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ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ЭВФЕМИЗМОВ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ: ТЕМАТИЧЕСКАЯ КЛАССИФИКАЦИЯ И СТАТИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ

В статье исследуется корпус эвфемистической лексики английского языка с упором на его классификацию по тематическим параметрам. Исследование опирается на энциклопедический словарь эвфемизмов, который является исчерпывающим источником статистического и тематического материала. Выборка включает 7896 словарных единиц, представляющих различные области использования эвфемистического языка в речевом производстве. Тематические поля были объединены путем группировки тематически сходных лексем и выражений, что позволило выделить 17 различных тематических полей. В исследовании используется комплексный подход к классификации, анализирующий эвфемизмы на основе способа их образования. Выявленные базовые приемы включают заимствования из других языков, расширение смыслового значения, метонимию, метафору и различные словообразовательные изменения. Также были рассмотрены периферийные приемы, такие как аллюзия, эпонимия, персонификация, вульгаризмы и эпитеты. В исследовании подчеркивается значение эвфемизма как неотъемлемого компонента системы английского языка, отражающего историческое развитие и становление языка, выступающего в качестве механизма сглаживания коммуникативных актов. В работе отмечается, что эвфемизация речи может использоваться не только для построения вежливого общения, но и для осуществления манипулятивного воздействия на

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адресата. Качественный и количественный анализ словаря показал, что наиболее продуктивными способами формирования эвфемистической лексики являются метафорический перенос, расширение смыслового значения и различные словообразовательные изменения. Заимствование иностранных слов, аллюзия, персонификация, эпонимия, эпитеты и вульгаризмы оказались менее продуктивными. Полученные результаты могут быть полезными для дальнейших исследований в области лингвистики, социолингвистики, прагматики, межкультурной коммуникации, обучения языку, культурологии, антропологии, манипулятивного использования языка и этики дискурса.

Ключевые слова: эвфемизм, троп, метафора, аллюзия, метонимия, аббревиатура, эпитет, языковая манипуляция

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EUPHEMISM CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH: THEMATIC CLASSIFICATION AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

This study examines the corpus of euphemistic vocabulary in the English language, focusing on its classification according to thematic parameters. The research draws upon the encyclopedic dictionary of euphemisms, which provides a comprehensive source of statistical and thematic material. The sample comprises 7896 vocabulary units, representing the diverse areas of euphemistic language use in speech production. Thematic fields were consolidated by grouping thematically similar lexemes and expressions, resulting in the specification of 17 distinct thematic fields. The study employs a comprehensive classification approach, analyzing the euphemisms based on their method of formation. The primary methods identified include borrowings from other languages, expansion of semantic meaning, metonymy, metaphor, and various word-formation changes. Peripheral methods such as allusion, eponymy, personification, vulgarisms, and epithets were also examined. The research highlights the significance of euphemism as an integral component of the English language system,

reflecting the historical development and formation of language while serving as a mechanism for smoothing communicative acts. It acknowledges that euphemization of speech can be employed not only for constructing polite communication but also for implementing manipulative effects on the addressee. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the dictionary reveals that metaphorical transfer, expansion of semantic meaning, and various word-formation changes are the most productive ways of forming euphemistic vocabulary. Borrowing foreign words, allusion, personification, eponymy, epithets, and vulgarisms are found to be less productive. The implications of this research extend to linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, language education, cultural studies, anthropology, manipulative language use, and discourse ethics.

Keywords: euphemism, trope, metaphor, allusion, metonymy, abbreviation, epithet, linguistic manipulation

Introduction

The process of speech production in any language is characterized by a multitude of variables that influence the direction of the conversation and the choice of linguistic tools employed. The selection of specific linguistic elements in constructing a message often reflects the intentions and attitudes of the speaker, including the manipulation of the emotional tone to conceal the true semantic content. Such linguistic phenomena form the foundation of euphemism, an essential component of English speech production.

The objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of euphemisms, focusing on their linguocultural characteristics, manipulative potential, and formation methods. This implies defining the concept of euphemisms, exploring their functions, and outlining their main classifications; examining euphemism as a linguocultural phenomenon; analyzing euphemisms as tools of speech manipulation; identifying thematic fields as the foundation for the study; examining the primary methods of forming euphemisms within various thematic fields; and exploring peripheral methods of constructing euphemisms within different thematic fields.

The research on euphemistic vocabulary and its classification according to thematic parameters holds several implications for various fields and disciplines. These implications are outlined below.

