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ON SOME LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF COMMUNICATION IN DIPLOMACY

Varduhi Ghukasyan*

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6878-1313>

Yerevan State University

The article provides an insight into diplomatic language through the discussion of the language choices in James Cleverly's and Annalena Baerbock's speeches. The diplomats' main weapon is their language. Diplomats speak a lot and give little information. Diplomatic communication is based on the use of various strategies and tactics. The most common ones include: the strategy of "ambiguity", the strategy of "mitigation", the tactics of euphemistic substitution, the subjectivity of assessment and communicative tolerance. The main purpose of these strategies is to maintain one's own interests and create a positive tone of communication. The aim of the study and the specifics of the data chosen determine the choice of the following research methods in the study of diplomatic discourse: the method of direct observation of the material, followed by analysis and generalization of the results, contextual-interpretive and content analysis methods, as well as methods of linguistic description.

Keywords: *diplomatic discourse, diplomatic communication, ambiguity and mitigation strategies, international relations.*

Introduction

Diplomatic discourse should be considered as a combination of three integral aspects: linguistic, cognitive and communicative. Today, the study of diplomatic discourse is of increasing interest, and its in-depth study from a linguistic point of view makes it possible to recognize new aspects of international interaction. For the development of effective international interaction, it is important to study the linguistic features of diplomatic discourse as international relations of our time are increasingly embracing and changing new areas of communication. The importance of linguistic analysis of diplomatic discourse in all spheres of international relations is undeniable, and the task of building a common diplomatic culture in the context of globalization is more relevant than ever today.

* varduhi.ghukasyan@gmail.com

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The processes taking place in the world community influence and affect both diplomatic communication and the content of diplomatic discourse. Therefore, the boundaries of modern diplomatic discourse have expanded significantly and include elements of economic, legal, commercial, military and, of course, political discourse. The relevance of this work is determined by the development trends of modern linguistics, which pays great attention to the communicative and pragmatic aspects of institutional discourse. Diplomatic discourse is one of the elements that contributes to the creation of nations' public image and position in the world.

Ambiguity and mitigation strategies in diplomatic communication

The main function of any diplomatic discourse is to influence. A diplomat must structure his/her speech in such a way in order to control the listeners' perceptions of situations, as well as to impose positive or negative evaluations on the listeners. For this, the diplomat has at his/her disposal a wide selection of communication strategies and tactics, the main purpose of which is to influence the consciousness of the audience and evoke the necessary emotions by using their knowledge, values and language. Thus, the speech strategy is a complex of actions aimed at achieving communicative goals.

The strategy of insincerity in diplomatic communication is implemented through the tactics of intentional creation of **ambiguity**. Ambiguity can be defined as a linguistic sign. It can have several meanings at the same time. W. Empson (1973, p. 1) defines ambiguity as "any verbal nuance, even the most insignificant ones that provide scope for alternative reactions to what is said." Ambiguity can exist on the lexical, syntactic, semantic and text levels. On the semantic level, the speaker expresses his thoughts in a coded way in order to convey a message without harming his own interests or the interests of the recipient of the message (it is important not to offend, not to allow "losing face", to prevent the disclosure of unwanted information intended for a "narrow circle"). Diplomatic language is fixed and universal and consists of signals that are clear in meaning. For example, the following statement is considered a classic one: *My government (state) cannot remain indifferent. or If our rights are grossly violated at sea and on land, we must retain freedom of action to adequately defend ourselves.* There are words and phrases that have a fairly broad interpretation: *retain freedom of action* does not specify what kind of action we are talking about: political, diplomatic, economic, military or a combination of all these actions. Such expressions often create ambiguity and uncertainty, thereby causing mistrust and caution on the part of the recipient (Trager, 2017).

