

The communicative-pragmatic features of euphemisms related to political process in English and Uzbek political discourse

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Annotation. Euphemisms play a significant role in political discourse, serving as a means to soften or obscure unpleasant, controversial, or sensitive topics. This paper examines the communicative-pragmatic aspects of euphemisms in political discourse, focusing on English and Uzbek languages. Through comparative analysis, we investigate how euphemisms are employed in political rhetoric, their pragmatic functions, and the cultural and linguistic factors that influence their usage. The findings reveal both universal trends and culturally specific characteristics in the use of euphemisms in political communication.

Keywords: euphemisms, political discourse, communicative-pragmatic, English, Uzbek, rhetoric, softening language

Introduction. Political discourse is inherently charged with sensitive and controversial issues, ranging from economic challenges to social inequalities, military actions, and ideological debates. In such contexts, euphemisms – a linguistic device used to soften or obscure harsh realities – serve as a crucial tool for politicians, diplomats, and the media. Euphemisms offer a way to manipulate public perception by framing contentious topics in less direct, more palatable terms. This study explores the communicative-pragmatic aspects of euphemism usage in English and Uzbek political discourses, examining how these rhetorical strategies differ across languages and cultural contexts.

Literature Review. Euphemism studies have been widely discussed in various disciplines, including linguistics, pragmatics, and political communication. Many linguists attempt to explain the concept of discourse (from the French "discours," English "discourse," and Latin "discursus" – meaning movement, continuous exchange, conversation, speech) as both a process of speech activity and a style of speaking. In the 1950s, the French scholar Émile Benveniste, working in the field of speech culture, offered a new definition of the term "discourse," which was relatively novel in French linguistics at the time, as "speech designated by the speaker." The American scholar Zellig Harris, in his 1952 work "Discourse Analysis," was the first to use the term "discourse" as a linguistic concept.

Modern discourse theory developed into an independent field of study primarily by the mid-1960s, with scholars increasingly recognizing discourse as an integral part of language. This shift led to a broader study of texts, as linguistics began to move beyond the formal-functional framework. Consequently, the term "discourse" became widely used in more comprehensive linguistic research. Scholars such as Allan and Burridge (1991) highlight euphemisms as linguistic tools used to navigate taboo topics and maintain politeness. In political contexts, Lutz (1987) emphasizes that euphemisms are often employed to manipulate public opinion and obscure the truth.

In Uzbek linguistics, studies on euphemism in political discourse are still developing. Along with foreign linguistics, the concept of discourse has also been studied by many scholars in Uzbek linguistics. Linguist Sh.Safarov, who has shared

valuable insights on the term discourse, presents the following views regarding text and discourse: "If both text and discourse are the results of human linguistic activity, then I doubt we can distinguish them only based on the superficial, formal indicators of 'oral' and 'written.' Similarly, it is difficult to imagine one having a material form while the other is free from this characteristic. After all, if both are products of result-oriented activity, shouldn't the achieved result take a material form?"

Thus, the concepts of text and discourse are interconnected, and it is clear that both are used to achieve some result. When analyzing discourse and distinguishing it from other linguistic units, Sh. Safarov's definition is particularly relevant: "Discourse is a speech structure that is organized based on the communicative function it performs and is adapted to the communication situation. The coordination of form and function allows us to distinguish discourse from other linguistic units."

Methodology. This study uses a comparative analysis of euphemisms in English and Uzbek political discourses. Data was collected from political speeches, media reports, and official statements, focusing on the use of euphemisms in discussions about governance, economic issues, military actions, and international relations. A qualitative content analysis was performed to categorize euphemisms according to their communicative functions and pragmatic effects. The analysis also considered cultural and contextual factors that influence euphemism use in both languages.

Analysis and Result. The analysis of political discourse and communication within the field of linguistics involves a descriptive approach to speech and the words being used, aligning with the classical method of rhetorical analysis of public speech. During this analysis, the interconnection between language and ideology also becomes a point of interest, particularly because it is reflected in the pragmatic specificity of the use of political euphemisms. This shows that political discourse or communication is always ideologically charged, as participants in political discourse belong to specific political institutions or groups. Consequently, the subjects of political communication determine the impact of their speech acts, including the strategic and rhetorical tools they use, based on prevailing political views and beliefs, as well as the relevance of the topic to their message.

Euphemisms in English Political Discourse. In English political discourse, euphemisms are frequently used to manage public perception and mitigate potential backlash. Euphemisms soften politically sensitive or negative actions. For example:

"Collateral damage" is used to refer to unintended civilian casualties in military operations.

"Enhanced interrogation techniques" softens the notion of torture.

