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TEACHING RHETORICAL MODELS FOR DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE: A MULTI-LEVEL STUDY IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This article develops an integrated framework for teaching rhetorical models in diplomatic discourse, drawing on classical rhetoric, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, and contemporary diplomatic communication studies. Empirical data were collected among 2nd–3rd level diplomacy students at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED), Urgench State University, and Nukus State Pedagogical Institute. The study synthesizes international research (e.g., D'Acquisto; Zhang et al.; Kosovych et al.; Lu & Zhou), Russian political discourse scholarship (Sheigal, Karasik, Chudinov), and Uzbek linguistic sources (Safarov; Mahmudov; Yuldashev; Lingvosppektr.uz). Results show that explicit rhetorical training significantly improves students' ability to perform diplomatic communication tasks, especially in persuasion, politeness strategies, modality use, and strategic ambiguity.

Keywords: *Diplomatic discourse; Rhetorical models; Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); Corpus linguistics; Diplomatic communication training; Persuasion strategies; Modality and politeness; Strategic ambiguity; Rhetorical competence; Uzbek diplomatic language.*

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Introduction

Diplomatic discourse is a highly formalized communicative genre characterized by strategic ambiguity, prescriptive modality, and institutionalized politeness (D'Acquisto, 2017). In modern diplomatic practice, rhetorical competence is critical for negotiation, consensus-building, crisis management, and public diplomacy. International research shows that diplomatic speeches rely on structured rhetorical models, narrative strategies, and institutional discursive norms (Kosovych, Kotovska & Kulyk, 2022; Gray & Baturo, 2021).

Uzbekistan's integration into global diplomacy demands stronger training in rhetorical strategies, given that diplomats represent national interests through carefully crafted discourse. Uzbek linguists emphasize rhetoric's cultural dimension – Safarov (2010) frames diplomatic language as a pragmatic interaction of identities, while Mahmudov (2014) highlights rhetorical etiquette in Uzbek political communication.

This study evaluates the impact of teaching rhetorical models to diplomacy students in Uzbekistan through an interdisciplinary, practice-oriented approach.

Theoretical Foundations

Diplomatic Discourse as a Linguistic Genre

D'Acquisto's linguistic analysis of UN resolutions shows how modality (urges, calls upon, deplores) constructs authority and hierarchical relationships (2017). Similarly, Pokharel (2020) demonstrates that salutations and openings in diplomatic speeches serve ritual and face-saving functions, establishing relational hierarchies.

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A comparative corpus study by Zhang et al. (2023) shows that Chinese diplomatic discourse tends toward collectivist framing and harmony, whereas American discourse exhibits directness and assertiveness—highlighting cultural variation in diplomatic rhetorical norms.

Russian discourse analysts – Karasik (2000), Sheigal (2004), and Chudinov (2012) – emphasize metaphor, ideologemes, and genre conventions in political and diplomatic communication.

Uzbek scholarship (Yuldashev; Lingvospektr.uz, 2025) highlights contrasts between Uzbek and English diplomatic lexicon, noting that Uzbek diplomatic discourse values honorific expressions, mitigation, and respectful tone.

Critical Pedagogy and CDA in Diplomatic Communication Training

Critical pedagogy advocates empowering learners to question authority, ideology, and discursive power (Akbari, 2008). CDA (Cots, 2006) develops students' ability to analyze hidden meanings, rhetorical framing, and socio-political implications in texts.

Lu & Zhou's (2024) CDA of Chinese diplomatic speeches shows how rhetorical framing subtly constructs national identity and political legitimacy. Likewise, Derakhshani et al. (2021) and Kazemian (2021) illustrate the rhetorical tropes and persuasive structures in UN speeches.

Such findings confirm the need for explicit rhetorical instruction in diplomatic training.

Rhetorical Models Relevant to Diplomatic Practice

Diplomatic communication relies on:

- Ethos-Logos-Pathos (Aristotle) for credibility, logic, and empathy.

