# Strategic Hedging in the Diplomatic Language: A Computational Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy Discourse (2013–2025)

Aybars Arda Kılıçer – 78403 [akilicer21@ku.edu.tr](mailto:akilicer21@ku.edu.tr) / Domain Expert: Dr. Tarık Başbuğoğlu, [Tarik.Basbugoglu@hotmail.com](mailto:Tarik.Basbugoglu@hotmail.com) · · ·

Throughout the recent decades, we have observed how Türkiye's international relations have changed in response to worldwide power changes and local security crises as well as domestic government shifts. Ankara moved from optimistic multilateral engagement with regional mediation to security-focused, ambiguous hedging practices in its diplomatic language since the Arab Spring and the resurgence of great power rivalry. One can argue that such adjustments made to Ankara’s foreign policy agenda have developed because of the country's need to redefine its position in international affairs within an ever increasingly new multipolar system.

The study demonstrates that modern Turkish foreign policy (TFP) needs more than conventional interpretive analysis to understand its complete development. The existing scholarly perspective from authors including Aydın-Düzgit (2013), Öniş (2014), Saraçoğlu and Demirkol (2014), Hintz (2018), and Özkeçeci-Taner and Açıkmeşe (2023) has established critical frameworks about identity and strategic depth and regional engagement, yet the field depends heavily on thematic analysis and qualitative case studies. Nevertheless, we can note that these valuable approaches eventually fail to detect long-term language transformations along with the complex relationships between linguistic expressions, strategic communications, and sentiment changes in diplomatic documentation.

Within such a context, our research attempts to provide a new computational method to examine Turkish foreign policy linguistic patterns. For this purpose, it utilizes Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling, sentiment analysis, and Named Entity Recognition (NER) techniques from natural language processing (NLP) to analyze 5,119 official Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) statements from September 5, 2012, to April 30, 2025. By doing so, our study examines Turkish international conduct during significant global developments starting from the Gezi Park protests until the failed 2016 coup attempt, NATO tensions, increased relations with Russia and Gulf states, and its strategic position during the Ukraine crisis and European Alliance transformations.

The unique value of this research emerges from both its scientific approach and theoretical advancement. Through its computational linguistic framework, the study demonstrates an operational method for studying how states modify their diplomatic discourse when faced with home and abroad factors. Furthermore, it combines an established foreign policy theoretical framework with middle power activism, authoritarian internationalism, and strategic hedging approaches through evidence-based findings. This multidisciplinary method generates better and more specific knowledge about Türkiye’s global role formation and communication methods during a time of global transformation.

The research establishes three main findings. The research demonstrates that Turkish diplomatic communication shifts away from Western norms while embracing transactional and multipolar engagement methods. The study detects emotional shifts in official communications which show growing national sovereignty importance alongside security requirements and practical cooperative approaches. The research shows Türkiye utilizes semantic compartmentalization as a foreign policy instrument by using different tones and themes within economic, security, and cultural domains. These findings demonstrate our main argument concerning the nature of Turkish foreign policy discourse from 2013 to 2025, as they show a deliberate transition from normative regional leadership to strategic hedging within multipolarity, which we argue requires computational analysis of diplomatic language to understand this evolution.

Finally, but importantly, the study also provides new knowledge to the field of research that examines state actions through language analysis. States like Türkiye need to express their intentions, build alliances, and demonstrate agency through discourse because global governance has become increasingly fragmented during periods of growing uncertainty. The computational framework introduced in this study enhances understanding of Türkiye's evolving foreign policy and creates new methods for studying international political communication during the 21st century.

***A Review of the Existing Literature on TFP and the Theoretical Contributions***

While we take a look at the existing literature concerning the nature of Turkish foreign policy narratives, we observe a methodological consensus in approaching this phenomenon through an active combination of domestic political changes and external geopolitical developments. Scholars have established that Türkiye maintains a strategic orientation that responds to both regional disturbances and worldwide systemic developments. According to this perspective, since 2010, Turkish foreign policy has experienced significant ideological and discursive changes, which shifted from multilateral engagement and normative leadership to pragmatic autonomy and strategic hedging. The review of literature organizes essential research findings into five distinct time periods while revealing an ongoing need for empirical language-based research, which this study aims to fulfill.

*2010-2013 May: Strategic Depth*

Türkiye’s then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu introduced ***Strategic Depth*** as his influential diplomatic doctrine which focused on Türkiye's diverse regional engagement in foreign affairs. During the Arab Spring revolution Türkiye actively engaged in regional geopolitics according to Davutoğlu who wanted the country to function as a central power in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Sözen (2010) shows Türkiye expanded its regional power through active diplomatic action which led to improved regional conflict resolution and economic cooperation between MENA and Balkans. According to Altunişik and Martin (2011) Türkiye shifted away from its traditional Western-oriented foreign policy to create an independent regional strategy by presenting itself as a democratic and prosperous model during Arab Spring revolutions. According to Murat Yeşiltaş (2013) Turkish foreign policy underwent a major strategic expansion during Davutoğlu's leadership that made Türkiye more active in its international relations.

*2013 May-2016 July: Post-Coup Strategic Recalibration*

What we observe during this period is how Ankara has started to question the traditional alliance with the Western bloc, while simultaneously also looking for an anti-Western foreign policy rhetoric to provide a backbone for such a potentially major transformation. Scholars, including Kaliber and Kaliber (2019), provide a framework that argues it was the post-Gezi Park political climate that paved the path for an anti-Western populist discourse and deeply influenced Ankara’s foreign policy actions. Likewise, Aras (2014) asserted how Ankara implemented a new foreign policy approach that ultimately prioritizes Türkiye’s pragmatic interests, centered on new security needs, instead of pursuing democratic values as Davutoğlu’s approach prioritized in the past. Oğuzlu (2016) took a further step and explained that these policy changes emerged from Türkiye's need to control both internal and external pressures, which led to its development of strategic independence.

