Linguistic Analysis of the Law of Georgia on Foreign Influence Transparency

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Abstract

This study presents a linguistic analysis of Georgia's Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence utilizing three primary analytical approaches. First, a lexical-semantic analysis of terms assesses the specificity and precision of the terms within the law. Second, corpus-linguistic analysis employs text corpora – extensive electronic text collections – to examine word combinations (collocations) and their connotations. Finally, the discursive analysis explores the law's argumentative structure and the legislative discourse, considering contemporary and historical contexts. The findings across these analyses reveal the following patterns. The law's title and text embedded with these terms seem to overlook the nuanced socio-cultural and historical contexts, particularly the legacies of imperial oppression. The research underscores that the law's conceptual and terminological framework is inherently hostile. The key terms and their modifiers carry negative semantic weight, contributing to a legal language that alienates citizens, stigmatizes foreign-funded civil society and media organizations, and facilitates their marginalization. The key terms in the law have historically and currently negative connotations. These terms evoke associations linked to Georgia's past experiences of repression and discrimination, resonating with aggressive and humiliating undertones. The analysis highlights the need for a more balanced and contextually sensitive legal language to avoid perpetuating historical prejudices and to support democratic and civil progress.

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1. Introduction

In contemporary society, legal language is a powerful tool in shaping and regulating social behavior, as well as mediating interactions between individuals, institutions, and the state. Legal texts, such as statutes, regulations, contracts, and judicial decisions, are not mere compilations of rules; they are complex linguistic constructs that communicate norms, distribute rights and obligations, and establish mechanisms for resolving disputes (Tiersma, 1999). The interpretation and understanding of legal language are critical for ensuring justice, fairness, and transparency in legal systems (Solan, 2010). However, the specialized vocabulary and syntactic structures of legal texts often make them inaccessible to the public, especially vulnerable groups, and even pose interpretive challenges for legal professionals (Gibbons, 2003).

Linguistic analysis of legal documents involves systematic study of their language and structure, focusing on how meaning is conveyed and how effectively these texts achieve their legal and communicative purposes. This analysis typically involves different methods, including syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions, as well as discourse features that reveal the communicative strategies embedded in legal language (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010). By examining ambiguities, inconsistencies, and situating legal language within its historical, social, and political contexts, linguistic analysis helps refine the clarity of statutory provisions and contributes to the overall fairness and effectiveness of the law (Gibbons, 2003). Such an interdisciplinary approach enriches legal and linguistic scholarship while serving as a practical tool to prevent misinterpretations and enhance legal precision (Solan, 2020).

On May 14, 2024, the Parliament of Georgia passed the Law on "Transparency of Foreign Influence" in its third reading, which was subsequently vetoed by the President of Georgia and returned to Parliament with detailed comments. Despite the President's objections, the Parliament disregarded the motivated remarks and adopted the law on June 3, 2024. The final approval came with the signature of the Speaker of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, and the law came into force on June 4, 2024. The adopted law sparked significant political unrest and widespread protests in Georgia. It was challenged in the Constitutional Court of Georgia on grounds of unconstitutionality by the President of Georgia, 38 members of Parliament, 122 non-governmental organizations, and two media organizations. A total of four lawsuits have been filed, and the Constitutional Court on November 4, 2024, issued a Recording Notice on admissibility of appeal (Constitutional Lawsuit No. N1829, 2024). Additionally, the non-governmental organizations submitted a claim to the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that the law violates fundamental human rights and freedoms, particularly freedom of association and protection against discrimination (Reuters, 2024; European Court of Human Rights Application No. 31069/24).

The law consists of 11 articles that establish a regulatory framework requiring non-commercial legal entities and media organizations receiving more than 20% of their income from foreign sources to register as "organizations carrying out the interests of a foreign power". Key provisions include the creation of a public registry administered by the Ministry of Justice, along with mandatory annual declarations detailing the sources and amounts of foreign funding, as well as the intended use of expenditures. The legislation grants the Ministry of Justice the authority to conduct inspections and monitoring of registered organizations. Non-compliance with the registration or reporting requirements may result in administrative fines ranging from 10,000 to 25,000 GEL. Furthermore, the law outlines procedures for appeals and delineates the responsibilities of the newly established Department of Financial Declaration within the National Public Registry Agency (Parliament of Georgia, 2024).

This article represents a linguistic analysis of the Law of Georgia on Transparency of Foreign Influence. The analysis of both the legal text and the discussions surrounding its adoption are carried out through three key approaches. First, lexical-semantic analysis of terms examines the specific terms used within the law, focusing on the adequacy and precision of their definitions. Second, the corpus-linguistic analysis explores the language of the law at the intersection of linguistics and technology, using text corpora – comprehensive electronic text collections – to analyze word combinations (collocations) and their connotations, as derived from language corpus data. Finally, the third direction of analysis investigates the discursive framework of the law, and the arguments presented during the legislative process, considering both contemporary and historical contexts.

2. Lexical, Corpus and Discourse Analysis of Legal Acts

The analytical tools of lexical analysis, corpus linguistics, and discourse analysis provide invaluable insights into the structure, meaning, and function of legal language. Lexical analysis focuses on the meaning and use of key terms within legal texts, which is essential for ensuring consistent interpretation across different cases (Stubbs, 1996). Corpus linguistics, meanwhile, allows scholars to analyze large collections of legal documents, identifying patterns of usage and highlighting variations in language use that may signal ambiguity or potential for misinterpretation (McEnery & Hardie, 2011). Discourse analysis examines how legal language constructs power, authority, and social norms, offering a broader view of how law functions as a form of social control and governance (Fairclough, 2001; Wodak, 2013). Together, these approaches provide a robust framework for understanding the complexities of legal texts and their wider societal implications.

An analysis, which focuses on the study of individual words and their meanings, is a foundational aspect of understanding legal language. Scholars such as Tiersma (1999) and Bhatia (1993) have emphasized the role of lexical analysis in uncovering the unique lexicon of legal discourse, often referred to as "legalese". Lexical analysis helps identify problematic terms that may obscure the meaning of legal texts for non-specialists, thus fostering efforts toward simplifying legal language for broader societal comprehension (Williams, 2007).

Corpus linguistics, which involves the analysis of large collections of texts (corpora), has become an invaluable tool in the study of legal language. By examining patterns of word use, phraseology, and syntactic structures across a wide range of legal texts, corpus analysis provides empirical insights into how legal language functions in practice. McEnery and Hardie (2011) have highlighted the benefits of corpus linguistics for legal studies, noting that the quantitative analysis of large corpora allows researchers to identify common linguistic patterns and trends that may not be evident from close reading alone. For instance, corpus analysis can reveal the frequency of legal terms or phrases, shedding light on how legal norms are consistently communicated across different legal documents or jurisdictions based on Computer-Assisted Legal Linguistics (CAL^2) (Vogel, Hamann & Gauer, 2018). This approach has proven particularly useful in areas such as statutory interpretation and the analysis of judicial opinions, where linguistic consistency is essential for the development of coherent legal doctrine (Solan & Tiersma, 2019). Moreover, corpus linguistics has been instrumental in identifying shifts in legal language over time, such as changes in gendered language or the increasing use of digital terminology in laws regulating new technologies (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010). Such findings have important implications for society, as they reflect evolving legal standards and the adaptability of the legal system to contemporary social issues.

The significance of linguistic analysis lies in its ability to uncover the underlying ideologies and power structures embedded within legal discourse. Legal language, far from being neutral, reflects the socio-political context in which it is produced and enacted (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 2009). By analyzing legal texts, scholars can identify how power dynamics and social inequalities are reinforced or challenged within the law. Moreover, linguistic analysis can play a critical role in legal reform by highlighting areas where legal language is ambiguous, exclusionary, or outdated, thus informing efforts to create more accessible and equitable legal systems (Eades, 2010; Gibbons, 2003). As a result, the linguistic analysis of legislation, draft laws, and legal acts has gained widespread acceptance as a vital component of legal studies (Tiersma, 1999). Discourse analysis goes beyond the study of individual words and phrases to examine how legal language functions within broader social and institutional contexts. By analyzing the structure of legal texts and the ways in which they convey power, authority, and ideology, discourse analysis provides critical insights into the relationship between law, language, and society. Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1997) have argued that discourse analysis is

essential for understanding how texts shape social realities and influence power dynamics. Legal language is not merely descriptive; it actively constructs and reinforces social norms, hierarchies, and relationships. For example, legal discourse plays a key role in defining the boundaries of acceptable behavior, establishing rights and responsibilities, and legitimizing state authority (Goodrich, 1990). Through discourse analysis, scholars can explore how legal texts perpetuate or challenge existing power structures, such as those related to gender, race, and class (Mertz, 2007).