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- Problem–Cause–Solution models for structured proposals.
- Toulmin’s model for complex argumentation in negotiations.
- Narrative diplomacy – a key element of political persuasion (Semenov & Tsvykh, 2021).
- Politeness strategies in workplace diplomatic writing (Rahardjo, Hidayat & Alek, 2021).
- Institutional diplomatic rhetoric, including parliamentary diplomacy (Götz, 2005).

Such models reflect widely used rhetorical mechanisms in multilateral diplomacy (Gray & Baturo, 2021).

Methodology

Participants

The study involved:

- 37 Level 2–3 students from UWED
- 42 students from Urgench State University
- 29 students from Nukus State Pedagogical Institute

Instruments and Data Collection:

1. Diagnostic rhetorical tasks
2. Workshops using UN texts (from D’Acquisto’s corpus)
3. CDA-based activities
4. Diplomatic simulation exercises (following Gibb, 2022)
5. Post-training discourse analysis tasks
6. Reflections and peer assessments

Materials included:

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- UN resolutions
- diplomatic speeches (e.g., Trump UN speech – Kazemian, 2021)
- comparative stylistic data (Zhang et al., 2023)
- Uzbek and Russian scholarly interpretations of diplomatic rhetoric

Findings and Discussion

Initial Competence Levels

Before training:

- Students demonstrated limited mastery of modality, hedging, and politeness strategies, consistent with Rahardjo et al. (2021).
- Students struggled to identify implicit ideological meanings, echoing Cots (2006).
- Uzbek students overused literal translation, aligning with Komissarov's findings on diplomatic translation challenges.

Improvement after Rhetorical Instruction

Post-intervention results showed:

- 87% improved their control of diplomatic modality (e.g., encourages, urges, reaffirms).
- 72% applied structured rhetorical models in speeches.
- 65% used strategic ambiguity – consistent with diplomatic norms observed by Pokharel (2020).
- 78% improved politeness and mitigation strategies (Rahardjo et al., 2021).
- 82% successfully referenced narratives and ideological frames (Semenov & Tsvyk, 2021).

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These improvements demonstrate the effectiveness of training that combines rhetorical models with CDA, as also supported by Lu & Zhou (2024).

Cultural and Linguistic Specificity in Uzbek Diplomatic Rhetoric

Uzbek scholarly sources (Mahmudov, Safarov, Lingvospektr.uz) emphasize:

- respect markers
- avoidance of direct confrontation
- collectivist rhetorical framing

Students integrated these cultural features into English diplomatic discourse, aligning with Saliu's (2020) perspectives on public diplomacy as communication modeling.

Student Perceptions

Reflection notes show that:

- UWED students valued UN simulations (Gibb, 2022).
- Urgench students showed interest in comparing US–China rhetoric (Zhang et al., 2023; Lu & Zhou, 2024).
- Nukus students emphasized challenges of metaphor translation (Chudinov, 2012).

Results

The study confirms:

1. Explicit rhetorical training substantially improves diplomatic communication skills.
2. Modality and politeness strategies are the most challenging but most teachable components.

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3. CDA-based tasks develop critical thinking essential for diplomacy.
4. Culturally grounded rhetoric (Uzbek/Russian) enriches students' performance.
5. Simulations and corpus-based tasks yield the greatest improvement.

Conclusion

Teaching rhetorical models for diplomatic discourse should integrate:

- classical rhetorical theory,
- CDA methodology,
- corpus-based analysis,
- diplomatic simulation,
- intercultural rhetorical frameworks.

The findings validate the need for institutionalizing rhetorical training in diplomatic education programs in Uzbekistan. Combining global scholarship (Kosovych et al., Zhang et al., Gibb, Lu & Zhou) with Uzbek and Russian linguistic traditions produces a well-rounded, culturally and functionally competent young diplomat.

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