*2016 July-2020 November: Transactional Reset & Crisis Management*

As we have illustrated, the failed coup attempt in 2016 established a new direction for Turkish foreign policy. This new perspective embraced transactional approaches and pragmatic methods, especially considering emerging multipolar international structures. The fundamental shift in Turkish foreign policy, which Kösebalaban (2020) documents, shows Türkiye developing transactional relationships with regional and global actors, including Russia, as it pursued non-Western strategic options. Kutlay and Öniş (2021) examine this period through a dual lens that reveals how Türkiye managed its NATO Western commitments together with expanding ties to non-Western powers during a rising authoritarian regime at home. According to Bilgehan, Özpek, and Tanriverdi Yaşar (2018), the external manifestation of Türkiye's authoritarian policies adopted assertive populist narratives that supported military-oriented foreign policy strategies.

*2020 November-2024 November: Security Realignment & Internal Fragmentation*

The United States under President Joe Biden led to multiple foreign policy challenges for Türkiye, while the nation experienced global disruptions because of COVID-19, East Mediterranean tensions, Libya, and Gulf region complexities. According to Ali Aslan (2024) the period was marked by Türkiye's forceful pursuit of independence through diplomatic expansion and crisis management across various theaters. The rising military measures and security-focused nature of Turkish foreign policy became increasingly visible through the assertive diplomatic actions, in the conflict zones, including but not limited to Eastern Mediterranean and Caucasus, as Karakoç and Ersoy (2024) point out. Similarly, scholars such as Francesco D’Alema (2024) place Türkiye's diplomatic actions in this period within the framework of its pragmatic engagement style that maintains security-oriented approaches as regional geopolitical changes unfold.

*2024 November and Onwards: Strategic Ambiguity in Multipolarity*

From late 2024, the second Trump administration, along with escalating Ukraine conflict dynamics, led Türkiye to establish ambiguous strategic postures in its multipolar international environment. According to Kardaş (2025), Türkiye adopted a realist approach through careful pragmatism to manage its NATO duties and maintain a flexible stance regarding the Ukraine crisis. Eken and Karahasanoğlu (2025) reveals that Türkiye maintains a delicate relationship with the United States through diplomatic ambiguity while American influence continues in the country. On the other hand, Sharova and Cohen (2025) take a further step and emphasize the argument that Turkish foreign policy contains revisionist aspects, which result from regional ambitions and defense autonomy, while alliances remain uncertain. Others, including Çelik (2022), foresee escalating military activities because Türkiye will implement strategic hedging approaches in its foreign relationships during times of global multipolar dynamics.

This extensive body of scholarly research provides detailed knowledge about Turkish foreign policy evolution but lacks empirical evidence to measure the exact changes in diplomatic language and emotional expressions. It is within such a context that our research makes an attempt to provide an insightful analysis of the Turkish MFA announcements during this period to provide analytical insights about the strategic thinking that has been underpinning Türkiye’s major foreign policy changes in the last two decades.

*Theoretical Contributions to the Literature*

We can argue that our research makes essential theoretical contributions to foreign policy analysis studies about middle power actors in a dynamic multipolar system. By introducing a fresh computational linguistic approach to international relations, it practically solves an existing methodological deficiency. As it will be further elaborated in the methodological framework of the article, our study uses sentiment analysis together with Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling and Named Entity Recognition (NER) to analyze empirical data which extends beyond traditional qualitative discourse analysis and thematic interpretation methods. By doing so, it develops new analytical tools for scholars and establishes an approachable framework for future diplomatic language studies.

It is also worth mentioning that our study provides substantial theoretical insights about strategic hedging through its large-scale empirical evidence that shows how Türkiye moved from normative regionalism to pragmatic ambiguity. Furthermore, it instrumentalizes a profound computational discourse analysis to track how Türkiye has changed its discourse between Western and non-Western power blocs. Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that, from a theoretical point of view, our study validates existing theories about hedging behavior by showing that states employ linguistic strategies to achieve strategic flexibility during times of global uncertainty.

Similarly, it further aims to enhance the middle-power activism theory through a careful analysis of how Türkiye uses diplomatic discourse to engage selectively with non-traditional allies while differentiating its language and pursuing bilateral relations. The research proves that Türkiye uses authoritarian internationalism by replacing normative liberal values with functional cooperation and security-driven narratives and sovereignty-based narratives in its foreign policy communication.

Finally, on a theoretical ground, it also introduces semantic compartmentalization as a new conceptual framework to analyze foreign policy discourse. By doing so, it demonstrates that Türkiye uses various linguistic approaches to different policy areas by using positive language in economic diplomacy but negative language in security and territorial issues. The phenomenon expands constructivist theories because it demonstrates how states use communication to perform specific functions during the current period of geopolitical fragmentation.

***Research Methodology***

This research uses a mixed-methods analytical framework, which combines both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to analyze the evolution of Turkish foreign policy narratives during the 2013–2025 period. Within such a perspective, it utilizes 5,119 official Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) statements ranging from September 5, 2012, to April 30, 2025, to develop an empirical longitudinal sentiment-based analysis of Ankara’s diplomatic discourse. The research investigates Türkiye's foreign policy discourse changes through strategic alignment from Western conflict to Russo-centric cooperation to hedging middle-power strategies. From this perspective, this research expects to provide an empirical data analysis of the aforementioned diplomatic texts that illustrates how Türkiye has increasingly become a middle-power actor that effectively pursues an adaptive strategic hedging that has been extensively discussed in the existing literature (Kutlay and Öniş, 2021; Aslan, 2024; Kardaş et al., 2025).

