

The Royal Dialect in Nepali Political Discourse

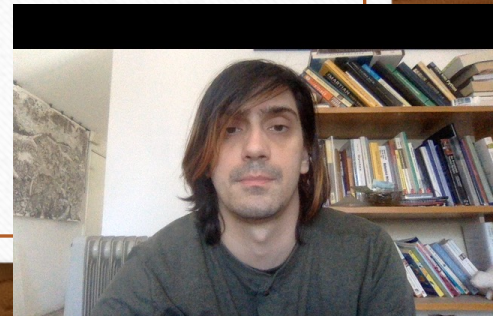
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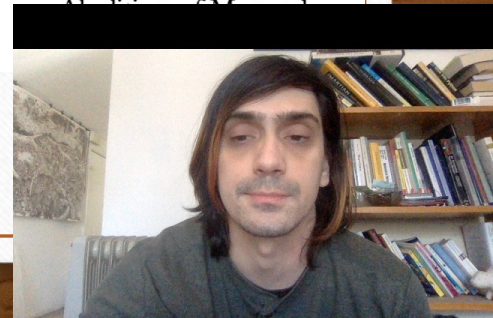
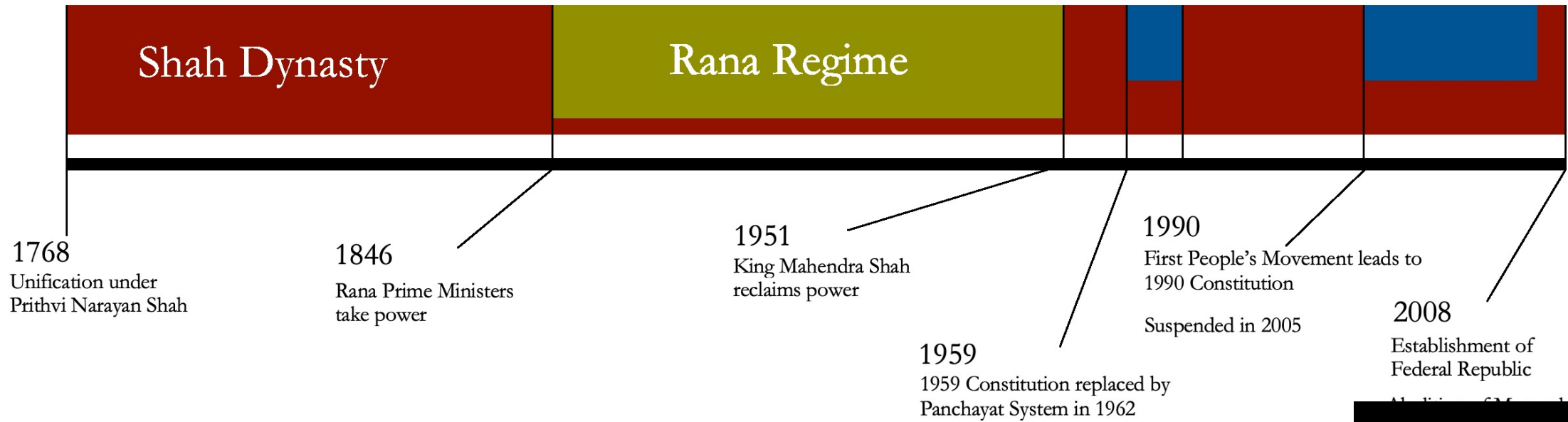


Introduction

- Nepali *darbaari bhasikaa* ‘Royal Dialect’
- Nepal’s transition from a Hindu monarchy to a secular democracy
- Anne Mocko interviewed key political figures in 2010
- Secondary linguistic analysis of unpublished interview transcripts

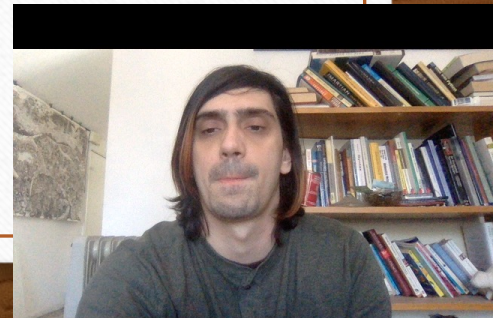


Timeline of the Kingdom of Nepal



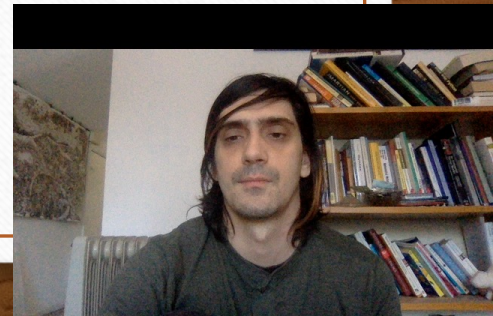
Historical Background

- Multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-religious state
 - 2011 Census lists 122 languages
 - 50% speak Nepali as first language today
- State Policy promoted one religion, one language, one state
- Caste Hierarchy codified into law from 1854-1990 (*Muluki Ain*)



