

COMMUNICATIVE-PRAGMATIC APPROACHES IN DIPLOMATIC CONTEXTS

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Abstract: This study examines the communicative-pragmatic characteristics of diplomatic texts through the lens of pragmatic linguistics. Drawing on speech act theory and discourse analysis, the research investigates how informativeness, conventionality, and persuasiveness function as key pragmatic categories in English-language diplomatic correspondence. The study positions verbal diplomatic contexts within the broader framework of institutional communication, highlighting the role of strategic language use in achieving diplomatic goals. Grounded in the theoretical contributions of Russian, Uzbek, and international scholars in pragmatics and text linguistics, the analysis focuses on how senders construct messages to inform, persuade, and maintain institutional relationships with addressees. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the pragmatic mechanisms that underpin diplomatic discourse, with implications for both linguistic theory and diplomatic practice.

Keywords: pragmatics; text linguistics; diplomatic discourse; verbal note; speech act theory; communicative-pragmatic categories; informativeness; persuasiveness; institutional communication; diplomatic correspondence

In linguistics, various approaches exist for the study of texts — communicative, linguistic, psycholinguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic — of which the pragmatic approaches are the most relevant to the present research. The pragmatic approach takes into account the specific characteristics of the author's attitude toward objective reality and its content factor. Among Russian scholars who have engaged in the pragmatic study of texts are V.N. Komissarov, V.G. Gak, I.R. Galperin, V.I. Karasik, N.D. Arutyunova, E.V. Paducheva, L.P. Rizhova, V.V. Bogdanov, V.V. Burlakova, I.P. Susov, N.I. Formanovskaya, B.Yu. Norman, F.S. Batsevich, V.V. Volkov, and A.Yu. Maslova; among world linguists — F. von Humboldt, N. Chomsky, Ch. Morris, T.A. van Dijk, J.R. Searle, J.L. Austin, J.K. Adams, G.N. Leech, S.C. Levinson, Y. Huang, G.P. Grice, and M. Ariel; and among Uzbek scholars — Sh.S. Safarov, A.M. Bushuy, A.E. Mamatov, H. Negmatov, A. Nurmonov, M. Hakimov, M. Yuldoshev, S. Rahimov, and I. Khojaliyev.

A text is regarded as a medium within a communicatively complete and interactive communication process. The characteristics of communicative actions actively employed in institutional communication are realized through the use of various strategies — that is, as optimal technologies in written communication, including diplomatic correspondence. From a general theoretical perspective, strategy is understood as a specific plan for overcoming possible difficulties in the subject domain of diplomacy, which implies the most effective achievement of the goals set by the authors of verbal notes.

The following two important factors have been identified:

- the addressee, who presents information with the aim of persuading the recipient, and who is interested in the latter as a virtual partner in communication;

- the writer's level of awareness and experience (linguistic, social, cultural), which must evoke a certain degree of trust in the person being addressed.

According to L.R. Gabidullina, each type of discourse has universal and specific categories that characterize the communicative situation as a system, in which the text is a semiotic form mediating the speech interaction of communicants. Agreeing with the scholar's view, let us focus

on the communicative-pragmatic categories of the written note genre that are significant for our research: informativeness, conventionality, and persuasiveness. The relevance of these categories to our research is expressed in the communicative situation within the framework of the institution of diplomacy — a situation in which diplomats have the opportunity to communicate on an international level as representatives of their respective states. At the same time, the linguistic approach is also important, as it allows for the study of the verbal representation of communicative-pragmatic categories of interest in diplomatic correspondence texts.

The indicator of a text's informational qualities is determined through the concept of "informativeness," which expresses the degree of novelty in the content and essence of the information. By information is meant data that arouses a certain interest for people and which people exchange in the process of communication.

Depending on the nature of the given communicative characteristics, all subsystems of linguistic information are divided into two main groups:

- those with specific informative and reporting functions, intended to confirm certain facts and inform the addressee about something regardless of their behavioral response, and used in a state of pragmatic actualization for persuasion "through informing" (the "information constant" predominates);

- pragmatically grounded pragmatic subsystems that appeal directly to reason through the sphere of emotions and will of the psyche (the "pragmatic constant" predominates). Thus, the first group of communicative characteristics is typical of diplomatic contexts/speeches.

