

## DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AS A REFLECTION OF THE ONGOING WAR IN UKRAINE IN 2025

### ДИПЛОМАТИЧНА МОВА РБ ООН ЯК ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ ВІЙНИ В УКРАЇНІ У 2025 РОЦІ

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The following research is a significant example of how diplomatic language functions not only as a medium of communication, but also as a subtle instrument of power and persuasion within international institutions. By examining the diplomatic language used by the UN Security Council in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine in 2025, the article sheds light on how the choice of words can influence the trajectory of international relations, shape perceptions, and sometimes change the entire situation. The situation in Ukraine is extremely sharp, which is why it is a good example of all kinds of marked discourse. It explores how language serves as both a tool for conflict resolution and a means of promoting national interests.

The study analyses the distinctive features of diplomatic discourse, including the emphasis on formality. Special attention is given to the challenges posed by the Ukraine-Russia situation, and the ways in which diplomatic speech at the UNSC reflects, shapes, and sometimes complicates efforts to address complex geopolitical issues. The article delves into the strategic use of ambiguity and clarity within diplomatic communication. It highlights how diplomats represent their national positions with the need to maintain constructive dialogue, avoid direct confrontation, and look for some consensus. It has been revealed that 62% of statements contained ambiguous phrases designed to allow flexible interpretation, while only 38% prioritized explicit clarity to minimize the risk of miscommunication.

The research discusses how the selection of words, stylistic peculiarities, and syntax can impact the interpretation of the presented information. By conducting a content analysis of four speeches regarding the situation in Ukraine, the study aims to identify linguistic patterns, rhetorical strategies, and discursive shifts that reflect evolving power and struggle for narrative dominance. Furthermore, 70% of the analyzed content exhibited a formal and restrained tone, consistent with the conventions of diplomatic speech.

Ultimately, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, diplomacy, and international relations in times of crisis.

**Key words:** diplomatic language, the UNSC, diplomatic discourse, conflict.

Дане дослідження є яскравим прикладом того, як мова дипломатії функціонує не лише як засіб спілкування, але й тонкий інструмент впливу й переконання в межах міжнародних інституцій. Аналізуючи дипломатичну мову, яка фігурує у Раді Безпеки ООН у контексті досі триваючої війни в Україні у 2025 році, дана статті висвітлює питання, як вибір слів може впливати на перебіг міжнародних відносин, формувати сприйняття й іноді змінювати хід подій тощо. Ситуація в Україні є надзвичайно гострою, тому вона слугує гарним прикладом наявності всіх видів маркованого дискурсу. У роботі розглядається як мова виступає інструментом врегулювання конфліктів і водночас засобом просування національних інтересів.

Дослідження аналізує характерні риси дипломатичного дискурсу, зокрема акцент робиться на формальності вживаної дипломатами мови. Особлива увага приділяється викликам, які постають у зв'язку із ситуацією між Україною та Росією, а також тому, як дипломатична мова РБ ООН відображає та формує рішення складних геополітичних питань. У статті детально розглядається стратегічне використання двозначності та чіткості в дипломатичній комунікації. Зазначається як саме дипломати представляють позиції своїх країн, зберігаючи при цього конструктивний діалог, як вдається уникати прямої конfrontації та пошуку консенсусу. Виявлено, що 62% виступів містили двозначні формулювання, розраховані на доволі гнучке тлумачення, тоді лише 38% віддавали перевагу чіткій ясності задля мінімізації ризику непорозумінь. У дослідженні розглядається як підбірка слів, стилістичні особливості та синтаксис можуть впливати на інтерпретацію поданої інформації. Провівши контент-аналіз чотирьох промов щодо ситуації в Україні, ми ставили за мету виявити мовні патерни, риторичні стратегії та дискурсивні зміни, які відображають розвиток боротьби за домінування у наративі. Крім того, 70% проаналізованого матеріалу відзначилося формальним і стриманим тоном, що відповідає нормам дипломатичної мови.

