

## НАУЧНЫЕ СТАТЬИ

УДК 811.111

<https://doi.org/10.25076/vpl.56.01>

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### ЭВФЕМИЗМЫ В ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ И ИХ ПОТЕНЦИАЛ В МАНИПУЛИРОВАНИИ МНЕНИЕМ ЧИТАТЕЛЕЙ: ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ АСПЕКТ

*Эвфемизмы и процесс эвфемизации восходят к природе человека и его страху перед силами природы, которые привели к возникновению системы языковых табу. К одной из причин нового этапа в развитии эвфемизмов можно отнести социализацию человека, становление его как члена общества. Отражая своей тематикой и частотой употребления непрерывный процесс развития общества, эвфемизмы указывают на изменения культурных ценностей определенной этнической общности от поколения к поколению, проникая практически во все сферы жизни и общения. Статья посвящена изучению эвфемизмов в экономическом дискурсе на примере статей по экономическим вопросам, их формированию и функциям, а также их манипулятивному потенциалу и выбору модели манипуляции. Проведенный функциональный анализ показал, что среди эвфемизмов в экономическом дискурсе доминируют функции вуалирования и нормализации, поскольку они помогают манипулировать общественным мнением путем смягчения реального состояния экономики или смягчения последствий мер, принимаемых правительством или топ-менеджментом, и то*

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какое влияние они оказывают на общественность. Что касается выбираемых объектов манипулирования, то манипуляция репутацией оказалась наиболее частой в экономическом дискурсе, поскольку именно с этим объектом в первую очередь связаны такие функции эвфемизмов как вуалирование и нормализация.

Ключевые слова: эвфемизм, речевая манипуляция, метонимическая номинация, метафорический перенос, экономический дискурс, объект манипуляции

UDC 811.111

<https://doi.org/10.25076/vpl.56.01>

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#### **EUPHEMISMS IN ECONOMIC DISCOURSE AND THEIR POTENTIAL IN READERS' OPINION MANIPULATION: FUNCTIONAL ASPECT**

*Euphemisms and the process of euphemization go back to the nature of a human being, and their fear before natural forces that lead to creating a system of linguistic taboo. Socialization of a human being, their becoming a member of a society can be referred to one of the reasons for the new development of euphemisms. Reflecting by their topics and frequency of use the continuous process of society development euphemisms reflect changes in the cultural values of a certain ethnical people from generation to generation penetrating to almost all spheres of life and communication. The article is devoted to study of euphemisms in economic discourse based on articles on economic issues, their formation and function as well as their manipulative potential and the choice of manipulation models. Functional analysis showed that veiling and normalization functions dominate among euphemisms in economic discourse as they help to manipulate public opinion by softening the real state of the economy or hindering consequences of measures taken by the government or top-management and their effect on the public. As for chosen manipulation objects, reputation manipulation proved to be the most frequent one in*

*economic discourse as veiling and normalization function are most often referred to this object.*

*Key words: euphemism, speech manipulation, metonymic nomination, metaphorical transfer, economic discourse, manipulation object*

### **Introduction**

The foundations of the study of euphemisms in Russian philology are laid in the works of N. S. Arapova, L. A. Bulakhovsky, J. J. Warbot, A.M. Katsev, M. L. Kovshova, L. P. Krysin, B. A. Larina, V. P. Moskvina, A. A. Reformaty, E. P. Senichkina and other scholars in linguistics. Among the foreign studies on the systematic description and classification of euphemisms we can distinguish the works of such authors as K. Allan and K. Burridge, K. Linfoot-Ham, J. Lawrence, J. S. Nieman and K. J. Silver, E. Partridge, H. Rawson, R. Spears, B. Warren, R. V. Holder.

Both Russian and foreign linguists have studied euphemisms in terms of their formation/structure, semantic meaning, pragmatic use in discourse. Analysis of findings in recent studies allow us to distinguish three main types of euphemism formation. The first one is semasiological shifts of a meaning by narrowing of its scope, metonymizing, metaphorizing and semantic contrasting. The second is changing the form of a word by such language tools as abbreviation, word composition, formations with postpositions, conversion, affixation, contamination, and sound similarity. And lastly, the third one is borrowings from other languages.

We should also mention appearance of such direction in euphemisms studies as functioning of the device in different types of discourses which is also a focus of our study.

Most scholars agree that euphemisms can be referred to the idea of tolerance. Such principle can justify the wide spread of euphemisms in the sphere of mass media, finance, economy, as well as politics and business.

We need to mention that euphemisms have been studied in different fields of linguistics. For example, in nomination (Danilina et al., 2019), in structural semantics (Druzhinin, 2021), in communicative pragmatics (Malyuga & Tomalin, 2024), in sociolinguistics (Malyuga, 2024; Tampos-Villadolid & Santos, 2019), in psycholinguistics (Huang, 2019;

Formanova & Dombrovan, 2019), in cognitive linguistics (Suparto & Fithri, 2022), linguistic culturology (Chaika et al., 2021; Akopova, 2016 a). The gender factor of euphemization is also being studied nowadays (Malyuga, 2019).

