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STYLISTIC-PRAGMATIC AND TRANSLATION ASPECTS OF METAPHOR, EUPHEMISM, AND RHETORICAL FORMULAS IN DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE

*Zhunisbek L.¹, Daulet F.N.²

^{*1,2} al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Abstract. This article investigates the stylistic and pragmatic devices that shape the communicative effectiveness of diplomatic discourse, focusing on three key strategies: metaphor, euphemism, and rhetorical formulas. It aims to reveal how these linguistic mechanisms construct diplomatic meanings, negotiate political stance, and sustain intercultural communication.

The research views diplomatic discourse in the light of strategic communication wherein linguistic options can be used to persuade, reduce, and build identity. The conventional studies of political language have tended to favor the ideological content at the expense of the stylistic and functional ways in which this content is expressed. The present study will fill such a gap with the investigation of the interaction between rhetorical creativity and practical restraint of diplomatic communication. The results presented show that a metaphor defines the conceptual models of cooperation or confrontation, euphemism mitigates the act of face threatening language, and rhetorical formulas institutionalize a diplomatic position. Empirical base is represented by official diplomatic texts in English and their Chinese translations. Qualitative and quantitative methods are used to discover repetitive metaphorical patterns, euphemism, and formulaic language.

The findings prove that the integrated stylistic-pragmatic framework can be used as a full-scale tool of comprehending diplomatic discourse and is helpful to provide practical information to diplomatic translation and translator training. As part of this research, the authors points out that diplomatic translators must balance political equivalence with cultural resonance and tonal appropriateness, especially when formulaic expressions embody policy stances and euphemisms preserve negotiability.

Keywords: diplomatic discourse, diplomatic translation, stylistic devices, pragmatic strategies, translation equivalence, metaphor, euphemism, rhetorical formulas

Introduction

Diplomatic discourse occupies a unique position at the intersection of language, politics, and culture. It is the linguistic embodiment of foreign policy, a medium through which nations articulate their interests, negotiate differences, and project their identities on the international stage. Contrary to common

communication, the diplomatic language is extremely strategic and institutionally limited: each lexical item and syntactic form can be perceived as implying a political position, nation image, or an intercultural connection. This is why the topic of diplomatic discourse has been discussed in interdisciplinary research combining linguistics, communication studies, political science, and translation since a long time ago.

Over the past three decades, it has become increasingly evident among scholars that diplomacy does not simply depend on propositional content, but rather on the delicate management of language form. Scholarship in the area of political discourse analysis has shown that the rhetorical and pragmatic approaches are essential to the formation and negotiation of a political meaning [1]. Work in cognitive linguistics also suggests that metaphor and conceptual framing play a crucial role in the development of political cognition and persuasion [2]. However, most of these studies focused on the aspects of ideological framing and evaluative position rather than the stylistic texture and practical devices that make the language of diplomacy both convincing and courteous [3]. On the ground, diplomats and spokespersons need to always address two countervailing imperatives: the imperative of political accuracy and the imperative of relational consonance. The discourse of diplomats thus requires them to act in a manner that can be described as the strategic ambiguity, which is an intentional linguistic versatility which enables various interpretations without compromising communicative consistency.

The study takes diplomatic discourse as a very codified type of strategic communication, which is described by the repeated employment of metaphor, euphemism and rhetorical formulas [2]. These mechanisms do not serve as decoration but as tools that enable speakers to construct an occurrence, reduce threat to face, and reinforce common values [5]. Metaphors create conceptual images of cooperation or competition, e.g., partnerships as journeys or international order as structures [3]. Euphemisms mitigate criticism, disguise agency, or minimize conflict, enabling speakers to communicate a lack of accord without open conflict [6]. Fixed expression such as mutual respect, win-win cooperation or constructive dialogue as part of the rhetorical formulas establish a language of diplomacy that indicates stability and consensus even in the absence of complete unanimity [7]. All of them are the stylistic and pragmatic basis of diplomatic communication. In this paper I will examine the interaction between these three linguistic strategies to support both the main goals of diplomacy, including the expression of national positions and the maintenance of international relations [8].

The paper will be based on the body of English-language official texts written in China and the United States since 2019 and 2025, incorporating views of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, politeness theory, and Critical Metaphor Analysis [2][3][5]. Combining qualitative discourse analysis with restricted quantitative analysis, it aims at revealing the patterns, functions and cultural differences of

metaphorical, euphemistic and formulaic language in diplomatic contexts.

The importance of this work is manifold. Theoretically, it contributes to an integrated model that links the styles and pragmatic aspects of diplomatic language both as subjects of study that are frequently kept separate [4]. Practically, the results have practical implications to diplomatic translation where linguistic and cultural differences should be delicately balanced to ensure accuracy and political sensitivity. The observation is consistent with the view of Liu who analyzed the discourse about diplomatic practice in China, where the author mentions the place of the translator in the preservation of ideological resonance, along with the changes in styling conventions to suit the international situation [7]. Furthermore, the paper offers cross-cultural communication training by pointing to the role of linguistic subtlety, including the use of metaphor and euphemism, in promoting mutual understanding and mitigating the probability of conflict escalation. As emphasized by Wang, effective diplomatic mediation may also rely on the capability of translators to recreate the tone, politeness, and metaphorical similarity of the original document without changing the pragmatic content. Finally, the research highlights the fact that diplomacy is an art of not only being able to say something in the way you want it to sound, but in the manner you utter your words, which emphasizes the semiotic and symbolic aspect of diplomatic language. Looking at it in this manner, semiotic approach of Sheygal and cross-linguistic discourse analysis of Sagadiyeva jointly demonstrate the essence of the notion of diplomacy as a practice of communicative action and culture [9][10]. Based on this semiotic knowledge, Daulet (2019) takes the discussion further into the more cultural plane, claiming that language is representative of both material and spiritual culture, and hence acts as a store of a nation's worldview and identity. All languages have different cultural codes that regulate perception, behavior, and communication [15]. In that context, diplomatic translation is not an act of lexical substitution, it is a cross-cultural interpretation of deeply rooted views on the language.