Linguistic Background

- Honorificity encoded into grammar
- Multiple levels of honorificity in everyday speech (3-5 depending upon source, cf. Hutt 1988, Acharya 1991, Regmi 2006)
- Usage depends upon status of speaker, addressee, referent
 - Seniority
 - Caste (e.g. Brahman conversing with Vaishya, cf. Acharya 1991)



Linguistic Background

PRO.3SG

Singular

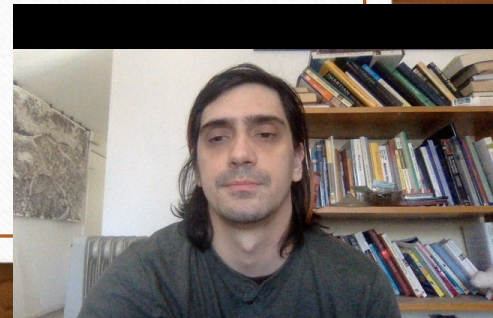
u

Plural

uniharu

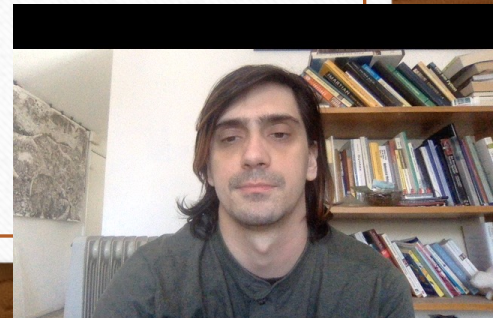
Honorific

uhãã



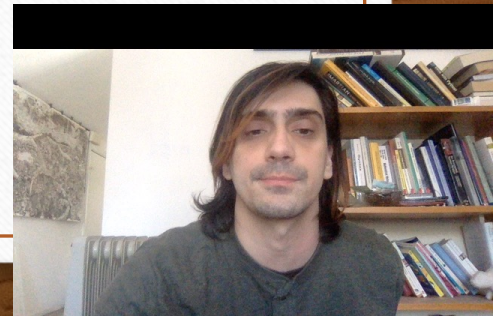
Linguistic Background

	PRO.3SG	<i>gar-</i> (“to do”)
Singular	<i>u</i>	<i>gar-cha</i>
Plural	<i>uniharu</i>	<i>gar-chan</i>
Honorific	<i>uhãã</i>	<i>gar-nu huncha</i>



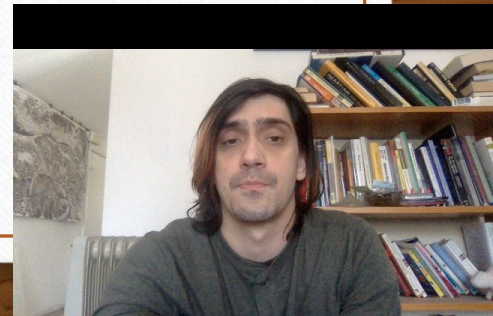
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Honorific	<i>uhãã</i>	<i>gar-nu huncha</i>
Royal	<i>sarkaar</i>	<i>gar-i-baksancha</i>



Linguistic Background

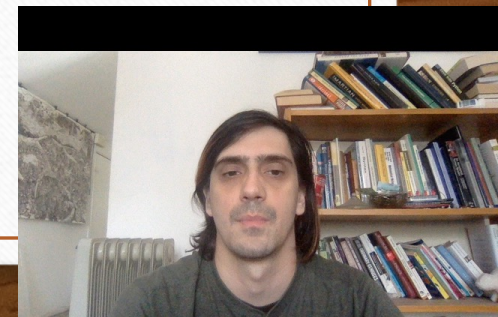
- The Royal Dialect consists of:
 - Specialized vocabulary:
 - Largely derived from Persian
 - *Sarkaar* as a pronoun and form of address
 - Vocabulary for common words like 'food' (*khaanaa* vs. *jyunaar*)



Linguistic Background

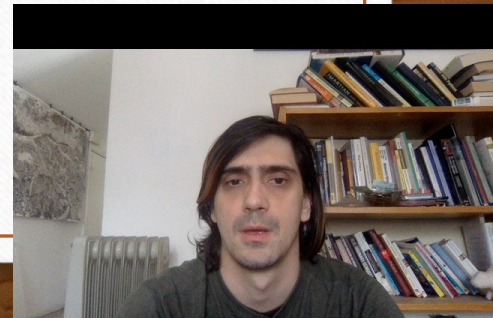
- The Royal Dialect consists of:
 - Royal Honorific Verb Construction
 - Light Verb *baksanu/baksinu* derived from Persian *bakhshiidan* ‘to bestow’

