

Euphemism and Gender: Linguocultural Euphemisms among Males and Females in Uzbek and English Language

Bobur Tolibjonovich Tojiboyev¹, Akhtambaev Sobitjon Sohibjonovich¹

¹Assistent of Applied Mechanics Chair

Abstract— The article presents some characteristics of linguocultural euphemisms used by male and female members of Uzbek and English society. It shows that there are some similarities and differences, which can be attributed to cultural and religious beliefs and values.

Keywords— euphemism, gender, language, culture, religion, linguoculturology.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that languages are influenced by nations' cultures, traditions, religions, psychological orientations and other social issues. Any development in one of these areas will be reflected in the expressive tool *-language*. One of the cultural reflections in language is the speakers or writers' attempt to cover-up certain words or expressions prohibited in public by individuals, societies or religions. This process is what is linguistically called euphemism. Euphemism is one of the most essential parts of human speech. It helps to soften impolite, unpleasant or restricted words namely euphemism plays a role of a mask to hide exact meaning. When people want to talk about some sensitive, offensive or taboo topics and want to be polite at the same time, they would probably use euphemisms.

2. MAIN PART

The use of euphemism varies with the gender, age, social status and occupation. There are number of things that triggered euphemisms to appear: social culture, including social conventions, traditional morality, religion, social values and politics and etc. If we look at the history human beings have already planted the seed for the use of euphemisms. It is written in Muslims' religion book "Koran" that when Adam and Eve ate prohibited fruit of paradise they became naked and began to use "fig leaves" to cover up certain parts of their bodies. That is why some linguists call euphemisms "**linguistic fig leaves**". From the linguists' point of view euphemisms are:

A **euphemism** is an expression intended by the speaker to be less offensive, disturbing, or troubling to the listener than the word or phrase it replaces. In real life, when people meet with some unpleasant things or behaviors, they usually choose some vague expressions to avoid making bold or hurting other's feeling, thus they choose to use euphemism. It softens the effect of what they really wish to communicate, avoiding, as much as possible, offence and conflict [1]

Euphemisms are mild, agreeable, or roundabout words used in place of coarse, painful, or offensive ones [5]

Euphemism is a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing [6].

In Uzbek linguistics this term is placed in 1963-1964 by N. Ismatullayev's dissertation called "Euphemisms in modern Uzbek language". He was the first to collect data about the phenomenon of taboo and euphemism, elucidated the phenomenon of taboo and euphemism by scientific and practical aspects[3]. A.Omonturdiyev investigated euphemistic bases in Uzbek speech. He wrote that euphemism is one of the themes that must be deeply studied as a research theme. According to A. Omonturdiyev's point of view "A **Euphemism** is like a "curtain", paraphrased with pleasant words which are restricted to tell directly or considered to be unpleasant, bad-mannered, or makes scare in imagination and cannot be pronounced openly.[4]

Linguoculturology is the reflection of culture and language, both of them have significant impact on people's speech act. Beginning with the XX century, linguoculturology gradually ousted country study in the didactic plan as well. Since the last two decades of the XX century the term "linguoculturology" has been often used in association with the term "culture-through-language studies". Linguoculturology focuses attention onto the reflection of spiritual state in the language of a man in the society. Moreover, changes to evaluation of gender roles and linguistic behavior, resulting in the appearance of gender-related euphemisms intended to reduce sexual discrimination and gender-role stereotyping.