The analysis relies on 5,119 official Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) statements from September 5, 2012, to April 30, 2025. The published official announcements provide essential information about important geopolitical and domestic developments that occurred in Türkiye after the 2016 failed military coup and during its complicated diplomatic interactions with NATO and Russia. Python-based web scraping scripts with specific dynamic content handling abilities extracted the data to achieve complete and precise results. The data set contains textual information together with publication timestamps and relevant context data that serves as a solid foundation for computational assessment.

Data quality and analytical accuracy were ensured through a series of strict text pre-processing procedures. The text normalization processes included tokenization, alongside stop words, punctuation removal, numerical data elimination, and lemmatization to reduce noise and standardize text for future analytical precision. The preparatory steps established the foundation for achieving dependable computational analyses.

The analytical framework applied multiple computational text analysis methods during analysis. The Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling technique analyzed the corpus to detect thematic progressions which helped researchers track Turkish foreign policy changes and their associated narratives. The diplomatic sentiment of Türkiye’s announcements was analyzed using VADER alongside BERT transformer-based models to generate empirical measurements of diplomatic tone regarding international actors and specific issues. The application of Named Entity Recognition (NER) techniques enabled researchers to identify and analyze important entities together with geopolitical references, which produced detailed foreign policy relationships and emphasized insights.

The research used multiple validation methods throughout its analytical process to guarantee both computational methodological accuracy and precision. The Python 3 programming language served as the platform for all script development and analytical execution because researchers received technical assistance through multiple iterations of code generation, debugging, and optimization using ChatGPT. The researchers performed manual validation on 100 randomly chosen diplomatic announcements from the dataset to confirm the accuracy of model outputs from Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), sentiment analysis (VADER Named Entity Recognition (NER), and BERT. Here, it is worth mentioning that we have performed an independent assessment of 100 random documents to verify that the model-generated sentiment and topic classifications matched the human interpretation of the text content.

On the other hand, the LDA model used Coherence Score metrics to evaluate topic coherence while testing different topic numbers to determine semantic distinctiveness. The sentiment models achieved satisfactory results when comparing automated polarity scores to human-coded evaluations for the sample documents regarding diplomatic language tone and polarity detection. The BERT model demonstrated superior performance in detecting fine sentiment variations within complex phrases that the VADER lexicon-based model failed to detect. The Named Entity Recognition outputs received verification through manual annotation of samples to determine the accuracy of geopolitical actor and organizational and regional reference identification.

The study eliminated bias from the textual corpus through its selection of Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) announcements instead of using politically charged sources from the Presidency or party-affiliated institutions. I believe that the MFA still maintains a standardized diplomatic tone through its institutional design, which makes it an objective source for foreign policy signaling in Turkish bureaucratic operations. Therefore, I argue that the selection of MFA announcements strengthens the credibility and neutrality of sentiment and discourse analysis because it takes place in a highly polarized political environment.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that the computational analysis encountered challenges because diplomatic language contains complex semantic meanings that depend on context. The interpretation of diplomatic nuances requires qualitative triangulation methods to function effectively. Considering this, the research maintained strict ethical standards through the use of only open-source public data, which protected academic integrity and prevented potential ethical problems from emerging. By following such a careful structure, the research’s comprehensive methodological framework facilitates the aim of filling the essential gaps in Turkish foreign policy research and delivering empirical findings about Türkiye's diplomatic language transformation.

***Data Analysis and the Initial Findings***

As one can expect, the analysis requires a utilization of the advanced computational text analysis tools, including sentiment analysis, topic modeling (Latent Dirichlet Allocation - LDA), and keyword frequency and semantic network analysis to achieve a comprehensive understanding of TFP narrative shifts. The combination of these methods operates on an extensive MFA announcement dataset spanning from 2010 to 2025 to deliver quantitative insights about narrative shifts, which helps researchers understand policy changes better. The empirical approach established through these methods remedies a key deficiency in current qualitative research because it uses quantitative evidence instead of interpretative methods and lacks quantitative evidence.

The NLP tools processed MFA announcement texts to perform sentiment analysis, which resulted in the classification of emotions into positive, negative, and neutral categories. The quantitative method allows researchers to evaluate diplomatic language objectively through sentiment analysis of announcements from various policy periods to detect strategic shifts. The research implemented LDA topic modeling to extract persistent thematic elements from the studied dataset. Through unsupervised learning, the algorithm groups terms based on their repeated appearances in multiple texts, which helps researchers find major policy topics across various time periods. The combination of keyword frequency analysis with semantic network techniques shows important concepts and their relationships to reveal changes in diplomatic priorities as well as discursive approaches. Through a combined analytical strategy, this research validates existing qualitative research while creating new knowledge through quantitative analysis of discursive changes in TFP and delivering an infrequently encountered analytical framework in political science research.

*Sentiment Analysis*

The sentiment analysis of announcements from 2010 to 2013 shows mainly positive diplomatic language, which corresponds with the aggressive diplomatic stance from the ***Strategic Depth*** doctrine by Davutoğlu. MFA announcements from this period contain optimistic language about cooperation, mediation, and economic partnerships, which supports the findings of authors including Sözen (2010) and Altunişik & Martin (2011). We observe how the positive diplomatic sentiment reached its peak point when Türkiye acts as a regional mediator through its diplomatic work in Libya and Syria.

On the other hand, from 2013 to 2016, the announcements appear to reveal a substantial transformation in diplomatic sentiments toward more negative and neutral expressions. One can associate this with the internal dissatisfaction centered on the Gezi Park protests and the growing disapproval of how Ankara had been handling the ongoing conflict in Syria. The empirical assessment of MFA documents from this period shows that diplomatic language shifted from positive to security-oriented and crisis-management focused, and political autonomy statements. The findings of Kaliber & Kaliber (2019) confirm this development because they observed increasing populist and anti-Western speech patterns throughout this period. Considering this, one can assert that the wider strategic repositioning of Türkiye led to its withdrawal from established Western diplomatic alliances.

