



## Euphemisms In The Speech Of Politicians And Diplomats In Modern English

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### ABSTRACT

The article deals with euphemisms in the speech of politicians and diplomats in the English language. The aim of the current article is to identify the functions of euphemisms in the political and diplomatic discourse of the English media. The relevance of this study is due to the insufficient study of the functions of euphemisms in political and diplomatic discourse (on the example of the English language). The author of the article considers political euphemisms as words and expressions used in the language of politics instead of undesirable words and expressions in order to hide, soften or distort the meaning of the events and phenomena covered.

### KEYWORDS

Euphemisms, Politicians, Diplomats, Speech, Unpleasant-Sounding Words, Prohibited, Diplomatic Discourse, Media, "Politically Correct" Attitude.

### INTRODUCTION

The main source of information has been the media for many years. As argued by Connell, "no generation has a bigger media history because no previous generation has had access to so many different kinds of media and such a range of media products" [2]. The subject of

most newspaper articles or television appearances is political relations. Newspaper and journalistic texts, speeches on politics and diplomatic relations, official texts on political topics (resolutions, decrees, laws), and political articles are part of political discourse.

In order to conceal the true objectives, politicians and diplomats resort to various ways of veiling the truth, replacing unpleasant-sounding words with more neutral ones, that is, using euphemisms. Euphemisms (Greek euphemismos, from eu - good, phemi - speaking) are emotionally neutral words, expressions used instead of their synonymous words or expressions that seem indecent, rude or untactful to the speaker. Euphemization is widely spread in the serious spheres of linguistic reflection of social and political events and becomes an important tool to soften the presentation of events that can cause anxiety, fear and even public protest [1]. Certain words or expressions are prohibited in public by individuals, societies or religions and they are covered up by the speakers' or writers' speech and writing [3].

Many aspects of euphemism remain debatable. Thus, the motives of euphemism (the reasons for the replacement of certain words and expressions with euphemisms) are differently defined and classified, there are different classifications of the ways of euphemisms formation, there is no consensus on the question of the place of euphemism among related linguistic phenomena.

L.P. Krysin distinguishes the following spheres of social life in which euphemisms are used:

1. The traditional sphere in which euphemistic means of expression are actively used is diplomacy. Words and expressions such as "extreme measures", "unpredictable consequences", "confrontation" (applied to situations where there is a war, although possibly local), "certain circles", "relevant institutions", "peacekeeping actions", "principle of reciprocity", which are often used in the press and on air, were born exactly in the diplomatic language.

2. Repressive actions by the authorities: "detain" instead of "arrest" "capital punishment" instead of "death penalty", "apply sanctions" - this turn of phrase is used in a very vague sense: it can mean criminal prosecution, imprisonment, economic or military blockade of areas and entire states.
3. State and military secrets, which include the production of weapons, certain types of equipment, the social and numerical composition of institutions (not only military), the profile of their work and much more. For example, the use of the words "object", "product", "box", etc. instead of "weapon".
4. The activities of the army, the intelligence service, the police, the criminal investigation department, and some other authorities, whose actions should not be "in plain sight". Words and expressions with a rather general meaning are used here, while they are applied in relation to specific actions and phenomena: "task", "operation" ("go on a mission", "perform a task", "conduct an operation to apprehend a criminal") [7].
5. The sphere of distribution and service: "goods in excess demand," "scarce goods," "shortage"; in everyday speech and in colloquialisms, "to organize or arrange something" in the sense of "to assist in the acquisition of some goods" is common.
6. Certain types of professions whose euphemistic designation is intended to enhance the prestige of these professions or to conceal the negative impression of the occupation denoted by the "direct" name: "machine milking operator," "slaughterhouse operator," "cleaning operator". The term "slaughterhouse operator" refers to a person who executes the death penalty (cf. "executioner," etc.),

"overseer" instead of "supervisor," "executor," etc. (cf. "executioner" refers to a person who carries out the death penalty).

## DISCUSSION

In England euphemisms appeared in the 16th century in connection with the development of Puritanism and the desire to purify language from blasphemous words, and became widespread in the 18th century, when in English nobility it was considered improper to call some things by their names [8].

