩვენი მოსახლეობა დავარწმუნო, რომ აბსოლუტურად ყველა სცენარისთვის ვართ მზად...

I want to tell you, to convince you that, to convince our population that we are ready for absolutely every scenario... (ibid.)

Illocutionary markers indicate the author's purpose in the ongoing discourse. In the given examples, we have the following markers, "მე ვიტყვოდი, პირდაპირ ასე უნდა ითქვას" (I would say, it should be said directly), "მე მინდა გითხრათ, დაგარწმუნოთ, ჩვენი მოსახლეობა დავარწმუნო" (I want to tell you, to convince you that, to convince our population) their purpose is not only to express the speaker's intention but also to indicate the purpose of the expressed opinion as in the second example where Irakli Garibashvili uses the word "to convince you" twice, which assures us that the expressed opinion is undoubtedly true.

14. Joe Biden:

I should point out, over 30 million jobs, more jobs in two years than any president has created in a four-year term. (White House Briefing 2023)

15. Donald Trump:

But I will tell you, the election that we have coming up is the single most important election in the history of this country. (NPR 2020)

This analysis highlights how Georgian and American politicians use discourse markers to enhance their speeches' clarity, persuasiveness, and emotional impact. By understanding the functions of these markers, we can gain deeper insights into the strategies employed in political communication.

3.3. Interpersonal discourse markers

3.3.1. Hedging as a cultural strategy

Irakli Garibashvili:

ევროპარლამენტში შედის 450 წევრი, უფრო სწორად 700 მდე, ალბათ თუ არ ვცდები, მაგრამ ჩვენი მოსახლეობისთვის არ არის საინტერესო სააკაშვილი შეხვდა ორ ადამიანს თუ სამ ადამიანს.

*There are 450 members in the European Parliament, or rather up to 700, **probably if I'm not mistaken**, but our population is not interested in whether Saakashvili meets two or three people. (Irakli Garibashvili 2021)*

17. Irakli Garibashvili:

ამის შემდგომ უკვე, როდესაც საქართველო გამოეთიშა ასოცირებულ ტრიოს, უფრო სწორად, მივიღეთ უფრო ნაკლები, ვიდრე უკრაინამ და მოლდოვამ – ევროპული პერსპექტივა, იყო დასავლეთის მხარდამჭერი აქციები საქართველოში.

*After that, when Georgia was excluded from the associated trio, or **rather**, we received less than Ukraine and Moldova – the European perspective, there were pro-Western demonstrations in Georgia. (Irakli Garibashvili 2023)*

In the given examples, we find the following markers “უფრო სწორად” (rather) that serve to soften what is said and to express the already stated opinion in simpler words. As for the first example, we find “ალბათ” (probably), which indicates that the speaker is not sure and tries to show it with the given marker.

18. Jeffrey Rosen:

*Our rights **are so capacious** they come from god and nature, not the government, **it would be impossible** to write them down in a single list. (C-SPAN 2023)*

19. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.:

*Those are things we should be looking at. that's all I've said. I think that's common sense. **I don't think you would say** that's a conspiracy theory. (C-SPAN Robert F. Kennedy Jr. 2023)*

As mentioned above, the speaker uses several linguistic means to soften what is said, as for epistemic verbs, in the English-language empirical material, we mainly find modal verbs, which serve to convey a certain opinion to the listener in the current discourse with simplified, simple, and understandable linguistic means. We found the following epistemic verbs: *would say, must tell, it would be*, etc.

3.3.2. Certainty markers and trust-building

20. ირაკლი ღარიბაშვილი: “უდავო ფაქტია, რომ დღეს გლობალური წესრიგი იცვლება. მსოფლიო ვეღარ იქნება ისეთი, როგორიც იყო”.

It is an indisputable fact that today the global order is changing. The world will never be the same again. (Irakli Garibashvili 2023)

21. ირაკლი კობახიძე “...ცხადია, ეს ჩვენს დემოკრატიულ სისტემას გააძლიერებს”.

It's certain, this will strengthen our democratic system. (Irakli Kobakhidze 2023)

22. ირაკლი ღარიბაშვილი: “რეალობა აღმოჩნდა, როდესაც ამერიკის, თქვენი და დიდი ბრიტანეთის წარმომადგენლები ჩამოვიდნენ საქართველოში, მათ ღიად და ხმამაღლა თქვეს, რომ საქართველო სრულად ასრულებს ვალდებულებებს და სანქციების დარღვევის არცერთი მაგალითი არ დაფიქსირებულა”.

