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**CITY EPIC AS A PLAY WITH LINGUISTIC NORM
(BY EXAMPLE OF „GEORGIAN“ JOKES AND
THEIR RUSSIAN VERSIONS)***

The article examines „Georgian“ jokes as a speech genre in which the linguistic norm is violated through connotative reduplication and other forms of language play. Based on Bakhtin's theory of speech genres and the study of humor, an anecdote is interpreted as a metalanguage practice reflecting social attitudes towards normality, deviation, and linguistic authority. The analysis is carried out in the context of the linguistically polyphonic urban space of Old Tiflis, where Russian historically served as the language of the empire, comparable to the role of French in Southeastern Europe. This sociolinguistic situation contributed to active language contact and the formation of hybrid speech forms, which later became a source of anecdotal texts. Special attention is paid to reduplication as a key mechanism for creating a comic effect in „Georgian“ jokes. Echo constructions such as shashlik-mashlyk, salad-malat, culture-multur do not have an independent denotation. However, they perform pragmatic and semiotic functions: they enhance the expressiveness of the utterance, mark irony, and refer to a conscious deviation from the norm. An analysis of Soviet and post-Soviet anecdotal empirical material, including the „Georgian“ typical characters Gogi and Givi, shows that reduplication serves to carnivalize the norm and symbolically explore the center-periphery relationship. At the end of the article, the author concludes that reduplication in „Georgian“ jokes is a key mechanism of the comic effect. The „echoes“ of main parts of words, such as multur, malat, and mashlik, lack independent denotation and serve to carnivalize linguistic norms and increase the expressiveness of

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speech. They assume knowledge of the normative code and turn deviation from the norm into a conscious language game and a form of collective language memory.

Keywords: *linguistic norm deviation, reduplication, language play, jokes as a speech genre, urban multilingualism, semiotics of humor, linguistic memory*

Introduction

The analysis of the language game and the problem of connotative reduplication would not have been completed if we had not turned to the genre of jokes about Georgians, „Georgianness“. The study analyzes jokes, since they are a speech genre (cf. Bakhtin, 1986: 60–102), in which comedy is modeled on playing with a linguistic norm, violating expectations, and clashing with codes and language registers (Dundes, 1987). Jokes offer a „critical“ look at the violation of the norm and the phenomenon itself, which are not liked by the society in which they operate. A joke through laughter and humor „removes“ aggression. The genre itself is an aggressive text packed with humor, in a funny situation.

Jokes as a metalanguage game with articulation and reduplication

Tiflis is today the capital of Georgia. In the past, it used to be a very multilingual city, and that is why the term „Old Tiflis“ refers to this historical and complex ethnic context (cf. Simyan & Dragan, 2025: 95–111).

In these constellations, it was important that several languages were known in a society and that they were used in different contexts. For instance, we know that French was the language that was widely spoken in the countries of Southeast Europe and served as the language of diplomacy. French was taught in schools and served to modernize the state education system. Knowledge of the French language was even imparted to connect post-Ottoman societies with Central Europe (Vesselinov, 2016; Henzelmann, 2019). In the context of the southern Caucasus, it used to be Russian that enjoyed a similar level of popularity and was very important in interethnic communication. This resulted in language mixing, which also included jokes.

Playing with languages was widespread in the multicultural dimensions of Old Tiflis. A certain „tradition“ of distorting the Russian language norm in Old Tiflis emerged, and it is due to ignorance of the language which is also evident in modern jokes. In the latter, the hero is not a Tiflis kinto, a notifi-

cation that refers to a small street vendor in Old Tbilisi who used to be the object of jokes in the past, but a simple Georgian philistine. That is why we have to settle also a modern context: All jokes mentioned below with a comic effect historically arose already in the Soviet and some in the post-Soviet era, and function due to deviations from the linguistic norm. They are constructed from the perspective of a native speaker resp. a linguistic norm that interprets „someone else’s“ speech through the prism of an accent or other language code. Thus, we will examine the linguistic reduplication that appears in jokes about Georgians, and then we will analyze several „school“ jokes and highlight some of their peculiarities.