However, we should note that manipulative potential of this stylistic device is not investigated enough. In our opinion the use of euphemization in texts of mass media is aimed at forming some desirable opinion or creating some special mood and creating desired reputation among readers. We suggest that media dealing with economic issues also tries to use the device to manipulate readers' opinion.

#### **Theoretical background**

Euphemisms are typically described as techniques that involve replacing certain words with alternatives that are more suitable for specific contexts. This linguistic device is characterized as a term or phrase that stands in for another that may be considered inappropriate or could sound offensive, as in “fell asleep with the last sleep” as a substitute for “died” (Ozhegov & Shvedova, 2006, p. 906). A similar explanation notes that euphemisms encompass terms used in lieu of others deemed unacceptable due to their harshness, insults, or discourtesy, as in “expecting a child” or “in an interesting position” instead of “pregnant” (Kalandarov & Tukhtasinova, 2021). Yet another perspective describes euphemisms as words or expressions used to indirectly reference objects or concepts when direct naming is considered socially inappropriate or indecent (Chernyavskaya, 2023; Grischevko, 2011b; Akopova, 2016b). Examples include “in an interesting position” for “pregnant”, and “if nothing happens to the patient” for “if the patient does not die”. In conclusion, our analysis indicates that the use of euphemisms is largely influenced by the communication context and cultural norms.

Upon analysis of various English mono-lingual dictionaries, it becomes evident that within the English-speaking culture, euphemism is frequently defined as “a gentler or more indirect term (word or expression) substituting for another that is considered rude or harsh, particularly when addressing unpleasant or uncomfortable subjects” (Malyuga, 2008).

Therefore, the definitions offered by both Russian and international scholars identify the primary function of euphemisms: to mitigate the impact of an uncomfortable statement.

The study of euphemisms reveals their multifaceted nature, particularly their role in forming our communication by providing more palatable alternatives to potentially offensive language. Holder (2008) emphasizes the euphemism's capacity to "soften" harsh realities, offering a way to convey sensitive topics without causing discomfort. According to Aytan et al. (2021), euphemization is inherently about masking reality – using pleasant terms to replace unpleasant ones, thus serving a protective function in discourse. Partridge (2006) characterizes euphemisms as "simpering evasions", suggesting an avoidance of confrontational language. Also, the scholar points out the ethical and moral considerations that drive the use of euphemisms in communication.

The fact that euphemisms have received various definitions in the scientific literature testifies to the fact that there is indeed a common understanding of euphemisms as tools that help resolve the complexities of language as a social construct. The focus on such phenomena as political correctness in linguistics and communication sciences boosted recent studies of euphemisms as it gave some new direction. According to most scholars, euphemisms today penetrate all spheres of oral and written discourse, culturally marked lexis. Some of the modern linguists suggest appearance of two languages, which are the language of facts and the language of ideas. They are not always equated since ideas are not at all times based on facts.

In all discourse types – mass media included – euphemisms today are incorporated to rectify the unfavorable text and substitute it with neutral equivalents, which have the capacity to dodge the chances of stirring up dismal associations. This operation relies on socially conditioned incentivization, which may be rooted in moral, ethical, political or even spiritual reasoning.

Following such understanding of what euphemism is let us consider its main functions in a discourse.

If to refer to initial understanding of the device, we need to specify that it was derived from taboos. Initially, it was associated with substitute terms that serves as placeholders for the names of specific entities that individuals were reluctant to vocalize. Today, it is clear that euphemisms are used persistently across the board. There are instances where euphemisms replace terms related to industry, professional titles, medical conditions, and more. Investigations indicate that the prevalence

of this device is steadily increasing with shifts occurring with regards to its use in different contexts of interaction. Scientists have reached various conclusions about the pragmatic role of euphemisms. To mention a few points, the first type of work is evasion and courtesy. Meanwhile, the second group further divides it into functional categories such as cover, normalizing and aesthetic.

In the communication process, many expressions can be associated with euphemisms. Researchers often point to tools that are linked to a country's thought and culture. Therefore, we need to consider the cultural dimension of the tool. This leads to the interpretation of euphemism as a kind of psychological reasoning. We believe that most euphemisms are determined by psychosocial factors.

However, we need to acknowledge that euphemisms can sometimes be far from perfect when embedded into interaction, be it written or spoken. In some cases, they can create unfair situations, as we will show in further analysis. Also, the wrong use of euphemisms can sometimes lead to negative consequences. Below we analyze the main role of euphemisms in turn.

**The function of taboo suppression** is one of the functions attributed to euphemisms that have the ability to conceal tokens that might carry unpleasant or indecent connotations (Grishechko, 2021). In understanding the formation of tropes, many scholars suggest that this type of language emerged as a result of linguistic taboos within various communities. In the early stages of human socialization, when people began to form societies, both their daily activities and technological advancements were quite limited. This lack of knowledge made it difficult for individuals to comprehend certain natural events, which resulted in confusion about their causes and how to manage them, as well as how to protect themselves. As a consequence, this ignorance brought about significant fears regarding the unknown, which, in turn, facilitated a heightened level of superstition. Additionally, minimal understanding of wildlife exacerbated apprehensions about wild animals and gave rise to numerous myths surrounding them. Consequently, individuals in those times were often reluctant to directly reference specific phenomena, entities such as ghosts and deities, or even utter the names of certain animals, fearing retribution from supernatural forces or attracting misfortune. So, they resorted to alternative expressions to avoid naming these subjects directly, thereby steering clear of potential disasters or

unpleasant connotations. The initial instances of euphemism usage emerged from this particular linguistic necessity.

