

The Identity and Discourse in Georgian and Turkey Diplomatic Relations Between 2002-2022

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This article's primary objective is to answer the question of what is the semantic language of identity and interests of Turkey and Georgia? In addition, it analyzes the connotative quotes that exchanged between the two countries during diplomatic visits. Because the article concentrated on the remarks that were stressed during visits and meetings that took place between the years 2002 and 2022, it was necessary to search through 150 news on civil.ge site and filter down to 35 news before applying the content analysis. The AntConc corpus analysis was used in order to comprehend the nature of the political conversation between both countries. According to the findings, the constructivism of core theme that claim states view each other via the identity through interaction was verified. The purpose of the research is to provide a contribution to the study of the identities and interests of Georgia and Turkey who are good neighbors.

Keywords: Georgia, Turkey, identity, diplomatic language, discourse

Introduction

The main question of this article attempts to answer the following questions: How do Georgia and Turkey label and see each other? What is the nature of the identity and interests of Turkey and Georgian diplomatic relationship? How does the diplomatic communication embody the message connotatively? The main objective is to choose Georgia and Turkey for such research since they are both neighbors hailing from different social, political orientation and are in volatile region. Georgia is strategically important for Turkey as a gateway to reach out the central Asia countries and people, also constitutes a secured transit country for energy projects from Azerbaijan to Turkey, then to Europe. Georgia is the only country in the region that borders with Black Sea and not only connects two main waters, Black Sea with Caspian but also connects Central Asia with Azerbaijan to Turkey via land route. Turkey is the only neighbor country that Georgia doesn't have border demarcation issues with, and only NATO neighbor country which Georgia borders with. For Georgia, Turkey is a gateway to and for the Europe is among the connotations.

The periodization of 2002-2022 has been selected for two reasons, firstly, the relationship of Georgia and Turkey experienced during political parties as United National Movement (2003-2012) and Georgian Dream (since 2012-present) and Justice and Development party (JDP) as single party government since 2002-present. Secondly, it is believed that Turkey with JDP coming to office changes the foreign policy with more ideological base. The article aims to contribute to research of diplomatic relationship in the international relations and provide a chronological history of diplomacy with underlying identity and interests of Turkey and Georgia. For this article, we borrow two words from literature and language.

In 2021 Georgian National Security Concept, Turkey is both denotatively and connotatively described:

“Georgia’s leading partner in the region. Turkey supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and its efforts to develop stable political, economic, and security institutions” and “Turkey, as a NATO member-state and a regional leader, is an important military partner for Georgia. Georgia attaches great importance to further developing its partnership with Turkey in the areas of defense and security.” (Ministry of Defense, 2012)

According to Turkey Foreign Ministry, political relations between Georgia and Turkey are also denotatively and connotatively emphasized in following statement.

Turkey’s ties with Georgia are on a par with those of a strategic ally. Both nations signed the Protocol Establishing Diplomatic Relations on 21 May 1992. Turkey has been Georgia’s largest trading partner and one of the country’s largest investors since 2007. The High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSC) mechanism was formed with the goal of further expanding bilateral ties. Turkey strongly supports territorial integrity of Georgia and does not recognize the so-called independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Turkey hopes that these conflicts will be resolved within Georgia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty through peaceful means. Turkey also supports Georgia’s efforts for integration with Euro-Atlantic organizations. Another important issue on the bilateral agenda is the return process of Ahıska Turks to their homeland. Turkey closely follows this issue and wishes that all obstacles in the return process will be eliminated. (Turkey Foreign Ministry, 2022)

Georgia for Turkey has become gradually significant over the years when the geopolitical imperativeness allowed Turkey to be one of the indispensable actors in the region, by knowing Georgia with the same geopolitical viability position in the neighborhood. This reality was expressed by different party, official’s orientation from Turkey and Georgia since 1991 that marked the independence of the Georgia. Davutoglu (2012) underlines that “Georgia is a significant actor in the Black Sea basin. Today Georgia is the only country that Turkey has stable and good neighborhood relationship”, “except Georgia, Turkey has almost conjectural problem with neighbors including Bulgaria.” (Davutoglu, 2012, p. 144). Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Saakashvili met in Istanbul to welcome the 15 Georgian sailors and three Turkish sailors who were held captive by Somali pirates for 16 months. Both the Georgian President and the Turkish Prime Minister said that their release was the result of coordinated efforts by Georgian and Turkish authorities. During the press release Saakashvili praised Erdogan in following words “a great democratic leader”, who had led Turkey, “an undoubtedly regional leader,” through “revolutionary reforms.” Underlined in many cooperation areas, the first time Georgian leader mentioned about restoration of historical cultural monuments. Saakashvili further said: “We have a difficult neighborhood and I think that [Georgian-Turkish] relations are exemplary... We have relations free from problems and this is first and foremost thanks to PM Erdogan” (civil.ge, 2012).

Turkey and Georgian relationship has matured over the years, internal and external political shifts and conflicts in Georgia and Turkey have not derailed the good neighborly relationship nor obstructed it. The relationship survived during Cold War Era, shaped and further multidimensionally enhanced, also, developed outside of the international political landscape that could potentially impact. On April 9, 1991, Georgia announced its dependence. On the 16th of December, 1991, Turkey as first country formally recognized the independence of Georgia, establishing itself as one of the first nations to do so without hesitation or perception about reaction from Moscow. Edward Shevardnadze was elected to the position of the first Georgian State President in 1992. He had a pro-Western image and campaign for this stance. In the aftermath of the election, he was appointed to the Presidency that also marked the beginning of establishing diplomatic relations between Turkey and Georgia.