The problem of reduplication in jokes and the functions of Goga and Givi characters

We will first of all focus on the problem of reduplication in jokes, which is a very common figure in Russian, but not for the English-speaking reader. Reduplication is addition of an almost-duplicate word to the main word, for example, the word salad-malat, which means „different“ (salads) among the peoples of the Caucasus (especially Georgians). By the same logic, for example, in colloquial Armenian, there is a similar word games like panir-manir (= կանաչի-մսնաչի/greens-shreens/greens and herbs (different types of greenery like cilantro, purple basil, purslane, watercress), varung-marung (different types of vegetables like tomato ect.), pahir-manir (different types of cheese), khorovac-morovac (different types of grilled meat on coals) and so on. These expressions belong to colloquial language stylistics, because in fact, we are dealing with „broken“ or incomplete repetitions of words with phonetic changes (Ambardaryan 2002: 190). We will give an example of a joke about reduplication, where the questioner’s issue is answered by a person who speaks pure Russian, without an accent; that is, there is no imitation of a Caucasian accent.

<p>„– So, how did you like our Uzbekistan? – Oh, beyond all praise: everything is wonderful, delightful, and truly distinctive! There’s just one strange thing you could maybe explain to me. Why do so many words here seem to be played with in rhyming pairs? – I don’t understand – how do you mean? – Well, for example, everywhere you hear things like „shashlik-mashlik“, „salad-malad“, „kurdyuk-murdyuk“, „bazaar-mazaar“, and so on. – Ah, that’s what you mean? Well, how can I explain it to you... there’s just a bit of a lack of „culture-multure“. (Shashlik-Mashlik. Live Journal)</p>	<p>„Ну, и как вам понравился наш Узбекистан? – Ой, выше всяких похвал: все замечательно, восхитительно и самобытно! Вот только, не могли ли бы Вы мне объяснить такую странную вещь? Почему многие слова у вас рифмованно обыгрываются? – Не понял, это – как? – Ну, к примеру, почему кругом только и слышишь: „шашлык-машлык“, „салат-малат“, „курдюк-мурдюк“, „базар-мазар“ и так далее? – А-а, вы про это? Ну, понимаете, как Вам объяснить? Немножко „культур-мультир“ не хватает“. (Shashlik-Mashlik. Live Journal)</p>
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Example 1. A traditional joke.

As we can see, in all the mentioned paired words (shashlik-mashlik, salad-malat, kurdyuk-murdyuk, bazar-mazar, kultur-multur), the first part has its own denotation, and the second part has an incomprehensible denotation. Mashlyk, malat, murdyuk, mazar, and multur are the echo words of the first part, adding emotionality to the discourse, irony (kultur-multur), but this is irony of the second level, as an ironic response to a cultured, inquisitive questioner. Thus, the joke implicitly emphasizes that it is possible to play with (linguistic) culture. The inquisitive questioner is a follower of the linguistic norm, and the answerer is a follower of the linguistic usage. Such jokes are based on a game of usage and norms. Empirical joke material shows that questioner and responder function as invariant agents, and Georgian I vs. Georgian II, inquisitive patriot vs. tourist-joker, etc., are their (paired) storytelling variants. The play of language norms and usage in the context of the Russian language, as a native speaker of the language norm, and a Georgian playing with the language in the bazaar, is evident in the following joke. However, there are two versions of this joke which we need to highlight: An Armenian one and a Russian one.

<p>„A Georgian is selling fruit at a market in Moscow: „Ananas! Bananas! Ananas! Bananas!“ One Russian can't take it anymore, comes up and says: „It's not <i>bananas</i>, it's <i>banana</i>.“ The Georgian replies: „Got it. Anan! Banan! Anan! Banan!“</p>	<p>„Վրացին Մոսկվա շուկայում մրգեր ւ վաճառում: – Անանա՛ւ, բանանա՛ւ, անանա՛ւ, բանանա՛ւ... Մի ռուս չի դիմանում, մոտենում ւ ասում. – Բանանաս չի, բանան ւ: Վրացին էլ՝ – Հասկացա: Անա՛ն, բանա՛ն, անա՛ն, բանա՛ն“: („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians.)</p>
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Example 2. I version (Armenian version).