It turned out to be the reality when the representatives of America, you and Great Britain came to Georgia, they openly and loudly said that Georgia fully fulfills its obligations and no example of a violation of sanctions was observed. (Irakli Garibashvili 2023)

In the given examples, we find the following certainty markers “უდავო ფაქტია” (*it is an indisputable fact*) and “ცხადია” (*it's certain*). These markers aim to convey the speaker's positive attitude towards the topic and to convince the listener. They carry a relatively strong meaning, “უდავო ფაქტია” and “რეალობა აღმოჩნდა”, (*it turned out to be real*), in particular, the following markers “ფაქტი” (*fact*) and “რეალობა” (*reality*) refer to the situation or circumstance based on truth, which Everyone shares or wants to share.

23. Joe Biden:

And of course, I know you've had an incredible role model in Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms. I tell you what, she is something else. (Rev.com 2020)

24. Jeffrey Rosen:

...of course, the Constitution is not perfect. the framers never thought it was. (C-SPAN 2023)

25. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.:

And of course, the Americans responded by dressing like Indians and boarding the East British India Company's ships and dumping the tea into the harbor and that's when the British sent that troop over here to quell the rebellion. (C-SPAN 2023)

In the provided examples, we find the following Certainty Markers "And of course", which aim to show the speaker's attitude, in particular, to indicate the fact that the speaker shares the opinion recorded in the discourse regarding a specific issue. These markers express the speaker's positive attitude, which aims to have a certain influence on the listener.

3.4 Attitudinal markers

3.4.1. Deontic verbs

26. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.:

*I said we **should** look at the chemical exposures and see what their impact is on public health and depression and endocrine disruptors in the alteration, what are girls in this country demonstrably reaching puberty at a much younger age than they were a generation ago? (ibid.)*

27. Donald Trump:

*We **must** remember that the overwhelming majority of police officers in this country, and that's the overwhelming majority, are noble, courageous, and honorable. We **have to** give law enforcement, our police, back their power. They are afraid to act. They are afraid to lose their pension. (NPR 2020)*

28. Joe Biden:

*Since I've come to the office, all they've really done is attack me and my economic plan – there hasn't been much else, even though we've created, **I should point out**, over 30 million jobs – more jobs in two years than any president's created in a four-year term. (CNN 2023)*

In the given examples, the politicians aim to express their attitude towards the opinion stated in the current discourse, employing different modal verbs; the specific attitude is clear to the listener depending on the meaning of the specific modal verb. For example, "I should point out", "We should look at" show that the speaker says something is a good idea, "we must remember" something is necessary, "we have to give" – we have to, we are forced to do so.

3.4.2. Attitudinal adverbs

29. Salome Zurabishvili:

ეს არჩევნები ასევე გამორჩეული იყო პატარა პარტიების მონაწილეობის სიმრავლით, რაც ასევე ძალიან მნიშვნელოვანია პოლიტიკური გარემოს მრავალფეროვნებისთვის.

*This election was also notable for the large number of small parties participating, which is also **very important** for the diversity of the political environment).* (1TV 2021)

30. Irakli Kobakhidze:

თვითონ ლომჯარიას რომ წარმოაჩენ შუაშისტად, რასაც აკეთებს, აკეთებენ მათი პატრონები, ეს უკვე მიუთითებს იმაზე, რომ აბსოლუტურად უსუსურები არიან დაგეგმვაში.

*If you present Lomjaria as a middle-class person, what their owners do, already indicates that they are **absolutely** weak in planning.* (1TV Irakli Kobakhidze 2023)

The speakers use the attitude markers to show their attitude towards the current discourse expressed through adverbial phrases, in particular, in the first example, Salome Zurabishvili uses different linguistic means to have a certain influence on the listener. Like, “ეს არჩევნები ასევე გამორჩეული იყო” (*this election is also featured*) and “რაც ასევე ძალიან მნიშვნელოვანია” (*that’s really important*); these markers express the speakers’ attitude through the adjectival constructions, however, in the second marker we find the adverb “really” which makes the marker stronger and the influence of the speaker on the listener is even more highlighted. As for Irakli Kobakhidze, he uses the adverb “absolutely”, which aims to show the radically different attitude of the previous government and the current government towards the state budget.

