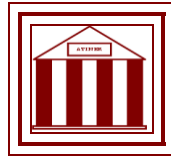


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French Loan Words in the Language of  
Diplomatic Protocol**

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## **Challenges in Teaching Latin and French Loan Words in the Language of Diplomatic Protocol**

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### **Abstract**

This paper gives a brief outline of the work we have undertaken at the Faculty of International Relations, Yerevan State University, to ensure the acquisition of Latin and French loan words in the language of diplomacy, the challenges we have faced in the teaching process and the ways to overcome them and move forward. The paper touches upon some peculiarities of teaching methods intended at the effective acquisition of the abovementioned loan words. Being an essential part of language learning, vocabulary acquisition and development is a vital part in teaching the language of diplomacy in general, and that of diplomatic protocol in particular. Effective teaching of notions and terms in the language of diplomatic protocol needs special attention since it develops both students' abilities and knowledge for successful communication in their occupation. Most professions employ phrases and terminology specific to their career, and diplomacy is no different. Diplomatic language of the present day is rich in many words and expressions of French, Latin, Greek origin, which have made the greatest contribution to the English diplomatic word stock, both directly and indirectly. Although English is clearly a Germanic language and doesn't belong to the Romance family, it will forever be bound to Latin and French. Borrowings from Greek are heavy in sciences and technology, while French and Latin loan words prevail in the English diplomatic language. The paper will highlight the overall picture of the borrowings in the target sublanguage which should be taken into consideration in the process of teaching the language of diplomatic protocol and ensuring the acquisition of loan words.

### **Keywords:**

## **Introduction**

The language of diplomacy is a clear reflection of the long history of diplomatic communication which has always played a vital role in the establishment and maintenance of international relations. Diplomatic language is characterized by a careful selection of words and expressions, specific repetitive patterns which have developed in the course of language history (Kashchyshyn, 2013). Many professions employ terminology specific to the field and diplomacy is not an exception. As any other language, the language of diplomacy in general, and that of diplomatic protocol in particular has its peculiarities, specific vocabulary, set phrases, which future diplomats should use in their diplomatic activity. In this sense, the language of diplomatic protocol denotes the specific form of language which affords diplomats an opportunity to express complicated and potentially controversial ideas without being offensive and impolite (Burhanudeen, 2003). Effective teaching of notions and terms in the language of diplomatic protocol needs special attention since it develops both students' abilities and knowledge for successful communication in their occupation. Being an indispensable part of language learning, vocabulary acquisition and its development play a crucial role in teaching the language of diplomatic protocol. English owes its exceptionally large vocabulary due to its ability to borrow words from other languages; consequently, diplomatic language of the present day is rich in many words and word combinations which are of Latin, French, Greek origin (Coleman, 1995; Jespersen, 1982). Thus, in the teaching process the dual nature of the language of diplomatic protocol deserves a special mention, as it includes both English terms and the ones borrowed from Latin and French – the languages which in the course of history made the largest contribution to the language of diplomacy and are considered its key terminological components (Rayevskaya, 1957).

## **Loan Words: Historical Perspective**

In order to ensure a full understanding of terminology in the language of diplomatic protocol, students should first get an idea about loan words (both assimilated and non-assimilated) borrowed and used in the target sublanguage. Diplomatic vocabulary comprises both terms from different areas of the same language (English, in the given case) and loan words from other languages – predominantly Latin, French and, Greek via other languages (Durkin, 2014). As far as the first case is concerned, it should be mentioned that diplomatic vocabulary is a mixture of different terminologies, and it is natural that in the course of time terms from other areas of the language enriched the diplomatic word stock and became an inseparable part of the language of diplomacy. First of all, these were the areas closely connected with that of diplomacy, i.e. legal and economic sublanguages, which have always played a special role in the formation of the diplomatic vocabulary. As far as the second case is concerned,

an insight into historical aspect of borrowings from other languages should be made (Kurbulija and Slavik, 2001). From the historical perspective, the language of diplomatic protocol consists of words from different languages, though loan terms from Latin and French prevail. The history of the evolution and development of the English language clearly shows the ability of English to borrow words and terms from other languages, mainly those the bearers of which had more or less direct contacts with the English nation. Latin and French, as well as Greek (via other languages) stand out as the main contributors to the diplomatic word-stock as they account for the overwhelming proportion of loan terms in the vocabulary of diplomatic protocol (Rayevskaya, 1957). To fully grasp their nature and meaning the student should get acquainted with the history of these terms since the full understanding of the terms and their history will guarantee the target outcome: the acquisition and the correct usage of loan words.