3. Methodology

The research on the Law of Georgia "On Transparency of Foreign Influence" was conducted using three distinct analytical approaches: lexical-semantic analysis, corpus-linguistic analysis, and discourse analysis. The Lexical-Semantic Analysis of Terms involved the study of the meanings of terms within a text, focusing on definitions provided in various dictionaries, including, field-specific, and terminological dictionaries. The goal was to evaluate the terms used in the Law on "Transparency of Foreign Influence". The terms relevant to the analysis were selected based on their frequency, semantic value, and legal and discursive relevance within the scope of the Foreign Influence Transparency Act. These key terms were systematically identified using an algorithm-based approach grounded in corpus linguistic analysis. Specifically, the Mutual Information (MI) method was employed to detect statistically significant collocations, highlighting the semantic weight and argumentative significance of individual terms.

While lexicological and terminological analysis offers valuable insights into the structure and relationships of words, it often proves insufficient for disciplines like law due to the complex and context-dependent nature of legal language (Clay, 2022). Corpus analysis allows for a more data-driven and empirical understanding of how legal terms are used in practice. Accordingly, we utilized Corpus-linguistic analysis in our study. Mutual Information (MI) approach was used for corpus data analysis in the study. MI is an extremely suitable tool for semantic analysis because it focuses particularly on identifying statistically significant associations between words or collocations. This feature is of central importance when it comes to examining relationships and contextual meanings in texts. A key advantage of MI is its ability to work effectively with smaller data sets. In contrast to the t-test, which assumes a normal distribution and independence of the data, such assumptions are often not met in linguistic data. MI, on the other hand, uses the co-occurrence frequency of words and does not require large data sets to produce meaningful results. MI is indispensable, especially in semantic analysis, where it is important to recognize not only the frequency but also the strength and exclusivity of word relationships (Sonderegger, Wagner & Torreira, 2018; Walters-Williams & Li, 2009). In the present study on the linguistic analysis of the Georgian Law of Georgia on

Foreign Influence Transparency, various language databases, known as corpora, were used to examine the linguistic structure and semantic patterns of the legal text. First, the Georgian National Corpus, containing over 250-million-word forms, was employed. This corpus is distinguished by comprehensive disambiguation and full annotation, which was a decisive advantage for the analysis. Additionally, it is maximally balanced in terms of genres and eras, enabling a representative examination of Georgian language usage. However, the relatively small size of 250-million-word forms remains a limitation. For further analysis, a second corpus was used: the data collection of the Word-Embedding /sitqvamnergi/ tool, which, with 1.5-billion-word forms, represents the largest available corpus of Georgian. The corpus offers a user-friendly interface with two output options: as a list or in the form of a two-dimensional graph. The sheer size of this database is advantageous, but the annotation is limited to POS (Part-of-Speech), and the data was last trained in 2019. However, this did not affect the research results, as the analyzed keywords are part of the core repertoire of the Georgian language, making the date of the data irrelevant in this case. The third corpus consisted of the legal text itself, whose small size presented a challenge. To effectively analyze this small data set, the Lancaster Toolbox was used, which allows corpora to be created from digital texts and statistically significant phenomena to be identified. Despite the small database, this tool was able to recognize and analyze the relevant semantic patterns and keywords in the legal text. These were visualized using the GraphCall tool, which mapped the semantic networks of the keywords both in detail and in the overall context. However, the corpora and the results of the analyses should not be viewed in isolation but must be interpreted in the larger context. The legal text corpus represents only a small part of a much larger semantic network – a "cloud" that reflects the current usage of the language rather than the language itself. This is a crucial aspect: the investigation does not analyze the language in its entirety but focuses on how it is used in a specific context.

While corpus analysis provides quantitative insights into patterns of language use, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) adds a qualitative layer by interpreting these patterns in light of broader social, political, and institutional contexts (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1997). Discourse-historical analysis (DHA), developed by Ruth Wodak and Reisigl belongs to the broader field of CDA (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; 2009). DHA provides a framework for analyzing the language of law in its historical, social, and political dimensions. Accordingly, we utilized DHA in our study. Reisigl and Wodak (2009) outline five key domains for discourse analysis:

1. Nomination: How are different people, groups, or entities named in the text (linguistic categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives)?
2. Predication: What characteristics or qualities are attributed to individuals or groups (linguistic tools: stereotypes, evaluative language)?

3. Argumentation: What evidence and reasoning are used against specific groups or ideas (linguistic tools: assertions, accusations, reasoning based on unsupported logic)?
4. Perspectivation: How are different perspectives and visions represented in the text, and how are names, judgments, and arguments framed (linguistic tools: direct/indirect speech, quotations, metaphors)?
5. Intensification or Mitigation: To what extent are certain behaviors or characteristics presented in an intensified or softened manner (linguistic categories: hyperbole, emotional emphasis, rhetorical devices)?

We employed the following strategies for discourse analysis: First, we selected texts and statements from leaders of ruling parties pertaining to the Draft Law on Foreign Influence Transparency. Second, we analyzed the application of five primary discursive strategies – nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification/mitigation – across each text, including statements, interviews, speeches, and parliamentary discussions. Third, we conducted an intertextual analysis of these discursive strategies across the selected texts. Fourth, we structured the findings according to Reisigl and Wodak (2009) framework. Fifth, we identified and incorporated relevant historical and social factors into the interpretation of our findings. The Discourse-Historical Approach is a comprehensive framework that connects language use to broader social phenomena, helping researchers understand how discourse constructs social realities and consolidates power. This method is applied to analyze the discourse surrounding the "Transparency of Foreign Influence" law, examining both the text and the discussions that occurred during its legislative process.

4. Research Results

4.1. Lexical-Semantic Analysis of Terms

A lexical-semantic analysis of terms of the Georgian law "On Transparency of Foreign Influence" was conducted. This type of analysis involves examining the meanings of key terms used in a text, referencing definitions found in various dictionaries (general, foreign words, and specialized terminological sources). In the study, we explored the key terms in the "Foreign Influence Transparency" law from this perspective. The following terms and phrases from the law were analyzed: 1) Foreign, 2) Power, 3) Influence, 4) Pursuer, 5) Interest, 6) Foreign Power (the term Foreign Principal is used in international literature), 7) Organization Carrying Out (Pursuing) the Interests of a Foreign Power, 8) Transparency. We will briefly present the results of the analysis:

"უცხოური" / "უცხო" ("Foreign"/ "Alien"):

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of Georgian Language (EDGL), the term "foreign" is defined as: 1) "pertaining to or originating from another/foreign country"; and 2) "characteristic of a non-native/foreign individual". Lexical Evolution: The term "უცხოური" (foreign) has gradually replaced "უცხო" (alien/strange) in formal contexts, particularly in phrases like "foreign language" ("უცხო ენა" became "უცხოური ენა"). This shift was likely due to the polysemy of "უცხო", which can carry negative connotations, such as "alien" or "unfamiliar" (e.g., "foreign element", "alien ideology" – (see EDGL). "უცხოური" is monosemic and neutral. Its connotation depends on its collocation: for instance, it can be positive ("foreign brand") or negative ("foreign influence").

"ძალა" ("Power"/ "Force"):

According to the definition provided by the EDGL, the word "strength" is regarded as a polysemous lexeme with multiple meanings: 1. Muscle energy is the source of movement and work. 2. The ability of a person or group to act (strength is in unity). 3. Phys. Mechanical impact, the cause that gives acceleration (force of gravity) to a material point. 4. Leg. Mandatory character (retroactive force of the law). 5. A group of people. Public forces. – Military forces (power).[1] The connotation of this word in the legal context refers to social or military forces. "ძალა" is generally neutral, but its connotation can shift. In political and social sciences, it often takes on a negative tone, especially when associated with military or coercive force, implying potential brutality or threat. Dictionary of Social and Political Terms defines: "Power/Force: The military component of power in international relations has four functions: intimidation, coercion, attack, and demonstration of prestige" (Centre for Social Sciences, 2004: 337).

"გავლენა" ("Influence"):

According to the definition provided by the EDGL, the word "გავლენა/influence" has the following meanings: 1) someone's or something with the capacity to influence someone or something: will affect, will have an impact, it will affect someone's mood, positions. Areas of influence / region/s over which another state claims control. The dominant state in its spheres of influence limits the actions of other states and the independence of this sphere itself (social and political terms). 2. Ability to influence, power, – authority. In social and political sciences, the term "influence" is used as "the behavior of one person to change the attitude and feelings of other people about him". It is worth mentioning that the term "influence" is used only in the title of the law and in the Explanatory Note of the Law and has a negative connotation as the main aim of the law

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[1] Available at EDGL, ena.ge/explanatory-online (accessed 13 June 2025).

explained in the Explanatory Note is to protect the state from foreign influence through transparency measures.

"გამტარებელი" ("Pursuer"):

According to the EDGL, the term "გამტარებელი/pursuer" has four meanings: 1) driver or conductor; 2) time spender; 3) implementer; and 4) someone holding and executing a correct position. In the context of this legal analysis, "გამტარებელი" is used with the third meaning, "implementer". It refers to an individual or entity that executes directives, often associated with external forces. In legal discourse, "გამტარებელი/pursuer" implies complicity in carrying out foreign interests, thereby reinforcing the perception of foreign influence as a threat. This term carries predominantly negative connotations in such contexts.