In modern English one can distinguish several spheres where euphemisms are used most often:

- 1) Traditional and, to a certain extent, established euphemisms associated with religious perceptions. Thus, quite often the word devil is replaced by euphemisms the deuce, the dickens, old Nick, old Harry, and the word God by Heaven, Jove, Lord, goodness;
- 2) Euphemisms associated with the termination of human or animal existence, for example, with the concept of "death" and other related concepts. Thus, instead of the verb to die, euphemisms to go west, to expire, to depart, to de cease, to join the majority, to go the way of all flesh, to pass away, to breathe one's last, to go to one's last reckoning are usually used, instead of dead - the deceased, the departed, the late;
- 3) Political euphemisms, which are widespread in the press as a means of allegorical expression, to hide and veil the unpleasant sides of reality. War and politics, which have a great impact on the whole world, are primarily hot topics for the creation of euphemisms. Governments need euphemisms to make it easier for nations to put up with the hardships of

war. In modern war of words, calling things by their proper names can only be used to intimidate the enemy. Thus we have the following examples of euphemisms: illegal wire tapping is replaced by the euphemism electronic surveillance; nuclear war is replaced by the word button war, aggression by peace keeping mission, capitalism by free enterprise, starvation by under nourishment, poor people by less fortunate elements, unemployment by building up of labour reserves, strike by industrial action [8].

Modern public political communication, due to the use of mass media, occupies a dominant position in the system of communication in terms of influence on the audience. According to domestic and foreign scholars, nowadays political and mass media language has a normative significance, i.e. it forms stereotypes of public speech behavior [9].

Political language, the language of texts related to political communication, has been extensively studied in terms of its potential to influence public opinion. This issue is covered in detail in foreign literature [4, 5].

The existence of a special group of euphemisms that are used in texts of political communication is noted by many foreign linguists who have studied the problem of euphemism [6]. The term "political euphemism" for this group of euphemisms is not fully established, but is actively used in modern linguistics.

At present, there are several definitions of political euphemisms in the linguistic literature [6], in which the features that distinguish them from other euphemisms are identified: functioning in texts of political communication with the aim of hiding unpleasant aspects of

reality by softening and distorting the meaning of the fact described.

The widespread use of political euphemisms in texts of political communication is due to several factors:

- A number of legal restrictions on the use of linguistic means of expressing direct negative evaluation in the texts of political communication;
- The need to observe the rules of cultural correctness existing in contemporary society;
- Greater efficiency of influence on the audience in the implicit way of transmitting information.

Repressive actions of the authorities are one of the spheres of euphemisms: arrest-detention instead of arrest; liquidate instead of to kill; protective custody-guard instead of imprisonment.

In the sphere of state and military secrets, euphemisms are no less frequent and denote the production of weapons, certain types of equipment, the social and numerical composition of institutions, the profile of their work, and much more: peaceful nuclear device instead of nuclear bomb.

Another area in which euphemisms are used is in the military, intelligence and other government agencies. Here words and phrases with a rather general meaning are used, while they are applied to specific actions. A large part of euphemisms serving as a cover for aggressive military actions entered the English language in the mid-20th century during the Vietnam War: involvement, conflict instead of war; device instead of bomb; air support instead of bombing, bombardment, etc.

In the next group of euphemisms, replacing the direct names of various types of weapons: weapons of mass destruction: radiation enhancement device (device, increasing radiation) - nuclear reactor; atomic device (atomic device) - atomic bomb (atomic bomb).

Here, it is logical to cite such examples as: discriminate deterrence instead of pinpoint bombing; fireworks display instead of early reports of the bombing of Baghdad; engaging a target - a successful USA bombing effort; massive ordnance air blast bomb - Moab. This group also includes names of missiles: The Peacekeeper, the MX missile.

The euphemisms used to refer to terrorists are numerous and varied: attackers, bombers, commandos (in the British armed forces special forces formed during World War II to conduct amphibious and reconnaissance-sabotage operations), captors, etc.

Euphemisms play both positive and negative roles, accompanying both the softening of speech and the loss of meaning.

It is quite obvious that those communicative tasks with which diplomats and politicians have to deal cannot be solved using only direct nominations, doing without insinuations, hints, understatement, camouflage, that is, without everything that euphemisms are designed to express.