The visit of foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin to Tbilisi on May 21, 1992 intensified the relationship and marked the beginning with a series of agreements that would pave the way to strategic partnership to today, by the signing of the “Friendship, Cooperation, and Good Neighbor Agreement” between Georgian President Edward Shevardnadze and President Süleyman Demirel on July 30, 1992. With this treaty Turkey and Georgia reiterated the acceptance articles of the Treaty of Kars which was signed on October 13, 1921. The Kars Treaty boundaries between the two nations have been irreversibly established, and the two countries have agreed to abide by the treaty’s provisions. In order to establish a trust between both states, right after Turkey’s recognition of independence and territorial integrity and sovereignty which marked series of agreements between two countries, the main political aspects of agreements between Turkey-Georgia were dominated by territorial integrity, border security, internal security, and terrorism concerns emphasized in these agreements then followed by economic, trade, and political dimension (Demirag, 2005).

Beside the swift and historical relationship between two states interpersonal ties also developed between presidents, Shevardnadze and Demirel. On January 14, 2000, two-day visits of Suleyman Demirel with numbers of high officials and businessman, marked another milestone in relationship with Georgia. During this visit series of documents were signed related to energy, military, and education. Edward Shevardnadze honored Suleyman Demirel with the highest order of the Georgia—The Golden Fleece in Opera House. Suleyman Demirel became the first Turkish President to receive such medal from Georgia (Reuters, 2000).

Prospectively, at the invitation, President Demirel Shevardnadze visited to Turkey in 1994. During Shevardnadze’s visit, series of the agreements were signed but it was only until 1996 that bilateral ties were deepened and transformed into a strategic partnership with Georgia. According to expectations, the two sides would cover a broad variety of issues topics such as regional cooperation and dispute resolution, among others. Instead, they would concentrate on putting agreements into effect. Achieved in November 1999, summit in Istanbul, was mostly comprised of a transit route for Caspian oil that runs via Baku, Tbilisi, and Ceyhan, Turkey. In addition, military cooperation was discussed during this visit. A large number of agreements have been reached. Relationships, particularly at this era, have also been successful because of the advantages that the BTC oil pipeline project will give to both parties in terms of significant economic and political benefits. During the years 1997-1998 Turkey-Georgia Georgia’s support for the Baku-Ceyhan project, has gained momentum as ties between the two countries have progressed. One of the main strategical aspects of establishing trade and economic relationship for Georgia with Turkey is that Georgia perceived Turkey as a “gateway” to the West. Later, after independency, Georgia adapted the West as conduit to shape its values. Thus, Georgian political and society at large adapted European identity. It can be inferred that Georgia desired to shape its European identity by using Turkey’s significant geopolitical location, as mentioned “friend” and “window to Europe” (civil.ge, 2006).

Beside the swift and historical relationship between two states, interpersonal ties also developed the identity between presidents, Shevardnadze and Demirel. Suleyman Demirel was the first foreign president to visit Georgia on 30 July, 1992. Eight years later, after independence of Georgia, on January 14, 2000, two-day visits of Suleyman Demirel with numbers of high officials and businessman marked another milestone in relationship with Georgia. During this visit series of documents were signed related to energy, military, and education. Edward Shevardnadze honored Suleyman Demirel with the highest order of the Georgia—The Golden Fleece in Opera House. Suleyman Demirel became the first Turkish President to receive such medal from Georgian government (Reuters, 2000). During the opening ceremony of a renovated border crossing points between Turkey and Georgia

in Sarpi, Adjara Autonomous Republic, prime Minister Erdogan said “the border should not be an obstacle.” during the same ceremony Saakashvili called Erdogan “My brother” for boosting the relationship with Georgia (civil.ge, 2009).

Back then, in Georgia foreign policy and geopolitical objective Turkey as a neighbor country has E70 route that connects West with the East (Spain to the Poti city of Georgia and to Turkey). Turkey and Georgia’s relationship and agreements were defined as sign of cooperation and good neighborly relations. In order to deepen the agreement framework, mutual Assistance and Cooperation in Customs was signed on 13 January 1994. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Joint Use of Border Crossing Points between the Governments of Georgia and the Republic of Turkey, was signed in Istanbul on June 11, 2010, and other relevant documents on the agreement with joint use of the Sarp, Kartsakhi-Childir/Aktash and Akhaltsikhe-Posof-Turkgozu land customs checkpoints (Georgian Foreign Ministry).

The article focusses on the discourse that each country’s high-level political elites used toward to one another. The research aims to contribute the research of identity and interest of two neighbor countries. The research uses main elements of the constructivist theories such as interests, identity, and discourse from the diplomatic communication. According to constructivism states see each other through the shaped identity and know each other through interaction, which is the claim for this research to find out.