Last but not least, our analysis of MFA documents between 2016 and 2020 demonstrates that negatively-toned language about national sovereignty and security threats and transactional diplomacy increased, particularly when dealing with Russia and other non-Western powers. Here, we can argue that the empirical evidence of negative sentiment strength validates the research findings of Özpek and Yaşar (2018), who documented the rise of authoritarian tendencies along with pragmatic foreign policy during this period. Therefore, it would not be a wrong argument to conceptualize sentiment analysis as a piece of numerical evidence that the diplomatic approach evolved into pragmatic realism through defensive and cautious language use.

*Topic Modeling*

One can contend that the LDA topic modeling technique enables researchers to track specific thematic patterns, including Turkish MFA announcements, through a careful analysis. Empirical evidence from 2010 to 2013 demonstrates three main topics, which include regional mediation, along with economic diplomacy and soft power initiatives. The research findings confirm the strategic goals of the ***Strategic Depth*** doctrine by validating Sözen (2010) and Altunişik & Martin (2011). The empirical data demonstrates strong evidence that the theme of active regional diplomacy was maintained consistently across all measured periods.

The subsequent period (2013-2016) shows topic modeling results indicating new thematic clusters consisting of security threats alongside domestic instability and strategic autonomy. The quantitative results demonstrate these themes rose substantially in importance throughout the Gezi Park protests and the Syrian civil war crises. The empirical findings from topic frequency and clustering analysis verify the research of Kaliber & Kaliber (2019) about Türkiye's pragmatic realignment alongside its developing anti-Western position.

Our research has also conducted an LDA analysis of transactional diplomacy and Russian engagement and defense capabilities to find that these topics emerged as the most important during 2016-2020. The empirical data shows a clear strategic move toward pragmatic realism and multipolar alignments, which supports the qualitative analysis of Kösebalaban (2020) and Kutlay & Öniş (2021). The research validates the extensive strategic change after the coup attempt through topic modeling by showing how it helps researchers detect subtle changes in diplomatic language.

*Keyword Frequency and Semantic Networks*

The analysis of keyword frequency in Turkish MFA announcements shows major conceptual changes. The analysis of 2010-2013 MFA statements shows that “*mediation*,” “*regional* *stability*,” and “*cooperation*” were prominent keywords that empirically match the optimistic foreign policy and proactive diplomatic style of Davutoğlu's administration. The semantic network analysis shows how these terms are closely linked to each other and shows how Türkiye positioned itself as a mediator and regional power.

On the other hand, the period of 2013-2016 shows a change in diplomatic discourse, which includes a constant use of “*crisis*,” “*security*,” and “*autonomy*” according to the analysis. The semantic network analysis demonstrates that security-related keywords show increased associative connections that indicate a diplomatic shift toward pragmatic security-focused policies. The quantitative results demonstrate alignment with the qualitative observations described in Kaliber & Kaliber (2019) and Aras (2014) about the strategic change.

Interestingly, the post-coup period statements from 2016 to 2020 feature an increasing use of the concept “*sovereignty*” as the dominant keyword, together with “*Russia*” and “*transactional diplomacy*.” The empirical keyword frequency analysis shows a measurable shift toward transactional diplomatic language, and semantic networks demonstrate strong associations between sovereignty and the bilateral relations with Moscow, which confirm the strategic shift in scholarly research by Kösebalaban (2020).

Finally, the recent statements from 2020 to date emphasize an intriguing trend of “*normalization*,” “*Libya*,” and “*East Mediterranean*,” which show a dual-edged character of Turkish foreign policy during this period. Here, we observe Türkiye's rising assertiveness and quest for achieving a normalization in its relations with other important regional and international actors. Nevertheless, one should underline the apparent fact that the quantitative analysis of keywords shows that Türkiye has become more assertive in its strategic position and military-oriented diplomatic activities, which match the similar qualitative observations made by Karakoç and Ersoy (2024).

Taking these all into consideration, one can suggest that this research validates and broadens existing qualitative insights about Turkish foreign policy narrative changes through the combination of sentiment analysis results, topic modeling, and keyword frequency data with semantic networks. The quantitative evidence supports scholarly interpretations in a consistent manner to show the detailed shifts in TFP while providing new evidence for understanding these changes. The multi-method empirical analysis in this research provides original findings about diplomatic sentiment and thematic priorities and keyword patterns, which were not previously identified in qualitative studies. This study establishes a strong empirical framework that serves as a valuable example for future political science research on foreign policy discourse analysis. The quantitative method provides researchers with an evidence-based method to analyze complex diplomatic narratives, which advances both theoretical and empirical foreign policy research. Taking this into consideration, one should delve deeper into a subsequent discussion of the data and its impact on understanding the broader implications of Turkish foreign policy to provide a further layer of our discussions.

***Discussions: Lessons from the MFA Announcements***

Our data supports the hypothesis we made concerning Türkiye’s diplomatic language evolution after 2013 through its identification of strategic changes between emotional expressions and geopolitical positions. This is especially visible, as the analysis of sentiment data from over ten years of MFA announcements generates measurable patterns to show such a priority change in the organization of Ankara’s foreign policy agenda. For instance, after the early 2010s optimism and cooperative tone the statements, we observe a shift towards rather more defensive responses before turning into a transactional and calculated approach after 2016. Such diplomatic changes match both the internal political transformations starting with the 2016 coup attempt and foreign policy adjustments with nations including Russia, Gulf States, and NATO. Here, it is important to emphasize that Ankara’s realignment and recalculation of its relations with respect to these regional and international actors have been a fundamental element in describing the broader transformations that the Turkish foreign policy has gone through in recent years.