Euphemisms serve a **veiling function** that exceeds the scope of merely substituting negative terms with more palatable alternatives. They also aim to build ambiguity in a statement while addressing a specific phenomenon or obscuring its true nature (Grishechko, 2011a). This veiling function becomes evident in discussions related to sensitive areas such as crime, politics, and military affairs, wherein specialized language is employed to obscure certain realities and presenting them in a more favorable light. Numerous politicians and media outlets exploit the inherent vagueness of euphemisms to cloak the truth, often in an effort to maintain political or economic stability.

The concept of **courtesy and politeness** in communication is rooted in speech act theory. This theory, which falls under the umbrella of psycholinguistics, posits that the primary goal of verbal interactions is to convey our intentions or to request assistance from others. Individuals tend to use more courteous language forms to sustain effective communication and reach their intended pragmatic outcomes (Grishechko & Akopova, 2015). Many people intuitively recognize that being polite makes it easier to engage others in conversation and obtain the desired responses. Therefore, when considering verbal communication through the lens of speech act theory, it becomes evident that euphemisms play a significant role in providing for polite interactions. To determine when to utilize particularly polite language, one must analyze the specific communication context. This analysis leads to the understanding that, aside from cultural backgrounds and the preferences of those involved, various other factors also influence communication. We refer to these factors collectively as social distance. To further explore the notion of social distance, it is important to specify that it is influenced by the nature of the relationships between communicators and the subjects being discussed. Generally speaking, a greater social distance increases the likelihood of using polite language, while a closer social distance tends to result in a preference for more direct and less formal language.

**The aesthetic function** is realized primarily in literary texts. The authors of literary texts need to avoid anything rude, unpleasant to read and they must follow common requirements of social censorship. The very nature of the substitute lexis determines the function. Dwelling on

the issue, Linfoot-Ham (2005) believes that the use of euphemisms appeals to the real, effective power of words in communication. We cannot but agree with the scholar that this function is directly related to the habit of controlling one's emotions. It became an inherent feature of a human being as a social and language identity. The whole human history proves that an unrestrained, open manifestation of opinions and feelings can lead to conflicts between a person and other people breaking up any communication. To sum up, people resorted to careful choice of words and softening unpleasant reality by vague euphemisms to conform to social norms of a particular society. We can well see it in modern communication, and in business and political communication in particular.

Thus, analysis of such function leads us to conclusion, that euphemisms are language units that allow avoiding the appearance of aesthetically rude words and expressions concerning taboo topics, disguising negative reality, expressing a subjective assessment and influencing the views of readers (listeners).

**Normalization function**, also defined as mitigation or softening blunt language, comes from the need to reduce the negative impact of any unpleasant utterance and interrelates with the above analyzed function. Some scholars believe that euphemization is based on the ability of some word or word combination to mitigate unpleasant essence of the signified (McGlone & Batchelor, 2003).

In accordance with its name, normalization function quite often becomes a subject to rude, vulgar, indecent, unacceptable, overly harsh, insulting and degrading language units when a speaker faces the need to meet social norms of verbal communication. However, we can easily confuse such language units with taboos. Referring to early euphemisms, understood as undesirable or inappropriate words, we have to characterize them well-known, most natural and accurate names of objects that, within the framework of the current culture, are recommended to be replaced with more acceptable ones from the point of view of ethical or social norms. While rude, vulgar, insulting, indecent, unacceptable, overly harsh, insulting and degrading language units are mainly subject to replacement by what is defined in modern linguistics as politically correct lexis.

**The rhetorical or in other definitions artistic or stylistic function** mainly manifests itself in public speeches and in literary texts. Here

euphemisms are used as stylistic device to make this part of a discourse eloquent, create a speech or report filled with solemnity and so-called high style (Diez–Arroyo, 2016). This function of euphemism is not so relevant within our research as it is most often reflected in diplomatic activity but the material for our studies is economic activity and economic discourse. If to refer to diplomatic speech, euphemisms there also implement the function of rendering and evaluation which is an integral part of rhetoric. Thus, we may suggest that the function is not so frequently presented in economic discourse and will try to prove it by the analysis.

**Protective function** arises from the need to think about the impact your message may have and possible consequences it may lead to before you voice it out (Chovanec, 2019). As we already mentioned above, unacceptable, overly harsh, insulting and degrading language used in communication can cause conflict between communicants. This can make it difficult or even impossible to further communicate and finally agree. A similar situation arises since someone threatens a partner or doesn't consider their interests or put them at risk. Therefore, we can conclude about such a need to use euphemisms as the need to minimize or mitigate the moral damage caused to each other in the process of communication. In other words, we'd like to highlight that euphemisms can perform this protective function.