Literature Review

The gap in the existing literature is: although plethora of studies on the region have been conducted, studies are mainly confined to high politics of Turkey’s proclaimed enhancing economic, security, energy, and other pragmatic measures and calculations toward this region. The dissolution of the Soviet Union brought both challenges and opportunities for Turkey in 1990s, within this Eurasian geopolitical shift, Turkey found itself at spotlight as an actor. Mustafa Aydin (2011) highlights the most significant policies of Turkey over Caucasus titled “Turkey’s Caucasus Policies” article. Aydin seeks the exploration of intention of the Turkey for the region, doing so, he draws a timeline dating back to Cold War Era. After the collapse of USSR, Turkey became another regional power due to its long history relationship with the Caucasus region. According to Turkey political elites, Turkey has various reasons to be effective player. Aydin pinpoints what those factors are that force Turkey to exert the influence over the region. Turkey involvement in the region intensified after August 2008 offering to establish a Caucasus Cooperation and Stability to mitigate further escalation in the region. Turkey sees the region a connection or a bridge connecting to Central Asia or a buffer zone that constitutes a counterweight against Russia as reflected in works (Aydin, 2010), unlike such geographical imperative of TFP definition that brought back from the Ottoman and Kemalist era of Turkey and South Caucasus that must be read behind “memorized” narrative and discourses. Thus, the old definitions and concepts are not sufficient to assess Turkey foreign policy’s soft and ideational factors in the region (Sozen, 2010). Another aspect of the traditional Turkish foreign policy in the region was the security concern. The region was in constant conflicts arising from ethnic strife. Turkey’s policy is founded on security, economic, and political concerns. It has also been consolidating its relations with Georgia regarding oil transportation.

There have been recent repositioning and developments of its policies regarding the Caucasus—for instance, it is having bilateral relations with Georgia and Armenia. Turkey in Georgian National Security (2012) Concepts is defined in four main themes: leading trade, energy cooperation, security and defense, and cultural cooperation. Turkey came to region late that reflected in studies. Celikpala (2005) underlined that Turkey initiated relationship

with Caucasus and ended its long-awaited arrival in 1994, and made strategies to develop a regional horizon to shape its relationship towards Caucasus and Georgia.

Aydin's (2004) article examines the relationship between Turkey and the Caucasus and Central Asia. The author identifies that in the early 1990s, some of the Turkish policy issues towards the Caucasus and Central Asia included its empty valor, disorganized attempts to reduce the region's influence, and its endless euphoric pronouncements. The success of these policies depended on how Turkey would respond to its constant ethnic strife with the Caucasus. The article indicates that Turkey's Bipartisan approach towards Caucasus problems has reaffirmed Georgian's integrity and thus enhanced their relationship. Moreover, in the early 1990s, Turkey faced challenging policy choices due to the increased rivalry between the Russian Federation in the Caucasus and Iran in Central Asia.

Aras's (2000) article denotes that the JDP government initially seemed to ignore its relationships with the Caucasus and Central Asia after the 2002 elections. It concludes that the Turkish policies over the region are hoped to give the country clear advantages over its competitors in the future. The article explores Turkey's reasons for changing its roles in Central Asia and the Caucasus while exploring the assets used to enhance its influence in those regions. The author indicates that Turkey's foreign policy had appeared balanced since the military had often controlled its relations with the world. The article stipulates that the main impediment hindering Turkish foreign policymakers from developing an effective foreign policy was the failure to sufficiently comprehend international scopes of the Caucasus and Central Asia. It states that policy alternatives are essential in overcoming the most vital hindrances to pave way for its new role in the regions. For instance, the new vision posits that Turkish policy should be steered to utilize the Black Sea Economic Cooperation project to mobilize domestic actors' support. The article concludes that the Turkish foreign policy is expected to remain hostage to its local political considerations and offer a minimal chance to construct a future for international or regional politics. Aras and Akpınar (2011) agrees with Aydin that Turkey repositioned itself due to the dynamic changes in the region. The newly independent states in the former Soviet Union created an influence area and opportunity for Turkey.

Turkey's foreign policy in the region was conditioned to be counterweight against Soviet Union. This narrative emerged and enlivened due to the historical events between Soviet Union and Ottoman and it continued to shape the perception of policy makers. The official openings to the region initiated after 1923 marked the creation of the Turkey ceding from Ottoman Empire. Before 1923, it is hard to recall existing diplomatic relationship between Turkey and its southern states and states in Central Asia. During the cold war, Turkey adopted a cautious foreign policy in South Caucasus due to the securitization at the border and instability at trans-border. One of the prolific writers on the TFP and Caucasus (Aydin, 2000) underlines that Turkey's arrival at the region and Central Asia was due to its historical, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic bond. Turkey had seen the region as an opportunity to mitigate radical Islam fearing it finds harbor after the vacuum. Similarly Görgülü and Krikorian (2012) state that when the Soviet Union collapsed, Armenia and Georgia were not in scope of Turkey's foreign policy objectives. Instead Turkey saw a possibility in the central Asia (Turkic World) and used financial and political resources to create a sphere of influence for itself. For Baran (2004), Turkey had two primary aspirations in the region: to establish embassies in newly founded republics, to lessen Russia's influence, and to use them as a diplomatic channel to west through Ankara instead of Moscow. The concrete steps were taken to promote the sovereignty and pro-western orientation and integration of these states. The second objective of Turkish interest in the region was to mitigate and prevent Iran and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia and Iran hold two

fundamental Islamic models to indoctrinate Salafi school in Muslim minorities in the Caucasus and Central Asia. To USA and EU Turkey was a “secular, democratic Muslim republic” to contribute to the region ideologically while promoting democracy in the region. However, the rapid involvement in the region has some miscalculations; the collapse of the former Soviet Union offered historical opportunities and political leverages in the region that had been out of the reach for Turkey. During the first few years, Turkey prioritized to become the unofficial leader of the Turkic states in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Turkish officials acted as a “Big Brother” to these newly independent states and led serious displeasure among their Turkic cousins. However, the initial excitement about these regions falling under the Turkish sphere of influence was proved unrealistic. In the coming years, Turkey’s involvement in the region has been careful and cautious.