Methods and materials

The paper under consideration will be based on a hybrid qualitative-quantitative paradigm that draws upon the methodological conventions of the stylistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis [4]. The qualitative aspect will attempt to explain the linguistic and communicative roles of chosen stylistic devices in natural diplomatic environments, whereas the quantitative element will offer frequency-driven data supporting the interpretation of overall tendencies [8]. An integral design like this one will provide a high level of analytical depth and empirical reliability, which is crucial when studying the delicate balance between accuracy and politeness that characterizes diplomatic communication [5].

The working of this framework is guided by the three steps of the Critical Metaphor Analysis developed by Charteris-Black [2], namely identification, interpretation, and explanation, which are combined with the pragmatist approach

to politeness theory by Brown and Levinson [5] and the model of euphemism and dysphemism by Allan and Burridge [6]. These mutually supplementary models allow the researcher to take note of the fact that language choices are encoding conceptual metaphors at the same time as they reduce face-threatening actions and recapitulate institutionalised expressions. This is done to take the study out of a rhetorical description into revealing cognitive and social processes behind the diplomatic discourse [4].

Based on explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, texts were compiled as corpora in order to make them replicable [8].

The inclusion criteria were that texts should have been officially issued within the years of 2019-2025, texts should have been produced by the foreign ministries of the four chosen countries, and they should be published in English. Although the corpus contains mostly officially issued English-language documents with a diplomatic context, Chinese renderings are included with selected samples to demonstrate the semantic, stylistic and pragmatic correspondence between them. The exclusion principles were applied to exclude non-official reproductions and remarks that do not relate to international relations or foreign policy.

The complete list of documents that were sampled with their titles, dates, issuing institutions, and URLs can be found in the Appendix A.

The analysis was conducted through three steps, namely, identification, interpretation, and explanation. The identification came after the MIPVU protocol (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) of using metaphors [12] and pragmatic coding of euphemistic and formulaic structures [6][8]. All instances were coded to identify the devices used, pragmatic functions and contextual frames based on the details in the code book of the project. Inter-coder reliability ($\kappa = 0.82$) showed that the analytic categories were applied consistently across coders [8].

Coding Framework and Reliability

Category	Operational Definition	Identification Criteria	Example
Metaphor	Conceptual mapping between abstract and concrete domains [2]	Meaning contrast and following the MIPVU protocol	“Build bridges of cooperation” → COOPERATION IS CONSTRUCTION
Euphemism	Lexical or syntactic mitigation of sensitive acts [5][6]	Agent deletion of negative polarity substitution	/ “Certain partners have not yet fulfilled obligations”
Rhetorical Formula	Recurrent institutional [4]	multi-word expression corpus; ≥ 2 words	Frequency ≥ 5 across “Mutual respect”, “Win-win cooperation”

Coding reliability was established through a double-blind cross-check of 20% of the corpus, resulting in Cohen’s $\kappa = 0.82$, which indicates substantial inter-coder agreement. Each of the coding logs was stored as per the standard practice of archive in order to provide replicability [8]. All the coded data,

category definitions, and samples were entered into a mutual spreadsheet such that other people could verify them independently. Random cross-checking of a second coder validated the consistency in the classification. In order to improve the validity of the results, two procedures were selected. The first one was cross-checking the analysis of a 20 percent randomly selected part of the corpus at another time to see whether it is consistent within the coder [8].

Then, it was also evaluated by the peer method where two linguists who focused on discourse analysis were consulted to provide methodological rigour and uniformity in terminology used [2]. Additionally, feedback is working in the field of metaphor studies as an expert gave autonomous confirmation of the research framework and its conceptual correspondence with Critical Metaphor Analysis [4].

Nevertheless, it is also recognized that the study has a number of methodological shortcomings. The corpus size is well-balanced, but still limited, possibly limiting its extrapolation to larger diplomatic settings [7]. Furthermore, English translation may lose the rhetorical sensitivity of the original language particularly in metaphorical and euphemistic expressions, which are highly sensitive to cultural and linguistic context. Future studies need to build up the datasets to incorporate native-language diplomatic communications and this will enable the more refined analyses of cultural differences in stylistic and pragmatic properties. The comparative multilingual strategy might also enrich the representatives and uncover common or differing rhetorical patterns within the linguistic traditions [9].

