Course Paper

Euphemisms in Present-Day English Political and Media Discourse

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

The most important trend in the development of modern English is its euphemization. The use of language units that serve to replace, soften, veil negatively evaluated concepts is a property that has been manifested in the language since ancient times. At the heart of this process is the need to replace words that, for various reasons, have become taboo, inconvenient to use, indirect or milder terms. New language units - euphemisms - are formed under the influence of national psychology, aesthetic and value-normative attitudes that have developed in society, as well as under the influence of a direct speech situation.

The relevance of this study. The uniqueness of euphemism lies in the ability to reflect social, cultural and moral values, features of worldview and thinking not only in the speech of individuals, but also in the speech portrait of modern society as a whole. Euphemisms completely depend on the assessments of certain phenomena accepted in society, on the definition of what is decent, acceptable, and what is not. Hence the need for their systematic study in connection with cultural and social changes.

Euphemisms have the ability to influence a person's thoughts, the perception of information. The ability to manipulate people's minds and push them to action with the help of euphemisms is often used by politicians and journalists, it gives them the opportunity to broadcast thoughts and ideas in the most beneficial way. In times of crisis, information coverage is of particular importance.

The right word can calm the society, console, reassure. However, it is possible to achieve a backlash, instill fear or, for example, disappoint the electorate in one or another participant in the elections.

The aim of our work: euphemisms in present-day English political discourse.

1) theoretical analysis of euphemisms;

2) consider the main characteristics of euphemisms;

3) analyze specifics of the formation and functioning of euphemisms;

4) analyze features of the use of euphemisms in media discourse.

The object of this study is the analysis of the theoretical aspects of the study of euphemisms.

The subject of our work: euphemisms in present-day English political discourse.

Research methods: search, classification, analysis, synthesis, analytical.

The structure of the work. The work consists of an introduction, two chapters, conclusions and references.

CHAPTER ONE
SEMANTICS AND FUNCTIONING OF EUPHEMISMS IN ENGLISH DISCOURSE: THEORETICAL ASPECT
1. Euphemism: definition of concept and main characteristics

In world linguistics, there is a significant interest of researchers in the issue of euphemization of speech and euphemisms.

Modern dictionaries published in English-speaking countries give the following interpretation of the term "euphemism". For example, the New Oxford English Thesaurus defines euphemism as follows: «Polite term, substitute, mild alternative, indirect term, understatement, underplaying, softening, politeness, genteelism, coy term». In the Cambridge International English Dictionary we find the following definition of the term : «(the use of) a word or phrase used to avoid saying another word or phrase that is more forceful and honest but also more unpleasant or offensive».

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 profitable interpretation of a bad word" («a good or favourable interpretation of a bad word»).

The phenomenon of euphemism in linguistics is traditionally associated with the phenomenon of "taboo". Therefore, it is no coincidence that initially ethnographers who studied the problems of taboo in primitive societies were engaged in the study of euphemisms. Taboo can be defined as a strict prohibition imposed in society, in a group of people on any action, object, etc.

In the first half of the 20th century, the problem of studying verbal taboos and euphemisms was reflected in the works of linguists in Western Europe.

An attempt to combine studies of euphemisms in the English language, to analyze the functioning of euphemisms in various types of discourses, to consider

the theoretical problems of defining euphemisms, was reflected in a monograph edited by D. Enright in 1985.

An important direction in the study of euphemisms in modern foreign linguistics is the question of the classification of euphemisms. So, the American linguist, compiler of one of the first dictionaries of euphemisms, Ch. Caney, divides euphemisms into 3 groups based on the motives of euphemistic substitutions: 1) euphemisms from superstition; 2) euphemisms from delicacy; 3) euphemisms out of decency. However, the entire classification of the euphemisms he collected is not consistent and logical.

H. Rawson, J. Aito, R. Holder, J.S. Nieman, K.J. Silver and others

Thus, despite the long history of the study of euphemism in foreign linguistics, we can conclude that the theoretical issues of euphemism, first of all, the fundamental features of euphemisms, have not been developed, and there is no unified approach to the definition of the phenomenon under consideration.