### **Peculiarities of Teaching Latin Borrowings in the Language of Diplomatic Protocol**

Latin was one of the languages that had an unparalleled influence on the language of diplomacy since its emergence as a sublanguage due to the fact that it was the language of an educated and sophisticated civilization. It was also the language through which most Greek words penetrated into English. A crucial event for the evolution of English diplomatic language was the adoption and expansion of Christianity, which promoted writing in Latin. Gradually its influence extended to the sphere of diplomacy due to the fact that both the Church and the law were involved with international affairs. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century Latin was considered the lingua franca of diplomacy (Kashchysyn, 2013), consequently, an understanding of Latin was of utmost importance to a diplomat.

While speaking about the influence of Latin in the language of diplomatic protocol we should bear in mind the two types of borrowings: 1) borrowings that over the course of language history were assimilated into the English language, and 2) non-assimilated borrowings, which deserve special attention in terms of both their acquisition by students and their correct usage in the language of diplomatic protocol.

Borrowings of the first type mostly indicate notions of diplomacy, diplomatic posts, main types of diplomatic activity; these words penetrated into the English language and have become English both in their form and pronunciation. From this point of view students don't face much difficulty either in acquiring and remembering the terms or in their pronunciation. Here, the task of a teacher is to give a brief historical background of the term, i.e. when and why it was borrowed, what it denoted in Latin, how its meaning changed over time and what it signifies in the present-day language of diplomatic protocol: all of the mentioned above has proved to arouse interest in students and help them in the process of acquiring and remembering loan

words. Thus, students may come across numerous examples of such terms the definition and the original meaning of which may be very useful in the process of learning both in terms of the acquisition of new words and in terms of gaining knowledge in the given field, e.g.:

*Consul* – the word was borrowed directly from Latin *consul* meaning: “magistrate in ancient Rome”. In modern sense its definition reads as follows: “an official appointed by a state to live in a foreign country and to represent the interests of its subjects in a foreign place”.

*Legation* – the word was derived directly from Latin *legatio* meaning “the office of an ambassador”. In English it is defined as “1) a diplomatic mission headed by a minister; 2) the official residence and office of a diplomatic minister”.

*Nuncio* – the word penetrated into English from Latin *nuntius* via Italian *nunzio* which means “messenger” or “envoy”. Now the word denotes a Vatican representative accredited as an ambassador to a civil government that maintains official diplomatic relations with the Holy See.

*Plenipotentiary* – the word came into English use directly from Latin *plenipotens* meaning “having full power” and is defined as “a person with full powers to act on behalf of his or her government, especially in a foreign country”.

In the process of studying the definition and the origins of key notions and terms, students may come across the words that passed through more than one language before being included in the English diplomatic word-stock. The following notions may serve as examples:

*Diplomacy* – the word’s origin lies in Greek *diploma* – “license, chart”, originally “paper folded in two”. Though the word *diploma* then appears in Latin meaning “an official document conferring a privilege, often a permit to travel”, it was borrowed from French *diplomatie* which evolved from the French term *diplomate*, which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century referred to a person authorized to negotiate on behalf of a state. The present-day definition of the word *diplomacy* is as follows: “1. the management of relations between countries, esp by each country’s representatives abroad; 2. the art or science of conducting negotiations”.

*Protocol* – the word originated from Greek *protokollon* meaning “first sheet glued onto a manuscript”; the word *protocollum* appears in Latin meaning “draft”. Sense developed in Medieval Latin and French from “official account” to “diplomatic document”, and finally, in French, to “formula of diplomatic etiquette”. The English definition of the word *protocol* is as follows: “1) the system of rules

governing formal occasions; 2) the first or original version of an agreement in writing”.

Great importance is attached to the teaching of non-assimilated loan words in the language of diplomatic protocol as they are considered ready-made formulas and make up a special layer in the standard vocabulary of diplomatic language. Being non-assimilated in the English language they present considerable difficulty for students; therefore, many aspects should be taken into consideration in the teaching process, such as:

1. **meaning** – here, the task of the teacher is to present the definition of the term, to acquaint the students with its, if any, English equivalent, to explain how the meaning of the term has changed or shifted from its original one when used in the language of diplomacy;
2. **pronunciation** – at this point the task of the teacher is to acquaint the students with pronunciation options as there are words that are pronounced according to Latin rules, or there may be words that have both Latin and their correspondent English options;
3. **environment** – the teacher should illustrate how, i.e. in what word combinations the terms appear in the sentence. As far as this point is concerned it should be mentioned that these terms generally occur in combination with English words;
4. **plural form** – generally, Latin words have different rules of forming plural, besides, there may be words the plural of which is formed according to the rules of the English language, consequently, the task of the teacher is to acquaint the students with all possible forms.