In addition to the functions already discussed – taboo suppression, veiling, courtesy, and aesthetic – euphemisms play a significant role in shaping social interactions and cultural narratives. They serve as linguistic tools that reflect societal norms and values, revealing what is considered appropriate or inappropriate discourse within a given context. This adaptability of euphemisms underscores their importance in communication across various domains, including personal relationships, healthcare discussions, and even within humor.

Euphemisms also facilitate easier navigation of delicate topics, such as death, illness, and financial hardship. For example, terms like “passed away” or “let go” soften the harshness of death and job loss, making it easier for individuals to discuss these realities without invoking strong, negative emotions. The aesthetic use of euphemisms highlights the power of language to shape our understanding of the world. However, the emphasis and initial motivation for employing euphemisms often differ between participants in communication.

Analysis of pragmatic functions suggests that clear distinctions among these functions are challenging to establish. In verbal communication, euphemisms frequently fulfill multiple roles simultaneously, which points to the interconnectedness of their pragmatic purposes. This complicates strict classification within specific discourses. Nevertheless, functions such as tabulation, veiling, and normalization appear particularly significant in their capacity to influence public opinion. These functions are notably prominent in media discourse, including coverage of economic topics.

Euphemisms also reflect cultural sensitivities and societal norms, adapting to shifts in moral and social frameworks. As perspectives on issues such as gender, race, and mental health evolve, so too does the language used to address them. For instance, expressions such as “person with a disability” exemplify the adoption of more inclusive and respectful terminology, which demonstrates the role of euphemisms in promoting understanding and reducing stigma.

In literary and artistic contexts, euphemisms contribute to the aesthetic quality of texts, enriching the communicative and emotional depth of language. Authors frequently employ euphemistic expressions to evoke specific emotions or to create atmospheres aligned with thematic objectives. This adds to the interpretive experience, striking a balance between honesty and sensitivity in storytelling. However, the aesthetic function of euphemisms is less applicable in economic texts, where their use primarily serves pragmatic purposes.

Ultimately, the multifaceted functions of euphemisms underscore their significance in language. They serve as a bridge between the harsh realities of life and the need for tactful communication, enabling individuals to express themselves in ways that are socially acceptable while managing the potential for conflict.

#### **Speech manipulation and euphemisms**

Manipulation is a form of covert psychological influence aimed at altering the addressee’s system of views, opinions, or behavior to serve the interests of the manipulator.

Any language evolves within a particular culture to adapt to social norms and values. Euphemisms allow speakers to navigate sensitive topics without causing offense or discomfort, thereby maintaining social harmony. However, this same feature can be exploited for manipulative purposes.

When euphemisms are deployed strategically, they can obscure the reality of a situation, masking its true implications. For example, terms like “downsizing” or “right-sizing” are often used in corporate contexts to refer to layoffs, softening the harshness of the reality and framing it in a way that makes it more palatable for stakeholders. By using euphemisms, organizations can diminish the emotional impact of negative news, leading to an altered perception of the event.

This phenomenon is observed not only in corporate or business communication but also in politics, public relations, and interpersonal relationships. Politicians often employ euphemisms to reframe controversial policies or actions related both to political and economic issues, thereby influencing public perception and mitigating backlash. For instance, terms like “collateral damage” serve to obscure the harsh realities of warfare, rendering actions more acceptable to the public.

The effectiveness of euphemisms in manipulation can be understood through the lens of psychology. The use of seemingly benign language taps into psychological mechanisms, such as cognitive dissonance and confirmation bias. When faced with uncomfortable truths, individuals may prefer to cling to the more favorable narratives constructed by euphemisms, as these narratives align better with their beliefs and emotional responses.

Moreover, the prevalence of euphemisms raises ethical questions about communication. While they serve a fundamental role in polite discourse, their potential for manipulation blurs the line between constructive communication and deceit. The challenge for communicators lies in balancing the need to maintain politeness and social cohesion against the imperative of transparent and honest communication.

In conclusion, while euphemisms are essential tools in facilitating polite conversation and avoiding discomfort, their capacity for manipulation underscores the complexity of human communication. By understanding how euphemisms function within the framework of social interactions, we can develop a critical awareness of their potential implications. This knowledge enables us to recognize when language is being used to manipulate perceptions or obscure reality, fostering more informed and conscious communication practices.

Euphemisms possess significant manipulative potential, largely due to their subtlety and the difficulty of recognition by the addressee. Within

the context of modern information flows, euphemisms are challenging to isolate and identify, particularly in terms of the taboo denotation concealed within their usage. Furthermore, only a small portion of the audience is aware of the linguistic mechanisms underpinning euphemisms, making it difficult for most individuals to comprehend the manner in which manipulative influence is exerted.