At the beginning of the 21st century, with the advent of new communication channels, increased media activity and the tendency for euphemistic vocabulary to penetrate into different areas in linguistics, new attempts are being made to study the nature of euphemisms, formulate a more accurate definition of euphemism, and streamline the existing classifications of euphemisms.

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that in modern linguistics there are many views on the interpretation of the concept of "euphemism". The opinions of linguists differ in the definition of stylistic affiliation and the prevalence of euphemisms, the definition of their features and the relationship with related linguistic phenomena. All approaches to the interpretation of the studied language units can be combined into two large groups.

Firstly, there is a narrow interpretation of the term "euphemism", which is associated with the operation of the mechanism for replacing a taboo, forbidden word or expression. Euphemisms are verbal "mitigations", the appearance of

which in speech is determined by the desire not to name not very pleasant, "rude" words.

The second group of views unites researchers who consider the concept of "euphemism" in a broad sense. Here there is a multidimensional interpretation of euphemism as a substitute for a word or expression that is inconvenient to use in a certain situation.

The first dictionary of euphemisms (Kind Words: a Thesaurus of Euphemisms. Expanded and Revised Edition) was published in the USA in 1990.

R. Holder, the author of a dictionary of euphemisms in the English language, began work on collecting factual material in 1977. He arranged the euphemistic units alphabetically. An important positive point is the presence in the dictionary of an illustrative part indicating the sources of the use of euphemisms. The continuation of the work of R. Holder was the publication in 2007 of a dictionary, which included more than 1200 new dictionary entries. Here the author used a new principle of material arrangement - alphabetical-thematic.

A feature of the N. Rees dictionary, published in 2006 in London, is the inclusion of specific dates for the appearance of euphemisms in the articles. Euphemisms, phraseological euphemisms are divided into 43 thematic groups. Within each group there is an alphabetical arrangement of the material. Selected rich illustrative material.

In general, the phenomenon of euphemism is well studied in linguistic science. At the same time, we note that numerous works of foreign scientists are distinguished by practical orientation, their efforts are concentrated on fixing new and systematizing existing euphemisms, creating dictionaries.

However, new language units appear in the modern language, and the meaning of words and expressions that act as euphemisms changes depending on social conditions. Therefore, of great interest today are studies of the composition of modern euphemistic expressions that have not yet been included in dictionaries

or scientific literature, as well as the continuation of the development of theoretical issues.

2. The specifics of the formation and functioning of euphemisms

In the scientific literature, the description of euphemisms is carried out according to their belonging to a certain sphere of use. The question of classifying euphemisms by spheres of use is one of the most controversial in linguistics. Today, there are more than a dozen classifications developed at different times by domestic and foreign scientists.

One of the first lexical classifications of euphemisms in Russian linguistics was proposed by B.A. Larin.

1. Physiological processes and conditions
2. Certain parts of the body associated with the 'bottom of the body'. The peculiarity of the designation of objects of this kind lies in the fact that their euphemistic designation in speech is perceived by speakers as not quite decent.
3. Relations between the sexes
4. Illness and death

Thus, these areas of euphemization can be called personal, they relate to the personal life and personality of the speaker, addressee and third parties.

All processes occurring in the language reflect the realities of social life. The process of formation and use of euphemisms is no exception in this respect. New realities give rise to the need for correct formulations.

English euphemisms are divided according to the following criteria:

1. Euphemisms related to discrimination
2. Euphemisms denoting terrible and unpleasant phenomena of reality
3. Euphemisms associated with the influence of the state on people's lives
4. Euphemisms denoting the appearance and age of a person

5. Euphemisms denoting human influence on flora and fauna

6. Humorous euphemisms

7. Diplomatic euphemisms.

8. Euphemisms in advertising language

A large group of euphemisms is used in speech to mitigate various types of discrimination:

Euphemisms softening age discrimination. The use of the word old is avoided; euphemisms such as senio, mature, seasoned are common instead.