1. Linguistics and Language Studies. The study provides valuable insights into the formation and usage of euphemisms in the English language. It enhances our understanding of the linguistic mechanisms employed to soften and mitigate potentially sensitive or taboo topics. Linguistic scholars can utilize this research to delve deeper into the intricate workings of euphemistic language and its cultural and social implications.

2. Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics. The classification of euphemisms based on thematic fields exposes the social and cultural contexts in which euphemisms are employed. It highlights the specific domains and areas of human experience where the use of euphemisms is prevalent. Sociolinguists and pragmatic researchers can use this information to explore how euphemisms reflect societal attitudes, values, and norms, and to analyze their impact on interpersonal communication.

3. Cross-Cultural Communication. The examination of borrowings from other languages and the influence of cultural contacts on the formation of euphemisms has implications for cross-cultural communication. Understanding the cultural associations and connotations of euphemisms can facilitate effective communication between individuals from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It helps to avoid misunderstandings and promotes intercultural sensitivity and understanding.

4. Manipulative Language Use. The research acknowledges that euphemisms can be employed as a manipulative tool in communication. By veiling certain concepts or topics, manipulators can influence the perceptions and reactions of their interlocutors. This observation has implications for critical discourse analysis, persuasion studies, and media studies, where the examination of manipulative language use is of great importance.

5. Language Education and Pedagogy. The study of euphemisms and their construction can be integrated into language education curricula. By familiarizing students with the concepts of euphemism, its various forms, and their thematic associations, educators can enhance language learners' communicative competence and cultural awareness. This knowledge enables students to navigate language use effectively in different social contexts.

6. Cultural Studies and Anthropology. Euphemisms reflect cultural attitudes, values, and social changes. The thematic classification of

euphemisms allows for a deeper understanding of cultural and social dynamics within specific domains. This research can contribute to cultural studies and anthropology by providing insights into how societies construct and negotiate meaning, taboo topics, and social norms through language.

7. Discourse Ethics. The study of euphemisms raises ethical considerations regarding language use and its impact on social interactions. It invites critical reflection on the balance between politeness, honesty, and the potential manipulation inherent in euphemistic language. Discourse ethics and philosophy can draw upon this research to explore ethical decision-making in communication and the implications of linguistic choices.

Theoretical background

Definition, functions, and classifications of euphemisms

Euphemism has become a prominent subject of study within the field of linguistics, receiving extensive attention from various disciplines. Researchers examining euphemism delve into its origins, provide precise definitions of this linguistic phenomenon, and categorize euphemisms based on different classification parameters.

Euphemism, like many language-related issues, has been subject to diverse interpretations by individual scholars. Some works perceive euphemism as a linguistic “trend” rooted in the desire for a form of speech conspiracy, aiming to veil the true meaning of certain realities and concepts (Gómez, 2009). Alternatively, others view euphemism as a trope that serves as a tool for semantic softening and smoothing (Bowers & Pleydell-Pearce, 2011).

The consideration of euphemism as a stylistic concept remains debatable. Some scholars propose classifying euphemism as a stylistic device (Halmari, 2011), while others refute this interpretation due to its direct designation of the subject (Rabab’ah & Al-Qarni, 2012).

Many researchers examining the nature of euphemism concur that it is intricately linked to the broader social phenomenon of taboo (Olimat, 2020). Consequently, euphemisms are often interpreted as lexemes or expressions with neutral tones and semantics, employed to adhere to societal prohibitions stemming from prejudices and superstitions.

Another prevalent viewpoint emphasizes the primary functional aspect of euphemisms, focusing on their role in mitigating existing or potential communicative conflicts. By minimizing conflict, euphemisms

contribute to the “camouflage” of real-world phenomena (Jing-Schmidt, 2019).

Euphemism is occasionally equated with a related linguistic phenomenon known as “cryptolalia” or secret speech, primarily observed in closed communication among specific social groups. In such cases, the meaningful content of the communication remains inaccessible to individuals outside of the group (Rittenburg et al., 2016). While euphemism shares similarities with secret speech in terms of concealing the true semantics of words, an important functional distinction lies in the accessibility of the statement’s meaning to all participants in communication, as opposed to the selectivity of secret speech. In other words, euphemism and secret speech can be seen as “situationally opposed” (McCallum & McGlone, 2011).

Consequently, the heterogeneity of the components comprising the concept of euphemism leads to varying definitions that highlight different aspects, whether it be its functions, the construction of a “camouflage” effect, or the intended purpose of use.