Examples of such changes can be tracked to some of such MFA announcements. For instance, the April 30, 2025, MFA statement about Syria presents a clear case of the “*clear stance*” against violent actions in southern Syria. The statement underlined that Ankara would continue to demonstrate firm determination against violent acts that take place in southern Syria. Here, what deserves specific attention is how it diverges from the previously peace-focused statements that the MFA released between 2011 and 2012. Such changes illustrate to us how Türkiye has strengthened its position within the regional security network, leading to a transformation from conciliatory language to forceful military involvement. Within such a framework, the results from topic modeling demonstrate how “*humanitarian cooperation*” has gradually evolved into “security and stabilization” as major thematic elements of Turkish foreign policy.

It is also worth mentioning that during the period from 2013 through 2016, the sentiment analysis indicates that positive emotional valence significantly decreased. We observe how MFA announcements took on neutral to negative tones, especially when they addressed Western countries. MFA statements utilize phrases such as “*çifte* *standart*” (double standards) and “*kabul* *edilemez*” (unacceptable) to express both disappointment and strategic distancing from European and U.S. institutions. This change in tone directly confirms the emotional separation from Western institutions, which occurred during the Gezi Park protests and Syrian conflict, while Türkiye felt its allies were not taking sufficient action.

At the core, one of the most turning points in understanding the nature of Ankara’s foreign stance appears to be the aftermath of the failed 2016 coup attempt on July 15, 2016. In the aftermath of the incident, the MFA statements started using protective language that focused on national security issues. Post-coup announcements contained repeated references to “*ulusal güvenliğimizi tehdit eden unsurlarla kararlılıkla mücadele edilecektir*” (the struggle against the elements targeting our national security will continue decisively) as they demonstrated national security combat determination. Furthermore, the results from LDA topic modeling during this period show significant clustering around sovereignty and domestic security alongside international betrayal. Therefore, we can suggest that the diplomatic language adopted a more forceful emotional tone, which demonstrated both domestic authority consolidation and new international alliance positions.

An interesting revelation on how Ankara’s relations with other regional and international actors have changed in this post-coup attempt environment concerns Russia. We observe that from this period onwards, the announcements from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs showed an intensified bond with Russia. One of the most striking examples of such a realignment with Moscow is the 2020 joint press release about the Syrian conflict, where Ankara named Moscow as a “*strategic partner*” in promoting “*regional cooperation*”. Intriguingly, Russia-related texts from this period displayed rising positive emotions, while texts about NATO and EU member states maintained neutral to negative sentiment according to sentiment analysis. Arguably, to balance the previous pro-Western sentiments in Turkish foreign policy craft, Ankara conceptualized Moscow as a new partner that now collaborates with Türkiye as a joint foreign policy anchor while its presence appears through textual tone as well as term co-occurrence and semantic proximity.

Similarly, our data analysis also demonstrates that Türkiye has built stronger ties with Gulf nations, particularly with Qatar. The MFA announcement from December 5, 2021, about the Foreign Minister’s visit to Doha states that “*Toplantıda, Katar'la halihazırda mükemmel seviyede bulunan ikili ilişkilerimizin daha da ileriye taşınmasına yönelik atılabilecek adımlar değerlendirilecek…*” (At the meeting, the steps that can be taken to further advance our bilateral relations, which are already at an excellent level with Qatar, will be evaluated.) The newly implemented positive emotional statements represent a total change from the previous Gulf relations that operated on transactional terms. Considering this, it would not be wrong to argue that the growing positive sentiment toward Qatar demonstrates how Türkiye implements alliance diversification through its hedging strategy.

We should also draw close attention to the implications of our keyword frequency analysis. Our operationalization demonstrates the rise of new concepts including “*savunma sanayi*” (defense industry), “*enerji güvenliği*” (energy security) and “*çok taraflılık*” (multilateralism). For instance, the announcement about the explosions took place in Iranian ports on April 26, 2025, demonstrates Türkiye’s expanding focus on regional logistics and energy routes – which is just one of such announcements that illustrate the rise of these new concepts in Turkish foreign policy craft. It would not be wrong to claim that these specific terms were nonexistent before 2015, but they now serve as essential concepts. The rising frequency indicates an evolution in Turkish security doctrine, which establishes links between economic infrastructure development and national sovereignty protection.

Especially from 2023 to 2025, we can argue that Ankara’s relations with the European Union also illustrates a prominent case of discursive duality in international relations. The statement of November 8, 2023, which underlines “*Tek taraflı ve haksız eleştirilerin yerine, işbirliği ve diyalog ruhuyla hareket edildiği takdirde, AB ile ilişkilerimizi daha sağlam temellere oturtmaya ve ortak çıkarlarımız doğrultusunda işbirliğimizi güçlendirmeye her zaman açığız.*”— “If we act in the spirit of cooperation and dialogue instead of unilateral and unfair criticism, we are always open to establishing our relations with the EU on a more solid basis and strengthening our cooperation in line with our common interests.”—represents the backbone of the hedging approach we and the authors in the literature have long been claiming for. The usage of conditional constructs (“ortak çıkarlarımız” / common interests) in Turkish diplomatic statements demonstrates the country's deliberate practice of ambiguous alliance politics that aligns with multipolar pragmatism.

In combination, we observe how the diplomatic framework of Türkiye has evolved into a hedging-based structure according to topic modeling data from recent years. The terms “*denge politikası*” (*balance policy*), “*çok kutuplu dünya*” (multipolar world), and “*esnek diplomasi*” (flexible diplomacy) started to dominate in official announcements from 2022 onwards. The thematic content of these announcements corresponds with actions that include Ukraine mediation while preserving Russian gas trade relationships. Through its diplomatic stance, Türkiye presents itself as a neutral diplomatic mediator instead of an ideological stakeholder.

Named Entity Recognition (NER) detects a recurring pattern where Türkiye engages in bilateral relations with countries that extend beyond its traditional Western alliance network. MFA texts from 2023 to 2025 show Russia, Qatar, Azerbaijan, Libya, and the UN as the five most mentioned entities. The country uses regional diplomacy to build multilateral legitimacy at the global level. The scarce mentions of EU or U.S. in diplomatic communications—mainly appearing in confrontational situations—reveal how Türkiye is moving toward Eastern and Southern strategic alliances.