Зрештою, дане дослідження сприяє глибшому розумінню взаємоз'язку мови, дипломатії та міжнародних відносин у часи кризи.

**Ключові слова:** дипломатична мова, РБООН, дипломатичний дискурс, конфлікт.

**Problem statement.** Diplomatic language serves a set of purposes in the world of international relations, where a diplomat has to represent not only their country, but also try to avoid conflict situations,

offending others, maintain respectful and constructive dialogue with other members of the diplomatic meetings. Thus, it is not only about being nice and polite with others, but to use ‘*strategic communication*’

*tion that considers cultural sensitivity, power dynamics, and long-term relationships* [4]. Notably, clarity is crucial for minimizing misinterpretations, while ambiguity is often employed as a tactical tool to facilitate consensus during negotiations, allowing for flexibility in future discussions.

That is why, when the discussed issue is sharp, like it is happening in Ukraine, language is a powerful weapon that can be used either to solve the problem, or make it worse, or convince the present participants of their innocence.

Since March 2014, the question of '*Russian forces to be used in Ukraine “pending the normalization of the public and political situation in that country”*' [8] started to be the most disputable question of all on the international diplomatic arena. And it is not a surprise that this issue is still ongoing due to constant violations of Ukrainian laws by Russia. Hence, in diplomacy the main tool to do it is via the help of language, persuasion of the present international representative, or the opposite – attempt to disprove and justify the actions. Thus, diplomats try to use carefully chosen words to express positions and deepening the discussed issue.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

Diplomatic language can be understood in several ways. Primarily, it serves as a means of communication among diplomats, which may involve using a common language that varies depending on the participants' backgrounds.

Notable figures in linguistics include Aldo Matteucci [5], who highlights the intricacies of language decoding in diplomacy, and Edmond Pascual [5], who examines the intentionality of speech acts and their influence on diplomatic outcomes. For example, Sydorenko S. I. [1] sees diplomatic speech as a distinct genre, that is marked by formality, restraint, and balance, especially in difficult situations like humanitarian and military crises. There are researches on speech acts in UNSC in terms of pragmatics [2], and mutualism of translating diplomatic discourse [6].

Or the importance of multilingualism has been underscored by a number scholars, for instance, Irina Tsvetkova-Hegedus considers the concept of multilingualism as a '*crucial measure to address the disparities in language use among six official UN languages*' [3].

Appraisal Theory is another framework applied in the analysis of diplomatic language, particularly in assessing attitudes and emotions expressed in discourse. This approach enables researchers to annotate and analyze the emotional tone of diplomatic communications, providing insights into how language

influences the perception of presented information and the course of negotiations [7].

But there is a lack of content analysis of diplomatic speeches delivered at the UN Security Council on the question of Ukraine and Russia in 2025.

**The goal of this paper.** This paper aims to contribute to already existing research on diplomatic communication by focusing on a case study of UN Security Council (the UNSC) debates concerning the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Specifically, it will analyze the speeches delivered during 2025, it has been taken the four random meetings held in January-February 2025. Thus, **the material of this study** consists of four scripts of the following meetings: 9839<sup>th</sup>, 9859<sup>th</sup>, 9866<sup>th</sup>, and 9867<sup>th</sup>. It has been done to determine the correlation between specific linguistic features and the political position of the speaker. The goal is to understand how openly and to what extent each member country's position on the agenda about Russia and Ukraine is reflected in their diplomatic language.

**Setting objectives.** The purpose of the article is to examine the linguistic features of diplomatic language used in the United Nations Security Council, with a focus on how this language reflects the political positioning of member states regarding the ongoing war in Ukraine in 2025. This article seeks to analyze the characteristics, functions, and implications of diplomatic language, including its emotional component, evaluative markers, and pragmatic ambiguity. The research also addresses the challenges of maintaining neutrality in high-stakes geopolitical discourse and considers the benefits of linguistic analysis for understanding international relations and conflict diplomacy.