31. Joe Biden:

*They don’t give in and **surely** they don’t cower and neither will I. I will put in place a plan to deal with this pandemic **responsibly**, bringing this country together with testing, tracing, masking.* (Rev.com. 2020)

32. Donald Trump:

*My fellow Americans, tonight with a heart full of gratitude and boundless optimism, I **profoundly** accept this nomination for President of the United States.* (NPR 2020)

The attitude expressed by adverbs is an indicator of the speaker's attitude, which not only expresses his attitude, such as, "I profoundly accept", but also evaluates the event mentioned in the discourse, as in the example, "They don't give in and surely they don't cower". Using adverbial constructions as attitude markers is quite common in political discourse. Bennet (2010) admits that "very" is the most frequently used adverb overall in the COCA, and is especially frequent in spoken language. "Really" is the second most frequent adverb in speaking (Bennett 2010: 6).

3.4.3. Adjectival constructions

33. Salome Zurabishvili:

სამარცხვინოა, როცა შენივე მოქალაქეები აქტიურობენ იმისათვის, რომ ქვეყნის სახე შელახონ ან თუნდაც მოითხოვონ ქვეყნის სხვადასხვა ფორმით დასჯა.

It is shameful when your citizens are active to tarnish the image of the country or even demand to punish the country in various ways. (1TV 2021)

34. Irakli Kobakhidze:

ვინმეს მართლაც რომ ეკადრა მოსამართლისთვის ვიზიტის გაუქმება, დარწმუნებული ვარ, ეს, პირიქით, უკუშედეგს გამოიღებდა და ვიზიტს სხვა მოსამართლეებიც გააუქმებდნენ.

If someone really decided to cancel the visit of the judge, I am sure that it would, on the contrary, have a negative effect and other judges would also cancel the visit). (1TV 2023, Irakli Kobakhidze)

"სამარცხვინოა" (*It is shameful*) and "დარწმუნებული ვარ" (*I am sure*) are two key phrases. The first phrase, "It is shameful," clearly indicates a strong negative judgment toward the actions of the citizens, showcasing the speaker's moral stance. The second phrase, "I am sure," conveys certainty and confidence, emphasising the speaker's unwavering belief in the consequences of certain actions.

35. Donald Trump:

I'm very, very proud to be the nominee of the Republican Party. (NPR 2020)

36. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.:

I am so grateful for you coming here. And GOTTO. I said GOTTO. Ok. *I'm very, very grateful* to all of you for coming. (C-SPAN 2023)

The phrase “I’m very, very proud” uses repetition of the adjective “very” to amplify the emotional intensity, demonstrating a high level of personal pride and satisfaction. Similarly, in “I am so grateful,” the adverb “so” adds intensity to the expression of gratitude. The repetition of “very” in “very, very grateful” further amplifies this emotion, making the expression more heartfelt and personal.

3.4.4. Cognitive verbs

37. Salome Zurabishvili:

მიმაჩნდა და მიმაჩნია, რომ ეს პროცესი, რომელიც დგას ამ დოკუმენტის უკან, მიზნები, რომლებსაც ეს დოკუმენტი ისახავს...

I thought and I think this way now that this process, which is behind this document, the goals that this document aims at... (1TV 2021)

38. Salome Zurabishvili:

მინდა იმ ქალებს, რომლებმაც გარკვეული გამარჯვება თუ არა წარმატება მოიპოვეს, მათ ყველას მივულოცო და ვუსურვო, რომ გააგრძელონ ეს გზა.

I want to congratulate all the women who have achieved a certain victory or not, and wish them to continue on this path). (ibid.)

The use of the phrases “მიმაჩნდა და მიმაჩნია” (*I thought and I think this way now*) reflects continuity in thought and opinion, suggesting consistency and reliability in the speaker’s stance. The cognitive verb “მინდა” (*I want*) indicates desire and intention, reflecting the speaker’s wishes or goals.