It is also important to mention that diplomatic language shows sectoral differentiation which demonstrates strategic diversification. The sentiment polarity of trade-related MFA communications remained positive, yet security incidents and territorial disputes resulted in strongly negative sentiment. The strategy demonstrates a practical separation of diplomatic functions. The country conducts open trade and energy dialogues with actors it also challenges on security grounds which shows its ability to conduct issue-specific diplomacy.

Especially, the evolution of Türkiye-EU relations reveals a significant decrease in the use of normative language. Early statements focused on “*üyelik süreci*” (accession process) and “*ortak değerler*” (common values) while recent statements emphasize “pragmatic cooperation” and “refugee negotiations.” The April 28, 2025, announcement directly attacks Greek Cypriot media while it also implies criticism toward EU non-action. The diplomatic discourse has shifted from hopeful language to a confrontational tone, which indicates a process of de-Europeanization in foreign policy priorities.

Counterterrorism stands as the primary dominant theme within this document. Terms related to “*terörle mücadele*” (counterterrorism), “*ulusal güvenlik*” (national security) and “kırmızı çizgimizdir” (our red line) started dominating the language from 2016 onwards. Announcements about the PKK and Syrian Kurdish groups display very negative sentiment polarity. The strong lexical emphasis in announcements supports Ankara’s border security measures and demonstrates textual proof of its defense-oriented foreign policy restructuring.

The MFA statements regarding Turkic states Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan maintain consistently positive sentiment through repeated use of words “*kardeşlik*” (brotherhood), “*birlikte hareket*” (acting together), and “*ortak tarih*” (shared history). The diplomatic language demonstrates cultural-linguistic alignment tactics. Topic modeling demonstrates that these diplomatic connections operate as an alternative basis for diplomatic legitimacy because Türkiye moves away from Western alliances.

On the international institutional framework, the United Nations, which Türkiye previously viewed as a moral authority, receives new descriptions in diplomatic texts as “*etkin çözüm*” (effective resolution) and “*pratik katkı*” (practical contribution). The discursive shift demonstrates how multilateralism has evolved from its value-based foundation to an outcome-based structure. The country has abandoned its normative actor position to focus on producing results and delivering functional peacekeeping and conflict mediation services.

The research results from 2010 to 2025 show that all topics have been fully substituted. The language shifted from “*AB uyumu*” (EU harmonization) and “*demokratik dönüşüm*” (democratic transformation) before 2015 but then focused on “*mavi vatan*” (blue homeland), “askeri güç” (military power), and “*enerji koridoru*” (energy corridor) terminology. Here, one can argue that the policy has evolved from institutional foreign policy to geoeconomic militarization, both in its rhetorical expression and strategic conduct.

The Eastern Mediterranean issues prompted Türkiye to adopt an increasingly forceful communication approach from 2020 to 2025. Early declarations about international law gave way to current declarations that use phrases such as “*haklarımızı her koşulda savunacağız*” (we will defend our rights under all circumstances). We observe how Türkiye has abandoned its previous dependency on legal norms for legitimacy because it now bases its sovereignty on military readiness to defend its rights under any circumstances. Although in the recent months there seems to be a possible rapprochement between Ankara and its neighbors in the Eastern Mediterranean, this story remains yet to be complete, and the hawkish stance continues to demonstrate a strong presence throughout the announcement texts (for instance No. 84, dated April 16, 2025).

What deserves a significant attention is how the analysis of lexical silence proves to be a vital discovery. Terms associated with the “Arab Spring” movement have started to disappear from official discourse starting from 2016 after they were frequently mentioned between 2011 and 2013. The narrative shift demonstrates how Türkiye can abandon a vocal support for democratization to focus on maintaining regional stability through cooperation with regimes.

The post-2022 diplomatic position of Türkiye regarding Ukraine serves as a remarkable example of how diplomats balance their language. The announcements such as the one made on February 24, 2023, steer clear of Russia's direct criticism while expressing support for “Savaşın, müzakereler yoluyla adil ve kalıcı bir şekilde bir an önce sona erdirilmesi gerektiğini her platformda vurguluyoruz.” (“We emphasize on every platform that the war should be ended in a fair and permanent way through negotiations as soon as possible”.). These statements show neutral sentiment polarity to support dialogue with essential actors while maintaining a neutral stance. In short, we can argue these in combination further characterize the growing hedging behavior one can track through Ankara’s careful use of diplomatic language.

To sum it up, our analysis apparently supports the main hypothesis, which conceptualizes how Türkiye has been adapting a new diplomatic language centered on an increasing use of a hedging strategy from 2013 to 2025. While the linguistic changes and thematic emphasis in Türkiye's foreign policy demonstrate its shift from being a normative regional mediator to becoming a realist hedger within a multipolar system, computational methods also validate theoretical findings by detecting new behavioral patterns. These include not only a novel semantic compartmentalization but also Ankara’s apparent multi-vector alignment.

***Concluding Remarks***

Our research aimed to bridge an important gap in Turkish foreign policy (TFP) studies through empirical studies of strategic language changes in Turkish diplomacy between 2013 and 2025. For that purpose, it used advanced computational techniques such as sentiment analysis and topic modeling and named entity recognition (NER) in an attempt to create an innovative method for precise foreign policy discourse analysis. The findings obtained from these techniques support the main research hypothesis about Turkish strategic realignment around a strategic hedging motivation by providing quantitative data that strengthens existing qualitative research results.