Results and discussion

The analysis of twenty-four official diplomatic texts of China, the US, Russia, and Kazakhstan demonstrates a steady use of both metaphor and euphemism and rhetorical formulae as the key aspects of strategic communication. [1][3] Even though such devices may be found in all four corpora, their frequency, roles and stylistic implementation vary depending on the political culture, the communicative rules and the audience expectations. [7] The mean proportion of metaphors represented about 35 percent of all stylistically marked expressions, the proportion of euphemisms, about 30 percent, and the proportion of rhetorical formulas, about 35 percent, indicating that there is an equal distribution among the three categories.[8] Such proportions confirm the statement of the Charteris-Black, who claims that rhetorical and pragmatic tactics can live symbiotically within the persuasive language.[3]

All of these linguistic tools make up what could be called a triadic mode of diplomatic meaning-making: metaphors are used to frame concepts, euphemisms are used to keep interpersonal relationships friendly, and formulas are used to regularize recurring attitudes. The result of their interaction is a discourse marked by a strategic ambiguity, which is an equilibrium between assertiveness and tactfulness, allowing the function of diplomacy even in times of tensions.[5] Such

a balance can be related to the notion of politeness in terms of face management by Brown and Levinson (1987), to the claim that the very concept of the face as a social-psychological phenomenon of Chinese culture is utilitarian in origin and takes shape through interpersonal interaction, as stated by Daulton (2019) [15], and also to the idea of controlled indirection developed by Musolff, all of which emphasize the practical necessity of linguistic flexibility in high stakes political discourse [4].

The comparative quantitative analysis of twenty-four diplomatic texts indicates an equal balance of stylistics and pragmatics that is shown in Table 1 given below. The obtained result is in agreement with the corpus studies indicating that proportional stylistic balance is a sign of stability in diplomacy [3].

Table 1. Distribution of stylistic and pragmatic devices in diplomatic discourse (2019–2025 corpus)

Device Type	Average Frequency (%)	Dominant Function	Example Keywords
Metaphor	35 %	Framing and persuasion	<i>bridge, foundation, journey, storm</i>
Euphemism	30 %	Face management	<i>concern, regrettable, measures, situation</i>
Rhetorical Formulas	35 %	Institutional stance	<i>mutual respect, win-win, constructive dialogue</i>

The three of these devices work together to form what can be called a triad model of diplomatic meaning - metaphor is used to shape conceptual frames, euphemism is used to soften interaction, and formulaic language is used to stabilize institutional voice [2]. They maintain strategic ambiguity together with the linguistic equilibrium which allows diplomacy to be both assertive and polite [5].

Metaphor became the most versatile and ideologically saturated apparatus, which could be used as a cognitive and rhetorical tool to shape the political reality. [3] Conceptual metaphors like journey, architecture, family, battle, and ecology served to organize the linguistic representation of international relations and its moral justification across all corpora [4].

(1) The diplomatic language of China tended to use the image of journey and family frequently (e.g., walking hand in hand, building a community with a shared future), which focuses on collectivism, harmony, and common development [7]. These metaphors correspond to Confucian and socialist cultural frameworks that emphasize the concept of relational equilibrium and ethical accountability, which is consistent with the concept of the nation as a family presented by Lakoff when speaking of Chinese ideological context [2].

(2) The United States, however, chose the idea of competition and rules-based order metaphors (e.g. defending the rules-based order, standing firm), which emphasized the ideology-driven leadership and moral rights to rule [4]. This metaphorical framing is an example of what Charteris-Black has referred to as moral legitimacy in metaphor, where moral reasons are used as a form of persuasion and power [3].

(3) The Russian discourse frequently used the concept of architecture and fortress imagery (e.g., building a multi-polar world, strengthening the foundations of security), depicting its foreign policy to be defensive, sovereign-directed, and stability-seeking[7]. Such metaphorical preference can be related to Musolff's idea of the so-called scenario-based metaphor whereby conceptual structures have encoded a geopolitical self-perception [4].

(4) Kazakhstan diplomacy (which is also less metaphorically dense), tended to support bridge and dialogue metaphors (such as being a bridge between the East and West or developing partner dialogue), which can be taken to indicate its intermediary geopolitical position and devotion to mediation. These metaphors confirm Sagadiyeva's assertion that small- and mid-sized states build their international identity in terms of the language of connectivity and cooperation[9].

When combined, these cross-cultural trends indicate that metaphors in diplomatic speech are not ornamental but rather ideological framing tools which influence how the international relations are imagined, legalized and narrated [2]. The offer cognitive consistency to the international narrative, which crosses between the political, moral and identity spheres of the stylistic-pragmatic system of diplomacy.

Metaphor in diplomatic discourse should be understood not merely as a stylistic feature, but as a culturally grounded cognitive mechanism shaping political meaning. Daulet emphasizes that language functions as a linguo-cultural code - a system of interconnected meanings reflecting a historically conditioned worldview and shared cultural stereotypes. Such codes allow utterances to activate culturally recognizable frames of evaluation and social expectation. In diplomatic communication, metaphorical images, euphemisms, and conventional rhetorical formulas operate within this code to maintain legitimacy, harmony, and face-saving interaction. From a translation perspective, these elements require cultural and pragmatic interpretation rather than simple semantic transfer, since overlooking the underlying code may lead to distortion of diplomatic intent and rhetorical effect. [14]

Metaphor offers cognitive support in comprehending intricate political facts. Within the framework of the four national corpora, a number of repeated metaphor families had been identified that referred to different ideological and cultural directions [7].