39. Joe Biden:

I promise you, look at my whole career. I’ll work as hard for those who don’t support me as those who do. (Rev.com 2020)

40. Joe Biden:

I believe it is this: Americans have called on us to marshal the forces of decency and the forces of fairness. (Al Jazeera 2020)

Phrases like “I promise you,” “I believe,” and “I think” are markers of cognitive stance. “I promise you” adds a sense of commitment and

reassurance to the audience, while “I believe” and “I think” convey personal conviction and the speaker’s reasoning process. Additionally, the use of the focusing marker “look at” serves to draw attention to specific points, guiding the audience’s focus and reinforcing the speaker’s arguments.

4. THE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

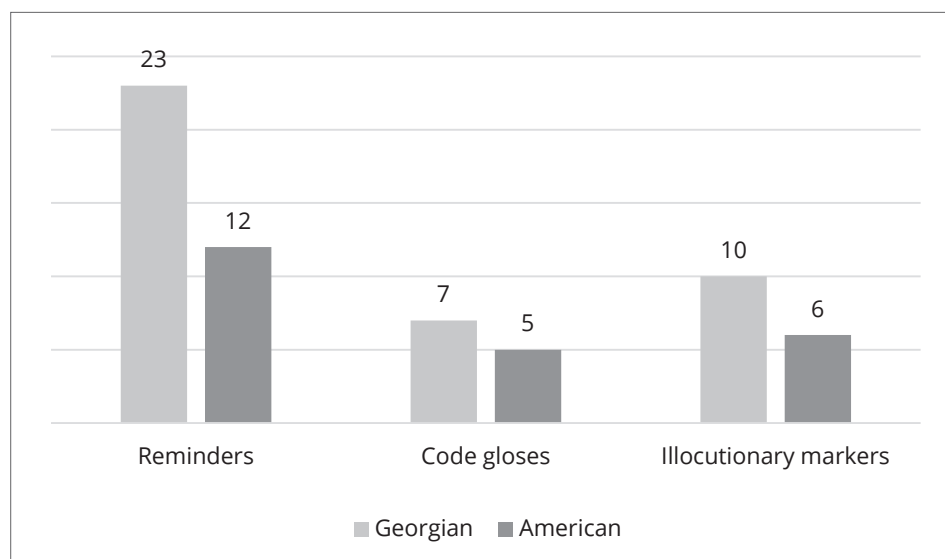
These examples show how politicians use language not just to convey information but also to express attitudes, emotions, and intentions. The use of adjectives and cognitive verbs adds a layer of subjectivity and emotional engagement, which can be persuasive in political communication. The repetition of adverbs and adjectives amplifies the emotional charge, making the discourse more impactful. These linguistic strategies help politicians connect with their audience on the emotional level, influencing how their messages are received and interpreted.

Table 4. Statistics of textual and interpersonal discourse markers

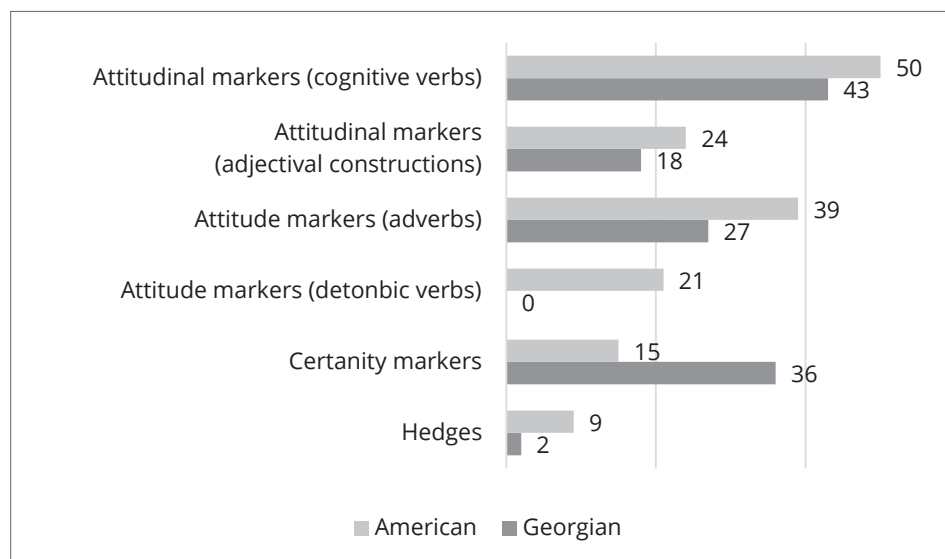
		Georgian	American
Textual discourse markers:	Reminders	14%	7%
	Code glosses	4%	3%
	Illocutionary Markers	6%	3%
Interpersonal discourse markers:	Hedges	1%	5%
	Certainty Markers	22%	8%
	Attitudinal Markers (Deontic Verbs)	0%	12%
	Attitudinal Markers (Adverbs)	16%	21%
	Attitudinal Markers (Adjectival constructions)	11%	13%
	Attitudinal Markers (Cognitive verbs)	26%	28%