In our view, a comprehensive definition of euphemism as a complex linguistic phenomenon should not only encompass its fundamental functions but also account for how these functions are performed and the speaker’s objectives in employing euphemism within a specific communication context. Therefore, as a working definition, we propose the following: euphemism involves substituting an undesirable lexeme or expression with a neutral or positively connotated unit within a given communicative scenario, with the aim of mitigating communicative conflicts or masking unpleasant aspects of reality.

The primary purpose of using euphemisms is to manipulate the addressee’s perception and reinforce a non-critical understanding by concealing or softening the true, direct content of a statement. Specific goals of employing euphemistic language include resolving communicative conflicts or discomfort and limiting the audience to whom the message’s content is accessible (Danilina et al., 2019; Malyuga & Orlova, 2016).

The functions of euphemisms are diverse and can generally be categorized as follows:

- 1) substituting precise names of fear-inspiring real-world phenomena, as in *pass away vs die*, *recessions vs depression*;
- 2) indirect naming, as in *executive action vs assassination*;

3) substituting names of socially deemed indecent phenomena, as in *honk the horn vs blow one's nose*;

4) observing etiquette to consider the interlocutor's feelings, as in *not a great reader vs a poor reader, verbally deficient vs illiterate*;

5) distorting or concealing the true essence of designated real-world phenomena.

Euphemisms as a tool for speech manipulation

Numerous studies examining the features and nature of euphemisms indicate that euphemistic language use serves not only to construct polite communication but also to exert manipulative influence on the message recipient. Manipulation, as a multifaceted phenomenon encompassing various aspects of human life, has been extensively described within multiple scientific disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science, and linguistics. In linguistic research, manipulative influence is carefully analyzed as a practice embodied through the use of language tools.

The term “manipulation” often connotes hidden influence, with the two concepts considered synonymous. In this understanding, manipulation is interpreted as a means of exerting psychological influence, aimed at subtly intruding into the listener's psyche, introducing attitudes, intentions, goals, or evaluations that contradict the listener's initial beliefs (Dubrovskaya & Yuskaeva, 2022; Akopova, 2016).

Effective manipulation relies on the construction of a “false reality”, which conceals and masks the manipulative intent as much as possible (Filyasova, 2022; Grishechko, 2011). This artificial, “parallel” reality maximizes the importance of certain aspects while minimizing others, thereby shaping the perception and evaluation of real-world phenomena in accordance with the speaker's manipulative intentions.

The essence of manipulation lies in deliberately constructing an incorrect and distorted informational framework within a communicative scenario, involving the concealment of facts, modification of knowledge, and rearrangement of priorities (Antipova et al., 2021). The manipulative effect is based on the association of explicit content, creating a kind of “formal armor” that diverts the listener's attention from taboo subjects while conveying additional semantics in the subtext (Malyuga & Grishechko, 2021; Agapova & Grishechko, 2016).

Importantly, the smoothing effect of euphemisms is not always achieved through associative correlation with a positive object or reality; additional mechanisms are employed by manipulators. Euphemistic language devices encompass phonetic distortion, abbreviations, acronyms, and paraphrasing through expanding the elements of a statement. These methods of constructing euphemisms bring about slight modifications to the tabooed unit, indicating a substitutive effect rather than a purely associative one.

The functioning characteristics of euphemisms in speech, focused on implementing and maintaining manipulative influence, have prompted scholars to describe their role as a “buffer” or “intermediate link” between a linguistic unit with an undesirable connotation and the consciousness, mental processes, and volitional activities of recipients within the communication context (Petrosyan & Grishechko, 2019).

The most significant and profound manipulative impact is often associated with political euphemisms, which, in the current global political landscape, have gained independent recognition. Political euphemisms are defined as linguistic devices embedded in political discourse aimed at the mass audience, intended to mitigate negative associations by providing inaccurate and distorted representations of the true meaning of the described real-world phenomena (Grishechko & Akopova, 2016).

However, some researchers argue that deliberate distortion of the statement’s true meaning undermines the euphemistic nature of camouflage within political discourse. Such situations arise when the euphemism loses its connection to the object it nominally represents, thus stripping it of its status as a euphemism (for example, using *tension* instead of *uprising*, *undernourishment* instead of *starvation*) (Terry, 2020).