"ინტერესი" ("Interest"):

The word "interest" has two main meanings according to EDGL: "ინტერესი- რისამე გაგების, გაცნობის, შესწავლის სურვილი" – The desire to understand, learn, acquire something; 2. "მიზანი, მისწრაფება, მოთხოვნილება || საუბ. სურვილი (რისამე ხელში ჩაგდებისა, მოპოვებისა)" – Goal, Aspiration, Need || convers. Desire (to seize, to obtain something). According to the law, the word "interest" is clearly used in the second meaning, carrying an unequivocally negative connotation (desire to seize or obtain something). In the text of the law, and particularly in the discourse surrounding it, the term "interest" is consistently used in a negative context, while its first meaning (the desire to understand, learn, or study something) is entirely absent. Naturally, the interests of a foreign (hostile) power are perceived as a threat, and the discourse is primarily focused on avoiding these threats.

"უცხოური ძალა" ("Foreign Power"):

The law defines "foreign power" as entities associated with foreign states, including governments, individuals, legal entities, and organizations under law. **Connotation:** In the legal text, "foreign power" has a distinctly negative connotation, suggesting external control and harmful influence on national sovereignty.

„უცხო ძალის ინტერესების გამტარებელი"
(„Organization Carrying Out (Pursuing) the Interests of a Foreign Power"):

Each component of the phrase "foreign power", "interests", and "pursue" – bears negative connotations in both the legal text and the broader discourse. This phrase, previously referred to as "agent" in a 2023 draft law, caused significant controversy and protests. Government representatives, including Irakli Kobakhidze (a leader of the majority

and current Prime Minister of Georgia), explicitly equated "agent" with "pursuing the interests". In the law's final version, an "agent" is understood as an entity that serves foreign interests. The wording implies that the local organization is merely a tool of foreign power, lacking autonomy. The sentence structure reinforces this perception by positioning the organization as subordinate to external authority. The use of a long, formal phrase creates a bureaucratic tone, adding to the sense of gravity. When combined, the negative connotations of each term are amplified, emphasizing the threat of foreign influence.

"გამჭვირვალობა" ("Transparency"):

The term "გამჭვირვალობა/transparency" appears solely in the title and is not explicitly referenced within the body of the law. According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Georgian Language (EDGL), transparency carries two primary meanings: firstly, the property of being physically transparent, and secondly, in a figurative sense, it denotes informational freedom or openness. The electronic Georgian dictionary ganmarteba.ge adopts this latter interpretation, defining transparency as a state in which society is enabled to observe governmental issues and access detailed information regarding the activities of public authorities. This conceptualization is similarly reflected in the Civil Encyclopedic Dictionary. Within the legal context, transparency is naturally employed in this second, legally significant sense. In this respect, the term "გამჭვირვალობა/transparency" can be categorized as possessing a positive connotation, as it fundamentally implies the revelation and disclosure of what was previously concealed or hidden, thereby implicitly acknowledging potential negative aspects against which transparency measures are applied.

This analysis highlights how the terms, though neutral in isolation, acquire strong negative connotations within the law, emphasizing the perceived threat of foreign influence and the need for defense against it.

4.2. Corpus Analysis of the Legal Text

The fundamental concepts and terms were only discussed within the framework of the legal text. The associations linked to the terms arise from the frequency of their collocations. The peak value and the average statistical collocate determine this frequency. Collocations generate Mutual Information (MI), which refers to the statistical proximity between two elements. They reveal the so-called 'transinformation' (synentropy), which underlies this proximity. Based on the text, the statistical analysis of direct collocations reveals a three-part (trigram) frequency pattern: 'interests (of)' | 'pursuer' | 'organisation', with each of these statistical collocations being associated with the term 'foreign'. Image 1/Figure 1 illustrates the frequency pattern of the terms in the law, where the main

collocate is 'foreign', while the most frequently associated terms are 'pursuer' and 'organization'. Further analysis of the collocations confirms that, semantically, the key term is not 'foreign' or 'alien', but the plural form of 'interest' – 'interests. The left collocate (modifier) of this term consists of the two concepts 'foreign' and 'power', while the right collocates are 'pursuer' and 'organisation' (Figure 1).

Figure 1 The frequency pattern of the terms in the law, where the main collocate is 'foreign'
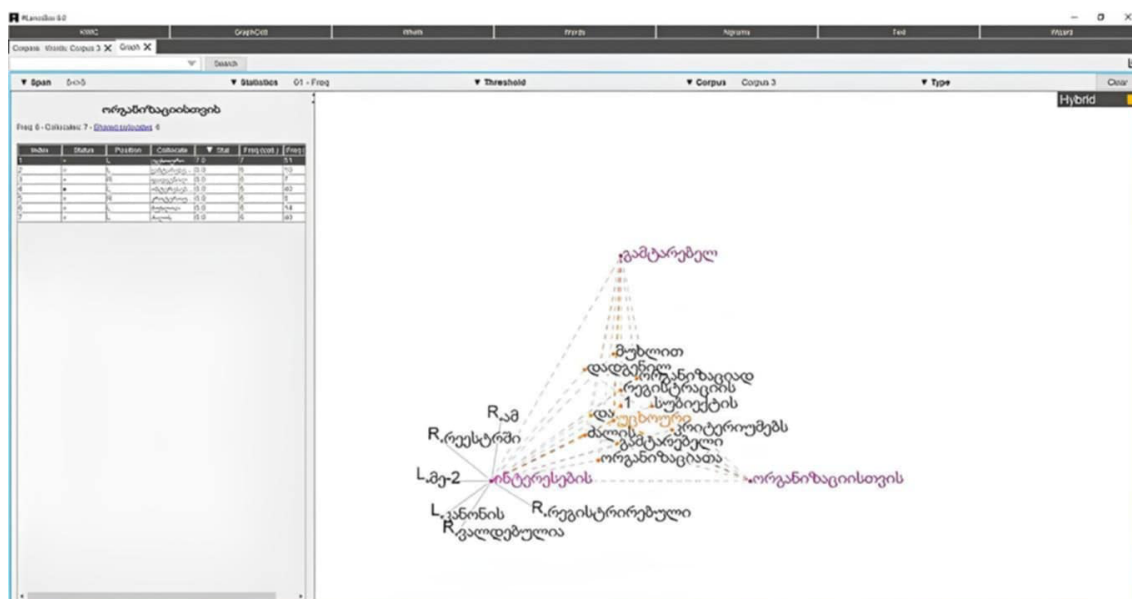
გამტარებელი – Pursuer; მუხლი – Article (Legal); დადგენილი – Prescribed; ორგანიზაცია – Organization; სუბიექტი – Subject; კრიტერიუმები – Criteria; რეესტრი – Register; ძალა – Power; კანონი – Law; ვალდებული – Obliged; რეგისტრირებული – Registered; ინტერესები – Interests

Figure 2 The frequency pattern of the terms in the law, where the main collocate is 'interests'

გამტარებელი – Pursuer; მუხლი – Article (Legal); დადგენილი – Prescribed; ორგანიზაცია – Organization; სუბიექტი – Subject; კრიტერიუმები – Criteria; რეესტრი – Register; ძალა – Power; კანონი – Law; ვალდებული – Obliged; რეგისტრირებული – Registered; ინტერესები – Interests

Thus, this image shows the main keyword of the law – 'interests' (Figure 2). Two of the most frequent collocates are presented as individual key terms: it is evident that the keyword 'interests' mainly collocates with the terms 'organisation' and its derivatives: 'organisations', 'organisations of', 'organisations for'. When the keyword 'pursuer' is used, it primarily collocates with the words: 'foreign', 'subject', 'power'. Therefore, in the legal text, the corpus-based method highlights the main key terms 'interests' and their collocates: 'organisation', 'foreign', 'subject', 'power' (Figure 3). Naturally, the relationship between the author of a text, particularly a legal text, and its reader should be clear in terms of the key terms.

