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## **FUNCTIONAL ASPECT OF EUPHEMISMS AND DYSPEMISMS ON THE MATERIAL OF MODERN ENGLISH MEDIA**

**Abstract:** In this article such linguistic phenomena as dysphemisms and euphemisms are described. They are regarded in terms of relevance and the linguistic value of their study by modern scholars. Their ability to reflect various social, cultural and moral values of modern society is investigated. It is noted that these phenomena have the capacity to influence the development and disappearance of different forms of taboos. Various approaches to the study of these phenomena are given. Much attention is paid to the importance of studying the sociolinguistic, cognitive and pragmatic aspects of it. These approaches to language are still relatively new, thus their study is of particular value and interest. The importance of publicistic texts and the texts of media as a material for studying these linguistic phenomena is proved by their undoubted ability to combine all functional styles is asserted. Based on the work of linguists and philologists, the authors provide generalized definitions of euphemisms and dysphemisms. The functions that they perform in modern English and in publicistic texts in particular are identified and analyzed. Several examples were taken from various media sources, which clearly demonstrate the effect produced by one or another euphemism or dysphemism. The conclusion states the need to study these linguistic phenomena, describes their linguistic and sociological value.

**Keywords:** language, media, euphemism, dysphemism, taboo, function.

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## **ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ АСПЕКТ ЭВФЕМИЗМОВ И ДИСФЕМИЗМОВ НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ СОВРЕМЕННЫХ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНЫХ СМИ**

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматриваются феномены дисфемии и эвфемии с точки зрения актуальности их изучения. Исследуется их способность отражать социальные, культурные и нравственные ценности современного общества, а также отмечается способность данных явлений влиять на развитие и отмирание различных форм табу. Приведены различные подходы к изучению данных феноменов. Большое внимание уделяется важности изучения социолингвистического, когнитивного и прагматического аспекта изучения эвфемии и дисфемии, которые обозначились относительно недавно. Объясняется ценность текстов СМИ в качестве материала для изучения данных языковых феноменов, утверждается их способность объединять в себе все функциональные стили. На основе работ лингвистов и филологов, автор приводит обобщенные определения эвфемизмов и дисфемизмов. Выявлены и проанализированы функции, которые они выполняют в современном английском языке, в частности, в публицистическом тексте. Были выбраны и описаны несколько примеров, взятых из различных СМИ, которые наглядно демонстрируют эффект, производимый тем или иным эвфемизмом или дисфемизмом. В заключении заявляется о необходимости изучения данных языковых явлений, описывается их лингвистическая и социологическая ценность.

**Ключевые слова:** язык, СМИ, эвфемизм, дисфемизм, табуизмы, функция.

Euphemisms and dysphemisms are specific linguistic phenomena. Their uniqueness lies in the ability to reflect social, cultural and moral values, peculiarities of thinking of not only individuals, but also of modern society as a whole, since these phenomena completely depend on the social assessments of certain ideas and concepts, on the definition of what is acceptable, and what is not. Hence, the need for their systematic study is beyond dispute, as it allows us to trace the cultural and social changes that lead to the development and extinction of various forms of taboos.

Most of the works devoted to the study of euphemisms and dysphemisms were based only on lexicographic material, which does not fully correspond to the real sphere of their use [2]. Various researchers considered euphemisms within specific philological disciplines (aspects related to practical stylistics, lexicology, semantics, as reflected in the works of S. Wildak, A.P. Kudryashova, B.A. Larin, K. Allan).

Sociolinguistic, cognitive and pragmatic aspects of studying euphemisms and dysphemisms came into notice of linguists relatively recently. Nevertheless, these components seem to be the most significant when studying these phenomena, for the reason that the main characteristic of language is its social nature. Accordingly, being influenced by various social circumstances, language is constantly changing, ensuring the fulfillment of new goals within the framework of global communication.

Focusing on the functional aspects of the language, modern linguists singled out publicistic texts, claiming them to be the ideal material for the study of pragmatic aspects of euphemisms and dysphemisms [1]. It is the material that vividly reflects all the changes taking place in society, in the means of communication and in the language. Publicistic texts combine both literary and colloquial speech. They are abundant in various means of expression, such as euphemism and dysphemism, which are often used in the publicistic texts, making it possible to determine the peculiarities of evaluative interpretation of a text.