Table 2. Cross-cultural examples of conceptual metaphors in diplomatic discourse

Conceptual Domain	Example (Original)	Translation / Gloss	Function
Journey	“We will <i>walk together</i> on the path of shared development.” (China)	“我们将携手走在共同发展的道路上。” (Wǒmen jiāng xiéshǒu zǒu zài gòngtóng fāzhǎn de dàolù shàng.)	Creates image of long-term partnership.
Architecture	“We are <i>building the foundations</i> of a multipolar order.” (Russia)	“我们正在构建多极世界的基础。” (Wǒmen zhèngzài gòujiàn duōjí shìjiè de jīchǔ.)	Frames policy as constructive rather than confrontational.
Family	“Members of the international community should <i>treat each other as equals</i> .” (China)	“国际社会的成员应像家人一样平等相待。” (Guójì shèhuì de chéngyuán yīng xiàng jiārén yīyàng píngděng xiāngdài.)	E m p h a s i z e s harmony and moral reciprocity.
Battle/Defense	“We will <i>stand firm</i> against aggression.” (U.S.)	“我们将坚定应对侵略行为。” (Wǒmen jiāng jiāndìng yīngduì qīnlüè xíngwéi.)	Justifies defensive stance through martial metaphor.
B r i d g e / Dialogue	“Kazakhstan continues to <i>serve as a bridge</i> between East and West.”	“哈萨克斯坦将继续作为东西方之间的桥梁。” (哈 萨 克 斯 坦 将 继 续 担 当 东 西 方 之 间 的 桥 梁 。)	Positions state as mediator and connector.

Chinese translations are given as examples and comparison only; all quantitative data analyses were conducted on English texts.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses prove that the choice of metaphors is highly correlated with the identity of the national narrative [2].

(1) In Chinese and Kazakh diplomatic discourses, journey metaphor and bridge metaphor is prevalent. It reflects collectivist and cooperative ideologies based on relational harmony and common progress[7].

(2) The battle and rules-based order metaphors are privileged by U.S. discourse which promotes moral authority and leadership based on the rhetoric of defense and principle [3][4].

(3) The Russian texts focus on the architectural image and imagery of a fortress, depicting sovereignty and strategic reconstruction as moral values [4].

From a pragmatic perspective, metaphors perform ideological framing functions: they allow diplomats to express positions indirectly while appealing to shared moral and cognitive schemas. This confirms Lakoff and Johnson’s view that metaphors are not ornamental but constitutive of political reasoning [2].

Euphemism has been used as the foremost linguistic way of managing faces and mitigating conflicts in diplomatic language. It plays a critical role in maintaining communication stability in relational situations, where explicit

condemnation would put negotiations at risk [5]. Three key strategies of euphemism were commonly found in all four corpora [6].

(1) Agent deletion and impersonal expressions are typical in cases when agents are deleted (e.g. mistakes were made, issues arose, tensions have emerged). This type of wording takes away the explicit agency, which makes it less blaming and lets diplomats talk about sensitive topics without openly accusing anyone of them [5].

(2) Negative polarity mitigation: i.e. not entirely consistent, less than constructive, regrettable. Such words replace direct criticism with indirect disapprobation thus minimizing the level of severity of a negative evaluation [4].

(3) Lexical substitution without evaluative neutrality (e.g., substituting sanctions with measures or war with conflict). As identified by Allan and Burridge as semantic deodorization, this strategy is de-sensitizing in its approach to emotion and is in line with institutional decorum [6].

(4) Cultural variation in euphemistic use is also significant. The Chinese and Kazakh diplomatic writings are more inclined to positive politeness approaches based on unity, agreement, and collaboration, which stems from a collectivist cultural perspective [7]. In contrast, the US and Russia documents are likely to focus on negative politeness methods that convey distance, restraint, and self-preservation, as per the discourse conventions of individualism and hierarchy [5].

In all cases, euphemism lets diplomats hold talks without provoking confrontation, as it is one of the main ideals of diplomacy, i.e., gentle talking. Brown and Levinson believe that politeness is not a linguistic courtesy, but a practical requirement in the management of power and face in institutional speech. These safety nets are verbalized and used in situations where the communicative context may be threatening to face such that they can serve to sustain rapport and diplomatic balance. They are examples of the idea of strategic politeness as described by Brown and Levinson, whereby strategic politeness is a kind of lexical tact that is used to strike a balance between institutional power and individual sensitivity [5]. There were three key strategies identified through the corpus analysis.

(1) Agent Deletion and Impersonalization

“Mistakes were made during the operation.” (U.S.) → Chinese equivalent: “行动中 出现了一些失误。” (Xíngdòng zhōng chūxiàn le yīxiē shīwù.)

The construction hides agency in the sense of a passive voice and nominalization as it distributes responsibility and reduces direct blame. Impersonal wording, observed by Allan and Burridge, has a face saving effect because an explicit actor identification is avoided [6].

(2) Lexical Mitigation

“The recent measures are not entirely consistent with international norms.” (Russia > Western recipient) The phrase is evaluatively softened rather than accusatory because it uses the phrase not entirely consistent instead of the more confrontational verb violate. It indicates Musolffs point regarding the use of

semantic down toning by diplomatic euphemisms to preserve discursive legitimacy [4].

(3) Positive Reframing

“We remain deeply concerned about the situation.” (China / U.S.) → “表示严重关切。” (Biǎoshì yánzhòng guānqiè.)

This traditional euphemism indicates criticism without an actual accusation, and turns bad attitude into socially acceptable care. It presents the cooperation of diplomatic talk principles: communication is preserved, while implicitly expressing disagreement [7].