Methodology

For this research qualitative content analysis is applied to examine the political discourse in Georgian media covering the news of the diplomatic relationship between Turkey and Georgia. Political speech quotation during the visits is the main corpus to investigate. Discursive connotations and denotations have been explored from 2002 onwards to 2022 in the speeches of political elites who were also decision-making figures of both countries during the official visits, national and international platforms, thus, material foreign policy and the irrelevant ministries or officials are not included in this research. It focused on the ideational foreign policy.

Why Civil.ge

The civil.ge news is a trilingual Georgian news website based on the reliable sources that was one of the reasons to choose for this research. Secondly, the public media Chanel 1 which is public online news channel has news from 2012 to 2017 that limited research. Thirdly, the Imedi TV which is pro-Georgian Dream Party current government did not have all years of news since 2012. Both of them were excluded from the research. From Turkey, Anadolu News Agency and Hurriyet Daily are two mains online in English, however, their news input was not well organized as civil.ge. For example, in the search of Anadolu Agency, Georgia keyword came out with many unrelated news. However, on the way to analyze the data from the Civil.ge, it has quite different news perspective. Civil.ge provides the news without the adding comment thus it enabled us to track the discursive official collocation about Georgia and Turkey.

Collecting Data

In order to extract data an extensive search was conducted from civil.ge archive which is one of the English online in Georgia that was sponsored by United Nations of Georgia and other civil organizations. In the search “Turkey” was the keyword and news that had sufficient connotations were selected to analyse. In order to get the data, over 150 news were examined between 2002 and 2022 from the search of civil.ge. Each news was scrutinized to explore the identity and discourse-based quotation of the officials during the visits. Only official visits are filtered as they are main authoritative and bureaucratic dominant. Non-official visits or discourses are excluded in this research. In selected news the identity and discursive message has been tracked such as how both states see each other, and know each other. Thus, constructivist theory elements were applied, as it postulates that “states know each other through interaction”. To understand the discursive and connotative character of the Turkey and Georgian Relations better, the corpora is applied using AntConc. AntConc is free software, that developed for educational purpose by the British linguist Lawrence Anthony. AntConc is utilized to find the frequency of words with collocations that define Turkey in Georgia and vice versa. For such corpora 130 news

from civil.ge are selected. The keywords searched associate with Turkey and Georgia. 12 keywords were selected to apply the corpus such as: “Turkey”, “neighbor”, “Georgia”, “friend”, “ally”, “good”, “support”, “territorial integrity”, “strategical”, “partner”, “we”, *are* keyworded. Collocation is applied to each to find the connection between discourse and collocation. For example, the results showed that “ally” collocates with “friend” and “friend” collocates with “Partner”, “neighbor”, “strategical”, “ally”. “Neighbor” collocates with “friend” and “country”. “Territorial” collocates with “integrity”, “sovereignty”, “Georgia”, “supports”, “Euro”, “Atlantic”, “support”. It is resulted that each of the chosen keywords has high frequency from high level political visits between 2002-2022. Such connotations are expressed in almost every diplomatic meeting and visit. For example, during the economic cooperation visits, reiterating the territorial integrity support by Turkish side has been expressed. Reiterating or supporting “territorial integrity” of Georgia has been a truism that implied in every diplomatic event.

Findings: Strategical Partner, Good Neighbor, and a Friend

This section explores the most significant adjectives that Turkey and Georgia call each other or describe their relations from 2002 to 2022. Georgia describes and attaches several adjectives to Turkey in its political statement. Turkey has been described as “partner”, “friend”, “neighbor” vice versa Georgia for Turkey. According to Caucasus Barometer survey¹ Turkey has been in the top of four as a friend of Georgia to “main friend of the country” since 2013. Similarly, Georgia is one of the third main friends of Turkey by Kadir Has University’s public perception surveys² (Kadir Has University, 2021). Georgia for Turkey is a “transit and significant” country to reach Caucasus and central Asia. During the opening ceremony of a renovated border crossing points between Turkey and Georgia in Sarpi, Adjara Autonomous Republic, prime Minister Erdogan said “the border should not be an obstacle.” during the same ceremony Saakashvili called Erdogan “My brother” for boosting the relationship with Georgia (civil.ge, 2009).

During the Adjara internal political problem in 2014, Turkey’s initiation to solve the problem was praised by Sakashvili during his visit in 2004. Meeting with President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, he stated that Turkey and Georgia are:

Natural allies and friends and praised Turkey underlining the support received from Turkey on Adjara issue. “I welcome the constructive role Turkey has played in settlement of Adjara’s crisis. Turkey has proved that it is a real friend of Georgia, we are natural partners with great traditions and nothing will hamper the development of our relations. (civil.ge, 2004)

Turkey’s current ambassador called Turkey and Georgian relationship based on the friendship, although she expressed that it is impossible to call friendship in international relations but Turkey and Georgian are friends to underline the uniqueness of relations. “Friendship is a funny word in international relations, but I truly believe that friendship has strong implications; and I think Georgia and Turkey are friends, as much as you can be in international relations.” (civil.ge, 2021).

Turkish Ambassador to Georgia Fatma Ceren Yazgan said, Turkey has chosen Georgia as friend a long time

¹ Caucasus barometer is one of the reliable sources that conduct survey in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. For subsequent years see <https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2013ge/MAINFRN/>.