Euphemisms softening property discrimination. The reason for the creation of such euphemisms is often the desire of officials of various ranks to smooth out the problems of property inequality of people. So, the word the poor is replaced by the needy, the ill-provided or the deprived. Euphemisms are used the socially deprived, the underprivileged, the disadvantages, low-income people.

Euphemisms that exclude discrimination against people with physical and mental disabilities. Almost every flaw is smoothed out by certain euphemisms. The word cripple is replaced by euphemisms differently adled, physically different or handicapable.

Euphemisms softening racial and ethnic discrimination. So, the word black is replaced by the euphemism member of the African diaspora, Indian - the word indigenous person.

The emergence of new areas for the use of euphemisms, as well as the obsolescence of some thematic groups under the influence of changes in religious views, moral principles, stereotypes, and the political situation, testifies to the activity and organic nature of the language units under consideration.

In linguistics, there are several classifications of ways to form euphemisms. One of the first is the classification of J. Lawrence, which presents two main ways of euphemization: the creation of an allegorical expression and the use of a chosen substitute word.

J. Niemen and K. Silver take the main semantic processes through which euphemisms are formed as a criterion for their classification of euphemization methods.

We analyzed the existing classifications and identified five main ways of forming euphemisms:

Morphological methods of euphemization.

Lexico-semantic ways of euphemization.

Syntactic methods of euphemization.

Phonetic ways of euphemization.

Graphic ways of euphemization

One of the most productive ways of forming euphemisms is negative prefixation. This method is the following model: negative prefix + stem of the word that is the antonym of the replaced. Through the nomination "from the contrary" - with the help of the prefixes un-, under-, im-, anti-, over-, the direct meaning of the word is negated.

Morphological methods of euphemism formation also include abbreviation. Such euphemisms are literal abbreviations, which correspond to the first letters of a taboo word or phrase. Abbreviation reduces the semantic features of the replaced lexical item.

To form euphemisms in modern English speech, various structural types of abbreviations are used:

1) abbreviations for "initial" type:

а) alphabetic: ESN (educational subnormal) instead of backward;

б) sound: gork – God only really knows.

2) abbreviations - truncations, when a new word is formed by truncating part of the old: porn instead of pornography;

3) abbreviations consisting of the initial part of the word and the whole word Bgirl (bar girl), B.O. Juice (body odour juice).

Recently, in the English-language media, such a euphemism as "R-word" is often used. Its meaning can only be understood in context, but it is most often found in economic texts and stands for recession. The abbreviation performs a smoothing function, since the word "crisis" is perceived as sharp, straightforward.

Abbreviation is becoming a popular way of forming euphemisms in connection with the desire of the media not to name undesirable phenomena directly. Thus, the morphological way of forming English euphemisms is quite common. Processes of speech euphemization also occur at the lexico-semantic level. The methods of formation of euphemisms of the indicated level include: generalization of meaning, metaphorization of meaning, metonymization of meaning, polarization of meaning, paraphrase, borrowings and terms.

Generalization of meaning is a technique that involves generalization, the transition from the particular to the general, the subordination of particular phenomena to a general principle. Another way of forming euphemisms is the metonymization of the meaning of a word.

Syntactic methods of euphemization include options for transforming word combinations, such as the use of an additional positive element, the exclusion of a negative element, the collision of conflicting components, and the excessive complication of the structure of a phrase.

The opposite way to transform expressions into euphemistic ones is to remove the unwanted component from their structure. In some situations, the introduction of an additional positive or neutral component in the phrase does not create a softening effect. Thus, syntactic euphemisms have a great manipulative potential, since it is more difficult to recognize euphemistic syntactic structures in a speech stream than lexical ones.

Phonetic methods for creating euphemistic names include sound analogy, onomatopoeia, reduplication, and rhyming slang. Euphemisms formed in these ways make it possible to convey a similar meaning without naming a taboo definition.