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of euphemistic speech as a tool for manipulative influence is widely recognized and supported by several evidential arguments:

- 1) euphemisms mask the true denotation by creating a neutral or positive connotation through associative concepts, thus serving as a “buffer” that relies on the notion that the higher the indirect method of influencing the addressee, the more successful the exchange of information;

2) the abundance of information in modern society hinders message navigation and adequate assessment, leading to a less critical perception by the addressee;

3) the mechanism of effective euphemization relies on the process of “recognizing” the hidden meaning, which can be challenging for individuals with low levels of communicative competence or due to extralinguistic factors such as limited time resources, inadequate education levels, or a lack of necessary background knowledge.

Mechanisms of implementing euphemistic manipulative influence and their effectiveness

Manipulative influence through euphemistic speech occurs in English at the phonetic, morphological, and lexical levels, allowing for varying degrees of impact effectiveness.

Euphemistic substitution at the phonetic level also serves manipulative intentions. Through sound analogy, the form of a taboo lexeme is modified to divert the addressee’s attention from an undesirable, forbidden, or unacceptable object of reality. Such denotations typically involve swear words or obscenities that are transformed, while the recipient still understands the intended meaning even if these explicit words are not verbalized. The manipulative potential in this case is limited primarily due to the specific domain of application, often associated with informal language and relevant topics for discussion. Additionally, the replaced word remains transparent to all participants in the communication. However, in certain cases, sound analogy proves to be the most suitable mechanism for effective manipulation and enables impactful influence on the interlocutor.

At the morphological level, three primary methods of euphemization contribute to manipulative impact on the interlocutor.

1. Negative prefix. This method involves adding a negative prefix to a noun (adjective, adverb) that has an antonymous meaning opposite to the replaced word. The resulting semantic content can be described as a moderate form of censure. Negative prefixation is a common approach in euphemistic manipulation, as it influences the psychological mechanisms of the addressee’s perception and their hidden unconscious models of behavior and understanding. Denying a positive denotation is a less intrusive method of conveying information in conversation than affirming a negative one. The manipulative effect of euphemisms constructed through negative prefixation relies on the clear principle of

mitigation and leveling. An important aspect is the lack of precise and specific designation of the undesirable denotation, as euphemisms allow for a wide range of possible interpretations.

2. Meiosis. Meiosis is a trope that involves underestimating the intensity of properties or features of an object, phenomenon, or process. Euphemisms based on meiosis weakly allude to the designated phenomenon or object of reality, resulting in a high degree of effectiveness in achieving manipulative goals and communicative intentions. From a psychological perspective and for the sake of covert speech production, overtly using blatant lies is unacceptable, as the speaker aims to avoid exposure and the consequent loss of trust from the manipulated recipient. Meiotic euphemisms aim to create an illusion, making the addressee believe that the unwanted denotation has been expressed (thus assuming they are not being deceived). However, the negative reality is actually referred to in a manner that significantly softens its manipulative impact. Reducing undesirable semantics through meiosis is considered an effective method of manipulative influence. The reduction of a feature leads to modifications and distortions of the recipient's perception regarding the essence of the discussed matter, contributing to the "camouflage" of its importance and significance. Furthermore, the indirectness, reduction, and weakening of negative concepts create an illusion of reliable information presentation, thereby increasing the addressee's susceptibility and accessibility to manipulative influence.

3. Abbreviation. Among the morphological methods employed in euphemistic speech, abbreviation holds the highest manipulative potential. This is primarily due to its ability to explicitly avoid full naming of the object of reality, which the manipulator intends to conceal. The absence of a specific word plays a significant role in the effectiveness of abbreviation. The speaker replaces the word with its abbreviated form, causing the interlocutor to be distracted and abstract from the essence of the discussed issue. Furthermore, deciphering the abbreviation in the recipient's mind may require additional time, providing the manipulator with a strategic advantage for planning and implementing their manipulative intentions.

The lexical level, which encompasses fundamental processes underlying euphemistic speech production, is widely regarded as the most influential level of operation. Manipulative influence is focused on

modifying words in line with the speaker's conscious and unconscious intentions, aligned with the recipient's personal perception. Specific words are chosen to initiate associations that serve the manipulator's interests.

Lexical units such as terms and borrowings exhibit a significant degree of manipulative potential. Borrowings, in particular, are foreign words that are often obscure to native speakers of the recipient language due to their secretive and ambiguous internal form. They lack negative connotations and are perceived as prestigious and noble, thus having the ability to elevate the denotation even when it is explicitly named. The usage of specific lexemes and terminological designations in communication creates an aura of respectability and fosters trust and respect towards the source of information. In contemporary euphemistic discourse, borrowings predominantly manifest as abstract nouns. For instance, *price liberalization* is used instead of *price escalation*, *confrontation* instead of *opposition*, *correction* instead of *reform*, *sequestering* instead of *reduction*.

