

# ԼԵԶՎԱԲԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

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## **THE GENERAL AND THE SPECIFIC IN POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSES**

*The aim of the current paper is to study the separate as well as the general characteristic features of diplomatic and political discourses. Traditionally the diplomatic and political discourses were studied as two separate disciplines, with the exception of few researchers who observe the two spheres as inseparable units existing side by side and as a rule completing each other. Our analysis has shown that the diplomatic and political discourses are closely connected: they share general characteristics with the key notion of language, still either of them has obtained specific features.*

**Key words:** *diplomatic discourse, political discourse, negotiations, agreement, persuasion, aim, function*

An old catchphrase says that one should use many languages to be properly understood: “One should use Latin speaking to God, Greek and Arabic to the merchants, Italian to the musicians, English to the sailors and engineers, French to his girl-friend, etc.” /Stanko, 2001/. Diplomats and politicians too have their language for communication. The diplomatic and political fields as separate units encompass specific aims, functions, characteristic features. However it should be added that very often these features coincide in the above-mentioned two disciplines as general for both of the scopes.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, diplomacy can be defined as the activity of managing relations between different countries. It is the skill in dealing with people in difficult situations without upsetting or offending them. At the same time politics is defined as the activity involved in getting and using power in public life, and being able to influence decisions that affect a country or society. It has also the notion of matters, concerned with getting or using power within particular group or organization /Hornby, 2009/. Political and diplomatic disciplines are two separate scopes existing side by side, usually playing an important role for each other. They are very often inseparable, as if they accomplish each other. For this reason, the political and international worlds are observed as parts of a single whole. They have their unique and specific functions and aims, as well as those considered general for both. Jeffrey Robertson in his book “Diplomatic Style and Foreign Policy” mentions that throughout the ages the

functions of diplomacy have focused on four key areas with the key notion of language: 1) *Negotiations*, 2) *The protection of nationals abroad*, 3) *Representation* and 4) *Reporting*.

These four aspects are based on four actions:

1. Representing the sending state in the receiving state. Here we deal with “acting for others” or “standing for others”. A diplomat represents the political, economic, strategic and military interests of the sending state.

2. Protecting in the receiving state the interests of the sending state and of its nationals within the limits permitted by international law.

3. Negotiations with the government of the receiving state. Negotiations are the basic means to pursue, prevent, manage, resolve and transform conflicts among states and other parties, including conflicts on how to overcome problems and insure cooperation.

4. Ascertaining by all lawful meaning conditions and development in the receiving state and reporting thereon to the government of the sending state /Robertson, 2016/.

The main function of politics is *persuasion*, the aim of which is to change the attitudes, to change the beliefs, and even to influence the audience’s choices. With the help of persuasion politicians and diplomats can even change the behavior of another party. The study of persuasion traditionally includes three notions suggested by Aristotle:

- *Pathos*, which comes from the Greek word “emotion” and refers to the so called “appeal to emotions”;
- *Logos*, which comes from the Greek word “word” and is the appeal to reasoned argument and deals with the logical thinking, proper choice of words, use of sound argumentation;
- *Ethos*, which is an appeal to the good character of the speaker: their influence, authority, experience, etc.

The ethos of the speaker is transmitted via his self-portrayal, including nonverbal and paraverbal factors. It depends on how the speaker is accepted by the audience, as in case the personality of the author is not respected by the audience, they are not very likely to agree with his statement. Three elements phronesis, areté and eunoria are important for ethos. *Phronesis* is the common sense. It refers to the author’s knowledge about the subject discussed, and his readiness to observe the case from various angles to seem reasonable to the audience. *Areté* is the virtue and generosity. It refers to the speaker’s human qualities. *Eunoria* is the good will. With the help of this the audience makes sure that the author is serious and the

contentment of the audience is important for him /<http://www.europ-ean-rhetoric.com/ethos-pathos-logos-modes-persuasion-aristotle/>.

Before discussing the main features of political and diplomatic discourses as parts of a single whole, we need to give the general description of discourse. Discourse, is the use of language in speech and writing in order to produce meaning, where language is the system of communication in speech and writing used by people of a particular country or area /Hornby, 2009/. In the article “Linguistic Features of Political Discourse” Kenzhekanova offers the following definition for the concept political discourse: “political discourse is a collection of all speech acts, as well as public law, tradition and experience, which is determined and expressed in the form of verbal formations, content, subject and the addressee of which belongs to the sphere of politics”. The same can be said about the diplomatic discourse, with the key notion of diplomacy /Kenzhekanova, 2015/.