An analysis of the mechanisms of euphemism formation in the English language makes it possible to single out morphological, lexico-semantic, syntactic, phonetic and graphic methods. Each of them has different possibilities of influencing the audience.

Conclusions to chapter 1

Modern dictionaries published in English-speaking countries give the following interpretation of the term "euphemism".

For example, the New Oxford English Thesaurus defines euphemism as follows: «Polite term, substitute, mild alternative, indirect term, understatement, underplaying, softening, politeness, genteelism, coy term».

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syntactic, phonetic and graphic methods. Each of them has different possibilities of influencing the audience.

CHAPTER TWO
EUPHEMISMS IN PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH POLITICAL AND MEDIA DISCOURSE: PRACTICAL ASPECT

2.1 Features of the use of euphemisms in political discourse

Euphemisms, the main purpose of which is to soften words and expressions in order to moderate what is unpleasant for the interlocutor, are very close to the language of diplomatic communication. They are brought together by semantic vagueness, tolerance, evasiveness in statements, which allow avoiding conflicts. Euphemisms are used very widely in speech, especially this can be traced in two spheres of human life - socio-political and everyday life. The most interesting is the first group of euphemisms, as they are used in a speech situation where both officials and ordinary civilians participate. Among these euphemisms, the following groups can be distinguished:

Euphemisms associated with the influence of the state on people's lives are "everyday". They can be found both in official speeches by politicians and in spoken English:

Euphemisms describing little-demanded professions:

The most uncommon professions, in the first place, are the professions of a janitor and a cleaner. In order to highlight and indicate the responsibility of people for the cleanliness of streets and premises, in English the expression garbage collector is often replaced by the expression sanitation man, or sanitation engineer, or garbologist; also replace the word road-sweaper with street orderly, the word janitor is replaced by the expressions environmental hygienist, or custodian, or building engineer.

«*A smaller proportion of childminders in England are offering childcare rated "good", say Ofsted inspectors*».

Euphemisms characterizing social vices (drunkenness, drug addiction, prostitution, crime):

One of the largest subgroups of euphemisms is represented by euphemistic vocabulary that distracts from such negative phenomena of reality as crime, drug addiction. For example, in circles associated with crime, euphemisms appear as criminal - illegal; prison - correctional facilities; rob - burgle; a prison guard - correctional officer; bloody -bally/bluggy/blurry; the head of Mafia family–godfather.

The problem of drug addiction and alcohol dependence in the framework of political discourse is described using the following euphemisms:drug addict - substance abuser.

«Obama will provide job training, substance abuse and mental health counseling to ex-offenders, so that they are successfully re-integrated into society».

Euphemisms relating to the problem of poverty:

In American English, there are a number of euphemisms for the homeless: street person / homeless person / displaced person / shopping-bag lady; As our research has shown, their use is limited to situations of official communication, as a rule, the official style:

«Although he never wound up as a street person, his life was a journey of terror and fear».

Moreover, we noted the following trend of euphemisms of this subgroup. *«Underprivileged hopeful in Obama's uplifting agenda».*

In the sphere of politics, euphemisms are also used to cover up aggressive military actions committed at the initiative of the state leadership: bombing - air support; victim - casualty / non-operative personnel; genocide - ethnic cleansing; killing people on your own side - friendly fire; killing - deprivation of life .

Euphemisms related to the global economic crisis

«Worst economic downturn in 50 years».

Euphemisms that serve as a substitute for expression «tax increases»: some inflows / revenue enhancements / balancing /fairer revenue raise /progressive revenue /progressive taxation.

«In continuing our effort to highlight states where progressive revenue-raising options are gaining support».

Using a euphemistic expression the Fourth World: *«The Fourth World Conference on Women is taking place as the world stands poised...».*

It is very rare to find a separate "crisis", which can also be a manifestation of the euphemization of speech; or, for example, using «coalescence of the banking system» instead of expression «a bank has collapsed».