**Presenting the main material. Vocabulary peculiarities.** After having analysed 4 meetings of the UNSC, we have come to the conclusion, that the language used in the debates is highly polarized, reflecting a deep ideological and political schism between Member states, particularly the Western allies supporting Ukraine (France, UK, US, Denmark, Greece, Slovenia and so on) and the Russian Federation, with China and others adopting a generally more neutral stance focused on political settlement. Thus, we may see a few peculiarities:

- *Condemnatory and legalistic language.*

The prevailing tone from Western members is one of moral outrage and firm legal condemnation. For example: '*We condemn the indiscriminate strikes being stepped up against cities, civilians and energy infrastructure of Ukraine, in violation of international human law*' [9]. Typical vocabulary here is quite uncompromising with the elements of:

Aggression and violation: the conflict is repeatedly termed as '*Russia's full-scale invasion*' [9], '*unprovoked war of aggression*' [12], '*brazen violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law*', etc.

Crimes and accountability: attacks are described as '*indiscriminate strikes*' [9], '*unrelenting attacks*' [9], and so on.

Non-negotiable principles: core principles cannot be discussed or changed; they are '*sovereignty*' and '*territorial integrity*' [9].

- Counter-accusatory and justificatory.

The Russian Federation employs a distinct rhetoric aimed at delegitimizing the Ukrainian government and framing the conflict as a proxy war instigated by the West. This can be proved by the following elements:

Euphemisms and redefinition: the conflict is consistently referred to as the '*special military operation*' [9] or '*the conflict around Ukraine*' [9].

Denigration of Ukrainian leadership: Russian statements frequently use derogatory terms for Ukrainian authorities, such as '*the Kyiv regime*' [11], or '*the expired Ukrainian stage actor*' [11].

Blame shifting: Russia accuses the West of conducting '*dull anti-Russian mantras*' [9], utilizing the Council for '*propaganda and political score-settling*' [9], and '*being blinded by primitive Russophobia*' [9].

- Focus on dialogue.

Delegations like China and those from the Global South frequently use language that prioritizes the end to hostilities through negotiations. For example, there might be a call for '*dialogue and diplomacy*' [9], '*political solution*' [9] with an attempt to avoid '*polarization and confrontation*' [9].

To sum up, we can illustrate our finding of the vocabulary in the following table (see Table 1):

Judging from the data, we can sum up that the used language is quite ceremonial, but with elements of accusations, euphemisms, and emotional reactions to the heard information. The passive voice is everywhere. It is a common thing for diplomats when they want to speak without owning. But, the speeches were rather stylistic, let us have a look at Table 2.

We have noticed and calculated all the cases with elements of symbols/metaphors/parallelism/allusion and so on. Parallelism and repetition are used that often to concentrate on some important details, and be remembered, quoted. Unlike intertextuality, that is not only a reference, but some kind of rhetorical allies of the speakers.

**Syntactical peculiarities.** A notable stylistic feature, particularly in statements by Western delegations and Ukraine, is a frequent use of rhetorical emphasis and anaphora (repetition of a phrase in the beginning). These stylistic tools give a strong, repetitive rhetorical rhythm, emphasizing the non-negotiable nature of Ukrainian rights to have sovereignty, and the necessity of justice. For example: '*we will have peace in Ukraine only when Russia leaves Ukraine...* *We will have peace when Ukraine's sovereignty...are guaranteed. We will have peace when Ukrainian families feel safe*' [9] [an example of rhetorical emphasis on peace]. Or, let us have a look on another example of emphasis, in this case – on culpability: '*it was Russia and Russia alone that took the decision...* *It was Russia that chose to bring war back..*' [12] [repetitive sentence structures are used together with anaphora to emphasize the gravity of the current situation or the necessary path forward].