The functions and aims that these two disciplines share are mainly those of: *a) integrating in communication, b) conducting negotiation, and c) coming to agreement.*

a) Communication is probably the most fundamental form of diplomatic agency as well as the political discourse /Costas, Kerr, Sharp, 2016/. Communication can be both verbal and non verbal. Nonverbal signals have the advantage of capturing the attention of a wider audience and of allowing greater flexibility and deniability than verbal messages /Cohen, 1987/. Diplomatic body language encompasses a wide variety of behavior including personal gestures among them a handshake which sends signals of friendly interstate relations. At the 1954 Geneva Conference, John Foster Dulles’s refusal to shake hands with Zhou Enlai was read by the Chinese as a signal of American rejection and harmed the US – Chinese relations for years to come /Costas, Kerr, Sharp, 2016/.

b) Negotiation is a process of making discussions, clarifying goals, etc. that leads to compromise.

c) Finally, agreement is usually the result of negotiations.

To show the connection between the concepts politics and diplomacy it should be stated that they both show an interaction between “groups”, where the word “group” is employed in its narrower sense, as it can refer to a small organization as well as to a whole country. It should also be mentioned that diplomacy is usually considered as the subset of politics generally dealing with peace, as in politics we deal with the inner political questions, as well as foreign policy, which is very often based on the inner one. It is the politicians that make native policy, as well as foreign policy. A diplomat (such as the president or minister of foreign affairs) represents the political interests of their own country, regardless of whether those interests will lead to peace or war.

It should also be mentioned that:

1. *These two types of discourse achieve their aims only with the help of language and linguistic tricks.*

Unlike a number of other spheres of activity, political and diplomatic actions primarily deal with language and speech, and in both cases, language is not only a means of reflecting political reality. A much more important role is played by the fact that language serves as a “secret source of power”, which allows its users to have a direct impact on the course of events /Ажеж, 2006/.

2. *These scopes perform a particular language function.*

According to E. I. Sheigal, “For political discourse, the *regulative* function is leading” /Шейгал, 2000/. By saying “*regulative*”, the process of regulating the activities of the addressee and the process of motivating him to important tasks is meant. This same function is characteristic for the public form of the diplomatic discourse /Терентий, 2010/.

3. *Within the framework of the instrumental function, both types of the discourse perform several tasks:*

- They form a certain vision of reality for the partners in communication, i.e. perform the orientation function.
- They deal with the functions of integration and social differentiation manifested in various genres of diplomatic discourse, reflected in the media /Терентий, 2010/.

4. *The specific goals of diplomatic and political discourses also coincide.*

At first sight, the goals of these discourses differ: if the aim of political discourse is the fight for power /Шейгал, 2000/, the function of diplomatic communication deals with protecting the interests of the country and its citizens. However, some sources suggest the idea that “protection of interests” in the international community is often used for the task of establishing control over the partners, trying to take the leading position in the world with the help of various forms of pressure /Терентий, 2010/. It brings diplomatic discourse closer to political communication, understood as transmission of messages, the content of which is reduced to a public discussion of three fundamental issues:

- a) the distribution of public resources,
- b) control over making decisions / the right to make decisions,
- c) application of sanctions (the right to punish or reward) /Denton, Woodward, 1985/.

Both in political discourse and in diplomatic communication all these functions are realized with the help of special markers, either explicitly or implicitly, through the ideological connotations of political terms, and a special selection of vocabulary /Терентий, 2010/.

English as a language used by politicians and diplomats has many characteristic features. The linguistic features mainly those of semantic, stylistic and structural ones usually coincide in the speeches of political and diplomatic disciplines. Language of official documents is a broad discourse, it does not have borders and can be described and studied from different perspectives. It has its

proper style, its proper choice of words, its proper grammatical features. All these features are studied from the linguistic perspective.

One of the characteristic features of the style of diplomatic and political documents is observed in the special way of using clichés, unique terms, expressions and abbreviations, such as *P.C. for Private Counselor*, *HE for His/Her Excellency*, *HMG for Her/His Majesty's Government*, etc. For this reason the speeches can be studied on the semantic level. In political and diplomatic speeches, usually more is communicated than is said, and the ordinary dictionary meaning is not enough for understanding it properly, as semantics according to Merriam Webster online dictionary, is just the study of the meanings of words and phrases in language /<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stylistics/>. A diplomat or a politician should be aware of ambiguities, and the deeper meanings that cannot even be found in ordinary dictionaries and he will need a terminological dictionary to find the meanings of certain words. As an illustration of this it is regarded relevant to bring a statement from Barack Obama's inaugural address, which is a vivid example of a speech containing characteristic features for both political and diplomatic discourses.