English:	Nepali:	Royal Nepali
‘to do’	<i>garnu</i>	<i>gar-i-baksanu</i>
‘to eat’	<i>khaanu</i>	<i>jyunaar gar-i-baksanu</i>
‘to go’	<i>jaanu</i>	<i>sawaari ho-i-baksanu</i>
‘to ask’	<i>sodhnu</i>	<i>sodh-i-baksanu</i>



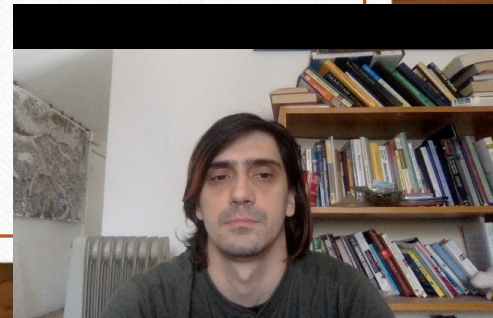
Overall Research Questions

- How do speakers use the Royal Dialect to portray political attitudes?
 - Political convention of using *u* when referencing political figures, including King
 - Royal Dialect indicates a political stance?



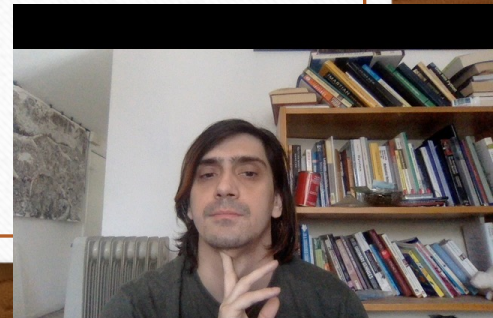
Focus of Study

- Interview transcripts
 - 4 Speakers, 2 Interviewers
 - 3 members of former Royal administration (royalist), 1 member of Nepali Congress (non-royalist)
 - Topics: Functioning of royal court and congress, political power and duties of kings, revolution and abolition of monarchy, 2001 palace massacre and its political aftermath



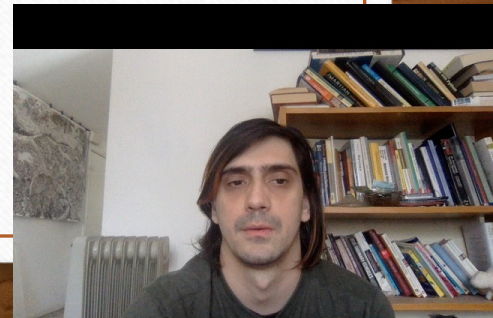
Study

- All mentions of royal figures in subject position
- Verb Form
 - Plural Honorific, Honorific Construction, Royal Honorific Construction
- Subject Pronoun
 - Plural (*uniharu*), Honorific (*uhãã*), Royal Form (*sarkaar*)



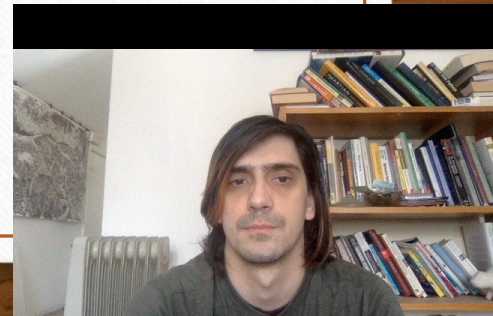
Results

- 222 Total Subject Mentions
- 139 Main Clause Verbs
- Subject Realization (out of 222):
 - Omitted: 46 (21%)
 - Pronoun: 37 (17%)
 - Overt Nouns: (63%)



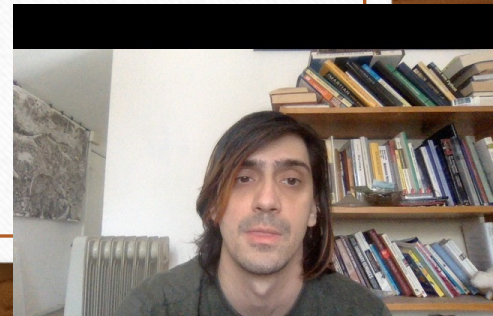
Subjects

- Particular Kings:
 - Prithvi Narayan Shah, Mahendra, Birendra, Dipendra, Gyanendra
 - Titles: *Raajaa*, *Yuvaraaj*, *Crown Prince*
- Discussion of kingly duties in general
 - *raajaa*



