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## NEOLOGISMS IN THE DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE OF ROMANCE- LANGUAGE COUNTRIES: SEMANTIC SHIFTS, TRANSLATION AND ENGLISH ADAPTATIONS

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*The study arises from the increasing role of English as the dominant language of international diplomacy and the growing presence of neologisms of Romance origin in diplomatic communication. Previous linguistic research has examined the adaptation of foreign terms in English. Still, little attention has been given to the specific influence of Italian, French, and Spanish, including the Rioplatense Spanish variant, on the formation of new diplomatic vocabulary. This gap prompts a focused investigation into how such lexemes are borrowed, reinterpreted, and semantically adapted in international, intercultural, or cross-cultural communication. This research aims to analyze the semantic transformation of neologisms derived from Romance languages in English diplomatic texts and to trace how their meanings evolve in connection with broader political, regional, and intercultural dynamics. The study uses qualitative semantic analysis of a selected corpus of over 100 authentic, publicly accessible international documents issued by diplomatic bodies, multilateral organizations, and foreign ministries between 2020 and 2025. The findings reveal a pattern of semantic narrowing and contextual shift in Romance-derived terms once integrated into English diplomatic discourse. These lexical units often lose part of their original cultural and pragmatic meanings while gaining new, function-specific connotations relevant to international cooperation, negotiation, and institutional discourse. Moreover, certain neologisms show varied interpretations depending on the linguistic and cultural background of the users, occasionally leading to asymmetries in mutual understanding. The study concludes that Romance-based neologisms play a key role in shaping modern diplomatic English. Their use reflects ongoing processes of linguistic globalization and intercultural negotiation. These findings help improve understanding of neologisms and ways of lexis enrichment, refine translation practices, terminological databases, and educational programs.*

**Keywords:** neologisms, diplomatic discourse, intercultural communication, context, international comprehensibility.

***Пономаренко О.В. Неологізми в дипломатичному дискурсі країн романського мовного ареалу: семантичні зрушення, переклад та адаптації англійською мовою***

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена зростанням ролі англійської мови як домінуючої мови міжнародної дипломатії та збільшенням присутності неологізмів романського походження в англомовному дипломатичному дискурсі. Попередні лінгвістичні дослідження вивчали адаптацію інших мовних термінів у англійській мові, але мало уваги приділялося специфічному впливу італійської, французької та іспанської мов, зокрема її аргентинського варіанту (ріоплатенсе, ріоплатської іспанської), на формування нової дипломатичної лексики. Ця прогалина спонукає до цілеспрямованого дослідження того, як такі лексеми запозичуються, переосмислюються та семантично адаптуються у міжнародній, міжкультурній чи крос-культурній комунікації. Мета цього дослідження – проаналізувати семантичну трансформацію неологізмів, запозичених із романських мов, в англійських дипломатичних текстах, а також простежити, як змінюються їх значення у зв'язку з ширшою політичною, регіональною та міжкультурною динамікою установами, багатосторонніми організаціями та міністерствами закордонних справ у 2020–2025 роках. Отримані дані свідчать про тенденцію до семантичного звуження та контекстуальних змін у термінах романського походження, котрі інтегруються до англійського дипломатичного дискурсу. Ці лексичні одиниці часто втрачають частину своїх первинних культурних і прагматичних значень, набуваючи при цьому нових, функціонально специфічних конотацій, пов'язаних із міжнародною співпрацею, переговорами та інституційним дискурсом. Більше того, певні неологізми демонструють різну інтерпретацію залежно від мовного та культурного походження користувачів, що іноді призводить до асиметрії у взаєморозумінні. У дослідженні зроблено висновок, що романські неологізми відіграють ключову роль у формуванні сучасної дипломатичної англійської мови. Їх використання відображає поточні процеси лінгвістичної глобалізації та міжкультурних переговорів. Ці висновки можуть покращити розуміння неологізмів і способів збагачення лексики, допомогти удосконалити перекладацьку практику, термінологічні бази даних і навчальні програми.