Table 3. Pragmatic strategies of euphemism in diplomatic discourse

Strategy	Linguistic Form	Communicative Function
Agent deletion	Passive voice, nominal structures	Avoids direct blame
Mitigation	Understates, negative polarity	Reduces criticism intensity
Reinterpretation	Positive or neutral lexis	Maintains cooperation tone

Cultural tendencies further reinforce these distinctions. Chinese and Kazakh diplomatic discourse tend to employ solidarity-oriented politeness (e.g., “我们始终重视合作” [Wǒmen shǐzhōng zhòngshì hézuò] - we give top priority to the cooperation), which focuses on the harmony between relations and consensus-building [7]. By contrast, American and Russian writing shows a distance-bound politeness (e.g. we anticipate compliance, it is not appropriate to say more), which is based on individual and hierarchical customs of communicative restraint [5]. In every instance, euphemism is a means to maintain the space of dialogue and prevent the escalation of the situation, highlighting the role of linguistic diplomacy in the strategic asset.

The rhetorical formulas are the stylistic framework in diplomatic talk and they serve as frozen or semi-frozen phrases which embody a common denominator, rules of procedure, and institutional pledges. These statements that tend to be repeated in documents and over time operate as language conventions that normalize the tone and indicate compliance with diplomatic etiquette. There are some commonly used examples such as mutual respect, win-win cooperation, constructive dialogue, rules-based international order, maintaining stability and shared responsibility.

Such formulas perform three essential communicative functions:

(1) **Stability and Predictability**

They offer recognizable linguistic patterns that mitigate the risk of misinterpretation in politically charged situations. This stability is indicative of what Charters-Black refers to as rhetorical habit - an inventory of standardized phrases that influence expectations and limit meaning in institutional language [3].

(2) Intertextuality and Authority

The repeated use of formulaic expressions in a series of statements produces a feeling of continuity, consistency, and authenticity. According to Musolff, that sort of intertextual recurrence allows institutional discourse to create an impression of ideological unity and hide inner diversity [4].

(3) Symbolic Alignment

By repeating the well-established diplomatic wording, the speakers identify with common values and with the established discourse standards. Such symbolic repetition supports the idea offered by Sheygal about the political discourse being a ritualized communication system in which the legitimacy is accomplished by the formulaic repetition instead of the novelty of the argumentation [10].

A quantitative observation is also to be made regarding the correlation between formulaic density and institutional hierarchy [8]. Statements made by ministers and heads of states have a relatively higher percentage of formulas, or about 40 percent, compared to the average of about 25 percent when it comes spontaneous press conferences. This trend implies the increased use of formulas as the level of formality and political importance of the discourse increases, which in turn signifies the rhetorical discipline of high-stakes diplomacy [4].

The rhetorical formulas, which are semi-fixed expressions that occur throughout diplomatic documents can be seen as the official language of diplomacy performing the role of stylistic constants that represent the concept of stability, continuity and common ideology. [3] These formulas produce expected language arrangements that are capable to express political legitimacy and intertextual consistency among different documents.

Table 4. Major rhetorical formulas in English and Chinese diplomatic discourse

Category	English Formula	Chinese Equivalent	Typical Context
Principle	<i>Mutual respect; equality and mutual benefit</i>	“相互尊重、平等互利” (Xiānghù zūnzhòng, píngděng hùli)	Bilateral meetings
Commitment	<i>Win-win cooperation; long-term partnership</i>	“合作共赢、长期伙伴关系” (合作共赢, 长久伙伴关系)	Economic or trade statements
Process	<i>Constructive dialogue; joint efforts</i>	“建设性对话、共同努力” (建设性对话, 共同努力建设性)	Conflict resolution
Value	<i>Rules-based international order; shared responsibility</i>	“以规则为基础的国际秩序、共同责任” (以规则为基础的国际秩序, 共同责任)	Multilateral fora
Appeal	<i>Promote stability; enhance understanding</i>	“促进稳定、增进理解” (Cùjìn wěndìng, zēngjìn lǐjiě)	Press conferences

Note: Chinese translations are included for illustrative and comparative purposes only; all quantitative analyses are based on English texts.

These recurring expressions perform three major **pragmatic functions**:

(1) Predictability: They offer predictable, expected statements that reduce interpretive confusion when engaging in sensitive political issues. The formulaic speech reduces communicative risk and promotes diplomatic objectives such as sustaining decorum despite the uncertainty [5].

(2) Intertextuality - The duplication of well-known formulas refers to repeating earlier official pronouncements and confirming the continuity of policies over time and leadership. Such inter-textual echoing produces what Musolff calls discursive cohesion, which enhances institutional memory and political tenacity [4].

(3) Alignment with symbols - The formula is used to indicate a commitment to universal diplomatic values, including respect, cooperation, and dialogue. Through the use of such familiar phrases as win-win cooperation or constructive dialogue, diplomats linguistically achieve consensus and moral alignment.

The empirical study also shows that there is a correlation between formulaic density and institutional hierarchy [8]. Ministers and heads of state have written communications with a greater percentage ($\approx 40\%$) of rhetorical phrases ($\approx 25\%$ in spontaneous press briefings), which confirms both the increasing level of formulaic as an institution becomes more formalized and controlled. The result can be used to support the claim of Charteris-Black that formulaic discourse is a tool of rhetorical discipline within political institutions[3].

Strategic ambiguity is created when metaphors, euphemisms and rhetorical formulas all are used together, as it represents a characteristic of a diplomatic style that does not exclude the element of precision but also has some flexibility. By metaphorizing, diplomats establish wide conceptual areas that may contain collaboration, bargaining, and reinterpretation [2]. Then, euphemisms adjust the mood of these conceptual areas to tone down face-threatening actions and protect the discourse elasticity [6]. Lastly, rhetorical formulas provide a grounding into the negotiated meanings through their incorporation into the language that is legitimized by the institution which ensures their coherence, continuity and their legitimacy.