Source: (Ardzenadze 2025: 143–144).

Figure 1 shows that the number of reminders, code glosses, and illocutionary markers in the Georgian-language empirical material is greater than in the English-language material.

Figure 1. Textual discourse markers

Source: (Ardzenadze 2025: 145).

Figure 2. Interpersonal discourse markers

Source: (Ardzenadze 2025: 146–147).

The provided analysis highlights the differences in the usage of emotional and attitudinal markers between Georgian and English-language political discourse.

Here is a more structured interpretation of the key points:

The comparative analysis of emotional markers.

Cross-linguistic differences in emotional persuasion

1. Hedges vs. certainty markers:

- In the English-language empirical material, the frequency of hedges (linguistic devices that express uncertainty or politeness, such as *maybe*, *probably*) is higher compared to the Georgian-language material.
- Conversely, Georgian-language discourse contains a higher number of certainty markers, which convey conviction or assurance, like *I am sure* or *it is certain*. This suggests that Georgian speakers may prioritise assertiveness, while English speakers often emphasise caution or politeness.

2. Attitudinal markers:

- The English-language material contains a greater variety and frequency of attitudinal markers, especially those expressed through adverbs, adjectives, and cognitive verbs.
- These markers in English often carry stronger emotional weight and expressiveness. For instance, phrases like *I can't tell you how important it is* versus a simpler *it's important* illustrate how English speakers might use more emotionally charged language structures.

3. Modal verbs:

- The use of modal verbs to express attitudes or obligations (e.g. *must*, *should*, *might*) is prevalent in English but almost absent in Georgian. This difference likely stems from the linguistic structure of English, where modal verbs are integral to expressing nuanced meanings related to possibility, necessity, and obligation.
- Examples like Donald Trump's *We must remember that...* show how these verbs are employed to convey advice, necessity, or obligation with a varying degree of forcefulness.

4. The expressiveness of adverbs and adjectives:

- English-language discourse features adverbs and adjectives that are often more expressive than their Georgian counterparts. For example, English adverbs such as *frequently*, *profoundly*, *tragically*, and *aggressively* carry a high degree of emotional intensity.
- In contrast, Georgian equivalents, like ძალიან (*very*) or სამწუხაროდ (*unfortunately*), tend to be less varied and intense. The repetition of adverbs in English, such as *very*, *very special*, further amplifies emotional expression, adding emphasis and affecting the audience more strongly.

5. Lexical diversity:

- The lexical diversity of epistemic verbs (verbs that express a degree of certainty or belief, like *think*, *believe*, *know*) is more extensive in English than in Georgian. This might be due to the broader range of modal and auxiliary verbs available in English, enabling speakers to express nuanced shades of meaning.

6. Implications:

- **Language and culture:** The findings suggest that language structures and cultural communication styles are closely intertwined. English discourse, with its variety of modal verbs and expressive markers, allows for more nuanced and emotionally resonant communication. In contrast, Georgian-language discourse might prioritise clarity, certainty, and directness over emotional expressiveness.
- **Political rhetoric:** In political communication, the differences in messaging can significantly influence how audiences perceive that information. English-speaking politicians may use emotional and attitudinal markers to appeal to voters' emotions or to hedge their statements. Georgian-speaking politicians, on the other hand, may focus on conveying certainty and authority.
This analysis provides insights into how language choices reflect and shape the communicative intentions and cultural norms of different language communities.