<p>„A Georgian is selling fruit and loudly shouts across the market: Ananasy! Bananasy! Ananasy! Bananasy! („Pineapples! Bananas! Pineapples! Bananas!“) A little boy comes up and says: „Sir, you're so big and yet so uneducated. You shouldn't say <i>bananasy</i>, you should say <i>banany</i>. „Thank you, boy“, the Georgian says. „BANANY! ANANY! BANANY! ANANY!“ (Joke № 1111519002)</p>	<p>„Торгует грузин фруктами и громко объявляет по базару: – Ананасы! Бананасы! Ананасы! Бананасы! Подходит маленький мальчик и говорит: – Вы дяденька такой большой и такой необразованный. Надо говорить не бананасы, а бананы. – Спасибо малчик. БАНАНЫ! АНАНЫ! БАНАНЫ! АНАНЫ!“ (Анекдот № 1111519002)</p>
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Example 3. II version (Russian version).

As we can see, the Russian-speaking little boy in Example 3 wants to bring the Georgian seller into the field of the linguistic norm (pineapple vs. banana (resp. bananasy)). However, he still goes away from the norm (pineapple vs. banana banana). His game reduplications are memorable chants on the market, which, for native speakers, can act as „anchors“-slogans.

In the oral urban environment, there are other versions of the jokes of the meta-level game, in other words, the game of linguistic usage:

<p>„Why do you all repeat words with the letter ‘M’? Like <i>arbutz-marbutz, taksi-maksi, bazar-mazar</i>?“ „What can you do – the people have no culture-multure!“ (Reduplication-shmeduplication URL. https://clck.ru/3RHZN6)</p>	<p>„А почему у вас все повторяют слова с буквой „М“? Например, арбуз-марбуз, такси-макси, базар-мазар?“ – „Что поделаешь, нет у народа культуры-мультикультуры!“ (Редупликация-шмедупликация. URL. https://clck.ru/3RHZN6)</p>
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Example 4. Reduplication.

The joke in Example 4 follows the same questioner-responder model. The latter responds as a „cultural ethicist“. Empirical evidence shows that the reduplicativity of words extends beyond the (Southern) Caucasus. In all the above jokes, there are no „individualizations“, then in the following examples, Gogs and Givi become the characters. We need to note that this a Georgian name which is one of the „naive/goofy/goofy/swaggering“¹ characters in jokes, for instance:

<p>„One Georgian asks another: – Gogi, how do you think <i>gogal-mogal</i>² would be in English? – Probably... <i>Shakespeare-makespeare</i>“. (Joke August 29, 2002)</p>	<p>„Один грузин спрашивает другого: – Гоги, как ты думаешь, как будит по-английски гогал-могал? – Навэрнае, Шекспир-мэксспир...“ (Анекдот 29 августа)</p>
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Example 5. Joke August 29, 2002.

In the joke in Example 5, Gogi acts as a responsible, knowledgeable, expert in the English language and literature, a „wise man“, but in reality, a fool. Through the reduplication of the word „gogal-mogal“, a semantic transition occurs from low (kitchen, ordinary, domestic) to high (cultural), with a play on the pseudonym of the great Russian writer Gogol. In a joke, a grammatical or lexical answer is expected to the question about the translation („how it will be in English“). Nevertheless, in a completely unexpected way, we hear a „literary“ response in the transition from the Russian writer of the

¹ Two Georgian guys in full suits and ties are driving an old car. It's *crazy hot* outside – like 40 degrees. Windows up. No air. Nothing. One looks at the other and goes: – *Gogi, come on... let's roll the windows down. It's boiling.* And Gogi says: – *No, no, no...* Let them think we have air conditioning. („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians: <https://www.akumb.am/archive/index.php/t-55575.html>)

² The Russian language norm should be *eggnog/gogol-mogol*. It sounds close to the Polish meaning *kogel-mogel*; in English, *hug-mug, hugger-mugger*.