² Kadir Has University. (2021). “Turkish Foreign Policy Public Perception survey-2021.” <https://khas.edu.tr/en/arastirma/khastarastirma/khas-arastirmalari/turk-dis-politikasi-kamuoyu-algilari-arastirmasi-2021>. Accessed 4.27.2022.

ago while referring the letter of Simon Mdivani presented to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1921.³ Hikmet Sami Turk, the Minister of Justice visited Georgia to sign cooperation protocol. His visit was welcomed by Shevardnadze with such words “The visit once more proves that Georgia and Turkey are good partners and this kind of relation will deepen in the future.” (civil.ge, 2002). On two-day visits by Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul to Georgia, he underlined that “I am confident that these meeting will further deepen friendly relations and strategic partnership between Georgia and Turkey,” “With this project Georgia and Turkey are becoming even more important countries for the whole world,” “We are doing our best to ensure peace in the Caucasus. Resolution of the Abkhazian conflict is particularly important in this regard.” (civil.ge, 2003).

In 2012, three Georgian soldiers died while serving in IRAQ under the ISAF mission. Turkey Foreign Ministry released a condolence statement including:

As we condemn this terrorist act, we offer our condolences to the people and government of Georgia—our friend and neighbor, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (civil.ge, 2012)

Georgian PM Irakli Garibashvili highlighted that Turkey is “reliable ally, strategic partner and friend, which supports our territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic integration.” “It is good to have such a partner and strong state as a neighbor”. (civil.ge, 2014)

Georgian Prime Minister “I want to reiterate that Turkey is one of our major partners and we should have very close relations with [Turkey]”. (civil.ge, 2014)

The year 2015 marked the construction of the TANAP (Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline). President of Georgia, Giorgi Mergvelashvili touched on the interdependency and described the Georgian geopolitical importance “Wellbeing not only of Georgia, but of our friends—Turkey and Azerbaijan, also depends on that.” (civil.ge, 2015).

Foreign Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili laid out the priorities of Georgian foreign policy in 2015, his main priority was summarized aiming to “fully implement” Georgian European Integration and return to the European identity. He did not mention about Turkey support in this endeavor, however, he underlined to work with Turkey as a strategical partner.

A lot of attention will be paid to deepening relations with countries in the region. We will continue our strategic cooperation with Azerbaijan and Turkey, and traditionally close and friendly relations with Armenia (civil.ge, 2015). For this article, we borrow two words from literature and language: “Denotative” and “Connotative”. Denotative is the literal meaning, word by word in the dictionary. Connotation embodies the various social overtones, cultural implications, or emotional meanings associated with a sign. Denotation is the literal meaning of a word in dictionary. While denotation is principal meaning of the word, connotation is the emotional attachment to the word. For example, Georgia denotes a small and regional country in South Caucasus for Turkey. Connotatively Georgia means an important ally, transit, strategical country for Turkey.

In 2014 during the press conference, Foreign minister Turkey, Mevlut Cavusoglu described Georgia as a “strategic value” and reemphasized the support of Turkey for the territorial integrity of Georgia and diversifying the bilateral cooperation. No doubt that there is a level of interdependency between Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey in term of energy, economy, and transportation.

Turkey experienced a failed coup attempt in 2016. Georgia was one of the first countries to send support

³ Simon Mdivani was the first Ambassador of Georgia to Turkey and he was the first foreign diplomat to recognize Mustafa Kemal Ataturk regime. He was appointed as Georgian representative on December 27, 1920 to 31 January in 1921. And his letter of credential was accepted by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk that marked 100 years of relationship between Georgia and Turkey.

message to Turkey, and hoped the situation will end peacefully. Foreign Ministry of Georgia underlined that the situation in “neighbor and strategic partner” will end peacefully (civil.ge, 2016).

Georgia closely followed the development with “concern” in Turkey. Georgian political elites convened a special session at presidential palace to evaluate the situation in Turkey and possible implications on the neighbor country. Georgia was one of the first countries condemned the military coup emphasizing support to democratically elected government. Georgian high political official underlined the Turkey as a democratic country facing a military coup will have implications on Georgia and Georgian borders as an immediate neighbor. Georgia condemned the coup but did not mention Gulen movement—a civil society that only Turkish government held accountable for the coup but was rejected by the movement.

After meeting with National Security Council, President Giorgi Margvelashvili said that “We want to express our support to the democratically elected government in Turkey, and personally to President Erdoğan,” (civil.ge, 2016). Further Georgia announced that they come up with several decisions to implement, such as:

“Control on boarders has been tightened. We will probably close all the border crossing points with Turkey soon. So far there is no turmoil in northeastern parts of Turkey, which border with Georgia. On our side the situation is under control,” also said that flights to Turkey have been “suspended”, Said President Mergvelashvili. (civil.ge, 2016)

With such measure, Georgia reflected a sovereign state to take the measure to secure its border when one of the neighbor countries goes through internal political strife. At the same time, Georgia offered the help and support to Turkey after the coup attempt. Georgia’s Kvirikashvili was one of the first prime ministers to visit Turkey, showing the solidarity with president Erdogan and Binali Yildirim, Prime Minister at the that time. Erdogan welcomed the “solid support” from Georgia and Georgian people as mentioned by Kvirikashvili. He also expressed that “Turkey and Georgia share historical ties. We have moved to the strategic cooperation level. Our cooperation is also interesting in view of European integration processes” (agenda.ge, 2016).

Prime Ministry Binali Yildirim thanked Georgian government for the immediate support of Georgia. “On behalf of my nation and my government and people of Turkey I express my gratitude to Mr Kvirikashvili and the people of Georgia for their support,” the Turkish PM said, adding that after the failed coup “life has now returned back to normal” in Turkey (civil.ge, 2016).