The use of terms is advantageous in the context of manipulative intentions, as a significant portion of the audience either has limited access or partial understanding of their meanings. Consequently, correctly perceiving the true semantic content of a statement becomes difficult or even impossible for such individuals.

Materials and methods

The study utilized examples from Holder's (2008) dictionary of euphemisms, which served as the primary material for analysis. The dictionary consisted of a total of 7,896 entries, providing a comprehensive sample for investigation. The research methods employed in this study included linguistic observation and description, which involved interpreting the characteristics of the language units under examination. In addition to linguistic observation and description, the research methodology incorporated several analytical techniques to gain deeper insights into the studied euphemisms.

Linguo-stylistic analysis was employed to examine the stylistic features and effects of the euphemistic language units. This approach aimed to identify the specific linguistic choices, rhetorical devices, and stylistic variations used in the formation of euphemisms. By examining the linguistic nuances and stylistic strategies, a comprehensive understanding of the euphemistic expressions was obtained.

Contextual analysis played a crucial role in exploring the situational factors and communicative contexts in which the euphemisms were employed. The contextual analysis involved examining the surrounding linguistic and social factors that influenced the selection and usage of specific euphemisms. This included considerations of cultural norms, social conventions, power dynamics, and intended audience.

Statistical analysis was utilized to quantify and analyze the frequency of the identified euphemisms within the dataset. By employing statistical techniques, the research aimed to identify trends, thematic fields, and recurrent patterns in the formation and usage of euphemisms. This quantitative analysis provided grounds for valuable observations regarding the prevalence and variations of euphemistic language in different contexts.

The combination of these methodologies allowed for a comprehensive examination of the linguistic, stylistic, and contextual aspects of euphemisms, having facilitated a deeper understanding of the nature of euphemistic language and its manipulative potential, contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the chosen euphemistic expressions in the study.

Study results

Basic ways of constructing euphemisms in various thematic fields

This study focuses on the analysis of the corpus of euphemistic vocabulary in the English language, with a specific emphasis on classifying the euphemistic vocabulary according to thematic parameters. Holder's (2008) encyclopedic dictionary of euphemisms served as the source of statistical and thematic material, containing a total of 7,896 vocabulary units categorized into 68 thematic fields that correspond to the areas of euphemistic language use in speech production.

Given the substantial number of identified thematic fields in the dictionary, which may hinder the productivity of analysis, we consolidated thematically similar lexemes and expressions into larger groups. As a result, the original 68 thematic fields were reduced to 17 fields, namely: (1) body parts, (2) disease, physical and mental disabilities, (3) sexual relations, sexual orientation, (4) physiological secretions, (5) natural and forensic death, suicide, (6) work, (7) sins, (8) politics, (9) crimes, (10) war, (11) appearance, (12) age, (13) animals and

animal-derived meat, (14) charity, (15) race issues, slavery, (16) education, and (17) religion and superstition.

The euphemisms presented in the dictionary were classified based on their method of formation. The following methods of formation were identified: (1) borrowing from other languages, (2) semantic expansion, (3) metonymy, (4) metaphor, and (5) various types of word-formation changes. In addition to these methods, we also observed instances of allusion, eponymy, personification, and, in some cases, epithets in the formation of euphemistic vocabulary. Each of these formation methods will be further explored in detail in the subsequent sections of this study.

Borrowing. In Holder's (2008) dictionary of euphemisms, 84 euphemistic units were identified as being formed through borrowing vocabulary. This accounts for approximately 1.3% of the total number of analyzed euphemisms. Borrowed vocabulary is predominantly utilized in euphemizing thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (29 units), sins (10 units), body parts (8 units), and diseases, physical and mental disabilities (7 units). Examples include *in fragrante delicto* (in the act of extramarital copulation), *au naturel* (naked), *blighty* (a serious but not fatal wound), and *loco* (mad). The presence of borrowed euphemisms can be attributed to linguistic and cultural interactions between native English speakers and other cultures, primarily French, Latin, Italian, Spanish, and others. The extensive borrowing from the French language is explained by geographical proximity and the intertwined historical and cultural destinies of the two peoples. The frequent use of Indian language for designating certain unpleasant objects and phenomena can be attributed to the prolonged British presence in India, which enriched the English language not only materially but also linguistically.