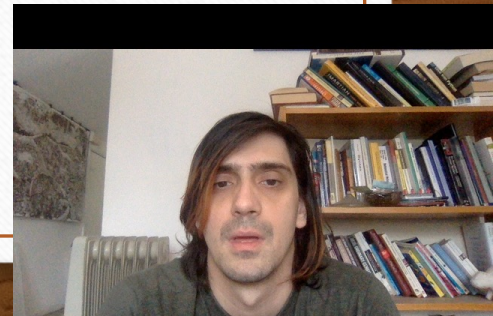
Subjects

- Other members of the Royal Family
 - Nirajan, Shruti
 - Kinship terms: *uncle, choraa, grandfather, naati-naativi*
- British Royal Figures
 - Queen Elizabeth II, Charles I, Princess Diana, Princess Philip, Prince Charles

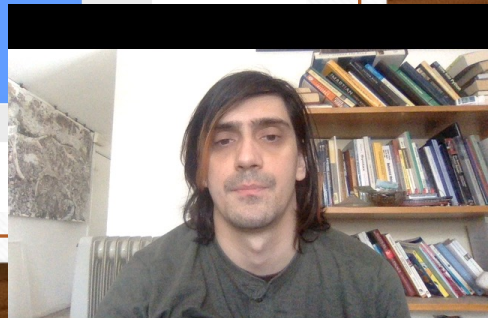
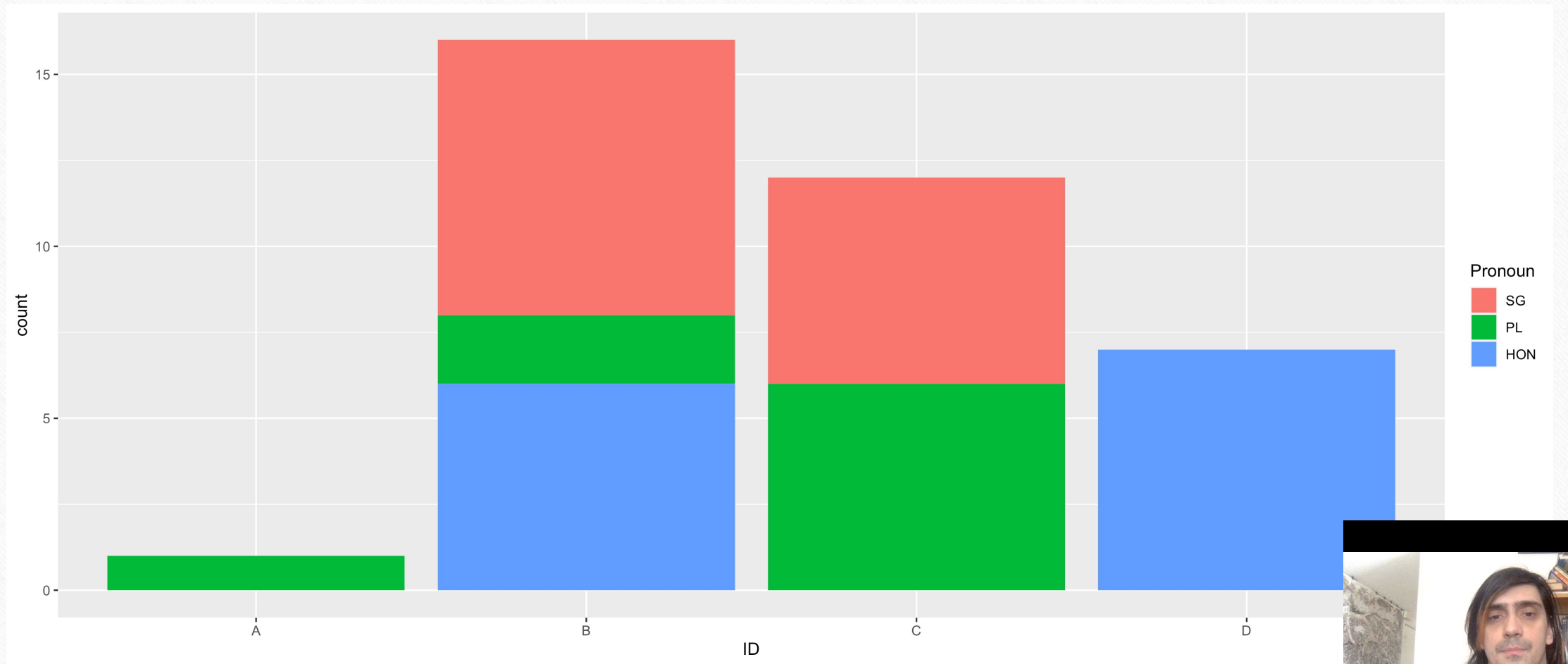