While our study investigated how Turkish foreign policy language evolved through merely twelve years, it transitioned from optimistic ideological language about regional ambitions into a strategic multipolar hedging approach with a controlled emotional tone. In such a context, it would not be wrong to argue that such shifts are not merely stylistic or rhetorical. Rather, the strategic evolution of Turkish foreign policy represents fundamental changes within its geopolitical structure as well as domestic political needs and adaptive responses to shifts in global power dynamics. Here, the computational analysis provides essential knowledge about how international threats and domestic weaknesses cause foreign policy narratives to transform.

To begin with, our data indicates that the period from 2010 until 2013 under the "Strategic Depth" doctrine presented diplomatic communications by Türkiye with highly optimistic language. For instance, the regions such as the broader MENA and Balkan regions apparently had received frequent announcements from the MFA, which contained positive terms like “cooperation,” “mediation,” and “shared future.” Nevertheless, these discursive elements experienced a dramatic decrease in usage during the 2013 Gezi Park protests and the escalating instability in Syria amidst the erupted civil war and how Ankara responded it.

On the other hand, from 2013 to 2016, we observe how the official statements started to increasingly contain predominantly negative or neutral sentiment polarities. MFA announcements from this period showed skepticism and frustration, together with reserved attitudes toward Western institutions. Textual changes during this period matched the intensifying domestic political security agenda and the rising domestic populist movement which opposed Western views. The MFA statements from this period demonstrate scholarly evidence that Türkiye shifted away from standard Europeanization policies toward an independent position, which sometimes included regional conflict.

Considering this major change of affairs, we can conceptualize the 2016 coup attempt as a significant watershed moment. From this moment onwards, we observe how the sentiment analysis started to show us an increasing number of official statements that became intensely negative and security-oriented toward external interferences. Generally, they started to centralize around controversial concepts such as national sovereignty, together with state legitimacy and state existential continuity. This change occurred through shifts in also emotional tone, valence, and through the increased appearance of partnership and bilateralism-related terms.

After 2016, we observe that “transactional diplomacy” and “pragmatic cooperation” emerged as the new strategic foundation. The increase of "partnership" along with "energy corridor" and "strategic sovereignty" terminology in MFA declarations since 2017 further demonstrates the validity of this interpretation. From a theoretical perspective, such development also illustrates how Ankara adopted middle-power activism principles, which allowed it to protect its autonomy by maintaining strategic positions between great powers for maximum benefit.

After 2020, on the other hand, this hedging approach between multiple powers became even more entrenched. The strategic ambiguity of Türkiye reached its peak in the Ukraine conflict alongside Eastern Mediterranean tensions and Gulf normalization efforts. MFA announcements during this period skipped binary moral frameworks to emphasize Türkiye's position as a mediator, which supported regional stability goals. The discursive ambiguity, which refrains from either fully backing NATO or openly opposing Russia, demonstrates a refined hedging strategy that makes Türkiye an essential player in unpredictable geographic regions.

The keyword frequency results demonstrate an overall shift in diplomatic discourse toward security and trade diplomacy and energy cooperation. The frequency of "human rights" and "democratic values" decreased dramatically while "defense capability" and "sovereignty" and "economic cooperation" find themselves an extensive use. The strategic move toward hard power projection and geoeconomic alignment which some scholars call the “militarization of Turkish foreign policy” becomes evident through these findings. The NER results support the argument that Türkiye's geopolitical network has expanded its reach beyond traditional Western alliances. MFA discourse now emphasizes Russian, Qatari, Azerbaijani, and Libyan relations more than it does traditional Western alliances. The entities that appear more frequently and with positive or negative sentiment in the text indicate new alliances that form from necessary alliances, regional independence, and shared goals to develop alternative systems of governance.

The main achievement of this research lies in its methodological approach. Machine learning models together with computational linguistics provide this study with an approachable method to analyze foreign policy texts which yields reliable results. The method provides essential counterweight to traditional qualitative assessments because it relies on personal interpretations of restricted text samples. The computational methods reveal hidden patterns that human coding struggles to detect including topic drift and lexical silence and polarity shifts which create new opportunities for political discourse analysis.

The study also presents some limitations to its findings. The value of computational methods for empirical research depends on understanding the historical and political context of the findings. The language of diplomacy contains both performative elements and strategic ambiguity which machine learning algorithms struggle to detect without human intervention for qualitative validation. The analysis of sentiment through algorithms tends to miss subtle linguistic elements that include sarcasm and irony together with cultural references when the text uses formal or bureaucratic language.

The ethical and political consequences of foreign policy discourse demand attention as a fundamental aspect of this study. The changes in Turkish diplomatic language demonstrate both strategic military choices and the national struggle between democratic principles and authoritarian tendencies. The language functions as both descriptive and performative and constitutive element in this context. Therefore, we can argue that the changes in discourse indicate fundamental modifications within both the state's institutions and its ideological structure.

An interesting conclusion we can derive from our research’s results concerns the direct applications that reach further than the domain of Turkish foreign policy. This research shows how medium-sized powers use purposeful speech to handle the challenges of multipolar systems, together with internal instability and declining alliances. The case of Türkiye demonstrates the ways states manage their positions during systemic changes and shifts in global orders. The analytical model created for this research can be used to study foreign policy narratives in emerging or middle powers such as Brazil, India and South Africa.

Our study demonstrates that Turkish diplomatic discourse followed three main developmental phases, from optimistic to defensive to pragmatic, and from pragmatic to ambiguous strategic communication during the period from 2013 to 2025. The changing landscape of liberal hegemony decline, and geopolitical fragmentation drives Türkiye's strategic position in the world. The study presents a new framework through the combination of computational methods and theoretical understanding to understand both Türkiye's current situation and its potential future directions in a world moving towards multipolarity.

Future research should investigate this topic further by analyzing diplomatic social media content and press releases translated into Arabic and English and implementing neural network models for semantic analysis. The study of diplomatic discourse patterns in non-Western regions becomes more comprehensive through comparative research with other regional actors. The research provides a complete and evidence-based analysis of national language use as a tool to identify global positions.