**Ключові слова:** неологізми, дипломатичний дискурс, міжкультурна комунікація, контекст, міжнародна зрозумілість.

## **Introduction.**

Diplomatic discourse has always been a mirror to the ever-changing political, cultural, and social notions of individual states and the global society. It truly reflects developments in meaning, showing the emergence of new lexical units designed to denote such concepts and the decay of outdated ones. It's a common practice for most languages, including the Romance languages, to coin new words for new converts. When these terms are introduced into English diplomatic discourse, they usually undergo semantic shifts, which can lead to potential misinterpretations or loss of some nuances and shades of their original meaning. This paper explores specific examples of such neologisms, analyzing their origins, meanings, and the complexities involved in their English adaptations.

Additionally, diplomatic discourse, by its very nature, echoes the geopolitical, cultural, and ideological transformations of the societies it represents. Romance-language countries, notably France, Spain, and Italy, have long traditions of diplomacy and lexical innovation in statecraft. It is logical and expected that, in their communication, diplomats of these nations continually generate neologisms to articulate newly emerging political realities, institutional configurations, or shifts in international alliances.

Unlike general language neologisms, diplomatic ones often have a functional purpose: to denote a new policy (e.g., *francophonie*), convey alignment or divergence (e.g., *iberoamericanismo*), or indicate regionally relevant strategies (e.g., *lusofonia*).

Such neologisms are rarely contained within national borders; through multilingual translation and institutional dissemination, they are adapted – sometimes imperfectly – into global English. This adaptation is not merely lexical but also semantic, frequently leading to meaning dilution, shifts in political connotation, or misinterpretation in target cultures (Mchedlishvili, 2017).

This paper seeks to provide an outlook on such neologisms, focusing on their creation, the semantic shifts they undergo, and the linguistic and cultural strategies applied in adapting them to English.

### **Theoretical Background.**

The ways neologisms are formed in different languages is a well-researched area in linguistics, particularly within morphology, sociolinguistics, and terminology studies. Bauer (2001) defines neologisms as lexical items that are either new in form or new in usage. In diplomatic discourse, they often arise institutionally rather than spontaneously, as they are frequently coined by governmental bodies or diplomatic institutions (e.g., *OIF*, *MERCOSUR*). Typically, these neologisms are embedded in culturally and ideologically specific frameworks, which makes their cross-linguistic transfer more complex and/or meaningful.

On the other hand, semantic shift, as outlined by Traugott and Dasher (2005), involves a change in a word's meaning over time, often in response to changing sociopolitical contexts. In diplomatic usage, such shifts are intentional and strategic. For instance, the noun '*solidarité*' in French diplomatic discourse may denote state-level cooperation, whereas its English equivalent '*solidarity*' may evoke civil or grassroots connotations. This semantic modification illustrates how conceptual content is reshaped during interlingual mediation.

Finally, as it has already become a tradition to analyse linguistic phenomena within a multidisciplinary approach, some provisions of translation studies are applied to the analysis of diplomatic discourse carried out in institutions (Pym, 2004; Schäffner, 1997). They provide insight into how neologisms travel linguistically. Functionalist approaches (such as the Skopos theory) argue that diplomatic translators prioritize function over form, leading to the domestication or foreignization of neologisms depending on context. However, such strategies can obscure some earlier connotations or create hybrid meanings detached from their source culture.

Recent studies (Mchedlishvili, 2017; Koskinen, 2008) emphasize the political nature of translation in supranational contexts, noting that terminology is often aligned with institutional ideologies. This provision supports the hypothesis that neologisms in diplomatic discourse are not only linguistic units but also ideological instruments that participate in shaping global discourse.

This article builds upon this body of research by focusing specifically on neologisms borrowed from Romance-language diplomatic traditions and their "re-semantisation" in English. While prior studies have acknowledged the role of translation in meaning transfer, there is a gap regarding how these borrowed terms operate symbolically and politically in global discourse.

Accordingly, the study has been conducted to answer the following research questions:

- What are the possible ways to create neologisms in English?
- How do Romance-language diplomatic neologisms transform semantically in English-language contexts?
- What ideological and communicative functions do they acquire or lose during this transformation?
- To what extent do translation strategies contribute to meaning shifts, and how do they reflect institutional priorities?
- What is the current meaning and usage of a new lexical unit?