Diplomatic coded language allows the diplomat to protect himself from emotional outbursts, thereby distinguishing between the professional role and

personal feelings. According to Robert Jervis (1970), the relevance of ambiguity is manifested not on the semantic level and not on the level of linguistic signals, but on the pragmatic level. He writes that “this ability allows the player to keep multiple paths open at the same time and start conversations without damaging the conflicting picture the player wants to maintain if the other party’s reaction was unfavorable” (ibid, p. 125). R. Jervis emphasizes the difficulty of finding a balance between the right dose of ambiguity, which can be further rejected, if necessary, and a dose of useful clarity to be perceived as desired. One cannot be more ambiguous than possible, and clearer than is necessary (ibid, p. 181). The advantages of ambiguity often outweigh its disadvantages, and this is usually considered when choosing communication methods: ambiguous signaling between pilots and traffic controllers may be a *préludé* to disaster, but in diplomatic communication ambiguity is considered constructive and creative. The strategy of ambiguity sometimes becomes the only way that can guarantee the continuation of negotiations and facilitate decision making. Ambiguity in peace treaties increases their cooperative potential, since it forces the parties to sit down again at the negotiating table to clarify previously adopted formulations.

One of the means of diplomacy is “talking about nothing” and, at the same time, the manner of “thinking twice before saying anything.” At the same time, communicative tolerance is often encountered in diplomatic activities, and is aimed at creating a positive tone of communication closely related to the category of communicative mitigation in order to establish a conflict-free atmosphere of communication (Bykova, 1999). Thus, it can be assumed that the appeal of participants in diplomatic discourse to mitigation is due to the fact that the goal of this type of discourse is prevention and resolution of possible conflicts. Communicative mitigation is a certain mode of communication, determined by ethnocultural, sociocultural, situational and individual characteristics of communication. It breaks down into certain varieties and is expressed through a system of certain strategies and tactics. In diplomacy, there are tactics that help a diplomat convey his message softly, in most cases through a hint. The category of communicative mitigation is one of the key values of diplomatic discourse (Voevodin, 2000; Dotsenko, 1996).

As is known, within the framework of one utterance it is extremely rare that only one intention of the speaker is realized. The difficulty in verbalizing several intentions within one utterance cannot but affect the expressiveness of the speaker’s speech behavior. This is especially evident in potentially conflict-generating situations, which include, in particular, the verbalization of positive and negative assessments of the speaker to himself.

Linguistic characteristics of diplomatic idiolect

The question of the analysis of linguistic personality and his/her speech behavior is considered one of the most important problems of linguistic research (Karaulov, 1987). The main functions of diplomatic discourse depend primarily on the goals and intentions of the author of the discourse. Historically, the successful outcome of diplomatic activities depended and still depends to a great extent on the personality of the diplomat as a person endowed with necessary qualities, abilities and experience to carry out the mission assigned to him (Barston, 1988; Berridge, 2015).

One of the most important factors of diplomacy is the communication of professional diplomats, which is based on the use of rhetorical art, communicative strategies and tactics, which characterize the linguistic personality manifested in professional discourse. A diplomat is a person who is able to solve problems without showing hostility, to find a peaceful solution to the situation, especially in a difficult situation, and be careful in dealing with people. Diplomats try to present information in a favorable light or, conversely, to distract attention from the information that could harm their interests. When speaking the diplomat strives to create a favorable emotional background, which is necessary to influence the consciousness of the listeners and motivate beneficial actions. Along with verbal means, the communication strategy involves non-verbal (*kinetic means, gestures, tactile means: handshake, kiss, hug, touch, pat on the shoulder or back*) and paralinguistic (*volume of voice, whisper, shout, silence, pause, laughter, grin, sigh*) means. The texts of famous diplomats almost always bear the stamp of the orator as a linguistic personality, with all the peculiarities inherent to them. The main task of the linguistic analysis of speech is the study of the speaker's strategies and all the linguistic resources at his/her disposal (Issers, 2008; 2015).

Public *speaking tactic* is a verbal action that corresponds to a certain stage of the implementation of a communication strategy. It is carried out with the help of lexical, morphological, syntactic means and is aimed at establishing control over the consciousness of the audience, motivating or influencing the formation of an opinion or assessment of the situation. The distinctive qualities of diplomatic language are manifested in the speeches of diplomats at international events which mainly depend on the success of three stages of diplomatic discourse construction: the importance of the proposed topic, the structure of the discourse, and its impressive presentation.