XIX century, GOGOL, to Shakespeare (Shakespeare-Shmakespeare/Шекспир-мэкспир).

<p>„Givi, who is SUSHKA³? – SUSHKA is like LAVASH with a little hole! – Lavash with a little hole is a BAGEL, and SUSHKA is a DOGGY’S MOM!“ Source: https://otvet.mail.ru/question/45123185?reply</p>	<p>„Гиви, кыто такой СУШКА? – СУШКА – эта такая ЛАВАШ с дирочком! – ЛАВАШ с дирочком – эта БУ-БЛЫК, а СУШКА – это САБАЧКИН МАМА!“ Source: https://otvet.mail.ru/question/45123185?reply</p>
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Example 6. A recent joke.

In the last joke, humor is based on a replay of the following oppositions: drying vs. bagel vs. lavash (arm. bakery products), drying/SuShka/суШка vs. bitch/suChka/суЧка (male). Givi’s „explanation“ is based on an iconic metaphor, namely, visual similarities that are not equivalent: drying vs. lavash with a hole, lavash with a hole vs. a bagel. The „finale“ of the joke ends based on metonymy, the usual destruction. The denotation of the word „drying“ for Givi is not a bakery product („Drying is such a lavash with a twist“/„Sushka – eta takaya lavash s dirochkom“/ „Сушка – эта такая лаваш с дирочком“), but a bitch/ SuChka/ СуЧка (Dictionary of the Russian Language, 1999: 312). Bitch/SuChka is another acoustic signifier referring to a female dog, the diminutive name of the word „bitch“/Suka/Сука (Dictionary of the Russian Language, 1999: 312), which has an additional connotative meaning in Russian. „Bitch“/Suka/Сука is a disapproving or insulting address to a woman, a bitch, a woman with low social responsibility, etc.

Finally, here is another example of a joke with a „grassroots“ accent, presented in two versions: Armenian and Russian.

³ For the English-speaking public, let us clarify that the Russian word is „sushka“ (a small dry ring-shaped bread), „lavash“ (thin flatbread), and „bublik“ is „bagel“.

<p>„Listen, Givi, woman intimate organ, five letters.’ Givi: ‘Vertical or horizontal?’ ‘Horizontal.’ ‘Then write <i>mouth</i>’.⁴“ („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians)</p>	<p>„Պատուշայ, Գիվի, ժենսկի պալավոյ օտգան, պաստ բուկվ: Գիվին. – Պա վեռծիկալի՞ իլի պա գարիգանտալի՞: – Պա գարիգանտալի: – Տոգդա նապիշի ռոծիկ՞: („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians)</p>
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Example 7: I version (Armenian version) of another joke.

Judging by the joke, this is a product of the Soviet era. People from the Soviet „periphery“ (Georgia) travel to the „center“ (Moscow), and during the quasi-intellectual activity, a „grassroots“ theme based on the movement of planes is played out: crossword puzzle (horizontal vs. vertical) vs. anatomy. However, Givi’s knowledge moves away from the anatomical, with an apparent reference to the word „uterus“, into the erotic sphere, having in mind the areal, colloquial tabooed anatomical meaning of the letter P (p....) as a metaphor for physicality.

The deliberate diminutive of the word „rot-ik/рот-ик“ (little/ small mouth) enhances the comic effect.

„Knowledgeable“ in anatomy, or rather, the naively cunning Givi advises a friend to write (small) „mouth“, thereby having real, colloquial words in his mind (pussy vs. mouth), not a professional high-case word. On a pragmatic level, the listener, as an out-of-text character, becomes an accomplice in the game, completing the unsaid meaning, thereby enhancing the effect of inclusiveness and collective understanding. Thus, comedy arises at the intersection or collision of several codes from different language registers: from high (uterus) to low (p....), from horizontal to vertical.

