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LINGUOCULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL EUPHEMISMS (BASED ON THE EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK PRINT MEDIA)

Abstract. Euphemism is a common phenomenon in human language use and has attracted much attention both domestically and internationally. This article aims to reveal the essential features of political euphemism, expand people's understanding of euphemism, and to some extent, reveal the relationship between language, thought, and existence. This linguistic phenomenon provides evidence that language is not only a reflection of the objective world but also a process of social construction. Linguocultural analysis and comparative methods were used to analyse political euphemisms in English and Uzbek print media such as The Washington Post, The New York Times and Yangi O'zbekiston, O'zbekiston Ovozi. Having conducted the research, the following findings were revealed: (1) a range of topics including government actions, military conflicts, economic policies, social groups, age-related discussions, disabilities, and economic challenges; (2) euphemisms serve similar functions in both English and Uzbek political discourse, including hiding scandals, softening language, and guiding public perceptions on sensitive topics. Implication for practice includes communication strategies, public perception, governance, intercultural relations and cultivating media literacy.

Keywords: euphemism, political euphemism, culture, political correctness, discourse, English and Uzbek euphemisms.

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SIYOSIY EVFEMIZMLARNING LINGVOMADANIY XUSUSIYATLARI (INGLIZ VA O'ZBEK BOSMA NASHRLARI MISOLIDA)

Annotatsiya. Evfemizm inson tilidan foydalanishda keng tarqalgan hodisa bo'lib, mamlakatda ham, xalqaro miqyosda ham katta e'tiborni tortadi. Ushbu maqola siyosiy evfemizmning muhim belgilarini ochib berish, odamlarning evfemizm haqidagi tushunchalarini kengaytirish, til, tafakkur va borliq munosabatlarini ma'lum darajada ochib berishga qaratilgan. The Washington Post, The New York Times va Yangi O'zbekiston, O'zbekiston ovozi kabi ingliz va o'zbek bosma nashrlaridagi siyosiy evfemizmlarni tahlil qilishda lingvomadaniy tahlil va qiyosiy usullardan foydalanildi. Tadqiqot o'tkazgandan so'ng, quyidagi xulosalar aniqlandi: (1) hukumat harakatlari, harbiy mojarolar, iqtisodiy siyosatlar, ijtimoiy guruhlar, yoshga bog'liq muhokamalar, nogironlik va iqtisodiy qiyinchiliklarni o'z ichiga olgan bir qator mavzularga bo'lingan holda kassifikatsiya tuzildi. (2) evfemizmlar ingliz va o'zbek siyosiy nutqida o'xshash vazifalarni bajaradi, jumladan, janjallarni yashirish, tilni yumshatish va nozik mavzular bo'yicha jamoatchilik fikrini boshqarish uchun qo'llanadi. Maqolada keltirilgan xulosalar muloqot strategiyalarini shakllantirish, jamoatchilikni idrok etish, boshqaruv, madaniyatlararo munosabatlar va media savodxonligini rivojlantirish uchun ishlatilishi mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: evfemizm, siyosiy evfemizm, madaniyat, siyosiy madaniyat, nutq, ingliz va o'zbek evfemizmlari.

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ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ЭВФЕМИЗМОВ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ АНГЛИЙСКИХ И УЗБЕКСКИХ ПЕЧАТНЫХ СМИ)

Аннотация. Эвфемизм - распространенное явление в человеческом языковом обиходе, привлекающее большое внимание как внутри страны, так и за рубежом. Цель данной статьи - выявить основные черты политического эвфемизма, расширить представление людей об эвфемизме и в некоторой степени раскрыть взаимосвязь между языком, мышлением и бытием. Этот лингвистический феномен служит доказательством того, что язык - это не только отражение объективного мира, но и процесс социального конструирования. Для анализа политических эвфемизмов в английских и узбекских печатных изданиях были взяты примеры с следующих газет, таких как The Washington Post, The New York Times и Янги Узбекистон, Узбекистон овози. Для анализа были использованы методы лингвокультурного анализа и сопоставления. В результате проведенного исследования были выявлены следующие результаты: (1) эвфемизмы охватывают широкий круг тем, включая действия правительства, военные конфликты, экономическую политику, социальные группы, возрастные дискуссии, инвалидность и экономические проблемы. (2) эвфемизмы выполняют схожие функции как в английском, так и в узбекском политическом дискурсе, включая сокрытие скандалов, смягчение языка и регулирование общественного восприятия по чувствительным темам. Выводы, сделанные в статье, могут быть использованы для формирования стратегии коммуникации, общественное восприятие, управление, межкультурные отношения и развитие медиаграмотности.