Figure 3 The main key term "interests" and its collocates based on the legal text 'foreign', 'subject', 'power'
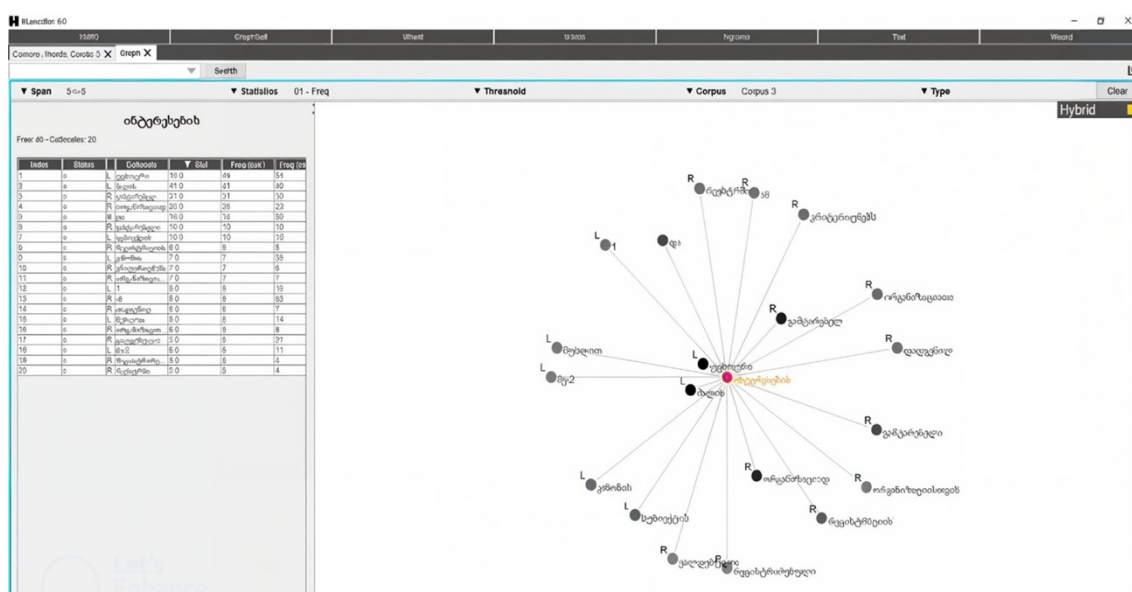
გამტარებელი – Pursuer; მუხლი – Article (Legal); დადგენილი – Prescribed; ორგანიზაცია – Organization; სუბიექტი – Subject; კრიტერიუმები – Criteria; რეესტრი – Register; ძალა – Power; კანონი – Law;ვალდებული – Obliged; რეგისტრირებული – Registered; ინტერესები – Interests.

The perception of these terms should be consistent regarding lexical, stylistic, pragmatic, and functional aspects. Key terms should encompass knowledge about discursive variations, cultural memory, and historical particularities of the conveyed concepts and terms, and this knowledge should be respected. In this regard, we examined several collocations in the National Corpus of the Georgian Language, the Georgian Reference Corpus (GRC), and the subcorpora of political texts.

The study analyzed important terms used in law or draft law, such as "pursuing the interest/ინტერესების გამტარებელი", "foreign power/უცხოური ძალა" and "agent/აგენტი". The general presentation of these terms is as follows.

These data show us that there is a frequency pattern for the words "interests/ინტერესები" and "pursuer/გამტარებელი" in Georgian, reflecting their joint use. What is important here is not the individual meanings of these words, but the fact that

they are most frequently used together. The stable social and political discourse conditions this frequency pattern. Consequently, it becomes the subject of investigation both in linguistic research and in interdisciplinary analysis. Linguistically, it is an obvious trigger – a *stimulus* for a specific social and political discourse. Statistically, this word combination is a significant indicator for the discursive evaluation of the involved entities. In other words, the fact that the term "pursuer" is the most frequent modifier of "interests" reflects the collocative nature of these words, which in Georgian highlights their meaning- and communication-related functions.

The research results are presented as follows: The National Corpus of the Georgian Language, which comprises 216,248,711 annotated word forms, shows the following collocations for the word 'pursuer' that is of interest to us (see Figure 1). As we have seen, the collocation 'pursuing the interests' is not only ranked first in the frequency list but also significantly surpasses other collocations.

The second image presents the frequency pattern of the same collocation based on data from the political corpus of 1918–21. It shows that back then, the word 'interest' was not associated with the meanings of 'pursuer'. The word 'interest' in the plural form was not actualised in this discourse. The collocation frequency pattern shows the following: in the first place is 'family-class interest', followed by several others, including 'the interest of the Dashnaks' and 'the interest of Russia'. When we examine the figures, we see that the collocations in this discourse are almost equally distributed. It is important to note that, 100 years later, 'family-class interest' and other social clusters have lost their relevance, yet 'Russia' remains in the same collocation, and new collocations have also been formed. The linguistic corpus of political texts, which also includes the political discourses of the years 1918-1921, categorises the collocations related to 'interests' as follows: (Figure 1).

As previously mentioned, the collocation of the word 'interest' with 'Russia' reappears after a hundred years and remains the most frequently occurring modifier. This is made clear in the following N-gram analysis (Figure 2).

As we have seen, contemporary discourse has a significant difference between the collocation 'Russia' and 'Russian' in the trigram combination with 'pursuing the interests'. This creates the basis for a negative, rejecting attitude towards this collocation. There is a risk that any other member of this collocational pair will be equated with Russia, that is, with a powerful, unjust, and conquering force.

The Expression "უცხოური ძალა/ foreign power" was also analyzed**.** A simple collocation search for this expression in the Georgian National Corpus (GNC) text database also reveals a pronounced negative associative potential. 'Foreign power/Principal' in contextual realisations is either synonymous with terms of negative meaning (fifth column, occupier, Russian border, enemy [...]) or refers to equally negative events associated with these terms. Moreover, this negative context is used not only to describe events from recent or modern history but is also generally linked to hostile, conquering, and malevolent forces:

- A foreign power emerges [...] which is ruinous for the nation;
- The foreign power [...] must leave Georgia;
- No foreign power can return us without law;
- Processes develop only according to the conflict order.

However:

- When the situation is stagnant, a foreign power takes over the processes;
- Georgi Saakadze could not restore the Georgian kingdom by relying on the Persians, for there stood a foreign power – disheartened and paralysed, he did not serve in the Georgian cause but, on the contrary, served his own interests;
- The Georgians are a fragmented nation;
- The actual occupier is not some foreign power or an infiltrated, treacherous 'fifth column', but the Georgian national movement;
- The NATO summit is held in Tbilisi, and it is clear that the NATO door is almost open to us, and thus the foreign power is lying in wait – the Russian line is clearly visible.

As we have seen, 'foreign power', one of the dominant collocations in the law, is strongly negative in connotation.

The Term "agent/აგენტი"– The word 'pursuer' is one of the alternatives for the key term 'agent', which was originally used in the legal text (Parliament of Georgia, 2023). With a word embedding tool, we analysed the associative field of this term: the application used for this analysis is based on 1.5 billion Georgian word forms (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Associative field of the term "agent"

აგენტი – Agent; დაზვერვა – Intelligence; აგენტურა – Spy network; სპეცსამსახური – Special Service; ინფორმატორი – Informer; აგენტობა – Agency; შემოგზავნილი – "Moled"; კაგები – KGB; კაგებეშნიკი – Representative of KGB; ჯაშუში – Spy.

The term "agent", presented as a "harmless" label by the initiators and supporters of the law , is surrounded by associations that carry clearly negative connotations:

- Agency (FSB)
- Intelligence service
- Informant
- Infiltrated
- KGB agent
- Spy
- KGB
- Agency work
- Informant
- Special service

Their associative 'strength', or the frequency of collocations, is graphically represented in the image: the length of the vectors indicates the semantic proximity or distance, while the size of the circles reflects the quantitative frequency and distribution.

It is technically possible to 'embed' a research term into a word embedding tool with a specific semantic component. As shown in the previous image, one of the semantic components of the term 'agent' is 'intelligence service'. When we embed the term 'agent' with this semantic component into the database, criminal lexemes appear in the associative links, clustered in the left sector with terms such as 'mafioso', 'Russian', and 'Scammer' (Figure 5). Similarly, the analysis of the term 'foreign' using the word embedding tool reveals a diverse associative chain. Notably, the semantic extension of 'foreign' includes terms such as 'non-Georgian' and 'infiltration', which are also potential danger-describing terms (particularly 'non-Georgian') (Figures 6 & 7).

Figure 5 Associative links of the term "agent" when embedded with the semantic component
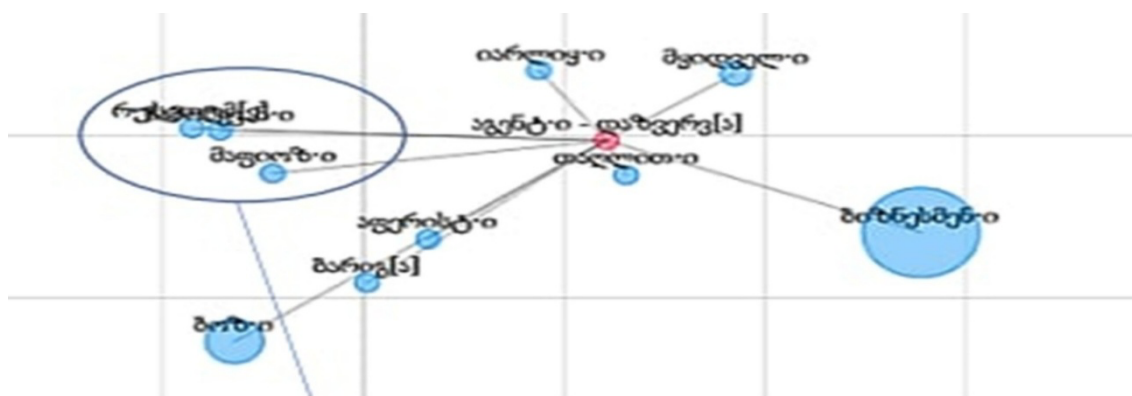
აგენტი – Agent; დაზვერვა – Intelligence; რუსეთი – Russia; მაფიოზი – Mobster; თაღლითი – Scammer; აფერისტი – Swindler; ბარიგა – Peddler; ბოზი – Bitch; ბიზნესმენი – Businessman.