Reduplication of Georgian „school“ jokes

We have seen in the examples above that motifs from everyday life are often used to tell anecdotes. These have achieved a certain degree of popularity among the general public. However, there are also other examples that are

⁴ Стоит заметить, что анекдот приобретает экспрессивность, если рассказывается с грузинским акцентом, чего нельзя сказать в русской, авторской версии (рассказал Ваня Комлев). II версия: „Two Georgians are sitting together; one of them is solving a crossword. ‘Listen, Gogi, the clue says: *Female sexual organ. Five letters.*’ ‘Across or down?’ ‘Across.’ ‘Then write: mouth.’“ // „Сидят два грузина, один разгадывает кроссворд. – Слушай Гоги, вопрос: Женский половой орган. Пять букв. – По горизонтали или по вертикали. – По горизонтали“. (Joke № 9961382).

significant for the educational sector, and we will examine them here. Many examples of language play can be cited from Georgian „school life“:

<p>„In a Georgian school, a lesson of the Russian language. – Rebjata, značit, russkij jazyk očen' složnyj jazyk. Naprimer: Nast'ja – èto ženskoye imja, a nenast'je – plokhaja pogoda“. (Joke № 556944)</p>	<p>„Урок русского языка в грузинской школе. – Дети, русский язык – очень трудный язык! Напримэр, Настя – это дэвушка, а ненастя – плохая погода!“ (Анекдот № 556944)</p>
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Example 8. A school joke.

In Russian, it is overlaid in the joke, which is attributed to the complexity of the Russian language and the teaching of the language norm. However, the teacher overcomes the „difficulties“ with great success, thanks to the juxtaposition of consonant words such as „Nastya“ and „*nenast'je*/bad weather“. It is well known that cognitive processes in humans occur through differences (Saussure, 1997: 166), the juxtaposition of the familiar vs. unfamiliar, contrast (Collins, Robinson, Behrmann, 2018: 120–131; Johnston/Edmonds, 2009: 577–596). The joke uses juxtaposition as a didactic device. The last joke given is, in fact, a critical product of the Soviet era. It has an echo of Soviet language policy: the language of the empire should be taught in educational schools of fraternal republics (Georgia, Armenia, etc.). It should also be noted that there are practically no such jokes about ignorance of the Russian language in Armenia; accordingly, humorous jokes about Georgian teachers of the Soviet era are products of implicit criticism of Georgian schools or teachers.

If, in the last joke, the process of teaching the Russian language norm took place in a comprehensive Soviet school, then, in the following example, the „expert“ of the Georgian language norm is already in the „center“ of the USSR – in Moscow.

<p>„A Georgian man in one of Moscow’s restaurants calls the waitress. – Devushka, prinesi vada. „Waitress: – Not vada, but vody. The waitress brings the water, the Georgian drinks it, and says: – Spasiby, vukusnaya vadi (instead of vodA). Waitress: – Not vodY, but vadA. – Vaaa, tupaya, shto li? Sama ni znayesh, a menya uchish!“⁵ („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians)</p>	<p>„Վրացին Մոսկվայի ռեստորաններից մեկում կանչում է մատուցողուհուն. – Դե՛վուշկա, պրինեսի վադա: Մատուցողուհին. – Не вода, а воды. Մատուցողուհին բերում ա ջուրը, վրացին խմում ա ու. – Սպասիրը, վկուսնայա վադի: Մատուցողուհին. – Не воды, а вода. – Վաասա, տուպայա՛, շտո լի: Սամա նի զնայեշ, ա մնե ուչիշ“: („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians)</p>
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Example 9. Jokes about Caucasians.

As we can see from the joke, he is at a carnival-themed gathering (restaurant). The waitress, as a native speaker of the language norm, functions as a „teacher“. Such a function is incompatible with the space of a carnival, which is why teaching a language norm causes aggression in a Georgian (What, are you stupid or something? You don’t even know it yourself, and you’re trying to teach me!). In the ending of the joke, the Georgian carouser turns into a „connoisseur“ of the cases of the Russian language, the linguistic norm: „prinesi vadA (water), instead of vodY (water), tasty water, instead of water (tasty vodY instead of vodA/ вкусная водЬI, вместо водA). The Georgian confuses the dative case with the nominative, the nominative with the dative.