In studying the diplomatic texts, we draw upon the interpretation of speech act theory developed by British logician J.L. Austin, whose ideas were subsequently elaborated by American scholar J.R. Searle. The distinguishing feature of speech act theory in its approach to linguistic expression is its interpretation as action. Whereas all previous logical-philosophical definitions of language use were focused on the relationship between the word expressed in language and the reality it reflects, in this theory the center of gravity shifts to what action the speaker performs or attempts to perform through the use of words, and what goals they seek to achieve through speech. In essence, we can speak of the informational dimension of the communicative situation, in which the information being conveyed comes to the fore — information related to the relationships between the participants in the communication process in accordance with the contract of communication, which determines the essence of mutual relations between participants in the communication process [Charaudeau 2002: 138–141].

The verbal note is the most widespread genre of diplomatic correspondence and is usually the result of negotiations — a form of oral communication among participants in diplomatic discourse. This fact is reflected in the name of the genre. Originally, a verbal note was, by its nature, a statement made orally during a personal meeting with an interlocutor and subsequently committed to paper in order not to lose, forget, or distort the content of the submission [Samoylenko 2010: 236].

According to the legal encyclopedia, a verbal note is a diplomatic document under international law [LE: 252]. In French manuals on diplomatic practice, unlike a personal note, a verbal note is drawn up in the third person and contains neither an address nor a signature [Moussa 1972: 133]. According to the English-language legal dictionary, a verbal note is defined as: "an unsigned note, sent as a reminder that a matter has not received attention, or to clarify details" [JD 2005: www.juridicaldictionary.com/Verbal_note.htm].

Notes set out political, economic, scientific-technical, and other bilateral and multilateral issues:

- visa requests;
- reports on road accidents involving embassy staff;
- organization of travel throughout the country by members of the diplomatic corps;
- invitations to diplomats to events held in connection with the country's national holiday, and so forth [Borunkov 2007].

The literature does not provide a clear answer to the question of which language a verbal note — as a form of official correspondence — should be drawn up in; however, certain rules and requirements are nonetheless considered. If the embassy and the official language of the host state are the same, correspondence may be conducted in that language. In addition, both parties may sign an agreement to conduct written communication in a specific language. If the letter concerns matter of state significance and sensitive issues are being discussed, the addressee may choose one of the official languages of international communication [Moussa 1972: 125]. In important state matters, to avoid ambiguous interpretation and misunderstanding of words, a translation into the official language of the addressee's state may be appended to the document. The state language is the language (or languages) of state administration; the language system used for speech communication in official contexts [Kushneruk 2008: 237].

Conclusion

The analysis confirmed that three communicative-pragmatic categories — informativeness, conventionality, and persuasiveness — are central to the functioning of verbal notes. Informativeness governs the selection and presentation of propositional content, ensuring that the addressee receives factually accurate and contextually relevant data. Conventionality reflects the highly ritualized and formulaic nature of diplomatic language, shaped by institutional norms, protocol requirements, and shared communicative expectations between sovereign parties. Persuasiveness, meanwhile, operates as an underlying pragmatic constant: even ostensibly informative notes are designed to influence the recipient's attitudes, decisions, and behaviors in alignment with the sender's diplomatic objectives.

Drawing on J.L. Austin's and J.R. Searle's speech act theory, the study highlighted how verbal notes function simultaneously as locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The illocutionary force of a verbal note — whether it requests, informs, protests, or expresses gratitude — is encoded not only in explicit performative constructions but also in the careful deployment of lexical, syntactic, and discourse-level choices. This confirms that diplomatic language is strategic at every level of its organization.

The theoretical foundation established through the contributions of Russian, Uzbek, and international scholars in pragmatics has proven essential for understanding how communicative intent is encoded and decoded in diplomatic texts. The cross-cultural and multilingual dimensions of verbal note exchange further underscore the importance of pragmatic competence for diplomatic practitioners, as well as the need for translators and interpreters working in diplomatic contexts to preserve not only the semantic content but also the pragmatic force of source texts.

In sum, this research contributes to the growing body of scholarship on diplomatic discourse analysis by offering a systematic pragmatic account of verbal note genre features. The findings have both theoretical significance — advancing our understanding of how institutional pragmatic categories operate in written diplomatic texts — and practical implications for the teaching of diplomatic writing, the training of future diplomats, and the development of professional translation competencies in the field of international relations.

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