By addressing these issues, the paper contributes to filling the conceptual and empirical gaps at the intersection of diplomatic discourse analysis, lexical innovation, and translation theory. It also draws upon prior authorial research on interlingual semantic transfer in institutional communication (Author, 2023), thereby extending the theoretical framework through a focused analysis of Romance-derived diplomatic neologisms in global English usage.

**Methodological notes.** This study employs a qualitative methodology grounded in discourse and translation analysis. The primary data set consists of 50 neologisms extracted from official diplomatic documents, multilingual glossaries, and institutional communications issued by international organizations such as the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), MERCOSUR, and the European Union. These documents were collected from open-access databases containing samples of diplomatic discourse dated between 2015 and 2025, to ensure temporal relevance and representativeness. The majority of the neologisms provided to further illustrate the findings of this research are dated 2020–2025.

To trace semantic shifts and functional transformations, the study used contrastive analysis between source texts in French, Spanish, and Italian, and their English equivalents. The selection prioritized terms that were explicitly coined in Romance-language diplomatic contexts and officially translated or referenced in English-language diplomatic discourse.

The study followed three main stages:

- 1) keyword search in diplomatic corpora to select relevant neologisms;
- 2) contextual and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) to determine pragmatic and ideological functions in both source and target languages;
- 3) translation mapping based on translation shift theory (Catford, 1965; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958) identifies lexical, semantic, and pragmatic transformations.

Potential limitations include the subjective nature of interpreting ideological functions and the restricted quantity of examples due to the specialized domain. However, to validate interpretation, parallel corpora were cross-checked with multilingual institutional glossaries (e.g., IATE, UNTERM), which reduced bias and ensured replicability. The methodology provides a consistent framework for identifying and analysing semantic and pragmatic shifts in neologisms as they move between diplomatic discourses of different cultures.

## **Results and Discussion.**

In the second half of the 2020s, the term ‘vaccine diplomacy’ became widely used in English-language diplomatic discourse as a response to the growing role of soft power in global health. The concept, which is borrowed from Romance languages – French ‘*diplomatie vaccinale*’ and Spanish ‘*diplomacia de vacunas*’ – refers to the phenomenon whereby states use vaccine supplies as a tool of foreign policy influence. Its emergence was triggered by the COVID-19 crisis, when

several countries (big vaccine producers) began actively supplying vaccines to other countries (which were not producing vaccines), not only for humanitarian reasons, but also to achieve strategic political goals (Foreign Affairs Committee, 2021; CFR, 2022).

In English, ‘vaccine diplomacy’ refers to the use of immunological resources as a diplomatic tool aimed at improving international relations, concluding favourable agreements, reducing tensions, or strengthening political influence. Unlike purely humanitarian aid, which presupposes selflessness, vaccine diplomacy implicitly contains an element of expectation of return – symbolic or practical. This is precisely where its instrumental significance lies: the vaccine is seen not as an end goal, but as a diplomatic ‘lever.’

The illocutionary function of this term in political discourse is informative with clear warning signs: for example, a British parliamentary report states that *"other states are using vaccine diplomacy to gain global influence"* (Foreign Affairs Committee, 2021). The statement presupposes that vaccination has become a new arena for geopolitical rivalry. The implication is that states that do not resort to such diplomacy voluntarily give up part of their influence, demonstrating either ethicality or geopolitical passivity.

The genre specificity of its use comes down to analytical reports, political speeches, and similar strategic documents. It requires restraint in its formulation, but the term ‘vaccine diplomacy’ itself is increasingly acquiring a negative connotation, especially in the Western information space. This is because, in the context of the pandemic, it has often been associated with the policy of some Eastern states, which has been perceived in the West as geopolitical expansion under the guise of humanitarian aid (Foreign Policy, 2021; CFR, 2022).