The following examples illustrate what the teacher should pay attention to while introducing new terms:

*Ad hoc* – 1) *meaning*: a Latin phrase meaning “for this, for a particular purpose only”; 2) *pronunciation*: [æd'høk]; 3) *environment*: (Latin+English) ad hoc committee, ad hoc diplomacy, ad hoc decisions.

*Ad interim* – 1) *meaning*: a Latin phrase meaning “in the meantime”, “for the intervening time”, is used to denote a diplomatic officer who acts in place of an ambassador, it is also abbreviated to *ad int*; 2) *pronunciation*: [æd'interim]; 3) *environment*: (Latin+English) ad interim measures, to serve ad interim.

*De facto* – 1) *meaning*: a Latin phrase which in law often means “in practice but not necessarily ordained by law”, or “in practice or actuality, but not officially established”; 2) *pronunciation*: the term can be pronounced either in its Latin form [de: 'fakto:] or the English

one [di 'fæktou, dei]; 3) *environment*: (Latin+English) de facto recognition, de facto freedom, to declare de facto.

*De jure* – 1) *meaning*: a Latin term used instead of “in practice” or “in law” when describing political or legal situations; 2) *pronunciation*: this term also has two options for pronunciation: the Latin one [de 'ju:re] and the English one [di 'dzuərei]; 3) *environment*: (Latin+English) de jure recognition.

*Persona non grata* – 1) *meaning*: a Latin word meaning “unacceptable or unwelcome person”; 2) *pronunciation*: [pə:'səunə nɒn 'gra:tə]; 3) *environment*: to declare persona non grata; 4) *plural*: personae non gratae [pə:'səuni: nɒn 'gra:ti].

*Modus vivendi* – 1) *meaning*: a Latin phrase signifying an agreement between those whose opinions differ, with a corresponding English expression “agree to disagree”. “Modus” means “mode, way or method”, “vivendi” means “of living”. But in diplomacy it is usually an instrument for establishing an international accord of a temporary nature; 2) *pronunciation*: the term has two types of pronunciation ['mɔdəs vi'vendi:; vendai]; 3) *environment*: (English+Latin) to establish a modus vivendi, to reach a modus vivendi; 4) *plural*: modi vivendi ['mɔdi: vi'vendi:; 'mɔdai vi'vendai].

### **Peculiarities of Teaching French Borrowings in the Language of Diplomatic Protocol**

The other major contributor to the English diplomatic terminology is French the influence of which on the English language of diplomacy is obviously huge – numerous words and word combinations currently in use have their origins in the French language. As a direct result of the Norman Conquest (1066) French words and word combinations constituted about a third of the English vocabulary as French was the language of official documents and maintained its status as England’s diplomatic language. These and a number of other historical events led to the assimilation of many borrowings into the English language in the sphere of diplomacy. Soon French became the language confined to the diplomatic profession. Whereas there were words that in the course of time assimilated into the English language, diplomatic French was also full of terms for which there were no English equivalents. This accounts for the appearance of non-assimilated French loan words (Gallicisms). They mainly denote some of the procedures and practices of diplomacy, the conceptual apparatus of diplomacy, ranks of representatives, ideas and principles with which diplomacy operates as the science and art of international relations (Kashchyshyn, 2013).

In the process of teaching the language of diplomatic protocol in English special attention should be paid to the acquisition and remembering of French non-assimilated loan words by students, as they denote, as it was mentioned



above, key notions, ideas, and positions in diplomacy. Special attention should also be paid to their spelling and pronunciation, and, in certain cases, to the use of feminine gender. Sound knowledge of all of the mentioned above will guarantee proper understanding and use of French loan words in the English diplomatic language. Thus, for example, while introducing diplomatic ranks, which are non-assimilated French loan words, the following way of explanation is observed: *chargé d'affaires*, the students should first be given the definition of the term, i.e. literally “charged with affairs” – the lowest rank of diplomatic representative; the plural of the term – *chargés d'affaires*; and, if the diplomat is female – *chargée d'affaires*. The “*d'affaires*” is always in the plural form and should be lowercase even if *chargé* is capitalized. The students should also be presented with another interesting term from the point of view of combination of French and Latin: *chargé d'affaires ad interim* (French+Latin). They should differentiate between the following two terms as well: *chargé d'affaires ad interim (a.i.)* – a diplomatic officer posted on a temporary assignment as chief of a diplomatic mission in the absence of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, e. g., in the interim period before the appointment of a new ambassador, during the ambassador’s leave of absence, during the time when the ambassador is recalled for consultations to the headquarters, etc.; and *chargé d'affaires en pied (e.p.)* – a diplomatic officer posted on a long-term assignment as chief of a diplomatic mission to which the sending state did not delegate its Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. The appointment of a *chargé d'affaires e. p.* may also represent a political signal when a state is not interested in promoting mutual relations to a full-fledged ambassadorial level.

