

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF EUPHEMISM

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Anotation: This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of euphemisms, their role and importance in language. Euphemisms are mild expressions used to soften negative, uncomfortable, or taboo topics. In the article, the main types of euphemism, its social, cultural and psychological aspects, as well as its importance in the process of communication are widely studied. It is intended to carefully analyze the place of euphemism in linguistics, its influence on language and its role in communication. Also, the article provides important information about the connection of euphemisms with social taboos and cultural norms and how they are used in language.

Key words: Euphemism, linguistics, communication, cultural norms, changes in language, psychological aspects

Euphemisms are one of the common phenomena in the process of human language use, they serve to improve communication between people, ensure that communication goes smoothly, and ensure that the conversation is conducted more effectively. In world linguistics, special attention is paid to the practical use of linguistic opportunities, the use of language units in speech, and to reveal the semantic and functional characteristics.

The word *euphemism* is of Greek origin where *eu* 'well' and *phēmē* 'speaking' form a compound that means "the use of auspicious words". The first mention of the term "euphemism" refers to 1656, when the English historian and lexicographer Thomas Blount in his dictionary of difficult words "Glossography" defined it as "a good or favorite interpretation of a bad word".

It should also be noted that the emergence of euphemism is related to the development of human thinking and moral values. It is not only a linguistic phenomenon (a word, phrase or sentence used in place of units that are inconvenient from the point of view of the speaker), but also manifested as a human tendency to change the speech situation in some way. By using an acceptable word, the negative atmosphere that can arise as a result of the use of forbidden (taboo) units by the speaker is mitigated. It is no exaggeration to say that forbidden words are equal to humanity. In Antiquity and the Middle Ages euphemisms were treated as a linguistic phenomenon, but each rhetorician categorized them differently. Aristotle regarded

them as a subtype of metaphor, Cicero termed them “*verba tecta*” (covered words) and Quintilian considered them a special form of allegory. English Renaissance made euphemisms prophets of a good end. For present-day research, however, these definitions are not precise enough. The notion of euphemisms presented in above-mentioned definitions is vague and does not suit the purposes of the thesis. More concrete observations, therefore, have to be presented.

The study of euphemism dates back to the 17th century, when Thomas Blount, an English lexicographer, defined the term “euphemism” as a good or positive interpretation of a bad word.

Rawson adds that nowadays “even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them”.

The Oxford Advanced Learner English-Chinese Dictionary (7th edition) defines euphemism as “an indirect word or phrase that people often use to mean something uncomfortable or unpleasant, sometimes to make it more acceptable, what he really is”. In the second half of the 16th century, the Puritans, vehemently defending their postulates, fought for socio-political superiority even through prohibitions, and the increase in books and theatrical productions made it possible to refer to a fixed text. Taboo topics and expressions have led to trends in literature and society to express the essence using euphemisms. This period is considered to be the heyday of euphemisms.

In Uzbek linguistics, the term “euphemism” was reflected in the research and dissertation of N. Ismatullaev entitled “Euphemisms in the Modern Uzbek Language” in 1963-1964. This phenomenon was studied by the Uzbek linguist A. J. Omonturdiev as an object of research, in which special attention was paid to the basics of euphemistic Uzbek speech, speech culture, euphemisms that provide unique beauty and attractiveness, and the results of his monographic research on euphemism of professional speech were comprehensively reflected. A. J. Omonturdiev is the author of Uzbek dictionaries such as “Бир сўз луғати” and “Ўзбек тилининг қисқача эвфемик луғати” dedicated to Uzbek language euphemisms. As mentioned above, with the development of the language, its euphemistic layer also develops. New forms of tabooing and euphemisms used due to new norms of morality and worldview appear on the field. Oriental forms of address, which are a reflection of the manners, level, and speech culture of the language owners, are naturally the product of euphemisms. The literature on euphemism is extensive. This brief overview only scratches the surface, providing a bird’s eye view of the definitions and functions of euphemism, as well as the common linguistic devices with which euphemism is constructed. While we find similar euphemisms across a wide range of cultures, there are also cultural differences in the domains in which euphemisms are employed. The significance of euphemism also varies across languages because of culture-specific norms on verbal taboos. This said, at the heart of euphemism seems to be something

fundamentally, if not uniquely, human that unifies the cultural particularities and functional variabilities of this trope. That is, we are able to reason about epistemic mental states, namely beliefs, desires, emotions, and intentions.

Euphemism is an important tool in language and communication to soften interpersonal relationships, express negative or taboo topics in a gentler and more respectful way. It is used taking into account not only the social and cultural aspects of the language, but also the psychological state of people. The use of euphemisms increases the effectiveness of communication, helps to respect social norms and moral values. Thus, understanding the theoretical basis of euphemism serves as an important part of clear and appropriate expression in linguistics and communication.

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