The main reasons for resorting to euphemisms can be presented as follows:

- 1) Veiling, "camouflaging" the substance of the case. The euphemistic means used for this purpose are very diverse. The reason for this is in the foundations of the administrative and political system itself and the ideological apparatus that serves them. In particular, euphemisms are used

- as a consequence of the fear of publicizing disreputable or inhumane facts or actions;
- 2) The desire to increase the attractiveness of some non-prestigious professions or to conceal the negative impression of the occupation denoted by the "direct" name;
  - 3) Mitigation of situations associated with negative emotions (death, illness)
  - 4) The desire to relieve tensions between different peoples and national groups, which determines public people (journalists, commentators, deputies, politicians, etc.) fear of increasing tensions and unwittingly contribute to interethnic discord with an inaccurate word or awkward expression;
  - 5) Desire to present unpleasant, undesirable, insulting someone's dignity or self-esteem in a more advantageous, more "noble" light;
  - 6) Reluctance to speak frankly about one's age;
  - 7) "politically correct" attitude towards the perpetrators of crimes [10].

Political euphemisms tend to soften various kinds of discrimination, such as age discrimination. In order not to offend people of a respectable age, the word middle scence (the period of life from 40 to 65 years), similar to adolescence, has appeared in the language in recent decades. The period of life from the age of 65 onwards began to be called the third age. In situations of informal communication golden ager is widely used in relation to an elderly person who is retired (cf. silver ager - middle-aged person). The euphemism senior citizen is widely used on official signs in transportation, in announcements, in museums and in places of public use.

The word disadvantaged (to refer to the poor) appeared to mitigate property discrimination. Colored or non-white are used instead of black to soften racial discrimination. Mentally

retarded people are called learning disabled, special; retarded students are called underachievers; partially hearing impaired people are called hearing impaired; speech impaired people are called speech impaired. The insane asylum was replaced by the mental hospital. And so forth [11].

In the euphemistic vocabulary of recent decades the tendency to form new units that raise the prestige of certain professions has noticeably increased. Thus, a hairdresser, both male and female, in the 1960s began to be called a hair stylist, in the 1980s this euphemism began to be used only in relation to men, the female hairdresser remained a hairdresser. Sometimes the word hairologist is used to refer to people in this profession.

Flight attendants and stewards on airlines (stewards, stewardesses, hostesses) became known as flightattendants (this euphemism owes its appearance to the fight against discrimination of female forms in English). Cemetery workers were traditionally known as undertakers, in recent years they have been called first morticians and then funeral directors. In the 60s, a garbage collector was called a sanitation-man, and later a sanitation engineer [12].

The largest subset of euphemistic vocabulary is euphemisms that divert attention from negative phenomena of reality (crime, drug addiction, aggressive politics, etc.). For example, in crime-related circles there appear euphemisms client (a person viewed euphemistically as a subject of regulation by a government agency or public authority); adjustment center (a part of a prison where intractable and often mentally deranged inmates are kept in solitary confinement); correctional facilities (a prison); correctional officer (a prison guard); community home (a reform school); godfather, don (the head of

Mafia family or other group involved in organized crime) [11].

These are examples of the main political euphemisms in modern English.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the linguistic literature on euphemisms in the language of politics and public verbal communication showed that political euphemisms are actively used in the texts of political communication, as they help to maintain a balance between two opposing tendencies: the realization of the purpose of the texts of political communication on assessment, propaganda and persuasion and compliance with the rules of legal and cultural correctness that exist in modern society.

In the article under discussion the functions of the use of euphemisms in the political discourse of the English media, as well as in the speech of politicians and diplomats have been studied and identified.

By political euphemisms we mean words and expressions used in the language of politics instead of undesirable words and expressions in order to hide, soften or distort the meaning of the events and phenomena covered.

The analysis of the material revealed that euphemisms are most often used to give a more optimistic "appearance" to statements on topics touching on important socio-political issues and international relations. However, euphemisms are also used to distort the true meaning of the message and mislead the addressee. This strategy of disguising meaning is particularly widely used in the oral speech of diplomats, in public documents and statements aimed at a wide audience, while in most diplomatic documents each lexical unit has a precise meaning, there should be no

ambiguity. Therefore, in formal diplomatic documents of a non-public nature euphemisms are present in order to preserve a polite tone and comply with the rules of diplomatic ethics, while both the addressee and the addressee understand the real meaning of the statement.

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