Thus, the term ‘vaccine diplomacy’ represents a pragmalinguistic change in the ways of referring to diplomatic activity, where medical geopolitics comes to the fore, combining material resources with symbolic power. Its function is not only to name a new diplomatic practice, but also to construct a political assessment of this practice as acceptable, ethical, or manipulative, depending on the speaker and the context of use.

In the 2020s–2025s, the term ‘city diplomacy’ became established in English-language diplomatic discourse as a neologism reflecting structural shifts in global governance. Its origins can be traced back to Romance languages, primarily French (*diplomatie des villes*) and Italian (*diplomazia urbana*), where the concept of municipal structures participating in international relations began to develop

actively in the early 2010s. In English the term was initially used in the field of intercultural exchange or urban development. Later, in the first half of the 2020s, it acquired a clear diplomatic meaning, particularly in official documents of the UN system and other international organisations. Here is the example of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) statement, released on the 19th January 2023: *"The City Diplomacy Lab... will contribute to promoting the principles and practice of city diplomacy in the context of multilateral dialogue and peacebuilding"* (UNECE, 2023).

Semantically, the term 'city diplomacy' refers to the institutional activities of municipalities aimed at participating in international dialogue, concluding agreements, and shaping global policies – particularly in the areas of climate, migration, sustainable development, and gender equality. In this context, cities act not only as objects of state policy implementation, but as full-fledged subjects of international law *de facto*, with their own interests, external partners, and political resources. A distinctive feature of this term is its role in the genres of official diplomatic communication: for instance, at the UN Mayors Forum in Geneva in 2023, it was emphasised that *"Cities are not only implementers of national policy. They are international actors with their own stakes in global issues"* (UNECE, 2023).

From a pragmatic point of view, the term city diplomacy performs a legitimising function, i.e., it does not simply name the phenomenon, but also gives it normative weight, recognising the right of urban actors to participate in the international process. Its illocutionary force lies in the affirmation of the new role of cities as autonomous subjects of diplomacy, which is transforming the classical model of centralised state foreign policy. The presupposition inherent in the use of the term lies in the recognition of the political subjectivity of the city. Implicitly, this lexeme hints at the need to integrate urban initiatives into national diplomatic strategy, as well as to rethink the horizontal hierarchy between states, cities, and international organisations. In the discursive dimension, 'city diplomacy' functions as a term that undermines the hegemony of Westphalian state-centric diplomacy: its presence in diplomatic communiqués indicates the growing role of decentralised actors in global politics.

Thus, 'city diplomacy' functions as both a linguistic neologism borrowed into English from the Romance traditions to describe urban political activity and a conceptual indicator of the profound evolution of modern diplomacy. It embodies a shift towards pluralism of actors in international governance, where cities cease to

be secondary identification units and take on the role of strategic players in building the inter-state order.

In the past decade, the term 'humanitarian diplomacy' gained prominence in international discourse as a neologism signifying a paradigmatic shift in the conduct and objectives of diplomacy. The term's origins can be traced to the convergence of humanitarian action and diplomatic engagement, with early usages observed in the rhetoric of international organisations such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. In French and Spanish – 'diplomatie humanitaire' and 'diplomacia humanitaria' accordingly – the concept had been present since the early 2000s, but it was during the following 10–15 years that it gained structured theoretical and practical application.

Initially appearing in NGO literature and conflict-resolution discourse, the term began to be formally adopted by international bodies and states to describe efforts to negotiate humanitarian access, protect civilians, and facilitate aid delivery in conflict zones. By the early 2020s, "humanitarian diplomacy" had become entrenched in policy documents, training programmes, and academic discussions, marking its transition from a descriptive phrase to a recognised strategic practice. A notable example can be found in the 2022 Humanitarian Policy of the International Committee of the Red Cross, used to define the concept under research as *"persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people"* (IFRC, 2022).

Semantically, the term denotes a specific subset of diplomatic activity aimed at negotiating humanitarian outcomes in situations of crisis, conflict, and disaster. It encompasses actions such as advocacy for international humanitarian law, negotiation of ceasefires for aid delivery, and engagement with non-state actors for the protection of civilians. The agents of humanitarian diplomacy are diverse – not only states and traditional diplomatic actors, but also international organisations, NGOs, and even religious or community leaders. In this sense, the term reflects the blurring of boundaries between political and humanitarian domains.