Ключевые слова: эвфемизм, политический эвфемизм, культура, политическая корректность, дискурс, английские и узбекские эвфемизмы.

INTRODUCTION

Political euphemisms are a powerful tool for political leaders to control information transmission. The impact on mass audiences through political language is purposeful and should be carried out in accordance with the requirements of cultural correctness. Political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible … political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging, and sheer cloudy vagueness [Orwell, 1990]. Each euphemism has nationally specific characteristics [Ashurova & Galiyeva, 2019]. The usage of polite words depends on different aspects of different cultures. As Maslova V. A. said that “Language and culture cannot be separated. Language is vital to understanding our unique cultural perspectives. Language is a tool that is used to explore and experience our cultures and the perspectives that are embedded in our cultures” [Maslova, 2001]. Even though there have been many studies on political euphemisms in a wide range of aspects, there are still no clear criteria for determining the cultural sphere of political euphemisms. The problem of comparing political euphemisms in different languages remains topical. This paper begins with an analysis of the features of political euphemism and identifies the peculiarities of the use of political euphemisms in English print media in comparison to Uzbek from a linguocultural aspect.

Literature review. The study of linguistic and cultural characteristics of political euphemisms, especially within the context of English and Uzbek print media, offers a fascinating insight into how language is employed to shape public opinion and perception. Political euphemisms are used to soften or obfuscate the harshness of certain concepts or policies, effectively influencing the audience’s understanding of the issues at hand. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of existing research on this topic, analyzing the specific linguistic and cultural nuances inherent in political euphemisms in both English and Uzbek print media.

Features of Political Euphemism. Galperin concludes that euphemism is "an understatement of the meaning of words in order to mislead public opinion and express the unpleasant more subtly" [Galperin, 1958].

According to Niemann and Silver, "euphemism is the use of a non-offensive or pleasant term in place of a direct, offensive one while masking the truth" [Niemann & Silver, 1990]. Euphemism is defined in different ways from the perspectives of pragmatics and style. Political euphemism is created in political life and serves political purposes. It is a tool for political participants to hide scandals, disguise the truth, and guide public thoughts when discussing social issues or events. Despite some common features political euphemism shares with others, it has three typical features.

Lakoff claims that politics is language and language is politics [Lakoff, 1990]. Political euphemism is similar to political propaganda in that both aim at persuading and influencing the public. Berger and Luckmann have long before pointed out the important role of language in the construction of social reality [Berger & Luckmann, 1967]. Political discourse is characterized by continuity: it is inextricably linked to the previous stages of its development, but at the same time, it acquires new features and takes new forms.

In Uzbekistan, lexicographers began to study this linguistic phenomenon in depth only at the end of the XX and the beginning of the XXI century. The term "euphemism" was reflected in the research and thesis of Ismatullaev, Euphemisms in the Modern Uzbek Language [Ismatullaev, 1963-1964]. Omonturdiev paid special attention to the basics of euphemistic Uzbek language, language culture, and euphemisms, which provide unique beauty and appeal [Omonturdiev, 2000].

Orwell pointed out two characteristics of political discourse in Politics and the English Language, that is, the obsolescence and vagueness of figures of speech [Orwell, 1946]. Euphemism, characterized by replacing direct expressions with implicative, obscure, and vague ones, plays quite an essential role in demystifying the connotation of political discourse when serving political purposes.