Euphemisms formed at the lexical, semantic, and syntactic levels exert the most pronounced manipulative effects on the consciousness of the addressee. Nieman and Silver (1990), building upon the classification by J. Williams, point out the significance of specific methods used in forming euphemisms, including:

- 1) foreign language borrowings;
- 2) generalization;
- 3) metonymic nomination;
- 4) metaphorical transfer;
- 5) phonetic distortion, etc.

#### **An overview of the types of manipulative objects**

Having considered functioning and formation of euphemisms, this study will further identify the types of manipulative objects, which are often employed in economic discourse to influence audiences.

##### ***1. Reputation Manipulation***

Reputation manipulation involves strategically shaping or altering perceptions of a business or individual to create a favorable image. This can be achieved via:

- positive framing: highlighting achievements, awards, or endorsements that enhance the reputation of a business or individual;
- crisis management: addressing negative publicity by downplaying issues or emphasizing corrective actions taken to restore trust;
- economic strategies: crafting narratives that align the economic policy with positive attributes, such as sustainability, innovation, or public satisfaction.

##### ***2. Manipulative Emphasis***

Manipulative emphasis focuses on highlighting certain aspects of a message while downplaying others to steer audience perception. This can be achieved through:

- selective highlighting: emphasizing specific features or benefits of an economic policy while omitting potential drawbacks;

- strategic language: using persuasive language or rhetorical techniques (e.g., hyperbole) to amplify the importance of certain points;
- visual emphasis: utilizing design elements (e.g., bold text, images) to draw attention to key messages in advertisements or presentations.

### ***3. Manipulation of Stereotypes***

This type involves leveraging existing stereotypes to influence audience perceptions or behaviors. It can manifest in:

- reinforcing stereotypes: using common cultural or social stereotypes to appeal to target demographics, which can simplify messaging but may reinforce biases;
- challenging stereotypes: presenting counter-narratives that challenge existing stereotypes, potentially positioning an idea as progressive or socially aware;
- targeted messaging: crafting messages that resonate with specific demographic groups based on their stereotypical characteristics or values.

### ***4. Manipulation of Implicit Meanings***

Manipulation of implicit meanings involves using language, symbols, or contexts that carry connotations beyond their explicit meanings. This can include:

- subtext: conveying messages indirectly, allowing the audience to read between the lines and derive additional meanings or emotions;
- symbolism: using symbols or metaphors that evoke certain feelings or associations without stating them outright (e.g., using nature imagery to suggest purity or sustainability);
- cultural references: incorporating culturally significant references that resonate with the audience, creating a shared understanding or emotional response.

Each of these manipulative objects plays a crucial role in shaping economic discourse, enabling companies to influence perceptions, behaviors, and decisions. However, ethical considerations should always be taken into account to avoid deception and exploitation of the audience.

### **Material and Methods**

The material for this study consists of euphemisms collected through the continuous sampling method from mass media articles on economic issues, including sources such as “The Economist”, “Bloomberg”, and

“The Guardian”. These publications target an audience interested in current economic events and their analysis.

Economic discourse primarily aims to establish and maintain economic relations between individuals, states, international corporations, and other stakeholders. A secondary aim is to inform the public about the current economic situation at national and global levels and to shape desirable public opinion.

Economic discourse fulfills multiple functions, including informative, educational, advertising, and ideological roles. Through this discourse, the public gains information and forms opinions on various economic processes. Given that economic developments at both global and national levels are widely covered in the media, a defining characteristic of mass media is its ability to make information accessible to broad audiences and influence public opinion on economic matters.

As a research object, economic discourse holds particular relevance in the modern era of globalization, the continuous expansion of international cooperation, and the growing need for governments and global businesses to influence public opinion. In this context, the economy serves as a driver of progress for both individual nations and the global community.

The analysis below will focus on some of the most representative examples of euphemisms identified in economic articles, which illustrate their role and impact within economic discourse.

### **Study Results**

Consider the following examples from “The Economist”, April 4, 2024, which illustrate the use of euphemisms in economic discourse.

The first example comes from the article titled “The Federal Reserve Cleans Up Its Money-Printing Mess”: “*China’s relatively closed capital account, which prevents investments from flowing freely across its borders, is the main obstacle to wider use of its currency. India’s capital account is less closed than it once was but is still far more sheltered than that of any of the countries with a global currency*”. This excerpt demonstrates an effort to frame India’s capital account and its accessibility in a more favorable light compared to China. The verb “shelter” is employed here with a positive connotation to evoke notions of protection, safety, and care, as opposed to “close”, which implies rigidity and restriction. The author leverages the metaphorical implications of “shelter” to create a more favorable image of the Indian

currency within the context of global finance and emphasize progress in India's economic reforms. This linguistic choice contributes to reputation manipulation by subtly promoting a positive perception of India's economic trajectory.

Another example is found in the article titled "How to Build a Global Currency": *"In September JPMorgan Chase, a bank, announced that it would include Indian government bonds in its emerging-market index"*. Here, the term "emerging market" functions as a euphemism. It can be classified as a metonymic nomination, enriching the term "developing market" with a more optimistic and forward-looking connotation. From a marketing and investment perspective, describing a country as an "emerging market" is far more appealing than using terms that may carry pejorative undertones, such as "developing market". This linguistic substitution serves to level out the perceived risks and challenges associated with these economies, such as political instability, infrastructure deficits, and social issues, while simultaneously attracting investors to securities issued by the Indian government. The positive framing of "emerging market" aligns with reputation manipulation, similar to the framing observed in the previous example.