***Ethical AI Statement***

The AI models employed in this research (specifically ChatGPT-4o and Grammarly) were used solely to enhance academic understanding of Turkish foreign policy discourse, with a primary focus on generating and refining Python3 code necessary for processing and analyzing publicly available diplomatic texts. Similarly, Grammarly was utilized to further enhance the grammar and linguistic clarity of the article. On the other hand, these models were not used for predictive surveillance, policy manipulation, or political profiling. All data preprocessing was conducted to minimize bias, ensure transparency, and preserve the integrity of the original content. The highest ethical standards were upheld throughout, and computational outputs, such as sentiment analysis and topic modeling, were rigorously cross-validated using qualitative content analysis to ensure contextual accuracy. Interpretations were carefully situated within historical, political, and linguistic frameworks to avoid distortion, ensuring the responsible and scholarly application of AI methods in this study.

***Bibliography***

Ahmet Sözen. (2010). A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges, *Turkish Studies*, 11:1, 103-123, DOI: 10.1080/14683841003747062

Ali Aslan (2024) Strategic autonomy in Turkish foreign policy: Defense or offense?, *Comparative Strategy*, 43:6, 749-780, DOI: 10.1080/01495933.2024.2409049.

Alper Kaliber and Esra Kaliber. (2019). From De-Europeanisation to Anti-Western Populism: Turkish Foreign Policy in Flux, *The International Spectator*, 54:4, 1-16, DOI: 10.1080/03932729.2019.1668640.

Aylin Aydın Çakır and Gül Arıkan Akdağ (2017). An empirical analysis of the change in Turkish foreign policy under the AKP government, *Turkish Studies*, 18:2, 334-357, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2016.1261021.

Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner and Sinem Akgül Açıkmeşe (eds.). (2023). *One Hundred Years of Turkish Foreign Policy (1923-2023): Historical and Theoretical Reflections* (Palgrave Macmillan).

Bülent Aras. (2014). Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy Revisited, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 16:4, 404-418, DOI: 10.1080/19448953.2014.938451.

Burak Bilgehan Özpek and Nebahat Tanriverdi Yaşar. (2018). Populism and foreign policy in Türkiye under the AKP rule, *Turkish Studies*, 19:2, 198-216, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2017.1400912.

Cenk Saraçoğlu and Özhan Demirkol. (2014). Nationalism and Foreign Policy Discourse in Turkey under the AKP Rule: Geography, History and National Identity, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42:3, 301-319. DOI: 10.1080/13530194.2014.947152.

Francesco D’Alema. (2024). Türkiye’s approach to the Arab spring revisited: political field and foreign policy in the AKP era, *Turkish Studies*, 25:5, 806-834, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2024.2365849.

H. Tarık Oğuzlu. (2016). Turkish foreign policy at the nexus of changing international and regional dynamics, *Turkish Studies*, 17:1, 58-67, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2015.1136088.

Hakan Mehmetcik and Arda Can Çelik. (2022). The Militarization of Turkish Foreign Policy, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 24:1, 24-41, DOI: 10.1080/19448953.2021.1992190.

Hasan Kösebalaban. (2020). Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Syria: The Return of Securitization, *Middle East Critique*, 29:3, 335-344, DOI: 10.1080/19436149.2020.1770450.

Jülide Karakoç and Duygu Ersoy. (15 Oct 2024). Turkish Foreign Policy in the Nexus Between Securitization and Populism, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/19448953.2024.2414168.

Lisel Hintz. (2018). *Identity Politics Inside Out: National Identity Contestation and Foreign Policy in Turkey* (Oxford University Press).

M. Evren Eken and Toygun Karahasanoğlu. (11 Mar 2025). Americanisation in Turkish geopolitical self: a psychohistorical analysis of the conduct of Turkish foreign policy, *Critical Studies on Security*, DOI: 10.1080/21624887.2025.2473161

Meliha B. Altunişik & Lenore G. Martin. (2011). Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP, *Turkish Studies*, 12:4, 569-587, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2011.622513.

Mesut Özcan, Talha Köse & Ekrem Karakoç. (2015). Assessments of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East During the Arab Uprisings, *Turkish Studies*, 16:2, 195-218, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2015.1045885.

Murat Yeşiltaş. (2013) The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy, *Turkish Studies*, 14:4, 661-687, DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2013.862927.

Mustafa Kutlay & Ziya Öniş. (2021). Understanding oscillations in Turkish foreign policy: pathways to unusual middle power activism, *Third World Quarterly*, 42:12, 3051-3069, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2021.1985449.

Natalia Sharova and Ronen A. Cohen. 2025. Reinventing new order: Turkish revisionist aspirations in the MENA region through a constructivist lens: 2002–2022, *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 12:1, 2480436, DOI: 10.1080/23311983.2025.2480436.

Şaban Kardaş, Bayram Sinkaya & Bahadır Pehlivantürk. (2025). Scope, drivers and manifestations of the realist turn in Turkish foreign policy: a case of delayed strategic adjustment, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 25:1, 11-30, DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2025.2468552.

Şaban Kardaş. (2025). Debating the hard power turn in Turkish foreign policy, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 25:1, 1-10, DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2025.2468579.

Senem Aydın-Düzgit. (2013). European Security and the Accession of Turkey: Identity and Foreign Policy in the European Commission, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 48:4, 522-541. DOI: 10.1177/0010836713482821.

Ziya Meral & Jonathan Paris. (2010). Decoding Turkish Foreign Policy Hyperactivity, *The Washington Quarterly*, 33:4, 75-86, DOI: 10.1080/0163660X.2010.516613.

Ziya Öniş. (2014). Turkey and the Arab Revolutions: Boundaries of Regional Power Influence in a Turbulent Middle East, *Mediterranean Politics*, 19:2, 203-219. DOI: 10.1080/13629395.2013.868392.