Pronouns

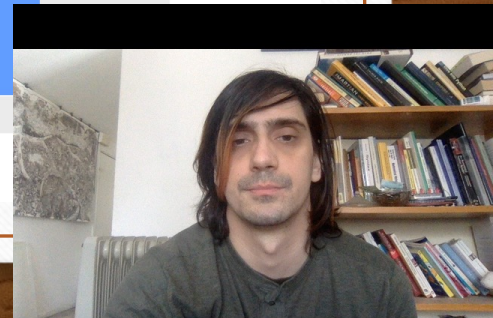
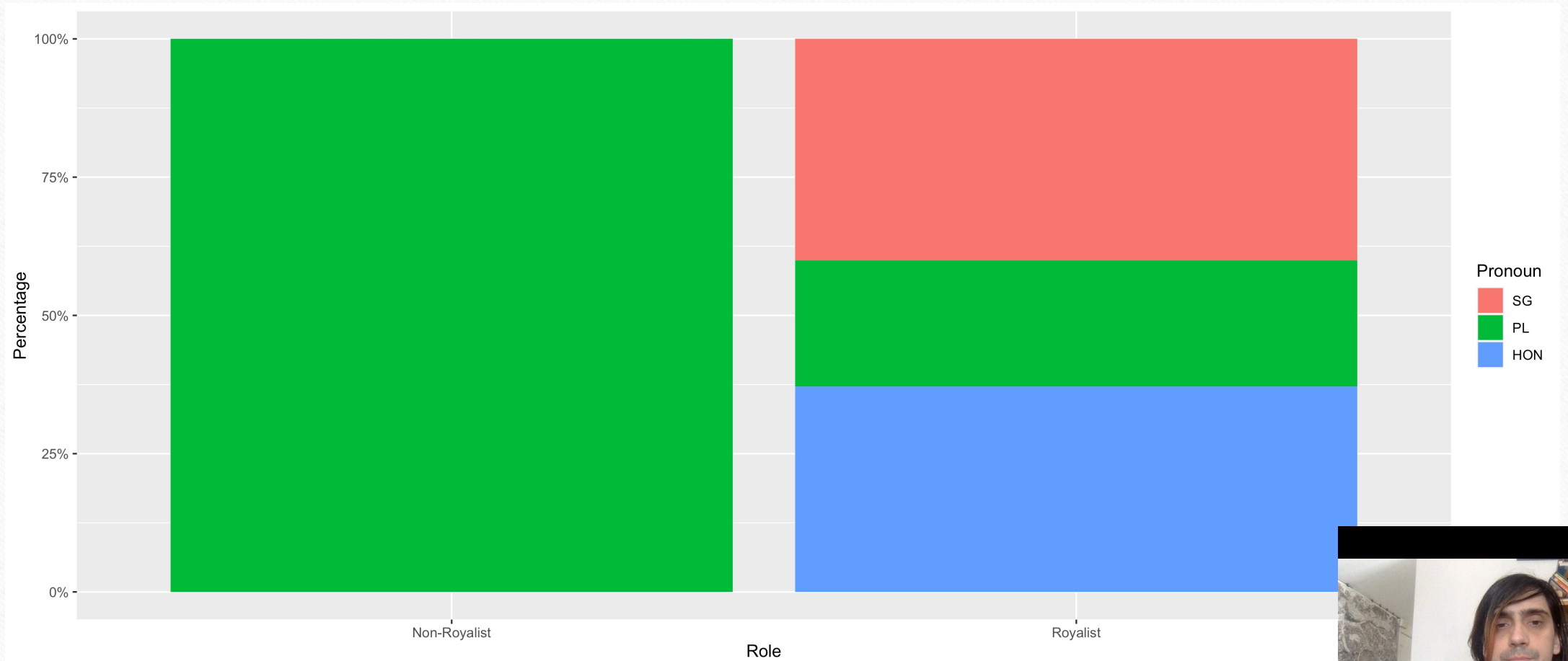
- Variant patterns
 - Some speakers use multiple pronouns
 - Non-royalist uses plural honorific
- *Sarkaar* is never used as a royal honorific pronoun
 - As a title: *Gyanendra Sarkaar*, *Birendra Sarkaar*
 - As a noun: referring to the entire royal family