7. The summary of key points:

- **Adjectival constructions:** These are crucial for conveying a speaker's attitude towards a particular subject or discourse. Examples like

დარწმუნებული ვარ (*I am sure*) and სამარცხვინოა (*It is shameful*) in Georgian and “I am so grateful” or “I’m very, very proud” in English show how adjectives are used to express certainty or emotions.

- **Cognitive verbs:** These verbs, such as “I thought” or “I believe”, serve to communicate a speaker’s reflective stance, often strengthening the credibility of their statements. For instance, Salome Zurabishvili’s use of მიმაჩნდა და მიმაჩნია (*I thought and I think this way now*) is a strong example from Georgian.
- **Cross-language comparisons:** The English-language material shows more variation in modal verbs, hedges, and expressiveness through adjectives and adverbs, often using repetition for emphasis (e.g. *very, very*). Georgian discourse emphasises the use of certainty markers and reminders, significantly influencing the listener.

One limitation of this study is the potential bias in corpus selection. The sample focuses on speeches by high-profile politicians, which may not represent broader rhetorical trends. Additionally, idiomatic or regional variations in discourse markers were not extensively analysed. Future research could expand the corpus and include more diverse speaker profiles to test the generalisability of these findings.

5. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the strategic role of a discourse and of pragmatic markers in the pre-election political discourse across two culturally distinct languages. Through a comparative corpus-based analysis, we found that Georgian speakers favor directness and assertive strategies through certainty markers and reminders, while English-speaking politicians employ a more nuanced emotional appeal through modal verbs, hedges, and intensifiers. These linguistic choices reflect broader cultural attitudes towards power, persuasion, and social interaction. The findings emphasise the importance of understanding emotional and attitudinal language choices in political communication. Not only do these markers enhance rhetorical effectiveness, but they also shape voter perception and trust. Understanding cross-cultural differences is crucial for political discourse analysts, translators, and communication strategists operating in multilingual and multicultural environments. Future research should broaden its

focus to include various political cultures, lesser-known political figures, and additional languages. This will help to enhance our understanding of the universal and culture-specific uses of emotional markers in the political discourse.

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Abstract

This paper investigates the emotional functions of a discourse and pragmatic markers in Georgian and American pre-election discourse. The study adopts a comparative corpus-based methodology, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses. The theoretical framework draws on pragmatics, discourse analysis, and corpus linguistics to explore how political language strategically uses markers to influence voters. The data include 108 Georgian and 117 English-language pre-election speeches (2019–2023). The results reveal that the English-language discourse uses more emotionally expressive and varied attitudinal markers, while the Georgian

discourse relies more on certainty and reminders to assert authority. These findings reflect underlying cultural communication styles and offer insights into political persuasion strategies across languages.

Keywords: discourse and pragmatic markers, pre-election discourse, comparative analysis, quantitative and qualitative corpus analysis

DYSKURSYWNE I PRAGMATYCZNE ELEMENTY METAJĘZYKOWE W AMERYKAŃSKIM I GRUZIŃSKIM DYSKURSIE PRZEDWYBORCZYM

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza ekspresyjnej funkcji dyskursywnych i pragmatycznych elementów metajęzykowych w gruzińskim i amerykańskim dyskursie przedwyborczym. Na potrzeby badania przyjęto komparatywną metodologię korpusową, integrującą analizę ilościową i jakościową. Założenia teoretyczne opierają się na pragmatyce, analizie dyskursu i lingwistyce korpusowej. Przyjęte ujęcie metodologiczne pozwoliło prześledzić, w jaki sposób w komunikacji politycznej wykorzystano wybrane środki metajęzykowe do wywierania wpływu na wyborców. Materiał badawczy stanowiło 108 gruzińskich i 117 anglojęzycznych przemówień przedwyborczych (2019–2023). Przeprowadzona analiza wykazała, że w dyskursie anglojęzycznym liczebnie przeważają bardziej ekspresyjne i zróżnicowane wykładniki postawy, podczas gdy dyskurs gruziński opiera się w większym stopniu na pewności i przypomnieniach, których używa się, aby podkreślić autorytet. Różnice te wynikają z odmienności kulturowych stylów komunikacji i odzwierciedlają strategię perswazji politycznej w badanych językach.

Słowa kluczowe: dyskursywny i pragmatyczny element metajęzykowy, dyskurs przedwyborczy, analiza komparatywna, ilościowa i jakościowa analiza korpusowa