The comicality of the situation is accentuated by the „screaming“, noticeable accent, as well as ignorance of the case forms of personal pronouns (me vs. me/ mne vs. menya/ мне vs. меня).

About the Georgian’s ignorance or knowledge of the Russian language, we read another joke from the post-Soviet era, which we quote in Example 10:

⁵ Standard English translation: „A Georgian man in a Moscow restaurant calls the waitress.
– Miss, please bring me some water.
Waitress: – It’s not *water*, but *some water*.
The waitress brings the water. The Georgian drinks it and says: – Thank you, the water was tasty.
Waitress: – It’s not *some water*, but *water*.
– What, are you stupid or something? You don’t even know it yourself, and you’re trying to teach me!“

<p>„A Georgian writes a text message: – Daragoy padrug Natash, atkuda you find out shto I not Russki? Normative version: A Georgian man writes an SMS: – Dear friend Natasha, how did you find out that I am not Russian?“ („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians)</p>	<p>„Դրացիի sms-ի գրում. – Դարաგոյի քարտուղարը Նատաշ, ա՛տ կ՞ուրքես քո ինչու եմքս չհասկանում? (Armenian version) Грузин пишет sms-ку: – Дарагои падруг Наташ, а՛т кудա ти узнал, што я не русский?“ („Century“ club. Jokes about Caucasians)</p>
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Example 10. Language skills.

As this joke in Example 10 shows, it ridicules Georgian language norms (spelling, grammatical gender, etc.). The comicality of the situation is further emphasized when he asks how Natasha guessed that he was not Russian; that is, in his mind, he already perceives himself as a native speaker of the Russian language and is surprised that he is not perceived as Russian.

Let us recall a few more jokes about the Georgians' ignorance of the Russian language, which are based on playing with articulatory accidents: „In a Georgian school. Teacher: „– Remember, deti: bulka, wilka, tarelka (булька, вилька, тарелька) are written without a soft sign, and sol, bean – with a soft sign. Remember this, deti, because it is impossible to understand this.“ (Joke №-2042319031).

As we can see, the teacher correctly explains that the words „salt“ (sol/ сол) and „beans“ (fasol-фасол) are written with a soft sign and need to be remembered, but playing based on accent, ignorance of articulation norms, intonation, rhythm of speech or lack of preparation of the speech apparatus for pronunciation of phonetic syntagmas of the Russian language becomes material for didactic purposes. The „author“ of the joke does not go into details, does not „explain“, but it can be added that a loaf, fork, and plate are not written without a soft sign, since the consonants before the „a“ sound firm. But there is another version of this joke, in which a Russian lesson in a Georgian school is the plot. The teacher says:

<p>„– Children, the words ‘teacher’ (‘,uchitel’), and ‘winner’ (‘,pobeditel’) are written with a soft sign (‘,ь’) at the end, while the words ‘fork’ (‘,vil’ka’), and ‘plate’ (‘,tarel’ka’) are written without a soft sign.“</p> <p>Gogi says:</p> <p>– „Teacher, but how can one understand this?“</p> <p>The teacher replies:</p> <p>– „Gogi, this cannot be understood – it must be memorized“.</p> <p>(Joke №-302615010)</p>	<p>„Урок русского в грузинской школе. Учитель говорит:</p> <p>– Дети, слова „учител“, „победител“ пишутся с мягким знаком на конце, а слова „вилка“, „тарелка“ пишутся бэз мягкого знака.</p> <p>Гоги говорит:</p> <p>– Учител, но как это понять?</p> <p>Учитель:</p> <p>– Гоги, это понять невозможно, это надо запомнить“</p> <p>(Joke №-302615010)</p>
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Example 11. A Teacher.

Of course, the „narrator“ of the joke adheres to the existing „logic“ that you need to remember. However, the phonetic analysis of the words „teacher“ (‘,uchitel’/‘,учитЭл’) and „winner“ (‘,pobeditel’/‘,победитЭл’) shows that if you omit a soft sign, the previous vowel ‘,е’/‘,е’ must be read as ‘,е’/‘,э’: ‘,uchitel’/‘,учитЭл’, ‘,pobeditel’/‘,победитЭл’. A soft sign softens the ‘,л’/‘,л’ sound, and the letter ‘,е’ is pronounced as a complex sound [ye/йе].