The following terms may serve as examples:

*Attaché* – junior officer attached to the staff of an ambassador, literally “attached”. In terms of pronunciation it has two forms: [ə'tæʃeɪ] and French [ataʃe].

*Doyen* – the word comes from Greek *dekanos* through Latin *decanus*; it also has its English equivalent – *dean*. As to its pronunciation, it has two forms: French [dwayɛ] and English ['dɔɪən]. The term also has the feminine form: *doyenne* [dɔi'ɛn].

Students should also be acquainted with non-assimilated French loan terms which have their corresponding English equivalents. The acquisition of these non-assimilated loan words will be easily comprehended if the corresponding English equivalents are presented. For example: French *tête-à-tête*, *vis-à-vis*, English *face to face*.

*Tête-à-tête* – a French word which literally means *head-to-head*. As to its pronunciation it has the following forms: [ˌtɛta'tɛt, ˌtɛta:'tɛt]. Students may find the following information very useful in terms of the use of the term *tête-à-tête*: it may be used as a noun, an adjective

and an adverb: 1) n. – a private conversation between two people; 2) adj. – confidential, private, 3) adv. – intimately, in private.

*Vis-à-vis* – a French phrase meaning “face to face”. As to its usage, it is used as a noun, an adverb or an adjective, or a preposition: 1) n. – a person or thing that is situated opposite to another; counterpart; 2) adv., adj. – face-to-face, opposite; 3) prep. – in relation to, regarding.

### **Teaching Methodology**

To facilitate the acquisition and correct usage of loan words a language teacher should be innovative and proficient in the choice and application of various methodologies pertinent to teaching loan words in the language of diplomatic protocol. The process of learning loan words can be made interactive and interesting with the introduction of appropriate vocabulary exercises. It is preferable to give the definition and the English equivalent (if any) of the loan word without using translation. The definition will enable the students to fully grasp the meaning and usage of the loan word and will facilitate the comprehension of the text. Another effective method of teaching loan words is to teach the vocabulary in context. New loan words and their etymology should be introduced to students before reading the text: the etymological aspect of loan words is of great importance as it provides an insight into the correct usage of the term. One of the effective ways of memorizing loan words is the task of finding synonyms for each word on the list where synonyms may be perceived and studied as their definitions. It has also proved very helpful for students to have a kind of exercise where there are sentences containing italicized words from the study list, and here the task of a student is to decide which collocations make sense in the given context. There is still another type of exercise where students are introduced a relatively brief passage that includes eight to ten loan words from the study list. Then these words are omitted and blanks are left for students to complete. This modified assessment will force students to scrutinize the context and have a deeper understanding and usage of loan words.

There are countless additional methodologies that teachers can employ to assist students in building up and enriching their vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge is something that expands and deepens over the course of years.

### **Conclusion**

Effective teaching of loan words in the language of diplomacy is really in need of immediate attention. To make diplomatic communication effective it is crucial to get acquainted with loan words as they prevail in the language of Diplomatic Protocol. French and Latin loan words have enriched the English vocabulary and become an inseparable part of the language of diplomacy. While helping students acquire these loan words, a number of aspects should

be taken into consideration in the teaching process, namely, the etymology of the term, its historical background, which provides a deeper understanding of the original meaning; consequently, the evolution of the term and its present-day usage in the language of Diplomatic Protocol should be presented afterwards. While dealing with non-assimilated loan words, further information has proved to be relevant in the teaching process, exactly, the pronunciation of the term, the formation of its plural, if any, as well as the environment in which it is used since the correct usage invariably secures effective communication. The use of loan words is highly specific and exacting since wrong variations may have significant and sometimes even irreversible consequences. In terms of language skills, diplomats are to be well aware of the correct usage of loan words and have to operate effectively within the fast changing landscape of global engagement and maintain an influential voice on a global stage.

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