Figure 6 Associative Chain of the Term "foreign"

უცხოური – Foreign; შემოდინება – Inflow; ქართულენოვანი – Georgian speaking; არაქართული – Non-Georgian; საზღვარგარეთული – Overseas; იმპორტული – Imported; უცხოეთი – Foreign country; უცხოელი – Foreigner; ამერიკული – American; ინგლისურენოვანი – English speaking; იაპონური – Japanese; ბრიტანული – British; ესპანური – Spanish; შვედური – Swedish; ჰოლანდიური – Holand; ნიდერლანდიური – Dutch; იტალიური – Italian; ფრანგული – French; გერმანული – German; ჰოლანდიური – Dutch; რუსულენოვანი – Russian speaking; პოლონური – Polish; თურქული – Turkish; უკრაინული – Ukrainian.

Figure 7 Associative Chain of the Term "Influence"

ზეგავლენა – Influence; კონცენტრაცი(ა) – Concentration; ზემოქმედებ(ა) – Pressure; ფოკუსირებ(ა) – Focusing; კონცენტრირებ(ა) – Concentrating; დემონტრირებ(ა) – Demonstrating; დემონიზებ(ა) – Demonizing; დემორალიზებ(ა) – Demoralizing; ფრაგმენტირებ(ა) – Fragmenting; კონსტატირებ(ა) – Stating / Asserting; სტიგმატიზაცი(ა) – Stigmatization; უკუგავლენ(ა) – Backlash; თემატიზაცი(ა) – Thematization; ლუსტრირებ(ა) – Lustration; სიმბოლიზებ(ა) – Symbolizing; რომანტიზებ(ა) – Romanticizing; თვითიდენტიფიცირებ(ა) – Self-identification; მანიპულირებ(ა) – Manipulating; ფურორი – Furor; თვითლუსტრაცი(ა) – Self-lustration; პროვოცირებ(ა) – Provoking; პერეფრაზირებ(ა) – Paraphrasing; პერსონიფიცირებ(ა) – Personifying; სიმულირებ(ა) – Simulating.

As shown in the image, one of the significant terms in the current legal text is 'influence', which is associated with the term 'pressure'. This, in turn, provides contextual links to violence, aggressive interventions, and coercion.

The term "გამჭვირვალობა/gamč.virvalova" is employed almost exclusively in positive, institutional contexts in Georgian discourse. A thorough investigation into the utilization of the Georgian embedding tool reveals its customary application in conjunction with terms such as "პასუხისმგებლობა/responsibility". The following terms are of particular interest in this context: "ანგარიშვალდებულება/accountability", "დემოკრატია/democracy", "გამოსავალი//solution" and "კორუფცია/corruption". These semantic associations suggest that transparency is comprehended not solely as a technical term, but mainly as a response to a social or institutional deficit.

Figure 8 Associative Chain of the Term "transparency"
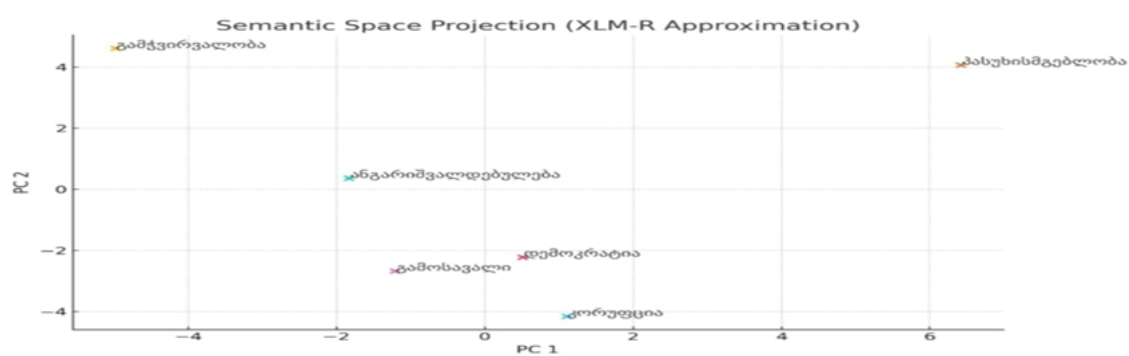
გამჭვირვალობა – Transparency; პასუხისმგებლობა – Responsibility; ანგარიშვალდებულება – Accountability; დემოკრატია – Democracy; გამოსავალი – Solution; კორუფცია – Corruption.

In this usage, "გამჭვირვალობა /gamč.virvalova" functions as a healing, restorative category, countering widespread opacity as a problem. The term's semantic environment thus suggests that 'transparency' is used in Georgian political discourse primarily in the context of resolving and mitigating institutional deficits (such as corruption or lack of accountability). In this sense, "გამჭვირვალობა /gamč.virvalova" is regarded as a concept of order that is associated with the establishment of legitimacy and the re-establishment of political trust.

4.3. Discourse Analysis

Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) provides a robust framework for analyzing how discourse constructs social phenomena and consolidates power. This approach has been applied to the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, focusing on the nomination and attribution of terms within the law, and their broader discursive implications.

4.3.1. Nomination

Discourse: NGOs and Media Organizations as Agents and Representatives of Foreign Countries

From a Nomination perspective, the inclusion of specific terms in laws and bills must be understood within both historical and contemporary contexts. As highlighted in the terminological analysis, the phrase "organization carrying out the interests of a foreign power" and its components: 'foreign power', 'interests', and 'pursuer' – each carry negative connotations, both within the legal text and in the wider discourse. The term itself – "organization pursuing the interests of a foreign power" – is presented in an inherently negative light. Beyond this connotation, it is crucial to examine the context in which the term emerged and the connection it has to its predecessor, the term "agent". In the 2023 draft of the law, the term "agent" was initially introduced, and government representatives made it clear that "agent" referred to a "conveyor of interests" (Irakli Kobakhidze, a leading member of the ruling party and the current Prime Minister of Georgia). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in the current, approved version of the law, the concept of an entity "carrying the interests of a foreign power" is synonymous with the term "agent", as confirmed by the discourse surrounding the legislative process.

The historical context and societal perception of the word "agent" in Georgia are also significant. During the 1930s, in the early Soviet Union, Soviet prosecutor Andrei Vyshinsky frequently used the term "foreign agent" to describe individuals accused of espionage and subversion during the notorious show trials – propaganda events aimed at eliminating perceived enemies of the state. Those trials, which often targeted former Bolsheviks, military leaders, and intellectuals, accused them of conspiring with foreign powers to overthrow the Soviet regime (Conquest, 1991). The term resurfaced during World War II, used against agents of Germany and Japan (Conquest, 1991). After the war, the Soviet Union continued labeling dissenters as "foreign agents" to suppress opposition and exert control over the population. For instance, Andrei Sakharov was labeled a "foreign agent" due to his connections with Western organizations and his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975 (Rubenstein, 1980), while Alexander Solzhenitsyn faced similar accusations for his interactions with Western publishers and intellectuals. In Georgia, prominent intellectuals like Mikheil Javakhishvili, Sandro Akhmeteli, and Titsian Tabidze were branded as foreign agents and spies, and the term persisted into the 1990s, even in independent Georgia, to label those perceived as enemies of the state.

Given this historical backdrop, the term "agent" or equivalent phrases in Georgian society carry an accusatory connotation, often implying collaboration with hostile foreign forces. This connotation has been reinforced by the Georgian government's frequent labeling of NGOs and media organizations as "agents". As an example: "the initiation of laws on LGBT propaganda and 'NGOs' served a dual purpose: on the one hand, legislative regulation of these issues was unavoidable, and on the other, the premature

expenditure of energy would completely deplete the power of an already weakened agency" (Bidzina Ivanishvili, speech on April 29, 2024).

Discourse: Organizations Registered under the Foreign Influence Transparency Act as Hostile, Extremist, and Radical Groups

In the discourse surrounding the Foreign Influence Transparency Act, the language used to describe its target groups – NGOs and media organizations receiving more than 20% of their funding from foreign sources – often stigmatizes these organizations. This stigmatization occurs not through the legal language of the act itself, but in the public and political discussions surrounding its adoption. The choice of nouns, adjectives, and verbs frequently paints these groups in a negative light. For instance, the non-governmental sector is often labeled with terms such as "radicals", "fake NGOs", "rich NGOs" (where "rich" carries a negative connotation, suggesting that foreign powers are spending significant funds against the country), "extremist organizations", "liberal-fascists", "fifth column", "privileged", "ideologized organizations", "ultraliberal groups", "agents" "stateless", and "a spy agent is a slave". Furthermore, the financing of these organizations is framed in terms such as "foreign money", "dirty money", and "black money".