Extension of Semantic Meaning. Holder's (2008) dictionary includes 1,780 cases (approximately 28% of the total) where euphemistic vocabulary is formed through the extension of semantic meaning. This method of word formation is particularly prevalent in thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (281 units), work (229 units), physiological discharge (194 units), diseases, physical and mental disabilities (188 units), natural death and forensic death, suicide (158 units), crimes (137 units), and politics (82 units). Examples include *illegitimate* (born a bastard), *prestigious* (expensive), *currency adjustment* (devaluation), *early retirement* (dismissal from

employment), *negative employee situation* (staff dismissal), *cash flow problem* (bankruptcy), *non-heart beating donor* (a corpse), *vital statistics form* (death certificate), *self-violence* (suicide), *pre-emptive self-defense* (killing), *deep interrogation* (torture), *additional means* (illegal drugs used for bodybuilding purposes), *ethical investment* (policy of buying stocks that do not offend dogmatists' prejudices), and *approved school* (penal institute for young criminals). The extension of semantic meaning or abstraction is a common means of forming euphemistic vocabulary. Abstractions allow for discussing sensitive or unpleasant topics while saving face for both the speaker and the interlocutor. Common words do not impose obligations on anyone and, when used in the appropriate context, are understandable to all participants in communication. This approach may be seen as a form of hypocrisy, but it serves the purpose of maintaining politeness. Using euphemistic abstractions has become increasingly common in the era of political correctness in the US and Britain, as it helps avoid insult, humiliation, and even subtle hints of someone's inferiority, such as *people with differing abilities*, *partially sighted*, *cerebrally challenged*, *differently abled*, *visually challenged*, *physically challenged*, *mobility impaired*, and *people with learning difficulties*.

Metonymy. The analyzed dictionary contains 110 cases of metonymy used in the formation of euphemistic vocabulary, accounting for approximately 17% of the total number of analyzed euphemisms. Metonymy is most commonly employed in the thematic fields of sexual relations and sexual orientation (29 units), physiological discharge (16 units), crimes (14 units), and work (12 units). Examples include *a big belly* (a pregnant woman), *dress for sale* (a prostitute), *front office* (a police station), and *boys uptown* (corrupt political bosses from Tammany Hall in New York City). Metonymy is not a widely used method for euphemizing English vocabulary, as it does not veil the unpleasant aspects of phenomena and objects as effectively as metaphor or the extension of semantic meaning.

Metaphor. The analysis of Holder's (2008) dictionary revealed 3,782 cases of metaphorical usage, representing approximately 60% of the total number of euphemistic vocabulary considered. Metaphor is predominantly employed in euphemizing thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (1,213 units), sins (810 units), natural death and forensic death, suicide (364 units), crimes (330 units), work

(300 units), physiological discharge (205 units), diseases, physical and mental disabilities (135 units), and politics (105 units). Examples include *come in at the window* (to be a bastard), *petticoat government* (a situation where a wife makes decisions for the household, including the husband's leisure time and spending), *woman in a gilded cage* (a young woman married to a rich old man), *wear a fork* (a cuckold), *creature of sale* (a prostitute), *fly a kite* (to write a begging letter), *lose your shirt* (to be ruined), *fly one wing low* (drunk), *hang up your hat* (to die), *give up the spoon* (to die), *written out of the script* (killed or dismissed from employment), *draw the king's picture* (to counterfeit banknotes), *guest of her Majesty* (a prisoner), *sheriff's hotel* (a prison), *let fly* (to fart), *light in the head* (of low intelligence), and *banana skin* (potentially dangerous situation). Metaphorical transfer is the most productive means of forming euphemistic vocabulary. Metaphor creates vivid and imaginative images that overshadow the unpleasant or coarse aspects of the word's primary, nominative meaning. Through metaphor, a remarkable image is created, often overshadowing the primary meaning altogether.

Word-Formation Changes. Within Holder's (2008) dictionary of euphemisms, we identified 244 cases (approximately 3.8% of the total) where word-formation changes were employed to euphemize vocabulary. Thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (66 units), body parts (27 units), diseases, physical and mental disabilities (25 units), physiological secretions (24 units), crimes (20 units), and politics (11 units) were particularly prone to word-formation changes. The following types of word-formation changes were observed in the euphemized vocabulary.