The tendency to euphemize official statements, articles on the topic of global warming.

«This summer, Clinton joined John McCain. and two other senators for a tour of Alaskan areas hard hit by climate change».

«Bush outlines goals to fight climate change».

In the course of writing the work, we identified another thematic group of euphemisms: "patented" euphemisms - euphemistic units, the authors of which are well-known political figures:

1) euphemisms sponsored by the George W. Bush administration:

George Bush named prisoners of war in one of his speeches «enemy combatants», «alternate procedures».

«But to call the tribunals that Bush is advocating "military commissions" is nearly as euphemistic as calling torture "alternative procedures"».

euphemisms developed by the Obama administration: *«Over the next few weeks prudence dictates that we undertake a policy of Un-Bush-like Cooperation Solution because I say so».*

Euphemisms are represented in political discourse in a significant amount. They touch upon various problems of the modern world, there is also a process of euphemization of the private life of politicians, public figures (euphemisms

describing natural needs), which is a modern trend in the English language, which speaks of the convergence of the political institution of power and citizens of the country.

2.2 Language means of media euphemization in English-language discourse

The modern world cannot be imagined outside the framework of business relations, therefore, in the process of linguistic modeling of reality, the role of linguistic means of designing business media discourse is extremely high, allowing diagnosing existing problems and predicting the emergence of certain negative phenomena in this area in order to prevent their dangerous social consequences for society. generally.

To consider euphemisms in the discourse of business media, three thematic blocks have been identified.

The block "Unemployment and Dismissals" is represented by numerous euphemistic substitutions for the nomination of the indicated problem. This block covers situations associated with the loss of a job, and the problem of unemployment in general, which is associated with stress and feelings of people in unstable times, business media discourse is implemented in hybrid texts in which there is a convergence of features of social and business discourses.

Funemployment is a euphemism that replaces the designation of social disasters as a result of job loss.

«For the record, Dustin approaches his sundry temporary jobs, which range from children's party clown to ice sculpture apprentice, with energy and enthusiasm ...He's also quite content to take "funemployment" to heart. He enjoys having the leisure time to wage water balloon wars with the neighborhood kids and bask in the glow of the family's big-screen TV».

RIF (Reduction in Force) is a euphemism that is a literary form of nomination denoting specific forms of dismissal and used in official corporate

documents (layoffs, as used in official corporate documents and press releases; fire from a job).

«I've seen a lot of friends here today. People that I didn't know got RIFed. For most people, it was a shock,' said Stark, who works on personal Computers at the lab».

The block "Financial problems of a Company" includes euphemistic designations of the company's financial difficulties, which are diverse in nature, especially in connection with the financial and economic crisis experienced by Western economies.

Kitchen-sink - a euphemism of a metaphorical nature, used in its direct meaning in the discourse of drama/

«Job cuts and a dividend reduction are thought to have already been factored into the share price. Equity salesmen believe that there is also little that could be said to push the shares higher on the day as the management has already kitchen-sinked the business and parted with Mariah Carey, one of its most expensive stars».

Open-the-kimono is a euphemism of metaphorical origin. According to the dictionary definition, this phrase has received the status of a corporate term reveal details of one's business operations.

«Most of the alliances, says Paolini, are legally formalized because of the need for both parties to "open the kimono" and discuss sales figures, proprietary research and financial figures».

The block "Improper actions of a company" is represented by euphemisms designed to keep silent about illegitimate actions and unseemly policies of companies.

«Now also known as "bikeshedding," Parkinson's Law of Triviality states that the more complex an issue, the less time spent on it. He illustrates this with a corporate executive committee meeting that has plans for a nuclear power plant on its agenda. With little discussion (too confusing ... trust the experts), the

committee speedily and unanimously approves the complex reactor plans but spends a much longer time arguing the far less important but easy-to- understand issues (e.g., should we use galvanized tin for the employees bicycle shed?)».

The block "Unfair practices in personal advancement" is represented by euphemisms that hide injustice in career prospects and unequal promotion opportunities for company employees.