A third example of economic euphemisms is found in the following passage: *"...which rise as a counterpart to the central bank's bond purchases during quantitative easing"*. The term "quantitative easing" represents an unconventional monetary policy tool used by central banks to stimulate the economy during periods of low inflation and near-zero interest rates, when traditional monetary policies become ineffective. As a euphemism, "quantitative easing" fulfills several functions. It softens and generalizes the more controversial notion of "printing money", framing it in a neutral or even positive light to reduce potential alarm. This positive framing contributes to reputation manipulation by presenting the policy in a way that obscures its complexities and risks, such as inflationary pressures or long-term economic dependency on monetary interventions. However, this euphemism also risks diminishing public accountability and understanding of the policy's broader implications.

Given that these examples are drawn from articles published in the same issue of "The Economist", it can be inferred that the publication seeks to cultivate a favorable perception of the Indian economy among its readership, particularly potential investors.

Another article under study is titled “Who Is Up and Who Is Down on China’s Economic Team”, published in “The Economist”, March,27 2024. Providing information about a meeting between China’s leader and American business executives the author states: *The economic backdrop to the meeting was less serene, thanks to a faltering economy, depressed stock-market and sporadic regulatory crackdowns*”. Here, two cases of euphemisation can be identified: “faltering economy” and “regulatory crackdown”. As a euphemism, “faltering economy” serves to describe economic challenges in a more palatable and less alarming way compared to a term downturn or recession. While it can serve to cushion the impact of bad news and promote a narrative of potential recovery, it also risks obscuring the full reality of economic conditions and misinforming the public thus manipulating its opinion. As a euphemism, “regulatory crackdowns” functions to frame enforcement actions in a way that seems assertive and responsible compared to tight regulation. While it conveys a sense of action against wrongdoing, it also carries implications of severity and authority that may overshadow discussions about the impact of such regulations and soften the response to their introduction by the public. Thus, the pragmatic function of this stylistic device is to obscure the actual economic situation and the potential implications of the actions taken to address it, thereby constructing a more favorable image of the American economy and the activities of the American government. As in the previous examples, this reflects reputation manipulation through the positive framing of the message.

The next example is taken from the article titled “Can China’s Consumers Save Its Economy?” published in “The Economist”, March,6 2024. The article starts with: *Most emerging economies struggle to live within their means*”. By framing the issue as a “struggle”, it can normalize (normalization function) the idea that many people experience difficulties managing their finances (manipulation of stereotypes), thereby minimizing the stigma associated with debt or financial mismanagement. As a euphemism, “struggle to live within their means” captures the challenges faced by individuals and families managing their finances but also carries significant implications regarding personal responsibility and societal context. By minimizing the reality of financial distress, this choice of describing reality may lead to a lack of urgency in addressing underlying issues, resulting in insufficient support for those who genuinely cannot meet their financial obligations. The final

statement: “Mr Li, in his Davos speech, spoke of rapidly unlocking China’s “supersize market” and “upgrading consumption” towards new products such as electric vehicles, smart homes and “green lifestyle” services” continues to create a more positive view on the economic situation in China. The “supersize market” reflects a complex interplay of consumer behavior, marketing, health awareness, and economic factors. Economic downturns can influence consumer choices, often leading more people to seek the perceived value in supersized options, so the phrase also softens the description of true economic situation. The trend of upgrading consumption or green lifestyle reflects a shift in consumer priorities towards quality, personalization, and sustainability. Businesses are evolving to meet these demands, presenting opportunities for market differentiation and innovation. However, they must also navigate challenges related to affordability, market segmentation, and environmental impact. Thus, in addition to the manipulation of stereotypes observed at the beginning of the article, the positive framing of the economic situation through the use of euphemisms is evident. This combination serves to mitigate the negative impact of an existing stereotype while constructing a new, more favorable one.

The analysis of the next example demonstrates that euphemisms can also be employed to draw attention to a particular issue. In the article titled “A Chilling Near-Miss Shows How Today’s Digital Infrastructure Is Vulnerable”, published in *The Economist* on April 4, 2024, the following passage appears: “Decentralization makes it possible to run such a complex system. But every so often comes a chilling reminder that the whole edifice is uncomfortably precarious”. In economic discussions, particularly regarding economic reforms, “decentralization” may be presented as a way to promote efficiency and innovation in the marketplace, suggesting that local entities can better respond to consumer needs than a centralized authority (positive connotation). However, such framing of the situation could downplay issues such as inequality or the lack of regulation that might arise from decentralizing certain aspects of the economy, making it seem that decentralization is inherently beneficial, while neglecting potential negative outcomes or conflicts of interest (manipulative emphasis for positive framing, that leads to reputation manipulation) and we clearly see this idea expressed in the sentence that followed and even in the headline of the article.