Such a multi-layered interaction makes it possible to exchange information on the commitment without too much exposure, criticize without engaging in confrontation, and promise without going too far. Strategically speaking, ambiguity is the essence of linguistic indirection power: instead of indicating an absence of clarity, it can also be viewed as a means of persuasion or domination. Following the remarks by Li (2022), controlled ambiguity allows diplomats to find some ideological distance when negotiating without institutional discord [13]. Likewise, Semenov (2019) claims that diplomatic rhetoric works as a double coded discourse, wherein ostensible moderation serves as a cover to the strategy of assertiveness [11]. In such a case, ambiguity does not act as a defect of communication but as a source of pragmatic power since various audiences are able to interpret messages to their own political benefit. As a result, strategic

ambiguity appears as both stylistic axiom and practical imperative, which confirms the dependence of diplomacy on the indirect methods, etiquette, and interpretation adaptability.

The combined operation of the three devices can be illustrated in Figure 1, which conceptualizes their complementary functions within diplomatic discourse.

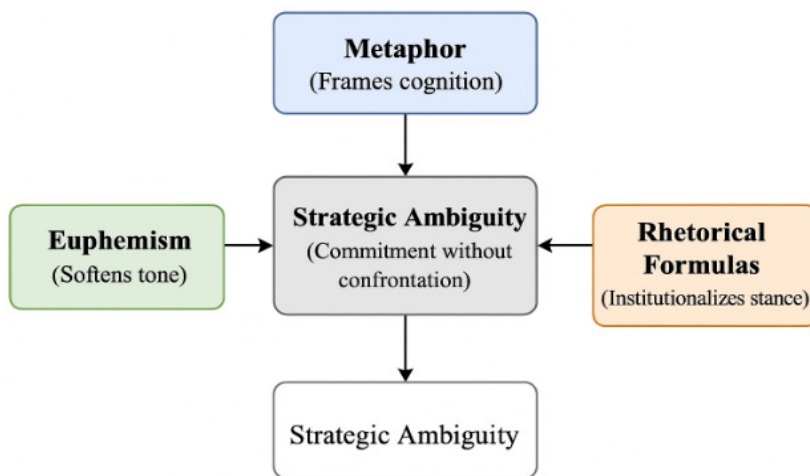


Figure 1. Interaction of stylistic and pragmatic devices in diplomatic discourse.

Figure 1 – Interaction of Stylistic and Pragmatic Devices in Diplomatic Discourse

A practical example demonstrates this multilayered interaction:

“China is prepared to do whatever it takes to ensure that a shared future community is established and it is still highly concerned over the latest occurrences.”

(中国愿意同各国一道，共同构建人类命运共同体，并对当前形势深感忧虑。)

Metaphor: “work hand in hand” and “build a community” frame cooperation as joint construction, reflecting Lakoff and Johnson’s notion of conceptual mapping between abstract diplomacy and physical action [2].

Euphemism: The term deeply concerned is a softened criticism which could be seen as an example of Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategy of indirect criticism [5].

Rhetorical Formula, i.e., the community with a shared future, is an example of a cliché policy term that has become a norm through repetitive use in official context as per the theory of rhetorical habits proposed by Charteris-Black [3].

Together, both of these stylistic as well as pragmatic devices contribute to generating strategic ambiguity, a form of discourse that allows making a

commitment without causing conflict or criticism without giving offence and is what Li (2022) would call pragmatic indirection as strategy [13].

This rhetorical balance represents the application of linguistic indirectness as a tool of power and influence in diplomacy rather than as a form of vagueness.

While diplomatic discourse can be interpreted according to a common global communicative frame and at the same time it shows the existence of different national stylistic identities which are implemented via metaphor, euphemism and rhetorical formulas as a single mechanism. The Western type of diplomacy, which includes both the United States, has given pride of place to clarity, values, and ideological interpretation, casting moral leadership and rhetorical openness in a legal-rational key [3]. In Chinese diplomacy, especially, harmony, partnership, and relational ethics are highlighted, and relational metaphors and moralized formulas are matched with cooperation within the collective society [7]. After Soviet discourse found in Russia and Kazakhstan is based on the balance between assertiveness and mediation integrating sovereignty-oriented imagery with cooperative framing to balance security and cooperation [11]. These dissimilarities make clear the importance of cultural pragmatics, the way linguistic form reflects an ideological position and societal and cultural principles in the sphere of intercultural communication.

During the process of translation and negotiation, these patterns must preserve both political equivalence and aesthetic resonance, not literalism hence, the phrase community with a shared future ought to have a collectivist, aspirational under-current and rules-based order requires contextualized interpretation where conceptual neutrality can possibly be substituted over formal precision.

Expressions like “*community with a shared future*” (共建人类命运共同体 *Gòngjiàn rénlei mìngyùn gòngtóngtǐ*) ought to be preserved in its collectivist resonance rather than its literal form, whereas expressions of a rules-based order should be conveyed in a culturally neutral manner^[7]. Taken together, these results indicate the role of metaphors in shaping the ideological cognition, euphemisms in maintaining the interpersonal diplomacy, and rhetorical formulas in the institution of discourse identity, which in combination brings about strategic ambiguity as a communicative equilibrium of meaning negotiation, face-saving, and sustaining flexibility.