In 2012, three Georgian soldiers died while serving in IRAQ under the ISAF mission. Turkey Foreign Ministry released a condolence statement including: “As we condemn this terrorist act, we offer our condolences to the people and government of Georgia—our friend and neighbor, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” (civil.ge, 2012)

In June 2012 Trabzon declaration was signed by Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan to deepen already existing economic cooperation by signing the declaration by three states. This is the first agreement that Davutoglu, as foreign ministry participated. Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze underlined the importance of the declaration and said that:

All the issues that are important for us are reflected in this declaration, including, of course, respect towards territorial integrity and sovereignty. This format is not directed against anyone; this is directed towards protection of our country’s national interests and towards further deepening of our strategic relations. (civil.ge, 2012)

Territorial Integrity Discourse

Territorial integrity of Georgia is one of the leading discourses in both countries’ political quotation,

critically analyzing the discourse that shapes both identity and interests in different time, since 2002. Georgian territorial integrity and sovereignty has been bi-partisan and impartial discourse in Turkish political elites. No matter which party came and went, this discourse has been sustained.

In 2002 Turkish ships navigated on shores of Black Sea close to Abkhazia, when repeated several times, Georgia stopped the ships due to suspicion of smuggling. President Shevardnaze met with state minister of Turkey Mehmet Kececiler for resolving the issue, after the meeting Shavardnadze underlined Turkey's support of territorial integrity of Georgia and thanked Turkey for it (civil.ge, 2002). "Georgia is a very important country for Turkey. Georgia's neighbor, as well as the countries of Eurasia need stability and peace in Georgia" (civil.ge, 2002). Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul reemphasized Turkey's support and respect to Georgia's territorial integrity in following statement: "We are doing our best to ensure peace in the Caucasus. Resolution of the Abkhazian conflict is particularly important in this regard," further he desired to see the solution through the territorial integrity of Georgia (civil.ge, 2003).

Prime Minister of Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Georgia with economic and other cooperation on agenda. During the joint press conference Recep Tayyip Erdogan underlined that "Turkey completely supports Georgia's territorial integrity and expresses readiness for cooperating on political and economic issues." (civil.ge, 2004).

Emphasizing the energy projects, Gul also reassured that Georgia is a significant country.

Turkey attaches great significance to the Caucasus, especially to Georgia. The energy projects, being implemented with the participation of the both sides, are especially interesting. We are ready to assist Georgia almost in all the spheres." The visit will boost relations and strategic cooperation between Turkey and Georgia, Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagarishvili said at the news briefing today. (civil.ge, 2003)

At the beginning of the 2004, Turkey impartially sent message for the democratization process for the tension that results in the dispute between the central government and the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan pointed the issue with "the unrest in Georgia gives us discomfort, our Foreign Ministry has taken the necessary initiatives in regard to Georgian officials' being sensitive on this issue." Further he said "We favor peace, not unrest, in our neighbors." (civil.ge, 2004). Later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement regarding the issue. In the statement Turkey underlined the Georgian territorial integrity with following official statement.

As a country that deems Georgia's territorial integrity and the well-being of the Georgian people to be important, Turkey expects the tension that has emerged between the Georgian government and the Adjara Autonomous Republic in recent days to be removed through the prudence and caution of both parties and within the democratization process of Georgia, in which it has achieved a significant progress. (civil.ge, 2004)

Turkey cautiously approached to the Russian and Georgian War in 2008. A brief statement by Turkish Foreign Ministry on August 26 reads that Turkey "attaches importance to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and is highly concerned about the recent developments." (civil.ge, 2008).

Speaker of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, Mustafa Şentop visited Georgia and met with president and other officials and reassured that "We also maintain our strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we emphasize our position on this issue on every platform." (civil.ge, 2022). Mevlut Cavusoglu and Georgian Foreign Ministry held a telephone conversation and Cavusoglu reaffirmed the Turkish side's unwavering support for Georgia's territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic aspirations (Channel 1, 2022). Territorial integrity discourse was also often mentioned when the Georgian Prime Minister met with Turkish Ambassador

in Georgia. Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili appreciated for Turkey irrevocable support, he reaffirmed “solid support” for Turkey support of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia (Anadolu Agency, 2022).

Qualitative Discussion

Analyzing the discourses, finding of this study reveal two explanations. First, Turkey has understood the importance of the Georgia by the time, as Georgian geopolitical position in the region became viable by external actors, especially after 2008 Russian invasion to Georgia. Secondly, Georgia shaped the description of Turkey in their political landscape. Turkey is no longer considered a modern or western country or secular, modern, democratic state for Georgia to look up but to connect with as valuable partner and strategical ally in the region.

According to data, Turkey’s traditional discourses connotating Georgia have not been changed due to the leader’s ideological orientation but with the few examples, it is seen that the aspirations are stated, for example Ahmet Necdet Sezer, as secular leader liked to see Georgia to integrate with the West, however, after the “west” orientation discourse or western type of foreign policy shifted in AKP political elites as they hailed from the Islamic background. Similarly, Sakashvili as pro-western echoed the Zurab Zhvania’s famous quotation “I am Georgian; therefore, I am European” mentioned only once that Turkey is a country for Georgia to look up for the Europe. However, Georgian political elites understand that Turkey is the only NATO country as neighbor to integrate the military and security umbrella of the west, which can be interpreted in the security dimension not democratization process.