Honorific Pronoun Usage by Speaker

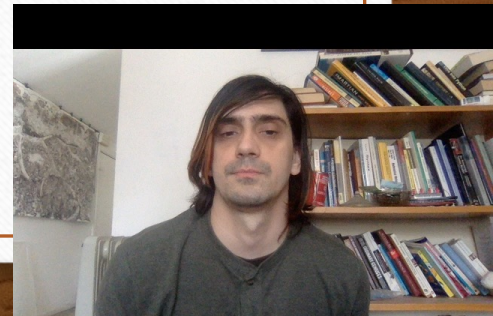


Honorific Pronoun Percentage by Role

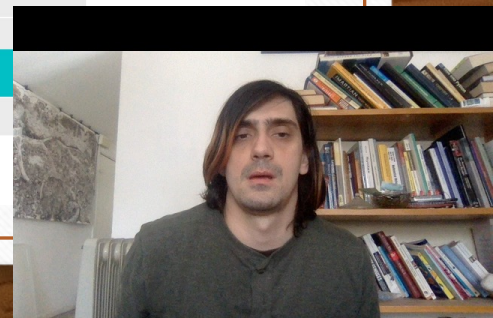
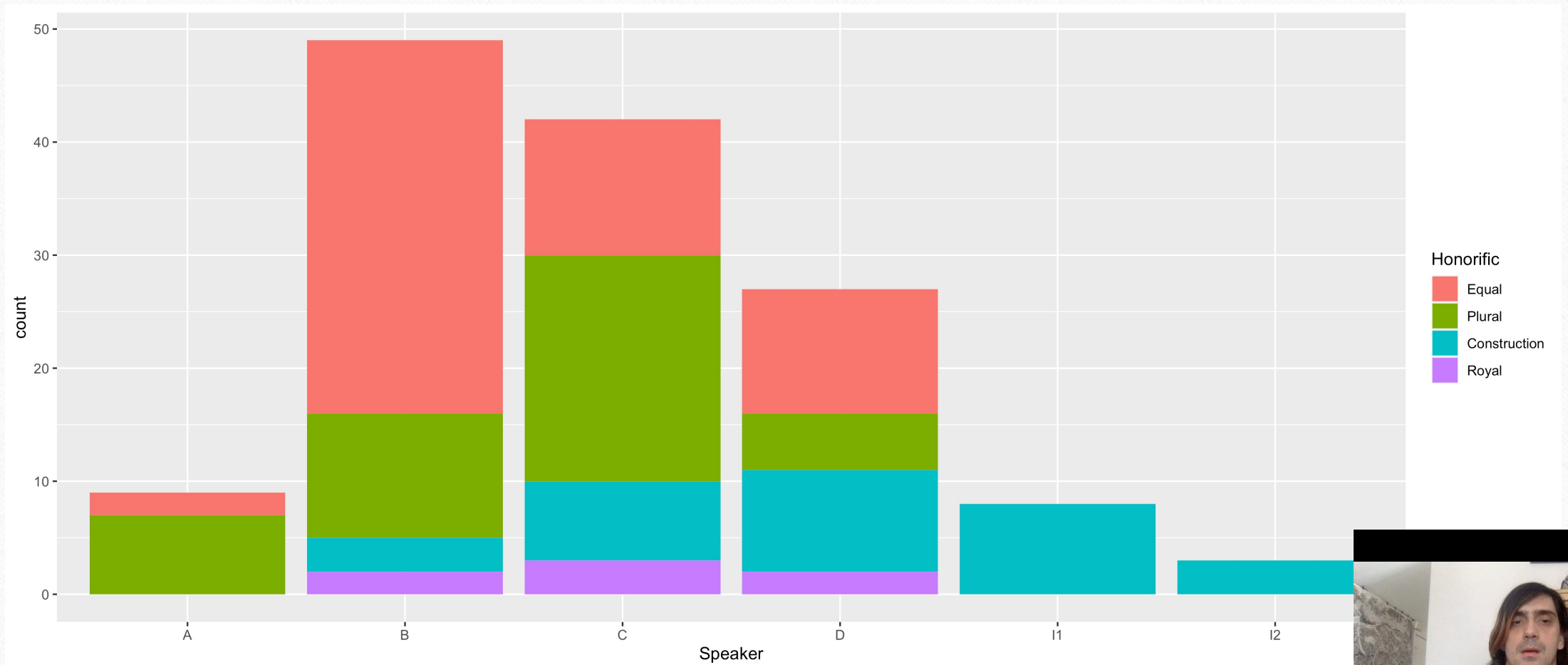