Conclusion

The diplomatic discourse is a complex interaction of the linguistic style and political purpose. As demonstrated by this research, the process is a part of a stylistic-pragmatic system where metaphor, euphemism, and rhetorical formula work together to create a state of strategic ambiguity-the balance between clarity and decorum, assertiveness and self-restraint.

These results indicate that metaphor is a cognitive and ideological framing mechanism. The metaphors of travel, architecture, family, or defence allow diplomats to create conceptual stories that define the way in which international

relations are viewed. Metaphors legitimize policies and foster solidarity without explicit argumentation, turning abstract values such as “order,” “peace,” and “development” into vivid and persuasive imagery.

Euphemism is conversely more practical when it comes to the needs of face management and reduction in conflicts. With the aid of euphemisms, diplomats are in a position to make criticisms less directly and hide their agency without spoiling the process of negotiation. The phrase of deeply concerned, not conducive, or regrettable may be used to exemplify how a negative assessment could be changed into a polite warning, which would guarantee that the discussion was carried on despite the tension.

Finally, rhetorical formulations provide a form of bureaucratic diplomatic expression. The repeated words such as mutual respect, win-win cooperation or constructive dialogue are used as linguistic stabilizers of international discussion. By their repetition, they create inter textual coherence and indicate adherence to common values. Such formulaic speech thereby offers steadiness to an area where meanings tend to be disputed and where alliances can shift easily. All three devices combined make up a triadic system of stylistic pragmatics in diplomacy. Their combination results in what is coined in this research as strategic ambiguity (Figure 1) - a communication style which enables the speakers to ensure political accuracy and still have relational amity.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research will be developing insights into diplomatic language as a hybrid genre that mixes creativity of style with pragmatic constraint. Its contribution to the increasing amount of literature in political discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics lies in highlighting the idea that stylistic form is not merely ornamental but serves as a tool of political action. Based on the Combination of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), [2] the politeness and face theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987), [5] and Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2011), [3] this paper creates an analytic scheme capable of analyzing strategic communication. Strategic ambiguity, as a linking mechanism between these frameworks, emerges as a unifying concept: metaphors create a cognitive framework, euphemisms control interpersonal relationships, and formulas represent institutional positioning. Such a triadic structure may shape any subsequent theoretic research on political rhetoric, intercultural pragmatics, and translation studies. Moreover, this paper confirms that diplomacy is a performative way of using language. Diplomatic language is not only a mirror of political situations, but it constructs them. States perform and assert identities, ideology and negotiate legitimacy in the global sphere through repeated stylistic choices. According to Daulet (2019) theory on somatic cultural code, the face and heart metaphors indicate how cultural cognition can be embodied in language and reflected in diplomatic communication. [15] Using these symbols in this research framework, where metaphors, euphemisms, and rhetorical formulas are seen as stylistic and pragmatic

tools, they indicate that the power of persuasion in diplomacy results out of culturally based manifestations of dignity, sincerity, and harmony.

Practically, the results provide useful information to translators, interpreters, and communication trainers working in diplomatic or intergovernmental environments. The sensitivity to metaphorical patterns, euphemisms, and formulaic patterns can increase the translator capability to preserve the accuracy and subtlety. Even with its restricted corpus, the present research provides the underpinning to subsequent multilingual and corpus-based studies of diplomatic discourse. Finally, it confirms that diplomacy is the skill of linguistic equilibrium - to persuade by holding back and unite through differences.

In a world that is getting more and more politically divided, it is still important to comprehend the stylistic and pragmatic aspects of diplomatic discourse. To have the ability to deliver messages strategically ambiguously- to be accurate, without causing offense, and courteous, without compromise- is not only an art of language but a crucial condition of peaceful existence around the world.

Appendix A. Corpus List and Sources

Country	Genre	Title / Event	Date	Issuing Institution	URL
China	Press Conference	Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's Remarks on China-US Relations	2021-03-19	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (China)	https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/
USA	Press Briefing	Department Press Briefing – Secretary Antony Blinken	2022-02-14	U . S . Department of State	https://www.state.gov/briefings/
Russia	Speech	Statement by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Security Guarantees	2022-01-10	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Russia)	https://mid.ru/en/
Kazakhstan	Multilateral Statement	Address at the CICA Foreign Ministers' Meeting	2023-10-12	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kazakhstan)	https://mfa.gov.kz/en/

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ДИПЛОМАТИЯЛЫҚ ДИСКУРСТАҒЫ МЕТАФОРА, ЭВФЕМИЗМ ЖӘНЕ РИТОРИКАЛЫҚ ФОРМУЛАЛАРДЫҢ СТИЛИСТИКАЛЫҚ-ПРАГМАТИКАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ АУДАРМАЛЫҚ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ

***Жүнісбек Л.¹, Даулет Ф.Н.²**

***^{1,2} әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан**

Андатпа. Мақалада дипломатиялық дискурстың коммуникативтік тиімділігін айқындайтын стилистикалық және прагматикалық құралдар қарастырылады. Зерттеу үш негізгі стратегияға – метафораға, эвфемизмге және риторикалық формулаларға – назар аударады және осы тілдік тетіктердің дипломатиялық мағыналарды қалай құрастыратынын, саяси ұстанымды қалай келісетінін әрі мәдениетаралық коммуникацияны қалай қамтамасыз ететінін айқындауды мақсат етеді.

