



## **LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF EUPHEMISMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES**

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### **Abstract**

The article discusses the discursive characteristics of euphemisms, their role in comparative languages, their study, and general classification. It also focuses on linguists' scientific and theoretical perspectives on euphemisms, summarizing their distinctive features.

**Keywords:** Language, speech, thinking, euphemism, euphemism, efema, discourse, taboo, linguistic culture, pragmatics, system, norm, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, proverb, saying.

### **Introduction**

Language is the most important means of communication among humans. People without language cannot achieve complete communication. Without language, thinking is impossible; that is, a person cannot understand reality and their place in it. Naturally, this raises questions about the relationship between language and thought. If language is not a natural phenomenon, then its place is among social phenomena. To determine how correct this assertion is and to obtain a clear answer, it is necessary to clarify the role of language among other social phenomena. The common aspect of language with other social phenomena is that language is a necessary condition for the existence and development of human society and, as an element of spiritual culture, cannot be conceived separately from materiality, just like all other social phenomena.

Language has unique characteristics. At the same time, it serves as a means of exchanging thoughts. There are two opposing and equally incorrect tendencies regarding this issue: 1) separating language from thought and thought from language; 2) defining language and thought together. Language is the property of



the community, allowing communication among its members and enabling them to store necessary information about any events in human material and spiritual life. As a communal property, language has developed over the centuries.

When discussing the discursive characteristics of euphemisms, their role in comparative languages, their study, and general classification, it is important to emphasize that they express the national, cultural, social, and political identity of a people within their psyche, the behavior of individuals, their way of life, and particularly in the realm of discourse. "The place and necessity of language in the development of nations, states, and societies is an extremely pressing issue. Language, nation, and society are essentially interconnected and interdependent concepts. The values of a people with developed language, culture, literature, and art expand based on dialectical laws. The progression of a nation primarily resonates in the literary language of the people, specifically reflected in its vocabulary."

Each individual establishes communication using the characteristics of their behavior and communication culture. Every individual forms a certain environment in which they engage with others, utilizing various means to the extent of their abilities in communication and interaction. Therefore, when characterizing the social nature of language, it is appropriate to consider language and folk culture, as well as the societal dimensions of language, as a dialectical unity. The process of cultural development in any society is closely connected to the language serving it, and along with this, language itself exerts influence over societal development. Language has helped humanity emerge from the animal world, achieve economic advancement, unify into political organizations, enhance their thinking, combat natural forces, and attain a level of progress, and it will continue to do so.

Observations show that in recent years, the strengthening of relationships between languages and cultures has increased interest in various people's communication cultures among philosophers, linguists, literary scholars, translators, and even sociologists and psychologists, as well as in the stylistic features that ensure the charm and impact of speech, such as various linguistic devices, metaphors, metonymies, synecdoche, proverbs, sayings, and folklore, along with national expressions and customs, being studied within linguistic and cultural norms. However, linguists have paid less attention to the scientific and theoretical aspects

of euphemisms. Their unique characteristics have not been given due consideration. This work signifies a preliminary focus on these issues.

In the context of societal speech situations, instead of coarse lexical units that contradict etiquette norms, stylistically neutral and colorful words, appealing word combinations, and phraseological units are used. The discourse process prompts an exploration of the internal possibilities of language and encourages the establishment of effective communicative exchanges with the addressee.

In linguistics, there is the term "euphemization." This term denotes the process of studying the conditions under which euphemisms arise. Euphemisms are not just linguistic phenomena; they hold significant importance in cultural development as well. Although euphemism occupies a place in the lexical level of language, it represents a complex linguistic phenomenon that showcases structural diversity. Euphemism comes from the Greek words "euphemismos," where "eu" means good and "phemi" means I speak, referring to the use of emotionally normative synonyms or phrases in place of indecent or coarse words used toward individuals. In expressive language, the discourse serves as a "mysterious curtain" that prevents violations of the etiquette of speech culture, thus ensuring its observance.

## Literature Review

Euphemism has been a complex linguistic phenomenon that has attracted the attention of researchers for a long time, yet not all of its aspects have been thoroughly studied. To date, there are no universally accepted clear criteria for defining euphemism, and there is no consensus regarding the boundaries of euphemism and the classification of euphemistic methods. Nevertheless, euphemisms have been present in human speech since ancient times.

I.V. Arnold briefly noted in his work the lexical meaning and definition of euphemism in the English language, its historical attraction for scholars, and its subsequent moral implications. For example, he discusses how in every religion, the name of God has been euphemized. In English, instead of the word "die," euphemisms such as "to pass from this world," "to pass from the world," "to pass away," and "to close one's eyes" are used. Additionally, for the word "dead," alternatives like "deceased," "may they rest in peace," and "passed from the world" are employed to make speech more appealing and to mitigate its negative impact on the listener.