The famous theoretician of diplomacy V. L. Israelyan (1990, p.136-156) presents portraits of famous diplomats describing their speech activities. He points out the following characteristics of a diplomat: talent for negotiations, management of the emotions of the audience, conviction in the truth of the state's policy,

presence of own style, deep knowledge of the subject and a broad horizon, skillful mastery of all kinds of compromise formulations, ability to develop mutually acceptable texts. Sincerity also plays a significant role in a diplomat's verbal activity. Still, in the context of frequent demands to be "sincere", this classic judgment plays a sobering role, so the orator appears in some "invented" character. Thus, creating a perfect image of a diplomat is impossible without paying attention to the quality of his speech, which in turn, makes it necessary to turn to the analysis of diplomatic discourse.

As for the character of the diplomat, A.N. Kovalev (1993) speaks of the classic qualities of a diplomat's "soul and spirit", which fall into two parts. The first includes confidence in the ability to create and maintain, the second – philological characteristics, i.e. authoritative speech and manners. The following adjectives are used in describing a diplomat: *attention, diligence, intelligence, insight, quick orientation, ingenuity, presence of spirit, balanced temperament, calmness, patience, willingness and ability to listen, gentleness, consideration*. A more profound examination reveals that personal characteristics and appearance play a significant role in the activity of a diplomat.

Let us observe some interesting examples that show the linguistic characteristics of diplomatic idiolect.

British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly states in his speech at the Milken Institute Asia Summit about the UK's strategic importance to the Indo-Pacific region.

We are looking to build on those pre-existing networks, to improve our partnerships. And our relationship with the Indo-Pacific is central to tackling those issues that I've just described, and our relationship with this region will be a driving force for a positive vision of growth and security in all our countries.

(Cleverly, 2022, September 29)

The common assumption is that the UK's relations with the Indo-Pacific region are a key to solving economic and security issues. The goal of the UK's strategy is to strengthen its position through the Indo-Pacific region and acquire reliable partners. In his speech, James Cleverly uses stylistic devices (similes, exaggerations, metaphors) aimed at keeping the listeners' attention and focusing on important points strengthening his speech. Using the following phrases (*unjustified invasion, speed-dating environment, literally meters east of the Greenwich meridian*) and repeating the word *map* several times, Cleverly expresses his attitude on key issues of the Indo-Pacific region. James Cleverly personifies the word *map*

around his idea of home and points out that he grew up in the east of the Greenwich meridian.

*Because I've always loved **maps**. And I particularly loved the **maps** that I grew up with as a child. Perhaps because the **maps** that I looked at when I was a child had my house right in the centre. And the reason is, because I grew up just literally metres east of the Greenwich meridian.*

(Cleverly, 2022, September 29)

In his speech James Cleverly uses both negative adjectives (with prefixes *-in, un-*): *insecure economy, unjustified invasion* and the negative particle (*no*).

*So, perhaps, now, it is **no** surprise to you that I much prefer globes. Because, because globes remind us that there is **no** middle, there is **no** edge, there is **no** centre, there is **no** periphery.*

(Cleverly, 2022, September 29)

In the following extract from Cleverly's speech the strengthening of the emotional impact of the speech is achieved through exaggeration and numerical data.

*At least **1.7 million** British citizens live across the region. **Our** trading relationships are worth over 250 billion dollars and they're growing. In the decades to come it will be the crucible of solutions to many of the pressing global challenges that **we** face – from climate and biodiversity to maritime security and geopolitical competition linked to **our** rules and norms.*

***We** can see the countries which choose to be committed to trade and commerce, So when **we** look at our maps, or indeed our globes, **we** have a choice.*

(Cleverly, 2022, September 29)

Cleverly focuses on the problem, and by exaggerating the idea, emphasizes the importance and seriousness of the situation described. The use of the collective *we* is regularly used in tandem with *our* in order to encourage collective responsibility, concern, collaboration, consensus and action. This is typical of international diplomacy where the speaker, on behalf of the national *we* constructs ultimately the collective *we* for the purpose of cooperation and solidarity.

The use of the modal verb *can* is often used in the speech, meaning that Great Britain can take clear steps to solve the problem.

*We **can** either see a world divided, or we **can** seek to explore those things that bind us together. And we **can** choose to recognise that geography matters less – and it is our values that make us neighbours.*

(Cleverly, 2022, September 29)

Cleverly ends his speech with optimism highlighting the United Kingdom's role as a world leader in technology development.