Politicians have contributed to this discourse by making statements that reinforce these labels. For example, Shalva Papuashvili, Chairman of the Parliament, stated, "For the last two years, I have been warning European and American diplomats and bureaucrats that the financing of radicals from the EU budget, using fake 'NGO' schemes, harms our country" (Papuashvili, 2024). Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze similarly remarked, "This liberal fascism is purposefully and coordinately financed from foreign sources, by donor organizations, which is a crime against Georgian society". Additionally, MP Sozar Subari emphasized the foreign influence, declaring, "I would like to say a few words about those rich 'NGOs', who, in this case, represent real foreign agents in Georgia" (14.05.2024). Kakha Kaladze, General Secretary of the ruling political party, further escalated the rhetoric, stating, "Everything is very simple. First, we have traitors, agents, an agency in the country, in the full meaning of this word, which is directly controlled by foreign forces [...] we remember the statements made by the non-governmental sector, we would rather hear the Prime Minister's statement than bombs falling in the country. Imagine what type and worldview of people we are dealing with!" (Kaladze, 2024).

4.3.2. Predication

Discourse: Organizations Pursuing the Interests of a Foreign Power Represent an External Threat and Foreign Group

Predication within discourse analysis allows us to anticipate the attributes assigned to specific groups in relation to laws or texts, considering historical, social, and psychological contexts. In the case of the Foreign Influence Transparency Act, such analysis reveals how non-governmental and media organizations are portrayed as agents of foreign powers, invoking strong prejudicial connotations. Prejudgment plays a critical role in shaping societal perceptions, particularly when it concerns foreign entities or their representatives. Psychological theories, such as social identity theory (SIT), cognitive dissonance, and intergroup bias, provide a framework for understanding this process. Social identity theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), suggests that individuals form their identity through group membership – national, ethnic, or ideological – and that this categorization leads to favorable bias toward one's in-group while fostering prejudice against the out-group. When NGOs and media organizations are categorized as entities serving foreign interests, this naming creates a distinct group that is perceived as external, thereby fostering negative bias, discrimination, and mistrust. Abrams and Hogg (1990) further argue that maintaining a positive group identity often necessitates negative evaluations of out-groups to enhance self-esteem, explaining why information perceived as coming from foreign powers is often viewed with heightened suspicion. Consequently, the legal language and societal discourse surrounding such organizations reinforce distrust, effectively positioning them as threats to national interests.

4.3.3. Perspectivization: Representation of Visions and Perspectives

The Foreign Influence Transparency Act introduces a division between non-governmental and media organizations, categorizing them into two groups: those serving foreign interests and those not. This categorization establishes distinct internal and external groups, shaping perspectives on how these organizations are viewed and treated. Organizations that receive more than 20% of their funding from foreign sources are labeled as "Organizations Pursuing the Interests of Foreign Power", while those without such funding maintain their ordinary status as non-commercial legal entities. This legal distinction creates a vision of "foreign influenced" organizations versus "national" organizations, suggesting that the former require control and oversight.

This separation highlights a key perspective in discourse: organizations funded by foreign entities are perceived as potentially serving external powers, which justifies state intervention. The theoretical framework of social psychology, particularly in-group and out-group dynamics, is relevant here. In-group organizations (those without foreign funding) are implicitly portrayed as representing national values, while out-group organizations (foreign-funded) are seen as suspect, requiring supervision. This creates a clear divide in how the state – and by extension, the public – views and engages with these entities. The legal framework, through its linguistic construction, amplifies

these perspectives, fostering a narrative that foreign-funded organizations represent an external threat.

Discourse: "Us" and "Them"

This categorization promotes intergroup bias, a well-established concept in social psychology. As Brewer (1999) notes, individuals are more likely to trust members of their own group and view external groups with suspicion. This bias extends to the perception of information, where sources from within the in-group (non-foreign funded) are considered more reliable. In the context of the Foreign Influence Transparency Act, this intergroup bias manifests in societal judgments about foreign-funded organizations, leading to discrimination, negative bias, and prejudgment.

The rhetoric of political figures reinforces this division. For example, Shalva Papuashvili, Speaker of the Parliament, suggests that some foreign-funded organizations are loyal to their sponsors, not to Georgia. This framing casts foreign-funded organizations as out-group entities that cannot be trusted, while organizations without foreign funding are seen as carrying national values and interests. Lado Mgaloblishvili's statement further reinforces this, suggesting that only organizations without foreign funding are genuinely concerned with solving national issues. This discourse fosters public distrust toward foreign-funded organizations, framing them as potential threats to national sovereignty. By portraying these organizations as external entities, the law and accompanying rhetoric create a framework where increased scrutiny and control over them seem justified. This marginalization impacts public support, diminishing the legitimacy of foreign-funded non-profits and media organizations and reinforcing nationalist ideologies within society.

Discourse: The Government Protects the State from Organizations Channelling the Interests of a Foreign Power

In the context of perspectivization, the Foreign Influence Transparency Act not only categorizes non-governmental and media organizations but also positions the government as the protector of the nation against foreign influence. The government assumes the role of safeguarding national interests, portraying itself as a force defending the state from external threats posed by organizations funded by foreign powers/principals. This self-representation reinforces the government's authority and justifies its actions in regulating, overseeing, and scrutinizing foreign-funded organizations.

> Our struggle for our homeland, families, children, parents, faith, identity, and culture continues today. It is here that we must confront the destructive actions and ideologies of certain groups. Consider these individuals – what they do, what they preach, what they demand, and whom they represent. These representatives of certain non-governmental organizations have betrayed their principles. They fear the passage of this law because it will expose the financial transactions and the substantial sums they have accepted for various actions, bringing this information to the attention of the public. (Mikheil Kavelashvili, Member of Parliament, April 16, 2024, Imedi News).

The government's claim of defending national interests against the infiltration of foreign influence is a strong component of this discourse. The law, through its language, underscores the distinction between foreign and local organizations, presenting the former as potentially harmful or disloyal. This differentiation legitimizes the government's regulatory measures, which are framed as essential for preserving the sovereignty and integrity of the nation. The discourse suggests that foreign-funded organizations may compromise the country's autonomy, and thus, government intervention is necessary to prevent any harm they might cause.

Historically, foreign influence has often been viewed with suspicion in Georgia, and this historical memory is embedded in the current discourse. Foreign powers have long been perceived as threats to Georgian sovereignty, whether through political, social, or economic means. This historical context is echoed in the language of the law, where foreign influence is portrayed as something to be guarded against, continuing a legacy of marginalization of foreign actors in Georgian political and social discourse.

4.3.4. Argumentation

During the argumentation in the process of adopting the law, the foreign forces against which the mentioned law is adopted are clearly identified. These foreign powers do not include Russia, because, according to the ruling power, financial transactions are not carried out from Russia to Georgia, and therefore the Russian state or related organizations cannot fall under the scope of regulation of this law. The list of declared foreign powers/principals is not extensive: (1) Global War Party; (2) the US government; (3) The European Union and individual countries within the European Union. This political rhetoric is reinforced by the data on the registration of organizations in the State Registry of Foreign Influence, established under the Foreign Influence Transparency Law. According to the Civil Registry of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia (2025), over 90% of the registered organizations receive funding from Western countries. Only one organization reports receiving funding from Russia, and even this funding is designated for educational activities conducted in Lithuania, not in Georgia.

Discourse: "Global War Party", the United States of America, and the European Union as Foreign Forces Acting Against the Interests of Georgia

Arguments and facts are not presented in the discussion about the actions of these foreign forces; however, without evidence and facts, these forces are named as foreign forces against which the law is directed and from whose hostile actions this law will protect the state. In addition to the unidentified "Global War Party" by the leader of the ruling party, the prime minister, the speaker of the parliament, or other politicians, specific states, their governments, or organizations operating in those states were directly named as foreign hostile forces in the argumentation for the adoption of the law. This

list of hostile foreign power states and organizations included the US and EU countries, thereby creating a specific discourse about the US and the EU as a hostile force fighting against Georgia's statehood in the context of the consideration and adoption of this law.

> The Global War Party forced the European Parliament to vote for a completely un-European resolution. All this had two goals: on the one hand, they once again tried to rudely interfere in the affairs of Georgia, and on the other hand, they showed everyone once again that the European Parliament has become one of their tools, which they will use at any time. (Bidzina Ivanishvili speech at the Meeting of Supporter of the Law, on April 29, 2024).