From a (socio)linguistic and pragmatic perspective, 'humanitarian diplomacy' serves a legitimising and mobilising function. It elevates humanitarian negotiations to the status of formal diplomatic engagement, thereby granting them normative and institutional weight. Its illocutionary force lies in the assertion that humanitarian concerns are not peripheral to diplomacy, but central to its modern mission. The presupposition embedded in the term is that diplomacy must



incorporate ethical imperatives and protection mandates, rather than focus solely on state interests or geopolitical equilibrium.

Discursively, the lexical unit 'humanitarian diplomacy' reflects a shift towards value-based diplomacy in international relations. It contests the realism-driven notion of diplomacy as merely an extension of national interest, introducing a normative framework where moral responsibility, human rights, and dignity inform foreign policy decisions. In this light, the term contributes to the diversification of diplomatic paradigms, bringing humanitarian actors into closer interaction with formal diplomatic channels and encouraging a hybridisation of roles and responsibilities.

Thus, 'humanitarian diplomacy' is more than a descriptive term: it is a discursive marker of transformation within global governance. It signals the institutionalisation of humanitarian values within diplomatic practice and recognises the increasing role of non-traditional actors in shaping international responses to crises. As such, the term illustrates the ongoing pluralisation of diplomacy, where humanitarian imperatives gain prominence alongside strategic objectives.

So, the above-presented analysis revealed three dominant patterns in the semantic adaptation of Romance-language diplomatic neologisms into English: semantic simplification, contextual generalization, and pragmatic shift.

First, semantic simplification occurred in over 60% of the examined examples when terms lost their institutional or state-level dimensions in favour of broader civil or informal interpretations. This indicates a trend toward reducing ideologically marked content during translation.

Secondly, contextual generalization was observed in neologisms tied to region-specific strategies, frequently used in English diplomatic discourse without adequate clarification of their political frameworks, resulting in vague or ambiguous usage. This weakens their symbolic power and creates interpretive gaps among international audiences.

Finally, pragmatic shift was particularly evident in terms coined within multilateral frameworks, where neologisms served strategic or persuasive purposes. Such lexical units are often translated without their embedded cultural-historical connotations, making them appear as mere geographic labels rather than an ideological construct. This shift underscores how translation filters diplomatic intent through institutional norms and audience expectations.

These findings support the hypothesis that English adaptations of diplomatic neologisms from Romance languages often downplay specific political or ideological content in favour of accessibility or neutrality. While this promotes international comprehensibility, it risks eroding the original discursive functions and ideological nuance of the terms.

The results highlight the need for more context-sensitive translation practices in multilateral diplomacy and contribute to a deeper understanding of how power, ideology, and language interact in international institutional settings.

### **Conclusions and Perspectives.**

This study has demonstrated that diplomatic neologisms originating from Romance-language countries undergo notable semantic and pragmatic transformations when integrated into English-language diplomatic discourse. The research identified dominant patterns such as simplification, generalization, and ideological dilution, which reflect the complex interplay between language, power, and cultural framing in international communication.

The originality of the study lies in its focused analysis of Romance-origin neologisms within diplomatic contexts. The article contributes to the field by linking lexical innovation with institutional discourse, highlighting how language mediates diplomatic intent and global narratives. It also provides a replicable framework for analysing similar phenomena across other language areas.

The findings have practical relevance for translators, policy drafters, and diplomats operating in multilingual environments. Greater awareness of semantic shifts can improve intercultural understanding, mitigate misinterpretations, and preserve the strategic functions of diplomatic terminology.

Nevertheless, the study is limited by its reliance on official corpora and institutional texts, which may not fully capture informal or emergent usage. Moreover, the interpretation of ideological implications, while methodologically grounded, remains partly subjective.

Future research could expand the corpus to include media coverage of diplomatic events, explore recipient audience interpretations, and apply comparative analysis to neologisms from non-Romance languages. There is also scope for developing typologies of diplomatic neologisms by function, ideological orientation, or institutional source.

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