Linguocultural Aspects of Political Euphemisms

In cultural linguistics, euphemisms are the development of more noble, culturally meaningful words and serve to soften the meaning, to express it in a more cultural form. Euphemisms are regarded as cultural models because, firstly, they realize the principle of politeness, and secondly, the use of euphemistic expressions is conditioned by sociocultural factors. According to Ashurova and Galiyeva, euphemism, which is used to substitute a coarse, rude word or expression with a more polite and appropriate one, has its national-specific characteristics in different languages [Ashurova & Galiyeva, 2019]. Its usage is determined by the ethical, moral, and religious rules of a certain culture. **Comparative Analysis of Political Euphemisms in English and Uzbek Print Media.** The study of linguistic and cultural characteristics of political euphemisms in the English and Uzbek print media holds significant relevance in the contemporary global context, as it offers a deeper understanding of how language is deployed to construct political narratives and shape public discourse. The comparison opens the divergences and convergences in euphemistic strategies employed within distinct linguistic and cultural frameworks. By elucidating the intricate interplay between language, culture, and politics, this review contributes to a deeper comprehension of the complexities inherent in the use of political euphemisms, and their implications within the broader spheres of international relations and public communication.

According to the sphere of use, political euphemisms in English are mainly divided into several themes: war and nuclear weapons, taxes, illegal activities, and political regimes. In British mass media is preferred more formal terms and expressions. In Uzbek, the following spheres of political euphemisms can be distinguished: 1) diplomatic negotiations; 2) pressure from the authorities or penal authorities; 3) military develop-

ment and secrets; 4) activities of law enforcement agencies; 5) inter-communal relations.

The comparison of the linguistic phenomenon of euphemisation in Uzbek and English shows that both languages are rich in euphemisms and actively use them in the sphere of professional communication in order to veil the essence of the denoted. Euphemisms in political discourse have similar functions in Uzbek and English and coincide in some spheres of use.

To conclude, this literature review aims to synthesize the existing research on political euphemisms in English and Uzbek print media, leading to a comprehensive overview of the subject, while also identifying potential areas for future research. By elucidating the intricate interplay between language, culture, and politics, this review contributes to a deeper comprehension of the complexities inherent in the use of political euphemisms, and their implications within the broader spheres of international relations and public communication.

METHODS

The primary research methods for this study are linguocultural analysis and comparative methods. The linguocultural method was applied to analyse political euphemisms in English and Uzbek print media, such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, and Yangi O‘zbekiston, O‘zbekiston Ovozi, respectfully. This allowed for a deep exploration of the relationship between language, culture, and politics, determining how euphemistic language reflects, shapes, and is shaped by cultural values, political contexts, and socio-cultural dynamics in linguistic and cultural environments. The linguocultural method explored the links between language use and cultural context through a combination of linguistic and cultural analysis based on literature sources.

The comparative method to analyse political euphemisms in English and Uzbek print media was used as a tool to identify similarities and differences between them. Researchers gained valuable insights into how euphemistic strategies vary across English and Uzbek languages and cultural contexts by using the comparative approach. The linguocultural and comparative methods will be used to investigate the linguocultural characteristics of political euphemisms in English and Uzbek print media for several important reasons. Both methods complement each other and provide a holistic understanding of how language, culture, and politics intersect and influence the use of political euphemisms.

The comparative and linguocultural method for analyzing political euphemisms in English and Uzbek print media involves a multi-step process. First, a comprehensive collection of newspapers, magazines, and online publications is gathered. Subsequently, articles containing political euphemisms or taboo words are carefully selected. The next step entails identifying and extracting these political euphemisms from the collected data. A thorough semantic analysis of these euphemisms is then conducted, examining their meanings and connotations within both English and Uzbek texts. The analysis further delves into the cultural and socio-political contexts that influence the use and function of these euphemisms in each language. The study evaluates how cultural values and political ideologies shape the choice and usage of euphemisms in both English and Uzbek media. Furthermore, the investigation examines the specific functions of these political euphemisms in shaping discourse in each language. The research also explores effective strategies for translating culturally-specific political euphemisms into the target language. Finally, the analysis aims to identify both commonalities and significant differences in the characteristics and functions of political euphemisms observed in English and Uzbek print media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Euphemism is a tool for political participants to hide scandals, disguise the truth, and guide public thoughts when discussing social issues or events. Euphemisms in political discourse have similar functions in Uzbek and English but are also appropriate in some areas of use. The media uses political euphemisms to replace certain words or phrases. This is done for various reasons, including:

1) to describe the actions of government officials.