The next example was taken from the article “Goldman Sachs’ Women Still Look Underpaid”, issued by “Bloomberg”, April,5 2024. Informing on the situation with payment in banking sphere, the author states: *“Most banks are pretty bad at developing, promoting and paying women — and there’s not a wide variation in their average gender pay gaps”*. By using “pretty bad at”, instead of “inefficient”, “incompetent” etc., the author minimizes the severity of the assessment (normalization function) by positive framing not to downgrade the banks’ reputation.

The article provides another case of euphemization: *“Those contacts may well have come from family and friends, or from being stuck in an unfashionable backwater doing little of great excitement or merit for some time”*. The phrase “unfashionable backwater” serves as a euphemism that encapsulates judgments about cultural relevance and modernity. While it can concisely convey criticism regarding a location or culture perceived as stagnant, it also carries significant weight in terms of elitism and cultural disparagement.

The article titled “S. Africa Taps Business to Start Office to End Rail Monopoly” published in “Bloomberg”, April, 8 2024, deals with the economic situation in South Africa. Analyzing the monopolistic approach to running some economic spheres, the author states: *It’s also resulted in a lower tax take for the cash-strapped government”*. The term “cash-strapped government” functions here as a euphemism that conveys financial distress while allowing for a more measured discussion about fiscal challenges. While it serves to soften the blow of financial realities, it can also obscure the full extent of a government’s fiscal difficulties. Understanding the implications of this euphemism is crucial for ensuring informed public dialogue and effective policymaking in response to governmental financial challenges. The trope obviously contributes to creating more favorable reputation of government measures.

Another example, taken from the article “UK’s Hope for Economic Rebound Fades with Slide in Job Vacancies”, published by Bloomberg, March, 24 2024, deals with the employment issue in Great Britain. Describing current situation in the British labor market, the author states: *The number of applications rose by a fifth year-on-year for February, adding to evidence that what was once a red-hot labor market has cooled significantly”*. The term “red-hot labor market” functions as a euphemism encapsulating the vibrancy and competitiveness of employment opportunities within a favorable economic climate. This

phrase is used to create an optimistic perception of the labor market, emphasizing job availability and wage growth. However, it simultaneously obscures underlying challenges, such as skills mismatches, job instability, or the casualization of work (e.g., gig economy roles), which are often associated with heightened competition. This positive framing contributes to the public's favorable assessment of the economic situation. Later in the article, the author addresses potential consequences, stating: "*Our latest data suggests a prolonged chill in the labor market*". Here, the phrase "prolonged chill in the labor market" operates as a euphemism describing a sustained period of stagnation or sluggishness in employment conditions. This term reflects a scenario characterized by limited job opportunities, slow hiring, and reduced economic activity. However, the choice of the word "chill" mitigates the negative connotations typically associated with economic downturns. The euphemism provides for softer, less alarming language, and thus aligns with a reputation manipulation model through positive framing, tempering the potential adverse reaction to the described economic challenges.

### **Discussion**

A euphemism refers to a neutral term or descriptive expression devoid of significant emotional or semantic intensity, typically employed in texts or public discourse to replace other words or phrases deemed improper or inappropriate. Euphemisms are often used to soften the impact of certain expressions, misleading the public or distorting reality. For instance, a phrase like "enhanced interrogation" can become a substitute for "torture".

Euphemisms are frequently utilized in speech or written texts to replace words perceived as vulgar or offensive, such as profane or obscene language. In some cases, "non-literary" terms with a less pronounced negative connotation – such as colloquialisms, slang, or idiosyncratic expressions – may serve as euphemisms. Their use significantly diminishes the negative impact of offensive or profane terms on a text, although in most instances, the intended meaning or the replaced term can be inferred from context or the euphemism itself.

The phenomenon of euphemism is rooted in long-standing linguistic taboos that prohibited the direct naming of dangerous objects or phenomena, such as deities or diseases, under the belief that their mention might invoke the very thing described. Euphemisms driven by

religious convictions, such as “unclean” instead of “devil”, remain widely used even today.

As human society grows increasingly refined, direct references to certain objects or phenomena – particularly those related to physiological functions or parts of the human body – begin to be viewed as objectionable and are often excluded from language, especially in its literary forms. For example, medieval chivalry avoided direct references to genitalia in courtly poetry, even as such terms remained prominent in the language of the emerging third estate. Euphemisms tend to flourish during periods of cultural stabilization, such as the linguistic affectations of aristocratic salons in the 16th and 17th centuries or the language of 19th-century literature.

This tendency extends beyond interpersonal communication to discussions of vices or transgressions, where particularly softened expressions are often employed. The uncovering of such euphemisms frequently forms the basis of satire and ironic antithesis.

In this study, approximately 50 articles were analyzed, with several representative examples and their analyses presented above. Regarding the methods of euphemism formation, the following observations were made.

No examples formed through foreign language borrowings were identified. This absence is unsurprising, as English serves as the primary language for conducting business globally, and other languages typically borrow economic terminology from English rather than vice versa.