1. Various Structural Types of Abbreviations.

Abbreviation of "initial" type. This type of word-formation change, often employed to create euphemisms, accounted for 77 cases (approximately 1.2%) in the analyzed dictionary. It was frequently used to euphemize thematic fields such as crimes (16 units), sexual relations and sexual orientation (11 units), politics (11 units), and work (8 units). Examples include *B-pill* (benzedrine used illegally), *H and C* (heroin and cocaine), *SOB* (son of a bachelor, a bastard), *R and R* (rest and recreation extramarital copulation), *SGO* (same gender-oriented homosexual), *SQ* (in such a situation pregnant), *PC* (politically correct), *CCB* (Civil Co-operation Bureau, a unit established by the government

to try to perpetuate white political domination), *NIH* (not invented here), and *RIF* (reduction in force).

Abbreviation as the addition of parts of two words. This type of abbreviation accounted for 26 examples (approximately 0.4%) in Holder's (2008) dictionary of euphemisms. Euphemistic vocabulary was formed by combining parts of two words, primarily in thematic fields such as appearance (8 units), sins (6 units), and sexual relations and sexual orientation (5 units). Examples include *don't-name-'ems* (trousers), *sit-in-'ems* (trousers), and *canoodle* (to fondle sexually, perhaps a compound of canoe and cuddle).

Syncope as a type of abbreviation. Syncope refers to truncating part of an old word to form a new word. This type of abbreviation was found to be the most productive method of forming euphemisms through word-formation changes. We identified 82 cases (approximately 1.3% of the total) where truncation was employed, particularly in thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (24 units), body parts (17 units), diseases, physical and mental disabilities (12 units), physiological secretions (12 units), and sins (7 units). Examples include *bi* (bisexual), *welly* (a contraceptive sheath, shortened form of Wellington boot, which is also made of rubber for protective reasons), *by-courting* (an indication of bastardy), *pash* (a homosexual desire, shortened form of passion), and *psycho* (a psychopath).

2. Transition of Words from One Part of Speech to Another.

Only 11 cases (approximately 0.2%) of euphemization through the transition of words from one part of speech to another were noted in the dictionary analysis. This method was observed primarily in three thematic fields: sexual relations and sexual orientation (7 units), sins (2 units), and appearance (2 units). Examples include *buckle* (to copulate, from the obsolete English "Bucklebury" – buggery), *claimant* (a poor person supported in the past or wholly by the state, from the word to claim money), and *cheaters* (cosmetic padding, from the attempt to deceive and the word "to cheat").

3. Diminutives.

This method involves creating new words by adding a diminutive suffix to the stem of the original word. Diminutives were relatively unproductive in euphemization, with only 15 instances (approximately 0.2%) identified. They were most frequently used in thematic fields such as body parts (6 units), diseases, physical and mental disabilities (4

units), and sexual relations and sexual orientation (2 units). Examples include *booby* (a mad person), *chubby* (fat), and *girlie* (a prostitute).

Peripheral methods of constructing euphemisms in various thematic fields

Within Holder's (2008) dictionary of euphemisms, we identified individual cases of allusion, eponymy, personification, epithets, as well as contextually conditioned vulgarisms.

Allusion. In the analyzed material, we found 85 cases (approximately 1.3% of the total number of analyzed euphemisms) of allusions to various events, names of people, literary and mythological characters. Allusions were most prevalent in thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (27 units), crimes (16 units), natural and criminal death, suicide (9 units), and sins (8 units). Examples include *Drury Lane vestal* (a prostitute), *Magdalene* (a prostitute), *Buddha stick* (a marijuana cigarette), and *Bloody Mary* (a drink of tomato juice and vodka). Allusion is a high-context stylistic device that draws upon a rich background or history behind a euphemistic word or expression, which explains its wide usage in euphemism.

Eponymy. We identified 21 cases (approximately 0.3% of the total number of analyzed units) of eponymous euphemisms. Eponymy was most frequently employed to euphemize thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (7 units), illness, physical and mental disability (3 units), charity (3 units), and physiological discharge (2 units). Examples include *Oscar* (a male homosexual), *Peeping Tom* (a voyeur), *Down's syndrome* (a congenital disorder formerly known as mongolism), and *Hansen's disease* (leprosy).