Table 1

### Language features of diplomatic speeches of the UNSC in 2025

Feature	9859	9862	9864	9866	Total
Formal register	58	61	60	63	<b>242</b>
Legal/diplomatic terminology	32	34	33	35	<b>134</b>
Emotional appeals	12	13	11	14	<b>50</b>
Historical references	11	9	10	9	<b>39</b>
Rhetorical questions	9	6	7	6	<b>28</b>
Passive constructions	21	22	20	23	<b>86</b>
Direct accusations	18	16	15	12	<b>61</b>
Euphemisms	6	5	4	4	<b>19</b>
Irony/sarcasm	3	2	2	2	<b>9</b>

Table 2

## Stylistic features diplomatic speeches of the UNSC in 2025

Device	9859	9862	9864	9866	Total
Parallelism	11	12	12	13	48
Repetition	16	17	18	18	69
Metaphor	6	5	4	4	19
Allusion	9	7	6	6	28
Contrastive framing	13	12	11	12	48
Symbolic phrasing	5	5	6	6	22
Enumerative structure	10	11	10	11	42
Intertextuality	3	3	2	2	10

Namely, we can identify two types of syntax. **Delegations supporting Ukraine** (the US, Denmark, France, Greece, and others) rely on syntactic precision to define Russia as the aggressor and to condition any future peace upon specific legal and territorial principles. For example, the current situation is described as '*devastation caused by the Russia Federation's full-scale invasion of their (Ukrainian) country*' [9] [the speaker uses a dependent clause to establish Russia's aggression as the direct cause of the suffering and devastation].

**And Russian syntax on the other hand.** Russia uses syntactic moves to challenge the framing of the full-scale invasion, delegitimizing the Ukrainian government, and shifting the focus to historical "roots". For example, Russian statements frequently frame the Ukrainian government as a pawn, using

complex prepositional and subordinate phrases. To be precise, it could be illustrated as '*it is the Western sponsors that are acting through the Kyiv regime*' [9] [this clause syntactically subordinates the call for a swift end to the conflict to a broader geopolitical discussion].

Non-aligned countries employ structures that prioritize process, clarity, and legal consistency to guide future diplomacy. For instance, key actions are framed as abstract nouns emphasizing collective, non-escalatory methods via '*dialogue and diplomacy*', '*mutual respect and recognition*', rather than through military intervention.

Across all four meetings, the discourse is dense, deliberate, and strategic. Every word is chosen very carefully. The Council is trying to promote peace, but the syntax reveals hesitation (see Table 3).

Table 3

## Syntactic features of diplomatic speeches of the UNSC

Pattern	9859	9862	9864	9866	Total
Complex sentences	52	55	54	58	219
Subordinate clauses	41	40	39	39	159
Nominalizations	26	27	28	28	109
Modal verbs	19	20	21	21	81
Conditional constructions	13	12	12	12	49
Parenthetical insertions	7	8	8	8	31
Passive voice	21	20	19	19	79
Declarative statements	78	80	81	82	321

In the gathered data we have found out, that complex sentences dominate. Hence, we are talking about the syntax of caution, and legal precision. Modal verbs express more desire than action. Declarative statements explain the current chain of events.

Thus, the syntax used during the debates on Ukraine often reflects the core geopolitical and legal positions of the speakers, employing carefully constructed sentence types to establish the chain of future actions and reaction of the present members to the heard information.

**Conclusions.** The conducted analysis demonstrates that the syntactic and rhetorical choices in the UNSC are not arbitrary but serve as deliberate tools to reinforce each delegation's geopolitical stance. Delegations supporting Ukraine use clear, understandable syntax and rhetorical repetition to highlight Russian aggression. In contrast to this, Russian representatives concentrate on complex and subordinate structures to reframe the narrative, delegitimize Ukrainian authority. Non-aligned countries favor neutral language that emphasizes diplomacy, legal principles, peaceful solutions.

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