And we are well on our way to becoming the European partner with the broadest, most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific. I am here to make it clear that the Indo-Pacific Tilt is here to stay. It is permanent.

(Cleverly, 2022, September 29)

In another speech James Cleverly spoke at the 18th Manama Dialogue in Bahrain in 2022. The theme of the dialogue was Rules and Competitions in the Middle East, which provided an opportunity for diplomats from different countries to discuss the interests and impact of these rules and challenges on the region. In his speech, James Cleverly repeatedly referred to the friendship and success of Great Britain and the Middle East, and also presented the negative influence of Russia and Iran on the Middle East, calling the latter a threat to the security in the Middle East. He assured that Britain is determined to stand by its friends and prevent Russia from acquiring the weapons of Iran's advanced nuclear system. At the same time, James Cleverly noted that Iranian weapons pose a threat to the entire region.

Iranian-supplied weapons threaten the entire region. Today Iran's nuclear programme is more advanced than ever before, and the regime has resorted to selling Russia the armed drones that are killing civilians in Ukraine, Britain is determined to work alongside our friends to counter the Iranian threat, interdict the smuggling of conventional arms, and prevent the regime from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

(Cleverly, 2022, November 19)

Throughout his speech, James Cleverly uses a variety of language techniques to make it more expressive, persuasive, and meaningful. With the help of different

expressions, he highlights the important points on which he wants to focus the attention of the listeners, repeatedly brings to the fore the positive influence of Great Britain on the Middle East, and sharpens people's belief that Iran and Russia are violently disturbing the peace in the world.

We may assume that James Cleverly repeatedly talks about his country's success in order to show that British influence and power has only been positive in the development of the Persian Gulf countries. He uses phrases expressing future predictions about the changes taking place, such as *I believe it will be equally momentous and filled with opportunity or I want to assure you that the United Kingdom will remain a steadfast friend and partner.*

In the next part of James Cleverly's speech it becomes clear that cooperation with the Persian Gulf countries is very important for Great Britain. He wants to make it clear to their allies, or, as he says, to their friends (*our friends in the Gulf*), that Great Britain's actions are aimed at achieving mutual benefit.

And Britain is convinced that we will only be able to overcome mutual threats and seize the opportunities in front of us by cooperating ever more closely.

(Cleverly, 2022, November 19)

Wanting to show the importance of this friendship for Great Britain, he does not separate Great Britain from the Persian Gulf countries in his speech and constantly uses the pronoun *we*.

And that's why we want to be with you on our shared transition to green energy, ensuring that we all benefit from renewable technologies.

But none of our shared ambition will succeed without security – and the hard truth is that we face an ever greater array of threats.

(Cleverly, 2022, November 19)

James Cleverly also notes that Russia's actions are violations of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. *Putin's onslaught against Ukraine amounts to a flagrant breach of the principles of sovereign and territorial integrity*, while Britain is the champion of those noble thoughts *that's why British forces are striving alongside their counterparts in this region to keep us safe and defend the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity which protect every nation.*

In James Cleverly's speech, in combination with the word *Russia*, there are always negative connotations such as *bloodshed, suffering, horrors, destruction, onslaught, pitiless.*

Cleverly ends his speech with an optimistic note, saying that Russia is defeated, the troops are retreating day by day. Generalizing Britain's opinion with the world's opinion, he wants to make his audience understand that aggression is not encouraged.

Yet despite using overwhelming and pitiless force, Putin is losing. Almost everywhere, Russian forces are in retreat and it is only a matter of time before Ukraine prevails. And it should be dawning on other regimes, who might have been tempted to behave similarly, that most of the world is determined to ensure that aggression does not pay.

(Cleverly, 2022, November 19)

The very last part of the speech draws a comparison between the unchanging principles of the Middle East towards Russia and the friendship between Great Britain and that region, implying that this friendship is directly dependent on those unchanging principles.

This region demonstrated its belief in sovereignty and territorial integrity when it voted at the UN General Assembly to condemn Putin's annexation of Ukrainian territory. Just as those principles remain constant, so I fervently believe that Britain's friendships across the Middle East and North Africa will deepen and endure.