These euphemisms serve pragmatic purposes by reducing the emotional impact and downplaying the severity of actions that could provoke public ideas.

Euphemisms in English political communication also functions as tools of power and manipulation. Politicians often use indirect language to shift responsibility or make controversial policies appear more palatable. By reframing difficult issues in

softer terms, such as referring to tax increases as "revenue enhancements," politicians can navigate criticism and maintain public support. For example:

"But critics described the move as undemocratic and warned it could lead to a lame-duck government, hanging on in office after losing a no-confidence vote." (Daily Telegraph, April 2016)

Thus, in this example, the euphemism signals a warning that the powers of certain state leaders or groups may come to an end because they fail to treat everyone equally or adhere to democratic principles. In short, the communicative-pragmatic goal of the euphemism used here is intensive in nature and directed toward a specific purpose.

"The prime minister made a quick U-turn in response to all the adverse publicity." (The Times, October 2018)

In this example, the euphemism refers to the prime minister quickly switching from one stance to an opposing one. The euphemism indicates major shifts in political decisions, and its communicative-pragmatic purpose is to soften and partially conceal the unfavorable changes made by state authorities.

Euphemisms in Uzbek Political Discourse. Uzbek political discourse, deeply influenced by cultural norms of politeness and indirectness, also makes extensive use of euphemisms. In a society where respect for authority and avoidance of direct criticism are paramount, euphemisms help maintain social harmony. For instance:

"Tartibga solish" (literally "to put in order") is often used instead of directly referring to censorship or restrictions on freedom of speech.

"Tinchlantirish choralari" ("calming measures") may be used to refer to repressive actions by the state, softening the perception of forceful measures.

"Agar adolatli hamkasbimiz hammaning bilimi va dunyoqarashini o'zi bilan barobar ko'rsa, xato qiladi, mabodo o'zini boshqalardan aqlliroq, deb hisoblansa,

ikki karra xatodir. Shuning uchun ham so'z aytishning mas'uliyati katta, mehnati

og'ir". (O'zbekiston ovozi, 2011, yanvar)

We can analyze this example as follows: 1) The euphemism "adolatli hamkasbimiz" describes a member of the "Adolat" social-democratic party, indicating that the speaker could be a representative of another party; 2) Alternatively, the euphemism "adolatli hamkasbimiz" is used to describe party members who are approaching their positions with reluctance in order to avoid damaging relationships with other parties. The communicative-pragmatic goal of the euphemism used here is to avoid disparagement and to "conceal the faces" of the officials in question.

In the political context of Uzbekistan, euphemisms are essential for maintaining an image of stability and control. Political leaders often use euphemistic language to navigate topics related to economic difficulties or international criticism. For instance, economic challenges are frequently referred to as "temporary difficulties" (*vaqtinchalik qiyinchiliklar*), downplaying the severity of crises.

The use of euphemisms in Uzbek political discourse aligns with broader communicative practices in the culture, where indirectness and deference to authority are highly valued.

Both English and Uzbek political discourses show a reliance on euphemisms to achieve similar communicative-pragmatic goals. In both contexts, euphemisms are used to soften the impact of negative actions, protect the image of political actors, and control public reactions. The strategic use of euphemisms serves as a rhetorical device to manipulate public perception and maintain political power.

Despite these commonalities, the specific euphemisms and the extent of their usage are shaped by the distinct cultural and linguistic environments of each language. In English, euphemisms often emerge from bureaucratic and legalistic language, reflecting a culture that values directness but also seeks to avoid outright confrontation. In contrast, Uzbek euphemisms are more closely tied to cultural norms of politeness, indirectness, and respect for authority, reflecting the values of a collectivist society.

Moreover, the use of euphemisms in Uzbek political discourse is influenced by the hierarchical nature of social and political life in the region, where direct criticism of leadership is generally avoided. This contrasts with the relatively more open and confrontational political culture in English-speaking countries, where media and public discourse often challenge political euphemisms.

Conclusion. Euphemisms are powerful communicative tools in political discourse, serving to mitigate the negative impact of sensitive issues and influence public perception. The analysis of English and Uzbek political discourses reveals both universal and culturally specific uses of euphemisms. While both languages employ euphemisms to achieve similar pragmatic goals, cultural norms and political contexts shape the specific forms and functions of euphemistic expressions.

The study contributes to a deeper understanding of how political rhetoric operates across different linguistic and cultural landscapes, highlighting the role of euphemisms in shaping political communication. Further research could explore the impact of these euphemisms on public opinion and the effectiveness of different rhetorical strategies in various political contexts.

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