The following generalized definitions can be given to these phenomena:

Euphemism is a word or expression used instead of another, which is incorrect, unauthorized or undesirable, in order to avoid naming things that can cause negative emotions in a speaker or interlocutor, as well as to disguise the essence of the notion [3].

Dysphemism is a word or expression that serves to deliberately replace any definition with a more vulgar, rude, unacceptable in a given

situation, often with the aim of expressing a negative attitude to something or discrediting the interlocutor [2].

Using the articles from the American and British media as an example, the most popular functions of dysphemisms and euphemisms were identified.

It was found that the most popular functions of using euphemisms in the American and British media are the following: replacing the names of objects of fear, denoting what is considered indecent, replacing definitions of unpleasant, disgusting objects, replacing words with more tolerant and politically correct terms, replacing in order not to shock others, the designation of organizations and professions that seem indecent.

The following examples are given in order to demonstrate the functions of euphemisms:

*«For the children unfortunate enough to suffer at the hands of **sub-standard accommodation**, there is an increased risk of childhood illness, disability, behavioural and mental health problems, as well as a deadening impact on life chance».* (The Guardian)

«Non-standard living conditions» is a euphemism (dwellings that are under housing standards) serving to replace terms associated with poverty. Clearly, the expression is used instead of the word «slum». The function of it is to conceal unpleasant and frightening truth.

*«One of the most persuasive myths about prostitution is that it is **the oldest profession**».* (The Guardian)

Here, the expression «*the oldest profession*» is used aiming to replace the word «prostitution». Its function is to designate a profession that seems indecent.

*«Catholic Charities fired a Mississippi employee on International Women's Day for discussing her former **pro-choice** advocacy work in a recent magazine article».* (The Guardian)

In the article taken from The Guardian, the term «abortion» is replaced by a euphemism «**pro-choice**». In the Russian language, «pro-choice» is translated differently, depending on the context, but usually as a term denoting freedom of choice («выступающий за свободу выбора»). In the British and American media, «**pro-choice**» is a popular euphemism for denoting abortion without medical indications.

The topic of abortion has been remained a public taboo for a long time, therefore, the press is trying to submit the term as gently as possible, using euphemisation in order not to cause discomfort to the reader.

The most frequent functions of using dysphemisms were identified: the function of reproach, insults, threats, reduction of social status, an attempt to cause negative emotions to the information among the audience.

The examples are following:

«*The Trump administration wants **regime** change in Iran*». (*The Washington Post*)

The dysphemism «**regime**» is often used by the media when describing a political situation in an unfriendly government. If the information relates to the country with which positive political relationships were established, the term «government» is used. Dysphemism is intended to provide a negative attitude to information from the audience.

«*Judge warns of **blood on our hands** if suicidal girl is forced out of secure care*» (*The Guardian*).

The expression is «**blood on our hands**» means «to be guilty». This dysphemism performs the function of the prosecution. Resorting to a vivid metaphorical image, the author deliberately evokes a negative emotional response from the audience, which makes it possible to consider the expression dysphemistic.

«*Japan's most senior finance ministry **bureaucrat** has resigned over allegations of sexual misconduct*» (*The Guardian*).

The Collins English Dictionary gives the following concept for the term «**bureaucrat**»: an official working in the administrative field. The dictionary also notes that this lexeme should be used if you want to show your disapproval caused by the fact that the politician pays more attention to formalities and compliance with the rules than to real help to the population. Based on this, it can be concluded that «**bureaucrat**» is a dysphemism in relation to the word «official, politician». His function is to lower the social status of an opponent.

The examples given above demonstrate that various events of society could serve as the sources of the emergence of new euphemisms and dysphemisms, fulfilling diverse functions. Thereby, it becomes clear that euphemisms and dysphemisms are to be further studied. Being an incredibly mobile and socially receptive linguistic phenomenon, they vividly reflect all the changes taking place in society and affecting the modern language.

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