Rainbow ceiling is a euphemism whose dictionary definition refers to insurmountable barriers to promotion due to belonging to the LGBT community.

«I am an out gay man in my late 20s. I was lucky to have liberal and accepting parents that pushed me to excel in school and attend university. I consider myself a successfully "launched" millennial and I've made it my mission to break the rainbow ceiling wherever I work».

Marzipan layer is a euphemism, the dictionary definition of which contains an indication of persons occupying a fairly high rank in the company's service hierarchy.

«A few FTSE 100 companies have three or more women directors, including Marks and Spencer, Legal & General and J Sainsbury. Cranfield is looking at what is known as the "marzipan layer" of talented people just below board level, who Higgs argues should be encouraged to gain nonexecutive experience on noncompetitor boards».

As a result of the study, the specifics of the functioning of euphemisms in the discourse of business media were determined, as well as the nature of the formation of business euphemisms within thematic blocks in the financial and economic sphere, which are most prone to euphemization processes.

The relative activity of using the methods of creating euphemistic nominations in contexts that require strict control in the media space and dictate an acceptable format for public discussion of pain points in the economy has been established. Judging by the results of quantitative calculations, the most active substitution of euphemisms for the designations of negative phenomena occurs in

the sphere of the nomination of financial problems, which is confirmed by the data of dictionaries and neoplasms.

Conclusions to chapter 2

Euphemisms are represented in political discourse in a significant amount. They touch upon various problems of the modern world, there is also a process of euphemization of the private life of politicians, public figures (euphemisms describing natural needs), which is a modern trend in the English language, which speaks of the convergence of the political institution of power and citizens of the country.

The mechanism of metaphorization, which is a popular way of producing euphemisms in the English-language business media discourse, results in providing a cognitive and ethno-cultural basis for creating hybrid business media texts in which there is a convergence of features of different types of discourse. The analysis carried out confirms this pattern on the example of the convergence of the properties of business discourse and social, theatrical, ironic discourse.

The study of business euphemisms in the media space shows their role in the process of linguo-political construction of reality. In this capacity, the participation of euphemisms in creating a favorable axiological picture is most clearly manifested, obscuring the social vices of modern society and imposing the myth of a society of social equality and general prosperity into the mass consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS

In the first chapter, we considered the theoretical aspects of the concept of "euphemism". We found out that euphemism is the use of verbal ciphers with the aim of softening and veiling the topic of the message, while leaving the possibility for the addressee to guess what it is about.

It was also investigated that due to the wide range of topics and fields, there are different classifications of euphemistic units. Since scientists have different views on defining the main functions of euphemisms, this section examines the most common classifications: by frequency of use and their fixation in the language, by subject matter, by linguistic analysis, by their social nature and structure.

We found out that the structure of euphemisms is very diverse. It was found that individual words, phrases and whole sentences can be used as euphemistic units. There is no complete thematic classification of euphemisms in political mass media texts, so we formed this classification based on the analyzed existing studies.

In the process of research, it was found that euphemisms are mainly used in English-language political texts to soften, veil, hide negative facts, or present political events in a favorable light.

Euphemism can affect political consciousness, radically change the meaning of the statement, and provide the necessary results of communication. This is the main tool in the hands of politicians and diplomats, with the help of which they try to convey their goals and ideas to the participants of communication. Therefore, we must be able to correctly perceive information and understand how reliable it is.

Media discourse is a «cognitive-pragmatic environment that realizes its essence through the production and broadcast to a wide audience of evaluative meanings and ideologues».

In the media discourse, euphemisms, depending on the field of application, can be divided into those that reveal such topics as diseases, death, age, gender, race, ethnicity, intimate relationships, physical and mental disabilities of a person, physiological processes and states of the human body, armed conflicts, economic instability, professions, material situation, crimes and their punishments.

Thus, in the process of carrying out the work, its goal was achieved, and the tasks were completed, but still the prospect for further research exists, because they are not closed.

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