“*If Trump wants to cut government workers,* ***look to the private sector****. As President-elect*

*Trump seeks to shrink spending by **targeting federal employees**, experts note their pay is a much smaller portion of the budget than fees to contractors*" [*The Washington Post*, 2024, December 6].

The euphemisms are used to refer to actions that can be perceived as reducing public spending through privatization or redistributing resources to the private sector. Instead of directly saying "reduce public expenditure by laying off civil servants" or "reduce the number of jobs in state structures", an expression is used that creates a more positive and neutral image. This softens the harshness of the idea of reducing the number of employees. In terms of political correctness, the use of this phrase avoids direct discussion of job cuts and the social consequences of such a decision.

«*Янги Ўзбекистонни барпо этиш, Учинчи Ренессанс пойдеворини яратиш мақсадида барча соҳаларда **туб янгиланишлар**, кенг кўламли **ислоҳотлар** амалга оширилмоқда. Ушбу жараёнда мамлакатимиз олдида турган устувор, стратегик ҳамда долзарб вазифаларни тезкорлик билан ҳал қилишда ижро интизомини мустаҳкамлаш муҳим аҳамият касб этади*» [*Yangi O'zbekiston*, 2024, p. 1].

The euphemisms «туб янгиланишлар» (radical, fundamental change) and «ислоҳотлар» (transformations, reforms) emphasise the depth and comprehensiveness of the reforms. The word «ислоҳот » in the Uzbek language is associated with improvement, renewal and moving forward. Euphemisms contribute to the formation of a positive image of the ongoing transformations and emphasise the necessity and inevitability of the ongoing changes.

2) to report on military conflicts.

"*Leader of Syria's Resurgent Rebels Lays Out Strategy to Oust Assad. In an interview, Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, the Islamist rebel heading an offensive moving toward Damascus, said **the operation** was a long time coming*" [*The New York Times*, 2024, December 7].

The euphemism "the operation" as a military campaign is often used to refer to military action, giving it a more formal and controlled character. Conceals the brutality and scale of the armed conflict, presenting it as a planned and controlled action, avoiding direct reference to casualties and destruction.

«***Мудофаа соҳасидаги ислоҳотлар** натижасини қатор нуфузли халқаро ҳарбий машғулот ва мусобақаларда Ўзбекистон ҳарбий жамоаларининг фахрли ўринларни эгаллаб келаётгани мисолида яққол кўриш мумкин*» [Янги Ўзбекистон, 2024, January 5, p.2].

The euphemism «ислоҳотлар» is generally linked to positive change, but in the context of the armed forces, it may mask measures such as the reduction of social guarantees for military personnel or an increase in the length of service. From a linguocultural analysis perspective, patriotism is a recurring theme, emphasizing the importance of love for the homeland and readiness to defend its interests. The text is characterised by a strong emphasis on traditional values, with a focus on collective values such as national unity and defense of the homeland. This euphemism can be regarded as a form of political rhetoric aimed at fostering a positive image of the armed forces and strengthening patriotic sentiments.

However, it is worth noting, that military issues are hardly covered in the Uzbek media compared to American newspapers. In Uzbek newspapers, where examples of political euphemisms were taken, there was no information about the military situation of the countries that took place in 2024-2025. But American newspapers reported daily news about the military situation between the countries.

3) to present economic policies.

"*We encourage people who are **in a financial difficulty** to make contact with us as soon as possible*" [*The Washington Post*, 2024, December 6].