Зерттеуде дипломатиялық дискурс стратегиялық коммуникация

тұрғысынан қарастырылады, мұнда тілдік таңдаулар иландыруға, шиеленісті жұмсартуға және сәйкестік пен бейнені қалыптастыруға қызмет етеді. Саяси тілге арналған дәстүрлі зерттеулер көбіне идеологиялық мазмұнға басымдық беріп, оның стилистикалық және функционалдық жүзеге асырылу жолдарын елеусіз қалдырып келеді. Осы олқылықтың орнын толтыру мақсатында мақалада дипломатиялық коммуникациядағы риторикалық шығармашылық пен практикалық ұстамдылықтың өзара әрекеттестігі талданады. Зерттеу нәтижелері метафора ынтымақтастық немесе қарсы тұрудың концептуалдық модельдерін айқындайтынын, эвфемизм бетке қауіп төндіретін сөйлеу актілерін жұмсартатынын, ал риторикалық формулалар дипломатиялық ұстанымды институционалдандыратынын көрсетеді. Эмпирикалық база ағылшын тіліндегі ресми дипломатиялық мәтіндер мен олардың қытай тіліндегі аудармаларынан тұрады. Қайталанатын метафоралық үлгілерді, эвфемистік қолданыстарды және формулалық тілдік бірліктерді анықтау үшін сапалық және сандық әдістер қолданылды.

Зерттеу нәтижелері интеграцияланған стилистикалық-прагматикалық талдау шеңбері дипломатиялық дискурсты кешенді түсінудің тиімді құралы бола алатынын және дипломатиялық аударма мен аудармашыларды даярлау ісіне практикалық мән беретінін дәлелдейді. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу авторлары дипломатиялық аудармашылар саяси баламалылық, мәдени резонанс және тоналдық үйлесімділік арасында тепе-теңдік сақтауы тиіс екенін атап өтеді, әсіресе формулалық тіркестер саяси ұстанымды білдіріп, эвфемизмдер келіссөз жүргізу мүмкіндігін сақтайтын жағдайларда.

Тірек сөздер: дипломатиялық дискурс, дипломатиялық аударма, стилистикалық құралдар, прагматикалық стратегиялар, аударма мәтіндегі бара-барлық, метафора, эвфемизм, риторикалық формулалар

СТИЛИСТИКО-ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ И ПЕРЕВОДЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ МЕТАФОРЫ, ЭВФЕМИЗМА И РИТОРИЧЕСКИХ ФОРМУЛ В ДИПЛОМАТИЧЕСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

*Жунисбек Л.¹, Даулет Ф.Н.²

*^{1,2} Казахский национальный университет им. аль-Фараби
Алматы, Казахстан

Аннотация. В статье исследуются стилистические и прагматические средства, формирующие коммуникативную эффективность дипломатического дискурса, с акцентом на три ключевые стратегии: метафору, эвфемизм и риторические формулы. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении того, каким образом данные языковые механизмы конструируют дипломатические смыслы, обеспечивают согласование политической позиции и поддерживают межкультурную коммуникацию.

Дипломатический дискурс рассматривается в статье в рамках стратегической коммуникации, где языковой выбор используется для убеждения, смягчения напряжённости и формирования идентичности. Традиционные исследования политического языка, как правило, отдают приоритет идеологическому содержанию, оставляя без должного внимания стилистические и функциональные способы его выражения. Настоящее исследование восполняет данный пробел, анализируя взаимодействие риторической креативности и практической сдержанности дипломатической коммуникации. Полученные результаты показывают, что метафора задаёт концептуальные модели сотрудничества или конфронтации, эвфемизм смягчает высказывания, угрожающие «лицу» участников коммуникации, а риторические формулы институционализируют дипломатическую позицию. Эмпирическую базу исследования составляют официальные дипломатические тексты на английском языке и их переводы на китайский язык. Для выявления повторяющихся метафорических моделей, эвфемистических средств и формульного языка используются качественные и количественные методы анализа.

Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о том, что интегрированная стилистико-прагматическая модель может служить комплексным инструментом понимания дипломатического дискурса и представлять практическую ценность для дипломатического перевода и подготовки переводчиков. В рамках исследования также подчёркивается, что дипломатические переводчики должны соблюдать баланс между политической эквивалентностью, культурной резонансностью и тональной уместностью, особенно в тех случаях, когда формульные выражения воплощают политические установки, а эвфемизмы сохраняют переговорную гибкость.

Ключевые слова: дипломатический дискурс, дипломатический перевод, стилистические средства, прагматические стратегии, переводческая эквивалентность, метафора, эвфемизм, риторические формулы

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Information about the authors:

Zhunisbek Lina – doctoral student, faculty of Oriental Studies, al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, e-mail: zhunisbek.lina@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4382-3911>

Daulet Fatimabibi Nogaykyzy – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor at the Department of Chinese Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. e-mail: fatima-dauletova@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1926-0502>

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Жүнісбек Лина – докторант, Шығыстану факультеті, әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Алматы қ., Қазақстан, e-mail: zhunisbek.lina@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4382-3911>

Дәулет Фатимабиби Ноғайқызы – филология ғылымдарының кандидаты, Шығыстану факультетінің Қытайтану кафедрасының қауымдастырылған профессоры, әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: fatima-dauletova@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1926-0502>

Информация об авторах:

Жунисбек Лина – докторант, факультет востоковедения, Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби, Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: zhunisbek.lina@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4382-3911>

Дәулет Фатимабиби Ногайқызы – кандидат филологических наук, ассоциированный профессор кафедры китаеведения факультета востоковедения Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби, Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: fatima-dauletova@mail.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1926-0502>