Honorific Verbs

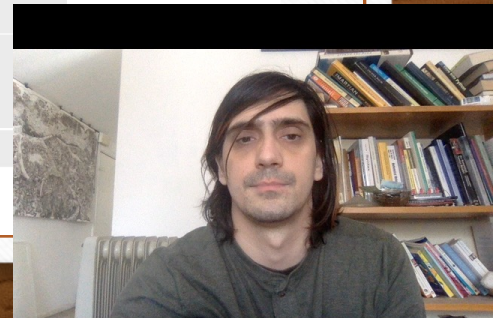
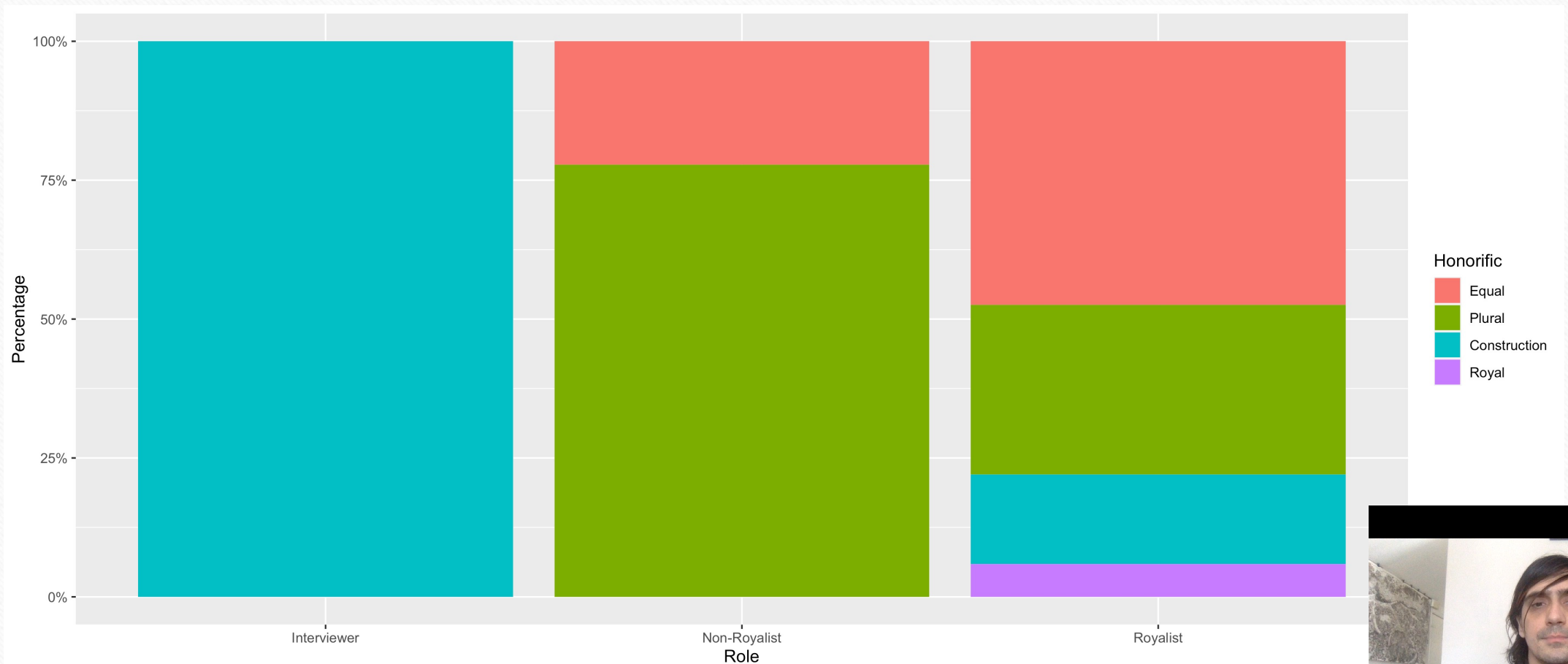
- Royal-aligned figures use the royal honorific construction 4-8% of the time
- A mixture of non-honorific, plural honorific, and regular verb construction honorific
- No examples of royal honorific from non-royal figures



Honorific Usage by Speaker



Honorific Percentage by Role



Examples: Royal Honorific

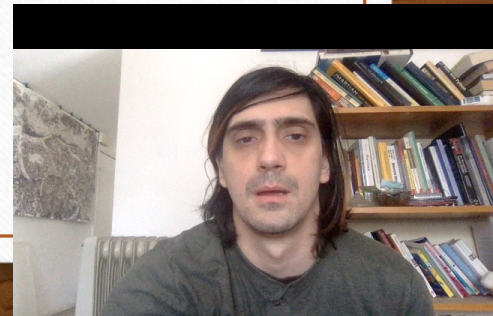
raajaa-le

king-ERG

“The king votes.”

bhoTi-baksan-cha

vote-**BESTOW**-PRES.3.SG

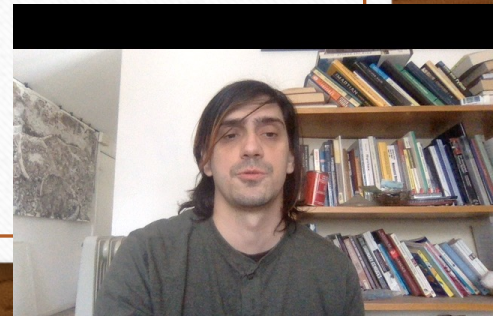


Examples: Royal Honorific

sarvocca.adolat-laai *question* *gar-era* *sodh-i-baks-iyo*

Supreme.Court-OBJ question do-CONJ ask-**BESTOW**-PERF.3.SG

‘(The King) questioned the Supreme Court.’