No examples formed through generalization were found. This is likely due to the specificity inherent in economic discourse, which prioritizes precise reference to concepts and avoids overly generalized terminology.

Approximately 45% of the examples are based on metonymic nomination. This method enables a transfer of meaning, often imbuing the concept with a more positive connotation.

Slightly more than half (55%) of the examples involve metaphorical transfer. Metaphors carry an evaluative function, which is particularly relevant in economic discourse as it frequently involves assessing the state of national economies, specific economic situations, and their impact on individuals and living standards.

No examples involving phonetic distortion were observed, as the analysis focused exclusively on written texts.

Concerning the functions of euphemisms, most cases (89%) are related to their normalization (softening or mitigating) or veiling function. This reflects the pragmatic role of economic discourse, which is primarily aimed at informing audiences about the current economic situation, encouraging and facilitating global market cooperation, and promoting state economic policies, often intertwined with the manipulation of public opinion.

The prevalence of these functions points to the necessity of a positive framing approach in economic discourse, which sometimes involves veiling potentially negative consequences to maintain public confidence and promote economic objectives.

### **Conclusion**

Euphemisms in economic discourse serve as powerful tools for shaping public perception and framing the narrative around economic issues. While they can promote a more digestible understanding of complicated topics, they can also lead to misinterpretation and a lack of engagement with the underlying issues. Critical examination of the language used in economic discourse exemplified by articles on economic issues is essential for fostering transparency, accountability, and informed discourse among policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public.

The analysis revealed that euphemisms, predominantly formed through metonymic or metaphoric transfer of meaning, primarily function as tools to soften or mitigate negative information about economic issues while persuading audiences of the favorable outcomes of the measures undertaken. Furthermore, the findings suggest that reputation manipulation is the most commonly employed objective, reflecting one of the primary pragmatic aims of economic discourse: to create a positive image of a business or specific business decisions.

The study also supports the hypothesis that the use of stylistic devices in general, and euphemisms in business discourse in particular, is closely linked to communicative situations where the adequate interpretation of a message depends on the recipient's background knowledge and ability to infer implied meanings. This includes recognizing instances of manipulation, such as softening or veiling unpleasant information.

The application of euphemisms in economic discourse plays a significant role in creating narratives surrounding complex economic issues. Euphemisms soften the harsh realities of economic challenges

and thus render difficult information more palatable to the public and stakeholders. However, it is important to acknowledge the dual-edged nature of this linguistic strategy. While euphemisms can facilitate understanding and maintain confidence, they may also obscure critical details, hinder transparency, and manipulate perceptions, raising ethical concerns about their overuse or misuse in economic communication.

On one hand, euphemisms can facilitate understanding and reduce anxiety related to economic topics that might be perceived as daunting or negative. For instance, terms like “staff reduction” instead of “layoffs” or “streamlining operations” instead of “cutting jobs” can help lessen the emotional impact of these decisions. This kind of language can foster a more constructive dialogue among policymakers and the public, allowing for a focus on strategic objectives rather than emotional responses.

On the other hand, the use of euphemisms can obscure the truth, leading to misinterpretation and disengagement with the real issues at hand. By masking the severity of economic challenges or consequences, these terms can hinder accountability and transparency, making it more difficult for stakeholders to engage meaningfully with the implications of economic policies and business decisions. This manipulation of language can serve to protect the reputation of businesses or policymakers, but at the cost of informed public discourse.

The study’s findings underscore the importance of being vigilant and critically aware of the language used in economic discussions. Recognizing euphemisms for what they are – tools that can alter perception – enables individuals to engage more thoughtfully with the information being presented. This critical examination can empower stakeholders to look beyond the surface and seek clarity on economic issues, encouraging a more transparent and accountable environment.

In conclusion, while euphemisms can play a role in communication strategy within economic discourse, their implications must be carefully considered. Stakeholders should strive for clear and open dialogue, where the complexities of economic decisions can be shared honestly, fostering an informed public capable of engaging with the underlying issues behind the language.

### Acknowledgements

The reported study was funded by Russian Science Foundation, project number 23-28-00505 “Manipulative rhetoric in modern English business media discourse: the functional pragmatic analysis”. <https://rscf.ru/project/23-28-00505>

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УДК 811.111

<https://doi.org/10.25076/vpl.56.02>

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### СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНОГО СПОРТИВНОГО ДИСКУРСА

*В то время как коммуникативные и функциональные аспекты спортивного дискурса относятся к широко изученным научным проблемам, стилистическими характеристиками данного типа дискурса уделяется меньше внимания. Настоящая статья направлена на устранение данного пробела путем выявления стилистических характеристик англоязычного спортивного дискурса и анализа их функционирования в различных медиа, включая печатные издания, трансляции (прямой эфир) и цифровые платформы. В исследовании использован корпус объемом 300 000 слов, скомпилированный с использованием различных источников с целью определения ключевых стилистических приемов, таких как аллитерация, метафора, перифраз, эпитеты, градация, эвфемизмы, сравнения и риторические вопросы. Как показали результаты исследования, данные стилистические средства способствуют эмоциональной и описательной насыщенности*

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