The noun *journey* in B. Obama's speech if understood directly would lead to some confusion, as according to Oxford Advanced Dictionary it has the meaning of an act of travelling from one place to another, especially when they are far apart /Hornby, 2009/. B. Obama uses this word in sentences like: "*Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or settling for less.*" /Obama, 2009/

If this sentence was studied on the semantic level, it would mean that president Obama and all the people travelled together, but examining the statement thoroughly, besides the direct dictionary meaning the statement will gain its secondary or figurative essence. So the speeches of this area should be studied on the stylistic level as well, which according to Merriam Webster dictionary is the study of the devices in a language that produce expressive value /<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stylistics/>. In stylistics, there are the so called functional styles, one of which is called the style of official documents. As far as diplomatic documents are official ones, then they can be studied on stylistic level alongside with the language of business documents, the language of legal documents and the language of military documents. The political discourse contains elements from each of the disciplines mentioned. The speeches of this scope, too, can be analyzed on this level. It is assumed that these documents very often are characterized by the absence of any emotions, stylistic devices and expressive means, but there is the opposite view as well, as the speeches of this sphere in oral form (such as inauguration address) are full of metaphors, metonymies, similes, analogies, personifications, etc. For a more comprehensive conclusion the above-mentioned statement was also observed on the stylistic level, where the word *journey* used as a metaphor, gained the meaning of *a struggle in running the government*.

One of the most important characteristic features of diplomatic speech is the structure, which varies from the oral to the written speech. Apart from heading, date, stamp and signature, which serve as the essential parts of the written diplomatic speech design, we can divide the oral and written diplomatic speech into four main parts: a) *the opening address*, b) *the greeting part*, c) *the body or the summoning cooperation section* and d) *the conclusion*.

#### **Opening address**

a) The speech in diplomacy and politics usually opens with direct address to the audience. In such an address the speakers, usually the presidents, use *Absolute* social deixis. They address the audience as a whole as well as respectively. For this can serve the following examples from B. Obama's first and second inaugural addresses:

*"My fellow citizens."* /Obama, 2009/

*"Vice President Biden, Mr. Chief Justice, Members of the United States Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens."* /Obama, 2013/

#### **Greeting part**

In this part, the speech includes greetings, congratulations, thanking, welcoming, etc.

#### **The summoning cooperation**

After the opening salutation part, then greeting part, the presidents pass to the main topic- to 2 phases, where the first phase presents a particular situation justifying the second phase which comes later. In his first speech, during the first phase, B. Obama establishes a common ground for his speech and the audience, speaking about the crises, the things that are interesting for people, as well as speaking about the indicators of the crisis:

*"That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood. Our nation is at war against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened, a consequence of greed and irresponsibility on the part of some, but also our collective failure to make hard choices and prepare the nation for a new age. Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly, our schools fail too many – and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet."* /Obama, 2009/

In the same speech, the second phase covers almost all the rest of the speech, till the conclusion, where the president suggests the ideas about overcoming the difficulties.

### Conclusion

The conclusions of the speeches are important, too, as they are the final parts, and very often easily remembered sections. B. Obama finishes his both speeches with almost the same ending. He addresses to God to bless the people and the nation.

*“Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.”*  
/Obama, 2009/

*“Thank you, God Bless you, and may He forever bless these United States of America.”* /Obama, 2013/

The observations show that we can do no more than note that the political and diplomatic discourses are two very large and separate fields, encompassing some separate and unique characteristic features, however we should admit that these fields are interconnected and in some cases they even fail without the help of the other.

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**Ռ. ԱՌԱՔԵԼՅԱՆ, Ա. ԱՎԵՏՅԱՆ – Դիվանագիտական և քաղաքական դիսկուրսների ընդհանուր և մասնավոր առանձնահատկությունները.** – Սույն աշխատանքի նպատակն է քննության առնել դիվանագիտական և քաղաքական դիսկուրսների թե՛ մասնակի, թե՛ նմանատիպ դրսևորումները: Մինչ օրս քիչ ուսումնասիրություններ են կատարվել, որոնցում քաղաքական և դիվանագիտական ասպարեզները դիտարկվել են որպես ընդհանուր մի ճյուղ՝ օժտված միասնական գործառույթներով և նպատակներով: Հետազոտության արդյունքները պարզ են դարձնում այն հանգամանքը, որ դրանցից յուրաքանչյուրն ունի իր ուրույն գործառույթները, որոնց հիմքում է լեզուն իր առանձնահատկություններով:

**Բանալի բառեր.** դիվանագիտական դիսկուրս, քաղաքական դիսկուրս, բանակցություններ, համաձայնություն, համոզում, նպատակ, գործունեություն

**Р. АРАКЕЛЯН, А. АВЕТЯН – Общие и специфические особенности политического и дипломатического дискурсов.** – Целью статьи является исследование общих и специфических проявлений дипломатического и политического дискурсов. В лингвистике исследования, в которых дипломатическая и политическая сферы изучаются как общие направления, наделенные схожими целями и задачами, крайне немногочисленны. Результаты анализа свидетельствуют о том, что каждый из этих типов дискурса имеет свои особенности, вместе с тем у них много общих функций, которые основаны на различных языковых особенностях.

**Ключевые слова:** дипломатический дискурс, политический дискурс, переговоры, убеждение, компромисс, цель, функция