Examples: Royal Honorific

sarkaar

bit-i-baks-yo:

Nirajan, Shruti

ROYAL

pass.away-**BESTOW**-PERF.3SG

Nirajan, Shruti

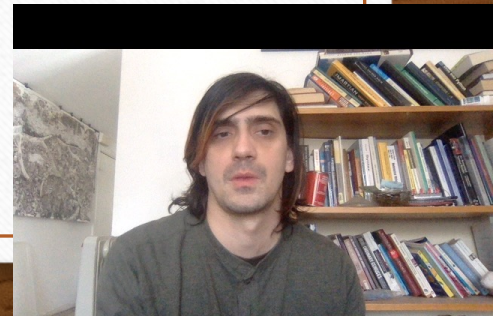
sabai

parivaar-ai

all

family-EMPH

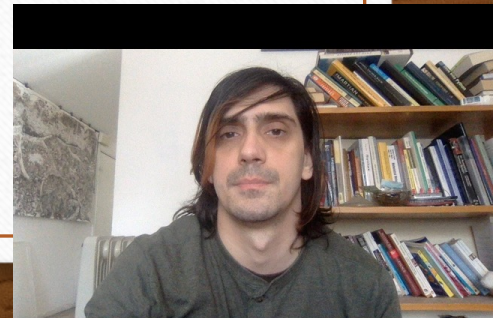
‘They all passed away: Nirajan, Shruti, the entire family.’



Examples: Verbal Honorific Construction

ani *raajaa* *kati* *belaa* *jaa-na* *sak-nu huncha*
And king how.much time go-INF can-**HON.PRES.3.SG**

‘And what time can the King go?’



Examples: Plural Honorific

raajaa-le

power

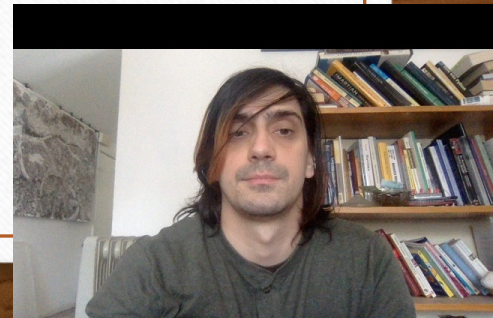
choD-e

king-ERG

power

give.up-PERF.3.PL

‘The King gave up power.’



Examples: No Honorific

Gyanendra-le

sabai

kaam

gar-yo

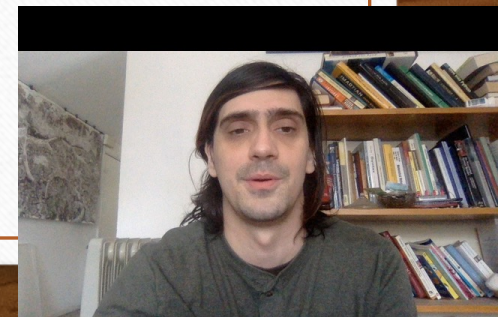
Gyanendra-ERG

all

work

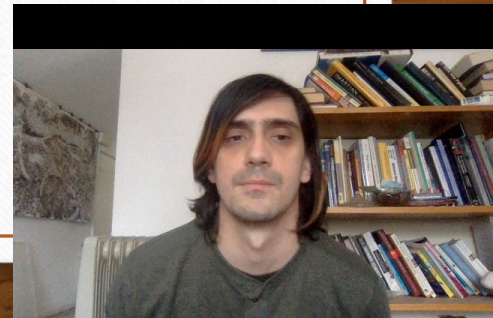
do-**PERF.3.SG**

‘Gyanendra did all the work.’



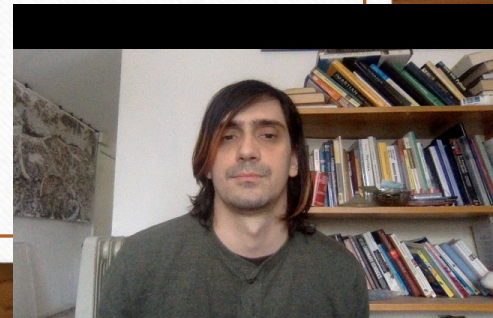
Usage of Royal Dialect

- Royal Honorific is used:
 - Discussing particular figures (not kingly duties in general)
 - Usually kings, but also royal family members
 - With the Nepalese royal family (not with British royals)
- Politicians use a mixture of honorific forms to refer to the King



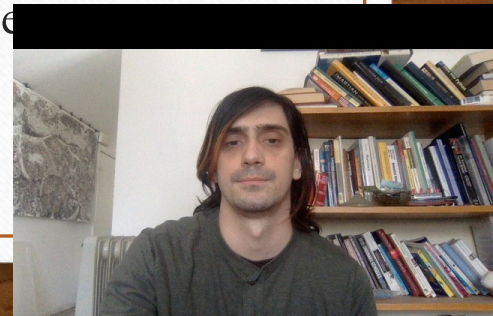
Forthcoming Research

- More interviews, particularly with non-royalists
- Analysis of royal dialect lexical items like *sawaari* ('to go')
- Comparison with *dinu* ('to give') light verb as a benefactive



Sources

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