According to A.M. Katsev, linguistic taboo serves as a "strong tool in the process of its creation," indicating that taboo is considered an important factor in the emergence of euphemisms. The term "euphemism" in English was first mentioned by T. Blount in 1656 in his work "Glossography," where it is interpreted as a linguistic phenomenon that means "to interpret a bad word in a good or positive way."

From the late 19th century, taboo and euphemisms began to be studied from a linguistic perspective. A. Mayo, by examining the linguistic characteristics of taboo and euphemisms in ancient languages, referred to this process as a change in word semantics. In the 1960s to 1980s, taboo and euphemisms were studied extensively by researchers such as S. Vidlak, J. Kay, and D. Lawrence. Later researchers like E. Partridge, A. Richard Spears, J.S. Neaman, C. Silver, D. Oaks, K. Allan, and others contributed to this exploration. Lexical materials up to that time were organized and reflected in specialized dictionaries.

In English lexicography, euphemisms are included in explanatory dictionaries. Although there are inconsistencies in the theory of taboo and euphemism, their general signs and characteristics have been identified. Taboo and euphemisms have been partially studied by many Turkic peoples, particularly by Kazakh, Turkmen, Altai, Azerbaijani, and Uzbek linguists. Notable scholars include S. Altayev, N. Ismatullaev, and N.M. Jabbarov. It is essential to highlight the dissertation work of Uzbek linguist N. Ismatullaev, who collected and analyzed information on taboo and euphemism, offered his insights, and arrived at specific conclusions. This research not only contributes significantly to Uzbek linguistics but also provides a fresh perspective on the issue of euphemism in all Turkic linguistics. Many Turkic scholars who study the phenomenon of euphemism in language consider this research as a foundational work.

### **Research Methodology**

Euphemism serves the function of softening the meaning of words. Sources provide the following scientific interpretation of euphemisms: "With the development of language, its euphemistic layer also evolves. New forms of euphemism emerge based on new moral standards and perspectives. There are euphemisms that arise in response to specific speech situations, the meanings of which often clarify through the text. For example, in the sentence 'Until we hand over Ra'no, it seems

that it won't rain,' (A. Qodiriy), the euphemism 'hand over' is used in place of the more direct phrase 'give to the ground' from the perspective of speech etiquette. Euphemistic expressions are widely used in speech. Lexicographic studies highlight that a significant portion of dictionaries consists of euphemisms. "Euphemism is a neutral word or descriptive phrase devoid of emotional coloring, primarily used to replace coarse or unacceptable words and expressions." Euphemism manifests itself in the relationship between language and thought. With the help of euphemisms, conversations among interlocutors are organized in a sincere and gentle manner.

A. Omonturdiyev has noted euphemism as an urgent topic that should have already found its solution as an object of stylistic study. The scholar has researched the euphemistic foundations of Uzbek speech more extensively than others. He believes that euphemisms should be studied from etymological and socio-cultural aspects. He was the first to emphasize the necessity of distinguishing speech units within euphemisms and drew attention to general and specific, graded methods of expression. This classificatory research can provide more practical information about euphemistic units in the Uzbek language.

Over time, the development of language and the solutions to global problems necessitate raising stylistics to the level of rhetoric, including the fundamental research of professional speech in all fields—such as animal husbandry, hunting, agriculture, law, journalism, diplomacy, storytelling, medicine, wrestling, crafting, sewing, and blacksmithing—and addressing issues like documenting their euphemistic tools. A. Omonturdiyev has dedicated his doctoral dissertation titled "Euphemism in Professional Speech" to the description of specific field euphemisms from an ethnolinguistic perspective. This work investigates euphemisms that arise in connection with the life, lifestyle, worldview, customs, traditions, and ceremonies of herders. Additionally, B. O'rinboyev, in several of his works addressing spoken language, has expressed valuable insights regarding the phenomenon of euphemism.

Other linguistic scholars also express opinions on euphemism in their research. For instance, H. Shamsiddinov presents his thoughts on the euphemistic functional-semantic synonyms of words, while A. Mamatov dedicates part of his doctoral dissertation to the euphemic and dysphoric formation of phraseologisms. Euphemistic meaning is also emphasized in some works related to artistic

language. In particular, scholar Z. Kholmanova, who has conducted a special study on the lexicon of “Boburnoma,” has presented some considerations regarding the euphemisms used therein. The scholar emphasizes that the euphemistic expressions in “Boburnoma” provide a grounded understanding of the semantic structure, emotional-expressive qualities of the old Uzbek literary language lexicon, and the author's linguistic mastery and artistic depiction methods. The work analyzes the euphemistic units of the concept of death and describes the forms used for specific semantic-stylistic purposes.