According to results, the “bilateral cooperation” is often used when two countries cooperate on mutual economic, trade, energy, and military cooperation, “regional cooperation” describes Turkey and Georgian relationship on energy security, pipeline projects, and military drills as trilateral cooperation. “Assistance”, often defines Turkey “as a helping hand” humanitarian aid, donation, or providing to Georgia. Such as “support” (verb) word defines Georgian internal unity as Georgia had faced internal ethnic conflict with Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Turkey message to the international actors that Turkey will not claim a territory from Georgia. The main collocation was support for “territorial integrity” with “support” “for Euro Atlantic aspiration” which defines Turkey’s intention and describes the diplomatic and political relationship with Georgia. “Friend or good neighbor country” defines the historical, people-to-people affinities and good relationship without suspicions, and “transit” is also uttered, emphasized by Turkey after Georgia importance has been realized by Turkey to reconnect with central Asia and secure destination for energy projects. Similarly, Turkey for Georgia has been called during the high-level political visits as “strategical partner”, “good neighbor”, and “friend”. Surprisingly, Turkey support for Georgian democratization process is not encountered in the news, it was almost not mentioned during diplomatic and high-level official’s meetings. This is because Georgia adapted European identity and looked for Baltic states for integration. For Turkey, Georgia understands the power of economic development more than democratization. Examining both sides’ discourses and keywords in the communication, “cooperation” denotes the relationship and collocates with “friendship”.

In following tables, we brought the frequency of the word during the diplomatic meetings using AntConc. It enabled to understand the value of a statistical measure between the search of the word denotatively and connotatively. Then each word gives collocation. For the rules of word count we can only provide “friend” as an example for each component of frequency, context, and collocation with the value and impact data in order to visualize the “friend” discourse.

Table 1
 “Friend” Frequency During 2002-2022

The screenshot shows the AntConc software interface. The search query is 'friend'. The results are displayed in a table with the following data:

Type	Rank	Freq	Range
1 friend	1	31	1
2 friendly	2	6	1
3 friends	2	6	1
4 friendship	2	6	1

Additional interface details: Target Corpus: article identity final.docx; Tokens: 12070; Search Query: friend; Sort by: Frequency; Progress: 100%.

Table 2
 “Friend” in Context

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 arti...	Georgia, Turkey is not only a neighbor, it's a	friend	and a strategic partner, ". Salome Zourabichvili also called on
2 arti...	supporting Georgia to Euro Atlantic Institutions. Turkey has been a	friend	and a strategic partner of Georgia and it has
3 arti...	our condolences to the people and government of Georgia – our	friend	and neighbor," the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (Civil.
4 arti...	our condolences to the people and government of Georgia – our	friend	and neighbor," the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (Civil.
5 arti...	and foreign ministry statement highlighted the importance of Turkey as	friend	and strategic Alley. According to Media Development Foundation, a
6 arti...	the statement made by Gogi Topadze. Turkey, being Georgia's	friend	and strategic partner, strongly supports our country's territorial
7 arti...	end collocates with Partner, neighbor, strategic, ally. Neighbor collocates with	friend	and country. Territorial Collocates with integrity, sovereignty, Georgia, support
8 arti...	For example, with the results showed that ally collocates with	friend.	and friend collocates with Partner, neighbor, strategic, ally. Neighbor
9 arti...	s crisis. Turkey has proved that it is a real	friend	of Georgia, we are natural partners with great traditions
10 arti...	s crisis. Turkey has proved that it is a real	friend	of Georgia, we are natural partners with great traditions
11 arti...	survey Turkey has been in the top of 4 as a	friend	of Georgia to "main friend of the country" since 2013,
12 arti...	country" since 2013, Similarly, Georgia is one of the third main	friend	of Turkey by Kadir Has University's public perception
13 arti...	the top of 4 as a friend of Georgia to "main	friend	of the country" since 2013, Similarly, Georgia is one of
14 arti...	ntention and describe the diplomatic and political relationship with Georgia. "	Friend	or good neighbor country" define the historical, people to
15 arti...	is due to the Turkic or Muslim communities in Georgia. "	Friend	or good neighbor country" define the historical, people to
16 arti...	itates than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons" (Wendt 1995, 73) to him, enemy,	friend	or ally composed within the identity that can be
17 arti...	end discourse. Table:2 "Friend" Frequency. Table:2 "Friend" in Context Table:3 "	Friend"	Collocation Table:4 Describing Georgia in Turkey Diplomatic Language -2002-
18 arti...	impact data in order to visualize the friend discourse. Table:2 "	Friend"	Frequency. Table:2 "Friend" in Context Table:3 "Friend" Collocation Table:4
19 arti...	high-level political visits as "strategical partner", "good neighbor" and "	friend".	Subsequently, Turkey has understood the identity of Georgia through
20 arti...	high-level political visits as "strategical partner", "good neighbor" and "	friend".	Surprisingly, Turkey support for Georgian democratization process are not
21 arti...	sident Mergvelashvili. (civil.ge.2016) Strategical Partner, Good Neighbor and a	Friend	This section explores the most significant adjectives that Turkey
22 arti...	Georgia Fatma Ceren Yazgan said, Turkey has chosen Georgia as	friend	a long time ago" while referring the letter of
23 arti...	selected to apply the corpus such as. Turkey, neighbor, Georgia,	friend,	ally, good, support, territorial integrity, strategical, partner, we, are
24 arti...	identity by using Turkey's significant geopolitical location, as mentioned "	friend"	and "window to Europe" (Civil.ge, 2006) Beside the swift
25 arti...	the Karam rules of word count we can only provide	friend	as an example for each component of frequency, context
26 arti...	with the results showed that ally collocates with friend. and	friend	collocates with Partner, neighbor, strategic, ally. Neighbor collocates with
27 arti...	the value and impact data in order to visualize the	friend	discourse. Table:2 "Friend" Frequency. Table:2 "Friend" in Context Table:3 "
28 arti...	order to visualize the friend discourse. Table:2 "Friend" Frequency. Table:2 "	Friend"	in Context Table:3 "Friend" Collocation Table:4 Describing Georgia in
29 arti...	in its political statement. Turkey has been described as Partner,	friend,	neighbor vice versa Georgia for Turkey, According to Caucasus
30 arti...	Turkey reiterated with the same words that Turkey is Georgian	friend	supporting Georgia to Euro Atlantic Institutions. "Turkey has been
31 arti...	Garibashvili highlighted that Turkey is "reliable ally, strategic partner and	friend,	which supports our territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic integration." "