Personification. In the course of material analysis, we observed 79 cases (approximately 1.2% of the total analyzed euphemistic lexicon) of personification. This method of forming euphemistic vocabulary was most commonly utilized in thematic fields such as body parts (24 units), physiological secretions (16 units), sexual relations and sexual orientation (15 units), politics (8 units), and race issues, slavery (4 units). Examples include *Little Mary* (the abdomen), *Jimmy Brits* (diarrhea), *Janet and John* (an oversimplified summary), and *Jim Crow* (unfair treatment of black people by whites).

Vulgarisms. We also noted 147 instances of vulgarisms (approximately 2.3% of the total), primarily in thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (62 units), body parts (55 units),

and natural and forensic death, suicide (12 units). Examples include *dead meat* (a corpse), *conk out* (to die), and *croak* (to die).

Epithets. The dictionary also included a number of epithets (23 units) used to euphemize thematic fields such as sexual relations and sexual orientation (12 units), illness, physical and mental disability (5 units), and body parts (4 units). Examples include *bedworthy* (describing a sexually attractive woman or one who may benefit from having a child), *beddable* (referring to a nubile woman), and *private* (pertaining to a patient paying personally for medical care).

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the dictionary revealed that the most productive methods of forming euphemistic vocabulary are metaphorical transfer, expansion of semantic meaning, and abstraction. Various word-formation changes also contribute to the creation of euphemisms. Borrowing foreign words, allusion, personification, eponymy, epithets, and vulgarisms were found to be less productive means of constructing euphemisms. It is worth noting that in certain sociocultural contexts, vulgarisms can also function as a form of euphemistic vocabulary. The study of euphemisms, their formation methods, and underlying reasons represents a promising area within modern linguistics.

Conclusion

This study delved into the examination of the corpus of euphemistic vocabulary in the English language by classifying it according to thematic parameters. Holder's (2008) encyclopedic dictionary of euphemisms served as a valuable resource, comprising a sample size of 7,896 vocabulary units within 68 thematic fields, representing the various domains in which euphemisms are employed in speech production.

By grouping thematically similar lexemes and expressions, we were able to condense the number of thematic fields into 17 broader categories, including body parts, illness, physical and mental disability, sexual relations, sexual orientation, physiological secretions, natural and forensic death, suicide, job, sins, politics, crimes, war, appearance, age, animals and meat derived from animals, charity, racial issues, slavery, education, and religion and superstition.

The classification of euphemisms in the dictionary was conducted based on their method of formation. The primary ways of formation identified were as follows.

1. Borrowings from other languages, with sexual relations, sexual orientation, sins, body parts, and diseases, physical and mental disability being the dominant thematic fields.

2. Expansion of semantic meaning, with sexual relations and sexual orientation, work, physiological secretions, diseases, physical and mental disability, natural and forensic death, suicide, crimes, and politics being the dominant thematic fields.

3. Metonymy, with sexual relations and sexual orientation, physiological secretions, crimes, and work being the dominant thematic fields.

4. Metaphor, with sexual relations and sexual orientation, sins, natural and forensic death, suicide, crimes, work, physiological secretions, diseases, physical and mental disability, and politics being the dominant thematic fields.

5. Various types of word-formation changes, with sexual relations and sexual orientation, body parts, diseases, physical and mental disability, physiological secretions, crimes, and politics being the dominant thematic fields.

Additionally, peripheral methods of forming euphemisms were distinguished, including allusion, eponymy, personification, vulgarisms, and epithets, each with their respective dominant thematic fields.

Euphemism, as an integral component of the English language system, reflects its historical development and formation, serving as a mechanism to soften communicative acts. The need for such softening arises from relevant cultural and social prerequisites, attitudes, and traditions. Euphemisms are a significant aspect of linguistic and cultural knowledge, reflecting cultural and social changes, customs, and traditions through verbal representation. Moreover, euphemization of speech can serve not only the construction of polite communication but also the implementation of manipulative effects on the addressee.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the dictionary revealed that the most productive ways of forming euphemistic vocabulary are metaphorical transfer, expansion of semantic meaning or abstraction, and various word-formation changes. Borrowing foreign words, allusion, personification, eponymy, and epithets were found to be less productive means of forming euphemisms. Additionally, vulgarisms can also function as a novel euphemistic vocabulary within specific sociocultural contexts.

The study of euphemisms, their methods, and the reasons for their formation represents a promising area within modern linguistics. The research on euphemistic vocabulary and its classification carries implications for linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, manipulative language use, language education, cultural studies, anthropology, and discourse ethics. It provides valuable insights into the formation, usage, and social implications of euphemisms, enriching our understanding of language, culture, and communication dynamics.

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