„Georgian“ jokes are the product of carnival consciousness, the „authors“ of which are native speakers of the linguistic norm of the Russian language. Otherwise, it was impossible to play at the meta-level (joke).

Here is another colorful example of a native Russian speaker. Alexander Radashkevich notes with subtle humor in Georgian Notes: at the international Russian-Georgian poetry festival „In Search of the Golden Fleece“ in Georgia, „one of these teachers, a sweet, small, thin woman, told us, pointing a pointer at some bone behind the dusty museum glass: „This mutton is sold in the sixth century B.C.“ / „Eta baranina sdelana v shestom veke do nashei eri“/ „Эта баранина сдэлана в шестом веке до нашей эри“ (Radashkevich, 2009). In other words, the ram’s bone is said to indicate an artifact from the sixth century B.C.

In this context, one should recall V. Kikabidze’s apt words. Of course, this is not a reproach to the highly respected A. Radashkevich, but as a warning against prejudice against any peoples: „Wise advice from Vakhtang Kikabidze. If a person of Caucasian nationality is talking to You in the language of Your nationality, do not consider him a fool for his accent and some grammatical errors. Just remember that this person is talking to You in Your language and also speaks his native language perfectly, which You do not know at all!“ (Kikabidze 2018).

We know summarize our findings. As can be seen, jokes based on the play of articulatory accidents demonstrate a stable semiotic mechanism for constructing a comic effect through deviation from the linguistic norm at the levels of pronunciation or acoustic plan, and of its metalanguage comprehension. The language game that arises in jokes and observations is shaped from the perspective of a native speaker of a normative code who interprets „someone else’s“ speech through the prism of his own linguistic competence. Comedy is based on the level of the plane of expression (narrative intonation, articulation, and intonation).

Articulatory accidents, manifested by graphemic and phonetic errors („uchitel“, „pobeditel“, „vil’ka“, „tarel’ka“, „bul’ka“/„учител“, „победител“, „вилька“, „тарелька“, „булька“), become signs of the speaker’s „otherness“. The analyzed jokes demonstrate that their construction is possible only at the metalanguage level, where knowledge of the norm is a prerequisite for playing with its violation. Nevertheless, the most interesting thing is that the „deformed“ in linguistic terms is interpreted as a deviation from the linguistic norm. Laughter is based on the contrast of articulatory errors and normative knowledge (the words ‘*fork*’ („vil’ka“), and ‘*plate*’ („tarel’ka“) are written without a soft sign). Such a linguistic inversion of the normative and the non-normative is made possible by carnival, playful thinking. In the context of didactic communication – the lesson – the teacher suggests abandoning the rational explanation („it is necessary to remember“). „Mysticism“ is introduced into comic discourse: to understand the impossibility of understanding, but only memorization.

Vakhtang Kikabidze’s advice can be considered as a metacorrection. The focus is shifting from assessing deviation to recognizing the asymmetry of language competencies. The accent and grammatical errors of the Georgian are reinterpreted as a consequence of intercode communication, in which one participant is forced to operate in a non-native language.

Conclusions

Reduplication in „Georgian“ jokes is one of the key mechanisms for constructing a comic effect. Echo words like *shashlik-mashlyk*, *salad-malat*, *culture-multur* do not have a full-fledged denotation. They enhance the emotionality of the utterance, mark the playful attitude towards language, and open the field for associative play. In these constructions, reduplication functions as a means of carnivalizing the norm, thereby destroying seriousness, transferring communication between quasi-participants in the dialogue to the register of irony. Reduplication in „Georgian“ jokes becomes a sign not of a linguistic

„mistake“, but of a conscious deviation from the norm, a form of language game, but on the part of native speakers of Russian. Without knowledge of the language norm, it was impossible to violate the comic. Laughter from „Georgian“ jokes is possible only if you have a background knowledge of the „correct“ pronunciation, spelling, or usage. Characters like Goga and Givi are not individualized, but function as typical figures that allow reproducing and varying the same semiotic scenario: „naive speaker“ vs. „the hidden bearer of the norm“.