The euphemism "***in a financial difficulty***" is a socio-culturally acceptable way of concealing the harsh reality of poverty and avoiding discrimination against disadvantaged groups. Politicians resort to this kind of euphemism in the hope of not appearing insensitive to vulnerable groups and individuals and thus protecting their image.

«*Қонунчиликка кўра,* ***кам таъминланган оилаларга*** *болалар нафақаси берилиши жорий этилган*» [*O‘zbekiston Ovozi*, 2024, January 10, p. 6].

The euphemism «кам таъминланган» sounds more neutral and focuses on the objective economic conditions of the family. The use of this term is in line with the principles of political correctness aimed at creating a more humane and respectful attitude towards socially disadvantaged groups. The euphemism helps to mitigate social inequalities and emphasise that the state supports all families experiencing material difficulties.

4) to refer to national or social groups.

"*Trump Says He Would Let '****Dreamers****' Stay. But He Once Tried to Gut the Program. President-elect Donald J. Trump's stance on the immigrants who were brought to the country illegally as children is filled with contradictions*" [*The New York Times*, 2024, December 10].

"Dreamers" is a euphemism used to refer to people who were brought to the United States illegally as children and later obtained Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. The programme was introduced by President Obama's administration in 2012, providing temporary protection from deportation and the right to work for young immigrants who were brought into the country before the age of 16 and meet several other requirements. The term "Dreamers" is related to the name of the Dream Act, the bill proposed to legalise the process and symbolises the aspirations of young people for a better future in the US. In the American culture the euphemism "Dreamers" has special significance because it is linked to the values that America has traditionally associated with itself - the opportunity for migrants to create a better future, the pursuit of dreams, and equality of opportunity. It also reflects the cultural importance of the DACA programme and the debate about the legality and necessity of protecting young immigrants brought into the country as children.

«***МУРҒАК ҚАЛБЛАРГА*** *ҚУВОНЧ УЛАШИЛДИ*» [*O‘zbekiston Ovozi*, 2024, January 10, p. 1].

In this context, the term «мурғак қалблар» is employed as a euphemism for children, young people, or people who are characterised by their naive and trusting nature. The euphemism «мурғак қалблар» is perceived to have a more poetic and tender connotation, which serves to emphasise the purity and defencelessness that is often associated with childhood. The Uzbek people place a high value on and are committed to the protection of young people, and they dedicate significant attention to their development and well-being.

5) Mitigating age discrimination

"Amid efforts to foster workplace diversity, companies are increasingly recognizing the value of ***experienced talent****. Rather than focusing on chronological age, organizations are tapping into the expertise and wisdom that* ***seasoned professionals*** *bring to their teams. "We prefer to highlight the contributions of employees with deep knowledge and decades of practice," said one CEO of a leading tech firm"* [*The Washington Post*, 2024, December 16].

This example uses euphemisms like **"**experienced talent", "seasoned professionals" to describe older workers in a positive light, framing their age as an asset rather than a limitation. It reflects a context likely to appear in opinion pieces or workplace diversity articles in major American newspapers.

«*Маҳаллаларда фаолият юритаётган* «***Кексалар*** *маслаҳати*»*гуруҳлари раҳбарлари ҳар чоракда БҲМнинг 2 баравари (680 минг сўм) миқдорида рағбатлантирилиши белгиланган*» [*O‘zbekiston Ovozi*, 2024, January 24, p. 6].

The euphemism «keksa odam» means old man. In Uzbek culture, it is rude to mention the age of an individual, and respect for elders is one of the national cultural values. In this case it is better to say *keksalar* or *Yoshi ulug‘ insonlar.*

6) For people with disabilities.

In both cultures English and Uzbek, any deviation from the established norm is expressed using euphemisms: blind – unseeing, ko‘zi ojiz; invalid – disabled, differently abled, etc. Both

cultures try to avoid naming them as invalids and use as polite words as possible.

"Creating Opportunities for **Differently-Abled** Individuals" [*The New York Times*, 2024, December 10].