(Cleverly, 2022, November 19)

In the statement on the Middle East peace process at the Security Council briefing James Cleverly uses various linguistic means to make his speech more convincing and influence his audience.

Also noteworthy is the use of *let me*, *let us* structures, which are characteristic of official situations.

[...] **Let me** be clear: the UK is committed to Israeli security.

[...] And **let us** not forget the consequences for those most directly affected: the Palestinian people.

(Cleverly, 2022, November 19)

In his next speech at the United Nations meeting, James Cleverly speaks about the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, emphasizing England's support for Ukraine. Reflecting on the period of the end of World War II, the tactics of criticism is used in his speech.

At the end of the Second World War, the United Nations saw a unique thing in human history. Powerful, victorious nations chose to limit their own power to protect the countries less powerful than themselves. That is why the UN Charter needs to be protected. And it's the reason why three-quarters of the entire membership of the UN have repeatedly voted to condemn this invasion in the General Assembly. But President Putin ignores the will of the United Nations. He doesn't care about the UN Charter. Early last year in New York, I predicted that if Putin was foolish enough to invade Ukraine, that Ukrainians would defend their homeland ferociously.

(Cleverly, 2023, February 20)

In his speech in the Parliament, again referring to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Cleverly continues to criticize Russia's actions.

Russia has targeted hospitals, schools and energy supplies. And because of Russia's blockade of the Black Sea ports and its economic blackmail, some of the world's poorest people are now paying higher prices for food, for energy and for the means of survival. We will crack down ruthlessly on those who seek to evade sanctions.

(Cleverly, 2023, February 20)

As diplomats always want to create and preserve relationships between their state and other countries, their speech must be persuasive. At the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Annalena Baerbock begins her speech by referring to Elie Wiesel (who comes from a religiously traditional Jewish family that survived the Holocaust). It is noteworthy that in her speech she indirectly refers to the current situation (especially the Russian-Ukrainian war). Using Wiesel's name, Annalena Baerbock seems to reflect Europe's bad attitude towards the current situation and makes negative predictions:

When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. "These are the words of Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner. His experience of the horrors of the Shoah and the Second World War made him a lifelong believer in the need to stand up for human rights, regardless of where violations occur and to whom. Wiesel was convinced

that when human rights are violated, that is a warning signal for what there is to come.

(Baerbock, 2023, February 24)

In her speech Annalena Baerbock uses a lot of repetition in order to emphasize feelings or ideas, create rhythm, and develop a sense of urgency.

[...] *But the crucial point is what we do now. **Now, when** our European peace order, **when** the Council of Europe, the OSCE, are under attack.*

[...] *700 million people who, thank God, **do not look alike, do not dream alike.***

[...] *Even though my home is now a prison because I **cannot** go to school, I **cannot** play volleyball, I **cannot** go out with my friends anymore. **This is** my home. **This is** where I want to be. *This is where I want to survive...**

[...] ***That is why** we are here. **That is why** I'm speaking here as German foreign minister. **That is why** you are here, and why you come back every month to work for our European soul, for every person in Europe for the teenagers in Kharkiv.*

[...] ***This is** a political task. **This is** a democratic task for us in the Council of Europe.*

[...] ***It's** up to us whether we use them or whether we leave them aside. **It's** our responsibility.*

[...] ***how** we all shop, meet our friends or go on a date, **how** entire industries work, or **how** scientists predict storms and droughts.*

(Baerbock, 2023, February 24)

In the above-mentioned examples lexical units such as *Human Rights* (about 39 times); *Europe* (62); *freedom* (12); *Russia* (10) – are repeated to provide clarity and emphasis, highlighting deeper meanings in the speech. Annalena Baerbock uses irony (*And feel free to do the maths on how many bilateral treaties it would need to replace them!*) to undermine the significance of the question and create a humorous effect. Irony is a helpful tool for diplomats to express contradictory experiences and complex feelings and situations.

The Council comprises more than 220 conventions and treaties. And probably no one in this room, maybe except for the President and the Secretary General, would be able to name all

of them. And feel free to do the maths on how many bilateral treaties it would need to replace them!