> Despite the complete lack of transparency in NGO financing, last year, concrete instances of extremism funding in Georgia came to light, aimed at supporting revolutionary processes. Specifically, over the past year, we have shared information with the public regarding the financial support provided to organizations such as Droa, the Franklin Club, and Canvas trainings, as well as other associations and events funded by foreign entities. These activities, which claim to combat radicalism, have, paradoxically, fueled polarization within Georgia. The financing of Droa and similar cases reflects the stark disregard of certain foreign powers for the Constitution, legislation, and state sovereignty of Georgia. While more than 90% of funding during this period came from American and European foundations, including the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), efforts to ensure the transparency of these funds have yielded no significant progress. (Mamuka Mdinaradze, April 3, 2024).

Discourse: Foreign Power Interest Organizations (NGOs) as a Hostile Power Fighting Against State Interests

In the process of reviewing the draft law or adopting the law, the rhetoric of the honorary chairman of the ruling party, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Parliament, the member of Parliament from the Parliamentary Majority, and the party leaders emphasized that the NGOs are a fighting force against the Georgian state, which are ruled from abroad against the interests of the Georgian state. The entire ruling political spectrum was involved in the creation of this discourse. Their public speeches and the messages they cultivated for the Georgian society highlight the attempt to create this discourse. Below we offer a part of excerpt from the opinions expressed by the politicians of the ruling political party, which sheds light on the desire to create the said discourse.

> Society often asks: why are they still fighting against the transparency of 'NGOs' with such ostentatiousness from abroad? Representatives of our team answer this question in the right direction, although they still avoid telling the complete truth. The complete truth is that the unclear financing of 'NGOs' is the main tool with which you can appoint the Georgian government from the outside. The goal is for Georgia to be governed not by the government elected by the Georgian people, but by 'bats' appointed from the outside – the modern-day Sergo Orjonikidze and Gigla Berbichashvili. Not allowing this is our obligation towardthe Georgian figures who sacrificed themselves for the idea of Georgia's freedom. (Bidzina Ivanishvili's speech at the Meeting of Supporter of the Law, on April 29, 2024).

Discourse: A Foreign Power and Organizations Serving the Interests of a Foreign Power are Fighting the Orthodox Church

The non-governmental organization as a fighting force against Orthodoxy and the Church is another discourse that the government tried to spread in the context of this law. The law was presented to protect the Church from "non-governmental" entities that are alleged to be fighting against Orthodoxy. In other words, the argumentation for adopting this law includes both the struggle of non-governmental organizations against the church and the state's role in protecting Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church from hostile non-governmental organizations. This discourse was actively propagated by the Prime Minister and other politicians:

> Organizations that openly attack the Orthodox Church, directly engage in propaganda against the Orthodox Church, engage in drug propaganda, are involved in a thousand vices, are directly involved in inciting radicalism. (Irakli Kobakhidze, Prime Minister of Georgia, May 22, 2024, 1 TV);

> NGOs are actively trying to attack the Orthodox Church and damage its reputation [...] when Georgian society sees that an NGO funded by a specific donor has been attacking the Orthodox Church for years, what should the public think about donors? (Irakli Kobakhidze, Prime Minister, April 17, 2024, Tabula).

4.3.5. Mitigation or Intensification

Mitigation or intensification is another strategy of creating discourses, which refers to the extent to which the texts are oriented towards presenting the characteristics of a group in an intensified way – positively or negatively – or, conversely, to soften them. From this point of view, in the text of the law on the transparency of foreign influence and its explanatory note, as well as in the process of debating the draft law, trends of both intensification and mitigation towards non-governmental and media organizations with more than 20% foreign funding can be observed.

Discourse of Intensification: Georgian Non-Governmental and Media Sectors as Pursuers of Foreign Interests

The law on foreign influence intensifies the perception that foreign-funded non-governmental and media organizations are akin to hostile foreign agents and the threat for state security. This is evidenced by comparisons to similar laws in the USA, Australia, and Israel. The Explanatory Card of the Law highlights that analogous legislation exists in the USA (FARA), Australia (FITSA), and Israel, targeting foreign influence and aligning Georgia's law with these international precedents to amplify perceived threats (Explanatory Card, p. 5).

In the United States, the government is responsible for ensuring national security, including safeguarding against foreign influence. Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) was introduced in the 1930s during a period of heightened global political tension. In 1935, the House of Representatives convened a special committee to investigate Nazi and other propaganda efforts within the United States. This reflected Congress's recognition of the need for oversight to prevent foreign powers from influencing the

U.S. government, particularly during a time of political and economic instability (Brown, 2017). FARA was adopted in 1938 as an anti-Nazi act, the purpose was brought prosecutions under against money laundering, fraud, sanctions evasion, illegal campaign contributions, bribery, terrorism, and hostile foreign powers (Brown, 2017). Australia's Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act (FITSA), passed in 2018, was modelled after the U.S. FARA framework. It was introduced alongside two other laws aimed at enhancing security through transparency mechanisms, with the primary goal of addressing concerns over Chinese influence, expansion, and espionage (Draffen & Ai Fui, 2020). Similarly, Israel's 2016 "NGO Law" emphasized transparency as a security tool. This law emerged within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and sought to regulate the activities of human rights NGOs whose work, at times, appeared to conflict with the interests of the Israeli state. All three of these acts were considered in the context of security, where transparency was viewed to ensure security, particularly in the fight against specific hostile states or groups.

These laws are different from Georgian one not only in its purpose as well as scope and definitions of foreign agents. Georgia's law appears to lack a clear national security justification tied to specific threats and casts a much wider net, framing all foreign-funded NGOs and media as potential agents of hostile influence, regardless of activity or intent. In contrast "FARA excludes from regulation as an agent of a foreign principal "any news or press service or association organized" under domestic laws or any publication that is distributed for "bona fide news or journalistic activities (Brown, 2017: 8) as well as individual or organizations " engaged in private and nonpolitical activities, including commerce, charitable solicitations, and religious, scholastic or scientific pursuit " (Brown, 2017: 9) .This divergence in both intent and practical consequence underscores that, despite surface-level similarities in naming or structure, the Georgian law represents a distinct legal and political instrument, aimed more at delegitimizing dissent than enhancing security through transparency. The analogies presented in the Explanatory Note of the Draft Law concerning the aforementioned states appear to be an attempt to intensify the discourse surrounding national security threats in Georgia, allegedly stemming from the activities of NGO and media organizations funded by foreign sources.

The contexts like Georgian reality are not mentioned in the Explanatory Note. Russia and Hungary can be good examples of the Georgian context due to their Soviet and/or Socialist heritage and current political visions. In Russia, the *Foreign Agents Law*, enacted in 2012, mandated that NGOs receiving foreign funding and participating in broadly defined "political activities" register as foreign agents (Alexander, 2018). This law imposes rigorous reporting obligations and public labeling, often with negative implications, effectively stigmatizing NGOs that advocate human rights and democracy (Krupskiy, 2023). It has been widely criticized for curtailing civil society and silencing opposition voices, contributing to an increasingly restrictive environment for civic engagement in Russia (Alexander, 2018). Similarly, Hungary introduced a transparency law in June 2016

(also called as LEX NGO) requiring NGOs receiving foreign funding exceeding €27,000 annually to declare themselves as "civic organizations funded from abroad" and put this label in all publications produced by them (Timmer & Docka-Filipek, 2018). While framed as a transparency measure, this law disproportionately targeted NGOs addressing government accountability and minority rights, branding them as foreign-influenced and diminishing their public credibility (Polgári & Nagy, 2021). In 2020, the European Court of Justice declared the law incompatible with EU legal principles, citing violations of the freedom of association and privacy (European Commission, 2020). As Draffen and Ai Fui (2020) highlight, several states have adopted foreign agent registration legislation modeled after U.S. laws. The ultimate effect of these laws has been to stigmatize NGOs by labeling them as "foreign agents", thereby complicating their operations under the weight of this pejorative designation.

Georgian law was also adopted against civil society organizations getting funding mostly from USA, EU countries, EU agencies, international organizations or Western countries. His intent is evident not only in the rhetoric used by politicians during the drafting and adoption of the Georgian Law on the Transparency of Foreign Influence, but also in the measures taken following its enactment. After the law came into force, the Civil Registry of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia registered 385 organizations (383 non-commercial legal entities and 2 limited liability companies) as recipients of foreign funding. The majority of these organizations – over 90% – are funded by entities from the United States, EU member states, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, or by international governmental organizations such as the EU, UN agencies, and the Council of Europe. A comparatively smaller proportion of organizations receive funding from countries such as Turkey, Azerbaijan, Israel, and Kazakhstan. Only one organization was registered as being funded exclusively by Russia, and two religious organizations were listed as receiving funding from multiple countries, including Russia (Civil Registry of Ministry of Justice of Georgia, 2025).