The euphemism **Lady** for a woman. As P. Trudgill observes, English speakers tell their children that it is impolite to call or refer to someone as a woman (but not as a man). Shop assistants in Britain may be referred to as **sales ladies** (but not **sales gentlemen**). **Ladies' wear** can be found for sale [7]. A euphemism has become necessary because of the unfavorable connotations that the word "woman" has for some people. This is as a result of the low status women typically has in a society, and because of the sexual implications that the word has in a male-dominated society. Another euphemism for the word "woman" is the word

“*girl*” that can be used for women considerably older than this, and it is not unusual to hear of a group of people that it consists of say, *five men and six girls*. The use of “*lady*” and “*girl*” as attempts of politically correct gender-neutral language was known as trivializing euphemisms by P. Trudgill, which were later replaced by the use of even less gender-coded euphemism – “*female*”, widely spreading in modern communication;

A blackened samovar stood at the far end of the corridor, opposite the cubicle of the carriage’s female attendant, their provodnik: a hefty, unsmiling woman... (R. Harris.Archangel)

In comparison with Uzbek culture euphemisms “*lady*”, and “*girl*” instead of woman, which are used among English speakers, are also common in Uzbek speakers but it has another more beautiful alternatives. They are “*qiz*” (young female), “*ayol*”(adult female), *onaxon* (senior female).

In Uzbek language the root of euphemism is closely connected with religion. In Muslims’ religion speaking bad words, even making someone sad by telling straightforward words is considered a sin. One Muslim must respect and speak to someone with beautiful, kind, pleasant words. As a result many ill-mannered, unpleasant words are changed with better ones so that to avoid misunderstanding between speaker and listener. It is also noticeable between parents and children, wife and husband, older people and youngsters. In family relationship male members of the family are strictly respected by female members and called with certain words. For example: it is shame to call husband with his name in front of others, so that instead of it “*dadajonisi*” (father of my children), with the name of the eldest child, “*turmush o’rtoq*” (companion during my life), “*jufti halolim*” (my halal couple). Wives also have several euphemistic words as : “*onasi*” (mother of my children), “*rafiqam*” (my beloved), “*bollarim*” (my family), “*turmush o’rtoq*” (companion during my life), “*jufti halolim*” (my halal pair). English males call their wives as “*my sweetest*” or “*my sweetie*”.

Mother in-law is called as: “*oyijon*”, “*ayajon*” (my dear mum). Father in-law is called as: “*dadajon*”, “*adajon*” (my dear father). However English speakers call their husband’s side just with their name like Mr. John, Mrs. Jane. Even the connotation “*bride*” is understood differently in both languages. “*Bride*” has much more responsibility in husband’s family in Uzbek culture. She should take into account every single thing as preparing meals, doing housework, looking after her children, taking care family members, household items and being always in good mood. For that reason, bride is euphemized as “*kelinposhsha*” (queen bride), “*kelinchak*” (dear bride). However, English brides do not care such responsibilities in husband’s family. They follow democratic idea in the family relationship. When the bride become pregnant it is too shameful to talk directly about pregnancy news that’s why there are certain euphemisms that describe that condition:” *bosh qorong’u*” (darkness in the head), “*homilador*” (pregnant), *og’ir oyoq* (heavy leg). “*To be in a family way*”, “*Bun in the oven*”, “*Knocked up*”, “*Baby bump*”, “*In a family way*”, “*Gestating*”, “*With child*”, “*Baby mama*”, “*Eating for two*”, “*On the nest*”, “*Preggers*” are accepted euphemism among English speakers for pregnancy. When the time comes to delivering the baby, Uzbek people say “*ko’zi yorimoq*” (having broken an eye), “*qutulib olmoq*” (to finish) instead of “*tug’moq*” (to bear). If the conversation is about the size of cloth English speakers prefer using *churbette* for girls’ size, *husky* for boys’ size, *portly* for men’s size, *women’s sizes* for women. Women’s little size is euphemized as *misses*, *junior*.

3. CONCLUSION

Euphemisms can and should be an object of research not only philologists but also cultural science, because the spheres of appearing of euphemisms are defined by culture. Comparative researches about linguocultural euphemisms among male and female gender should be conducted more and more in order to establish linguistic friendship between different cultures. The use of euphemisms in speech promotes instilling of tact, the tolerant relation to people, decencies, which dictated by rules of a human society. So we can say that euphemisms are the high informative, effective and important unit of the language. The peculiarities of their structure help us to acquire knowledge about literary standards of the cultural speech.

4. REFERENCES

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