### Results and Their Analysis

Significant work on euphemisms is evident in the field of linguistics. One prominent figure is the British linguist Ravson (1981), who compiled the "Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Forms of Communication," focusing on euphemisms in the English language. His research not only encompasses the history of English euphemisms but also opens a broad discussion on their characteristics, definitions, categories, and various related issues, transforming his work into a classic reference in the study of euphemisms.

American linguists, including Ravson, J.S. Newman, and C.C. Silver (1983), published "Pleasing Words: Euphemisms," where the author discusses all aspects relevant to euphemisms in the English language. They categorized euphemisms, provided detailed studies on their origins and usage, and produced what is considered one of the most significant and valuable scientific works on English euphemisms. The theories they created serve as a foundation for research into English euphemisms and hold immense significance in studies of euphemisms in the Korean language as well.

Turning our attention to the classification of euphemisms, each linguist who has engaged with the phenomenon has attempted to implement classifications based on various features to some extent. While this phenomenon remains unique like other linguistic units, these classifications focus on different aspects of euphemisms, and the results obtained vary. Although these diversities may appear contradictory, it is important to emphasize that, in reality, they serve to complement each other. The Russian linguist R.A. Budagov [20] proposes to divide euphemisms into two main categories:

a) Literary language euphemisms:

b) Various jargon euphemisms. The first category includes euphemisms that arise from the attempt to avoid using coarse language (for example, the euphemism "pochyotny vozrast" used instead of the word "starosti").

R.A. Budagov separately classifies contextual euphemisms. These are relatively more sophisticated and based on the character of the person expressing the thought and the context of the text. Contextual euphemisms are labeled as occasional euphemisms by Y.P. Senichkina. They always emerge in discourse and meet all the demands of the euphemism phenomenon, but lack a fixed form. Typically, such euphemisms are figurative and metaphorical in nature. A.M. Kasev also acknowledges this type of euphemism, asserting that occasional euphemisms possess a strong euphemistic influence (color). They are new and not yet incorporated into standard forms. In addition to occasional euphemisms, Y.P. Senichkina also identifies the following categories: euphemisms that have their own established forms and are known to the speaker, euphemisms whose origins are unknown to the speaker (related to a particular person, object, or event), as well as historical euphemisms and dysphemisms [21]. Among the classifications, thematic classification is regarded as the most substantial. In this regard, the classification conducted by R. Holder is noteworthy. He categorizes euphemisms into 60 subcategories from a lexical-semantic perspective, reflecting the diversity of the denotative content of euphemisms [22].

A.M. Kasev [17] divides euphemisms into ten thematic circles:

- 1) Names of divine powers;
- 2) Terms related to death and illness;
- 3) Names associated with flaws;
- 4) Gender-related names;
- 5) Names indicating poverty;
- 6) Names related to certain professions;
- 7) Names concerning mental and physical disabilities;
- 8) Names of clothing items.

The classification of the phenomenon studied has also garnered the attention of Uzbek linguists. N. Ismatullaev [16] categorizes euphemisms into five major groups:

- 1) Euphemisms related to taboos (names of poisonous insects; names of predators; names of diseases; spouses avoiding naming each other; euphemisms found in the language of women);
- 2) Euphemisms related to superstition and rituals;
- 3) Euphemisms used instead of coarse, awkward-to-say words and phrases;
- 4) Euphemisms used for rhetorical embellishment, uplift, and religious purposes;
- 5) Stylistic euphemisms.

The thematic grouping of expressions is also reflected in the scientific work researched by A. Omonturdiev [18]:

- 1) Euphemistic devices related to marriage;
- 2) Euphemistic devices associated with indecency;
- 3) Euphemistic devices concerning intimate relationships;
- 4) Euphemistic devices related to forms of address;
- 5) Euphemisms of human body parts and their clothing names;
- 6) Euphemistic devices concerning physical disabilities;
- 7) Euphemistic devices related to food and its digestion;
- 8) Euphemistic devices related to negative human activities;
- 9) Euphemistic devices connected to certain customs and traditions;
- 10) Euphemistic devices related to the concept of aging;
- 11) Euphemistic devices concerning death.

Euphemisms in the Noqardosh language have distinct discursive characteristics. Their usage is dependent on cultural, social, and communicative contexts. Euphemisms serve not only as tools for avoiding uncomfortable topics but also play a significant role in the successful execution of communication, improving social relationships, and reflecting cultural traits. For linguists, especially sociolinguists, this subject serves as an important source for study and analysis. Euphemisms are related to the customs of people, the level of cultural development, aesthetic taste, and the evolution of ethnic norms. As language develops, its euphemistic layer also evolves. New forms of euphemism emerge based on new moral standards and worldviews. There are also euphemisms that arise from specific speech situations, the meanings of which are often clarified through the context.



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