Considering the historical context of these jokes, it is safe to say that the Soviet context plays a crucial role in their formation. Most of the examples are rooted in the experience of the USSR's language policy, in which Russian served as a supranational normative code mandatory for study in the republics. „School“ jokes based on the difficulties of assimilating a soft sign, cases, or homonymy (Nastya / bad weather/ Nastya / nenast'e/Настя / ненастье) reflect not so much individual incompetence as systemic tension between the language of the center and the languages of the periphery.

In the „Georgian“ jokes in the post-Soviet era, there has been a shift in emphasis. If in Soviet jokes a Georgian is often depicted as a student or an object of correction, then in later examples he may act as an „expert“, confident in his command of the Russian language (a joke about a Georgian texting a restaurant customer). However, the comic effect is preserved due to the discrepancy between the character's self-perception and how the addressee interprets his speech. It indicates the transformation of language memory: the normative code remains, but loses its institutional rigidity and enters game mode. Thus, the „Georgian“ jokes demonstrate a stable semiotic mechanism in which language play and reduplication serve as means of processing the Soviet linguistic experience in the post-Soviet cultural consciousness.

Doubling in articulation and accent no longer constitute signs of „alien“ speech. They turn into „tools“ for collective laughter, allowing them to distance themselves from the past. In this sense, a joke serves as a space of linguistic memory, in which language becomes not an object, but a „subject“, i. e., material for carnival reinterpretation.

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Tigran SIMYAN

**GRADSKI EP KAO IGRA SA JEZIČKOM NORMOM
(NA PRIMJERU „GRUZINSKIH“ ŠALA I
NJIHOVIH RUSKIH VERZIJA)**

U članku se ispituje „gruzijski“ vic kao govorni žanr u kome se jezična norma narušava konotativnom reduplikacijom i drugim oblicima jezične igre. Na osnovu Bahtinove teorije govornih žanrova i proučavanja humora, anegdota se tumači kao metajezična praksa koja odražava društvene stavove prema normalnosti, devijaciji i jezičnom autoritetu. Analiza je sprovedena u kontekstu jezikoslovnoga polifonoga urbanoga prostora Staroga Tbilisija, đe je ruski povijesni služio kao jezik carstva, uporediv sa ulogom francuskog u jugoistočnoj Europi. Ova sociolingvistična situacija doprinijela je aktivnom jezičnom kontaktu i formiranju hibridnih govornih oblika, koji su kasnije postali izvor anegdotskih tekstova. Posebna pozornost je posvećena reduplikaciji kao ključnom mehanizmu za stvaranje komičnoga efekta u „gruzijskim“ šalama. Konstrukcije odjeka kao što su „šašlik-mašlik“, „salat-malat“, „kultur-multur“ nemaju samostalan denotat. Međutim, oni obavljaju pragmatičke i semiotičke funkcije: pojačavaju ekspresivnost iskaza, obilježavaju ironiju i upućuju na svjesno odstupanje od norme. Analiza sovjetskoga i postsovjetskoga anegdotskoga empirijskoga materijala, uključujući „gruzijske“ tipične likove Gogija i Givija, pokazuje da reduplikacija služi za karnevalizaciju norme i simbolično istraživanje odnosa centar-periferija. Na kraju članka autor zaključuje da je reduplikacija u „gruzijskim“ vicevima ključni mehanizam komičnoga učinka. „Odjeci“ glavnih dijelova riječi, kao što su *multur*, *malat* i *mašlik*, opet nemaju samostalnu denotaciju i služe karnevalizaciji jezične norme i povećanju izražajnosti govora. Oni pretpostavljaju poznavanje normativnog koda i odstupanje od norme pretvaraju u svjesnu jezičku igru i oblik kolektivnoga jezičkoga pamćenja.

Ključne riječi: *odstupanje od jezičke norme, reduplikacija, jezična igra, vic kao govorni žanr, urbana višejezičnost, semiotika humora, jezičko pamćenje*