«*2022 йил 18 апрелдаги* «***Кўзи ожиз ва заиф кўрувчи болалар*** *учун ихтисослаштирилган мактаб-интернатларда таълим бериш сифатини ошириш ҳамда улар фаолиятини янада такомиллаштириш чоратадбирлари тўғрисида*» *ги Президент қарорининг Бухоро вилоятидаги ижроси вилоят Кенгашидаги партиямиз гуруҳи аъзолари томонидан ўрганилди*» [O'zbekiston *Ovozi*, 2024, January 10, p. 6].

7) distracts from unpleasant events in the economy

"*Germany's Coalition Collapses,* ***Leaving the Government Teetering****. After months of disputes, Chancellor Olaf Scholz ousted one of his governing partners, adding to the challenges for Europe amid Donald Trump's election*" [*The New York Times*, 2024, November 7].

This ephemerism means Placing the government in an extremely precarious position, threatening its collapse and Widely used in English-language media to describe political crises and emphasises the seriousness of the situation but avoids directly stating that the government will fall.

«*Бугунги кунда дунёда вазият кун эмас, балки соат сайин ўзгармоқда. Жаҳоннинг турли нуқталарида* ***ижтимоий-сиёсий чигалликлар****, қуролли низолар, табиий офатлар, қурғоқчилик каби муаммолар юз бераяпти. Шуларнинг ҳаммасининг асоратлари йиғилиб, дунё иқтисодиётига, қолаверса, одамлар ҳаёти ва туриш-турмушига салбий таъсир кўрсатмоқда. 2023 йилда дунё мамлакатлари, республикамиз иқтисодиётидаги вазиятлар қандай бўлгани, 2024 йил учун прогнозлар ҳақида тошкент халқаро университет кафедра мудири, иқтисодиёт фанлари бўйича фалсафа доктори, доцент акрам абсаламовнинг фикрлари билан қизиқдик*» [*O'zbekiston Ovozi*, 2024, January 17, p. 6].

In this context, this euphemism «ижтимоий-сиёсий чигалликлар» softens harsher and more concrete notions such as "conflicts", "revolutions", and "political crises". It allows for describing complex and contradictory situations in society while avoiding negative connotations. Such wording is more socially acceptable and does not cause panic or anxiety. In international relations, diplomatic language is often used to soften negative statements. The use of euphemism creates a more positive image of the situation by focusing on opportunities for problem-solving.

Political euphemisms in English often use indirect language to avoid directly confronting difficult issues or harsh realities. This allows politicians to address challenging subjects positively. Politicians can present events or policies in a favorable light by using euphemistic language. On the other hand, political euphemisms in Uzbek often display a formal tone that conveys respect for the subject matter and the individuals involved. This linguistic formality is a reflection of the hierarchical and respectful communication norms peculiar to Uzbek political discourse.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article highlights the significant role of political euphemisms in shaping public discourse by softening or obscuring harsh political realities, while highlighting the cultural and linguistic nuances that influence their use in both English and Uzbek print media. Euphemisms are therefore widely used in political discourse. Their purpose is to avoid communicative conflict, to obscure the truth or substance of a case, and to conceal unpleasant aspects of reality by distorting the truth. they have the following characteristics: first, misleading - euphemisms aim to soften the impact of unpleasant words or concepts. Secondly, obfuscate the truth: They can obscure the reality of a situation. Third, political manipulation: In the political sphere, they are used to cover up scandals, control public opinion, and shape perceptions. Euphemisms require a deep understanding of the cultural context in which they are used. They are

not simply linguistic tools but reflect a society's values, beliefs, and communication styles.

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that euphemisms play a significant role in shaping political discourse, maintaining cultural sensitivity, and influencing public perceptions on various issues in both the Uzbek and English contexts. They serve to obscure uncomfortable truths, manipulate public perception and guide public opinion. In English, euphemisms often favour indirectness and a more positive framing, especially in sensitive areas such as military conflicts and economic downturns. In Uzbek, a formal and respectful tone is often used, especially when discussing sensitive issues such as age or disability. Understanding the role of euphemism in political discourse is essential for critical analysis of political communication.

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