(Baerbock, 2023, February 24)

In the above passage Annalena Baerbock uses different stylistic devices: simile (*rulers dispose of their citizens like pawns in geopolitical chess games*); metaphor (*the Commission is a compass for democracy; women's rights are a yardstick for the state of our democracies*); personification (*The Council of Europe is the soul of Europe*); alliteration (*be a bit biased; piles of papers; concrete call*); litotes (*I believe that this is actually **not a bad** thing, even though journalists may write*): Annalena Baerbock, like James Cleverly – criticizes V. Putin:

*As President Putin wants to drag Europe back into a past dominated by power politics, where states can trample on individual rights in the pursuit of imperial glory, **where rulers dispose of their citizens like pawns in geopolitical chess games.***

(Baerbock, 2023, February 24)

In this part of the speech, Annalena Baerbock addresses an important issue that is often encountered in both diplomatic and political speeches: citizens are viewed by leaders as pawns. And indeed, ordinary people are *chess pawns* for political leaders.

Assertion, storytelling and rhetorical repetition are the strategies employed when Annalena Baerbock attempts to persuade the audience. She tries to convince the audience to align with her way of thinking. It should be added in this connection that the whole speech is structured in the way of storytelling. This tool is used quite often by diplomats. Annalena Baerbock includes real stories/examples in her speech (she mentions the cases of Alexei Navalny, Osman Kavala as examples of human rights violations), through which she tries to influence the emotions and feelings of the audience. It is a well-known fact that if one wants to appeal to someone's emotions, it is helpful to use storytelling to connect to them on a more personal level.

[...] I spoke with teenagers in Kharkiv earlier this month. At different locations in Kharkiv, I saw the destruction. But what touched me most was my last stop at a heating point, set up with so much care and so much love.

(Baerbock, 2023, February 24)

Conclusion

Diplomatic discourse is characterized by great pragmatic potential containing the intentions of the author of the discourse. Diplomatic language contains a certain linguistic arsenal, which promotes mutual understanding and cooperation in the event of conflicts and disagreements. An important component of diplomatic discourse is diplomatic communication, the purpose of which is not only the exchange of information, but also the influence on both an individual and an entire state. The issue of analyzing a linguistic personality and his/her speech behavior can be considered as one of the most important problems of linguistic research. Diplomatic discourse primarily depends on the goals and intentions of the author of the discourse. The speaker strives to create a favorable emotional background in his speech, which is necessary to further influence the consciousness of the listeners and encourage them to actions beneficial to the diplomat. The emotive function of the discourse lies in influencing the emotions of the recipients.

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ԴԻՎԱՆԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՂՈՐԴԱԿՑՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՈՐՈՇ ԼԵԶՎԱԿԱՆ ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ՇՈՒՐՁ

Վարդուհի Ղուկասյան

Հողվածն անդրադառնում է արհեստավարժ դիվանագետների (Ջեյմս Քլեվերլիի և Աննալենա Բերբոքի) ելույթներում լեզվական առանձնահատկություններին: Դիվանագետների հիմնական զենքը նրանց լեզուն է: Դիվանագիտական դիսկուրսը նպաստում է աշխարհում ազգերի հասարակական կերպարի և դիրքի ստեղծմանը: Դիվանագիտական հաղորդակցությունը հիմնված է տարբեր ռազմավարությունների և մարտավարությունների կիրառման վրա: Ամենատարածվածներից են՝ «երկիմաստության» և «մեղմացման» ռազմավարությունները՝ շեշտադրելով գնահատականների սուբյեկտիվությունը, հաղորդակցական հանդուրժողականությունը: Այս ռազմավարությունների և մարտավարությունների հիմնական նպատակը սեփական շահերի պահպանումն է և հաղորդակցության դրական երանգ ստեղծելը: Դիվանագիտության ամենակարևոր գործոններից մեկը արհեստավարժ դիվանագետների հաղորդակցությունն է, հիմնված հռետորական արվեստի, հաղորդակցական ռազմավարությունների ու մարտավարությունների կիրառման վրա, որը բնութագրում է մասնագիտական դիսկուրսում դրսևորվող լեզվական անհատականությունը:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *դիվանագիտական դիսկուրս, դիվանագիտական հաղորդակցություն, երկիմաստություն, մեղմացման ռազմավարություն, միջազգային հարաբերություններ:*