



THE STUDY OF EUPHEMISMS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH
LANGUAGES

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Annotation. *In modern globalized society, the need to replace inappropriate or rude expressions with more polite and acceptable words, known as euphemisms, has significantly increased. People tend to use softer alternatives to express their thoughts in order to prevent their speech from sounding harsh, offensive, or impolite. This article discusses the history of the study of euphemisms in Uzbek and English linguistics and analyzes the approaches of various scholars to the phenomenon of euphemism.*

Key words: *euphemism, speech culture, stylistics, positive connotation.*

Introduction. The emergence of euphemisms is closely connected with the development of human thinking, moral values, and social norms. Euphemism is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a communicative strategy used by speakers to modify or soften a speech situation. In many cases, euphemisms replace words that are considered taboo, rude, or socially inappropriate. By using euphemistic expressions, speakers try to avoid negative reactions and create a more polite and acceptable communicative environment.

Taboo words have existed since the earliest stages of human society. Therefore, euphemisms appeared as a linguistic tool to replace forbidden or socially restricted expressions. The term *euphemism* originates from Greek words *eu* meaning “good” and *phemi* meaning “to speak,” which together mean



“to speak in a pleasant way”. Many linguists define euphemism as the replacement of an inappropriate or rude expression with a more acceptable and neutral one. For example, linguist A.A. Reformatskiy defined euphemisms as words that are allowed to be used instead of taboo words. In linguistic dictionaries, euphemism is described as a neutral or emotionally softened expression used instead of a word that may sound rude, unpleasant, or offensive.

Historical Development of Euphemisms. Euphemistic expressions attracted scholars’ attention as early as ancient times. In works on ancient rhetoric and stylistics, references to euphemistic speech can be found in the writings of philosophers such as Democritus, Paeon, and Aristotle. This shows that euphemisms were known and used even in ancient societies. Some researchers believe that euphemisms began to actively develop in English during the 12th–15th centuries. The influence of French culture in England also contributed to the development of polite and refined language forms. Linguist R. Burchfield, who studied the history of English, noted that euphemisms were widely used in the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer and that euphemism became an important stylistic device in literature. Later, William Shakespeare used euphemisms mainly as a stylistic tool to intensify emotional and expressive meaning rather than simply to avoid taboo words. By the 16th century, there was a growing movement to improve speech culture and avoid direct references to religion, body parts, and intimate topics. This tendency continued until the 18th century. For instance, Samuel Richardson used euphemistic expressions in his novel *Pamela* to describe delicate situations in a polite manner.

In the 19th century, social norms and moral standards became stricter, which led to the increased use of euphemisms in everyday speech and literature. Editors even modified literary works to remove expressions considered inappropriate for polite society. In the 20th century, euphemisms became



widely used not only for human body parts but also for animals, diseases, social problems, and political issues. The social changes caused by wars, economic crises, and social problems contributed to the growth of euphemistic and slang expressions. The meanings and functions of euphemisms began to change depending on social context, time, and cultural environment.

Linguistic Research on Euphemisms. The phenomenon of euphemism began to be studied scientifically in general linguistics in the early 20th century by linguists such as J. Vendryes and L.A. Bulakhovsky. Their works contributed significantly to the formation of theoretical approaches to euphemisms. Some scholars studied euphemisms in the speech of specific ethnic groups or genders. For example, A.N. Samoylovich and N.A. Baskakov analyzed euphemisms as an ethnic and cultural phenomenon. Other linguists such as E.A. Agayan and O.N. Trubachev studied euphemisms within the framework of cultural mentality and social groups. In English linguistics, I.V. Arnold discussed stylistic aspects of euphemisms. L.V. Artyushkina studied semantic types and replacement processes of euphemisms, while N.S. Boshchaeva focused on their pragmatic aspects. G.G. Kujim analyzed euphemisms as meliorative linguistic means, and A.M. Kasev studied them from a socio-psychological perspective. N.M. Berdova investigated euphemisms in connection with renaming processes, and Y.P. Senichkina identified their characteristic features. In the 21st century, many dissertations and scientific works have been devoted to euphemisms, which shows that interest in this linguistic phenomenon continues to grow.

Study of Euphemisms in Uzbek Linguistics. In Uzbek linguistics, the study of euphemisms began in the 1960s. The term was introduced into Uzbek linguistics through N. Ismatullayev's dissertation titled "*Euphemisms in Modern Uzbek Language*." Later, in 1997, A. Omonturdiyev conducted extensive research on euphemisms as an object of stylistics and studied



euphemistic foundations of Uzbek speech. Linguist M. Mirtojiyev in his monograph “*Semasiology of the Uzbek Language*” examined the relationship between taboo and euphemism and discussed the history of their study. Other Uzbek linguists have also expressed various opinions on euphemisms. For example, H. Shamsiddinov studied functional-semantic synonyms of euphemistic expressions, and A.E. Mamatov analyzed euphemistic and dysphemistic phraseological units in his doctoral research. Euphemisms were also studied in literary language. For instance, Z. Kholmanova analyzed euphemistic vocabulary in the language of *Boburnoma*. Additionally, Sh. Gulyamova studied gender aspects of euphemisms in Uzbek, and S. Turdimurodov researched euphemistic lexical units in explanatory dictionaries of the Uzbek language.

Conclusion. Thus, both Uzbek and English linguistics have extensively studied euphemisms compared to dysphemisms. Researchers have analyzed their relationship with related linguistic phenomena, their semantic and functional types, their place in language structure, and the differences between language euphemisms and speech euphemisms. Functional and stylistic aspects of euphemistic meanings have also been studied. However, discussions and debates among linguists on this issue are still ongoing, which indicates that euphemisms require further research in various linguistic, social, and cultural aspects.

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