Table 3
 “Friend” Collocation

Collocate	Rank	FreqLR	FreqL	FreqR	Range	Likelihood	Effect
1 partner	1	4	2	2	1	19.956	4.931
2 neighbor	2	4	2	2	1	17.141	4.417
3 strategic	3	4	1	3	1	15.728	4.154
4 ally	4	2	1	1	1	12.219	5.739

Table 4
 Describing Georgia in Turkey Diplomatic Language During 2002-2022

Adjective	Relations: bilateral (11), with (16), good (6), neighborly (5)
Adverb	good neighborly (5) good partners (2)
Noun	friend (12), partner (7), territorial integrity (20), assistance (3).
Verb	assist (3), provide (1)

With the putative, special relationship, Georgia understands Turkey’s objective and preferences that Georgia in Turkish foreign policy has multiple geopolitical roles. First, Georgia is a gateway to central Asia, later, Georgia is strategic partner in Black Sea and Caucasus region for Turkey.

Analyzing the discourse in the speeches from both sides the relationship has improved over the course of the time during JDP as proves the constructivist ideas that relationship between states improves during the interactions. After a milestone of agreements that reached between two countries or during the visits, often-used terms have been uttered that shape the identity of relations between Georgia and Turkey. Through the visits both states get to know each other’s objective well and understand their identity and preserve that identity over the time.

Table 5
 Describing Turkey in Georgia Diplomatic Language During 2002-2022

Adjective	Relations: bilateral (8), friendly (9), valuable partner (7), strategic (20), strong state (2)
Adverb	good (18), neighbor (8), partner (7)
Noun	friend (12), partner (20)
Verb	support (46)

According to our findings, Georgia gradually abandoned some discourses to describe Turkey that had reflected in the official statements such as labelling Turkey's as "model country" which was very prominent discourse after independence of the country. It is obvious that another discourse "supporting Georgia for European Union" is fading away from the political mainstream from Georgia. This is because Georgian increased international interaction, economic development, European integration, and especially recently free visa regime with European countries that Turkish people are deprived of. Another shift of discourses can be recent Turkey's undemocratic measures, human rights violation. Worsening economy and diversion from western orientation are the main reasons for Georgia to change their discourses. Once Ahmet Necdet Sezer described Georgia: "Georgian western adaptation" in 2002, while elites in Georgia believed that Turkey diverted from the western orientation. Also, Turkey's "window to Europe" that was mentioned by Saakashvili is no longer seen in political statement. Unlike Turkey, Georgia has connotated friend and partner more than Turkey connotated Georgia. Turkey denoted Georgia with more bilateral relationship. It showed that partner has collocated with friend in frequency and impact valued by Georgian politicians such as "partner and friend". Support is one of the leading verbs used during the meetings and it connotes Turkey's assistance and collocates Turkey support for the territorial integrity. "Good", as an adjective is used to describe "partner and neighbor" mainly connotated by Georgian diplomats.

Conclusion

Turkey and Georgian relationship is inter-image or intersubjective to see each other that has been searched. Although they are the words but have been often used in describing, explaining, and understanding Turkey and Georgian relationship. "Support" as a verb has been used for both territorial integrities. Turkey and Georgian relationship has been positively developed, overlooked some problems, and continues to today. Since 1992, three main perspectives marked the relationship: energy, economy, and security. As this article looked into discourse and intersubjective understanding of the relationship, through years, the relationship has been matured from recognizing, describing, and knowing each other. Georgia and Turkey relationship has shaped, developed, and enhanced through interactions that surfaced the material understanding of the foreign policy. We can say both countries know each other's interests and behavior pragmatically. Through the visits both states developed the relationship further, understand each other's identity, and preserve the identity. Constructivism assumes that identity is not static but changes, for Georgia and Turkey. Since 2001 onset of the recognizing independence of Georgia, Turkey's official description or identity toward Georgia has not changed but shaped positively toward Georgia. Therefore, we can assume that constructivist theory applied to the research questions has been confirmed.

Analyzing the discourse in the speeches from both sides the relationship has improved over the course of the time during JDP. After a milestone of agreement that reached between two countries or during the visits often-used terms have been uttered that shape the identity of relations between Georgia and Turkey. Reiterating "territorial integrity" defines Turkey's intention toward Georgia that shapes the diplomatic communication. The other discourses such as Turkish elites calling Georgia as "relative country" are due to the Turkic or Muslim communities in Georgia. "Friend or good neighbor country" defines the historical, people-to-people affinities and good relationship without suspicions. And "transit" is also uttered, emphasized by Turkey after Georgia importance has been realized by Turkey to reconnect with central Asia and secure destination for energy projects. Similarly, Turkey for Georgia has been called during the high-level political visits as "strategical partner", "good neighbor", and "friend". Subsequently, Turkey has understood the identity of Georgia through the years of

cooperation which firstly began to know each other, the cooperation has been enhanced through high level diplomatic visits, and resulted in further cooperation that ended with strategic partnership. Georgia has adapted a multidimensional foreign policy to search more cooperative area that could develop Georgian democratization process.

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