Mitigation Discourse: Foreign Interest Can Be Good, and NGOs and Media Organizations Can Serve a Good Interests

The discursive strategy of mitigation was clear during the discussion of the draft law. During the second reading of the draft law, at the committee meeting, the leader of the majority who presented the draft law, Mamuka Mdinaradze, tried his best to show that a foreign power and an organization carrying out the interests of a foreign power do not necessarily imply negative activities, as there are also positive aspects of foreign interests:

> How can we imagine the interests of a foreign power in a negative context? For example, when a certain amount of money comes from European funds, from the European Union, and it is used for a good, in educational institutions, farmers, and many other areas, and coincides with Georgian interests, this is only a positive and proud interest of Europe and European funds, even without exaggeration, in Georgia. If I am the representative of the power that implements such good projects for Georgia, I will say very proudly and boldly that I am the pursuer of the interests of the European power in Georgia. Can this be presented negatively? (Mamuka Mdinaradze, April 24, 2024).

The Prime Minister's speech about the activities of non-governmental organizations continues the same rhetoric and narrative:

> There are a number of non-governmental organizations that deal with environmental issues, agriculture, etc. However, there are several non-governmental organizations that are involved in questionable activities, among them there were non-governmental organizations that directly, openly demanded the resignation of the government, were involved in political activities, etc. Differentiation is necessary. Where important projects are supported, this is very good, but where policy funding is indirectly done, it is bad. The rest of the details remain to be seen. (Irakli Kobakhidze, March 19, 2024)

Intensification with Mitigation-Discourse: The Georgian State Should Be Freed from Organizations Pursuing Negative Interests

Mitigate threats such as discrimination, harassment, and activity prevention, as a discursive strategy of mitigation, the state, outside the legislation, establishes two categories: the bearer of the positive and negative interests of the foreign power. With this categorization, the discourse created by the state, and the stigmatization of "negative interest" organizations, there is a risk and serious doubt that the persecution and closure of these organizations will be justified.

> All those who protest against the adoption of the 'Transparency Law' should be prosecuted under the espionage clause, leaving them unpunished will have a heavy impact on the country's sovereignty and stability,"[...] the law exposes not only the agents operating on the ground, the same spies, but directly exposes their funders (Guram Macharashvili, executive secretary of political party People's Power, May 31, 2024).

In the historical context, there is a negative experience of marginalizing certain groups and punishing them as agents of foreign countries acting against the state. It was on this basis that in the 1930s, famous Georgian public figures were branded as foreign agents and spies, among them were representatives of the Georgian creative intelligentsia: Mikheil Javakhishvili, Sandro Akhmeteli, Titsian Tabidze, and others. Accordingly, with a mitigating intensification, the discourse is presented that some of the non-governmental and media organizations serving the interests of a foreign power serve the enemy state, in contrast to the organizations serving good interests. The Georgian state should be freed from the organizations carrying "bad" interests. This approach takes on a more dangerous form in the context of the existence of an exact analogue of the au-

thoritarian historical experience. To better understand and analyze the historical context and current experience, we offer excerpts from the publication *Mnatobi* of that time: "Agents of bloody fascism, traitors and spies of the socialist fatherland [...] mercenary agents of fascism [...]"; "A nest of traitors and traitors, poisonous snakes" (Mnatobi, 1937: 7–41).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth examination of the lexical, corpora, and discursive elements of the Law of Georgia on Transparency of Foreign Influence. A study of the selected terms and findings confirms that the key concepts and terms used in the law carry distinctly negative connotations. These terms can only take on positive or neutral meanings when paired with additional modifiers or used in a specifically crafted context (e.g., "positive influence" or "national interests"). Otherwise, when used independently, they tend to evoke a clearly negative, and in some cases, harsh or severe undertones. The term "foreign" has evolved from "alien" to a more neutral "foreign", yet its connotation shifts depending on context, carrying either positive or negative implications. The term "power", with its polysemous nature, underscores both physical and social dimensions but often leans towards a negative perception when associated with coercive force. "Influence" similarly carries a negative connotation in legal contexts, suggesting potential subjugation or threat. The term "conduit" or "implementer" amplifies this by implying complicity with foreign directives, reinforcing negative perceptions. "Interest", while polysemous, in this legal context denotes ambitions threatening national interests, further casting foreign entities in a negative light. The phrase "foreign power" and the specific designation of organizations "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" evoke strong negative connotations, portraying such organizations as subordinate tools of external control and harmful to national sovereignty. This terminology, though neutral in other contexts, is strategically employed within the law to accentuate the perceived threat posed by foreign influence, thereby justifying stringent regulatory measures.

The corpus linguistic analysis reveals significant collocational patterns that underscore the law's strategic use of language. The prominence of the term "interests" and its associations with "organization" and "pursuing the interests of foreign power" mirrors findings from lexical semantics and corpus linguistics. Scholars like John Sinclair (1991) have highlighted the importance of collocational patterns in understanding how word meanings are constructed through their associations with other terms. The frequent co-occurrence of "interests" with terms like "foreign" and "power" demonstrates how these lexical choices contribute to the construction of a particular legal and political narrative. Similarly, the work of J.R. Firth (1957) on "context of situation" emphasizes that word meanings are shaped by their contextual usage. The negative connotations of "foreign

power" and "agent" are not isolated but are embedded within a broader socio-political context that frames these terms as inherently problematic. This contextual analysis supports the view that legal language is instrumental in shaping public perceptions and political discourse.

The discourse analysis, informed by Reisigl and Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (2009), provides valuable insights into how the law constructs specific social and political narratives. The use of epithets like "radicals" and "extremists" in relation to foreign-funded organizations reflects a deliberate strategy to stigmatize and discredit these groups. The concept of "othering", as discussed by scholars like Edward Said (1978) in his work on Orientalism, is also relevant here. The law's categorization of non-governmental organizations as "organizations pursuing the interests of a foreign power" reflects a process of othering that positions these entities as outsiders or threats. This rhetorical strategy serves to reinforce a dichotomy between "us" and "them", which is a common technique in political discourse aimed at consolidating group identity and justifying regulatory measures. The strategic use of language in legal texts, as demonstrated in this study, aligns with theoretical insights from scholars like Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough. Foucault's concept of "discursive formations" (Foucault, 1972) suggests that language is not merely a medium for conveying information but a mechanism through which power relations are established and maintained. In the context of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, terms like "foreign power" and "organization pursuing the interests of foreign power" are employed to construct a discourse that frames foreign entities as adversaries. This discursive strategy serves to legitimize the law's regulatory measures by invoking a sense of threat and urgency. Fairclough's work on critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) further supports this interpretation. Fairclough argues that discourse shapes and is shaped by social practices, including legal and political practices. The negative connotations associated with terms like "foreign power" and "organization pursuing the interests of foreign power" delegitimize certain groups. This aligns with Fairclough's view that language in legal texts can reinforce dominant ideologies and power structures.

The research findings reveal a multifaceted and deeply polarized discourse landscape surrounding the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), media organizations, and foreign influence in Georgia. Central to these discourses is the framing of NGOs and media as representatives of foreign powers, often depicted as hostile actors undermining national sovereignty and state interests. This antagonistic narrative intensifies through representations of organizations as extremist and radical, aligning them with external threats to national stability. Furthermore, the state is positioned as a protective force countering these alleged threats, with a particular emphasis on safeguarding the state and the Orthodox Church and other national institutions from perceived foreign incursions. The discourse escalates with explicit references to the "Global War Party" as well as United States, the European Union controlled by "Global War Party" as adversaries of Georgia's sovereignty, portraying them as orchestrating actions against the

state and societal cohesion. This portrayal fosters a divisive narrative, amplifying the perception of civil society and independent media as carriers of harmful foreign interests. Collectively, these discourses underscore a pervasive securitization of civil society, framing it as an arena of ideological confrontation.

The practical significance of this research lies in its ability to shed light on how legal language shapes and influences public perception and political discourse. These findings hold relevance for legal practitioners, policymakers, and activists involved in debates on transparency and foreign influence. This research and the specific article hold practical significance for the ongoing review of the four lawsuits currently pending in the Constitutional Court of Georgia. Furthermore, the findings could contribute to the potential case review by the European Court of Human Rights, offering valuable insights into the law's implications for fundamental rights such as freedom of association and non-discrimination.

Scientifically, this research contributes to the field by presenting a methodological framework for exploring the intersection of language, law, and politics. Through the combined use of lexical analysis, corpus linguistics, and discourse analysis, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how legal language operates within broader socio-political contexts. This interdisciplinary approach deepens our understanding of how legal texts shape public attitudes and political behavior, enriching the broader field of critical discourse studies. Notably, this is the first linguistic analysis of legal acts conducted in Georgia, marking an important step in advancing the field. The analytical tools and methods developed in this study will not only foster the growth of the field in Georgia but also serve as valuable resources for other scholars, particularly in the context of widely discussed legal acts internationally. Future research could build on these findings by exploring the impact of such legal language on public attitudes and political behavior. As previously mentioned, research on the relationship between language and law is underdeveloped in Georgia. Future scientific studies should focus on creating a corpus based on legal literature and introducing the approach of Computer-assisted Legal Linguistics (CAL^2). This would allow for a more systematic analysis of legal texts, enhancing our understanding of how language shapes legal interpretation and its broader social impact.

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