**I**

**1. The definition of euphemism**

According to 'The Dictionary of Linguistic Terms' by Akhmanova O. [[1]](#footnote-1) euphemism is “a trope used in indirect, polite, extenuating denomination of any subject or phenomenon.”

Euphemism is a lexical substitution which helps the speaker to avoid responsibility and to make the bad seem good, the unpleasant seem attractive. A euphemism that is a mild, comforting word or evasive expression is used in place of one that may be found offensive or intolerable.

A euphemism and a trope are functionally compared. For instance: “They are addressed as “senior citizens” and congratulated on their attainment of **“golden years”**. In this sentence the euphemisms**“senior citizens”**and “**golden years”**figuratively signify *old age.* They are successfully masking the negative sides of *an old age* concept and used precisely with this purpose. Therefore the euphemism is a tool for softening speech and has a communicative function.

The word euphemism comes from the Greek word ευφημία (euphemia), meaning "the use of words of good omen", which in turn is derived from the Greek word roots *eu* (ευ), "good/well" + pheme (φήμι) "speech/speaking", meaning glory and flattering speech. In Dvorezky's[[2]](#footnote-2) Old Greek-Russian dictionary[[3]](#footnote-3) the words *eu* and *pheme* are translated as "произносить слова благоприятного значения, то есть воздерживаться от неподобающих слов, не кощунствовать или хранить благовейное молчание". In other words, it means speaking well by not speaking at all, that is by keeping a holy silence. Etymologically, euphemizing is the opposite of blasphemy (evil-speaking).

Here are some other definitions of euphemisms:

* A euphemism is only a more polite and more cultured form of what is called the taboo dictionary [Vandries , 1937: 206]. This definition is not considered as a precise one because the author does not make it clear what words are related to the taboo dictionary;
* “Euphemisms are emotionally neutral words or expressions used instead of words synonymous to them but rude, tactless and indecent for the speaker” [Arapova, 1990];
* “A euphemism is a kind of periphrasis”. Akhmanova’s dictionary says that periphrasis is “троп, состоящий в замене обычного слова (простого обозначения некоторого предмета одним словом) описательным выражением.” Thus, there are no words like *stewardess* and *fireman* in the staff schedule. Instead of them politically correct items **“flight attendant”** and **“firefighter”** are used.

In “Politics and the English Language”[[4]](#footnote-4), George Orwell writes that political language is designed “to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable”. Some euphemisms do distort and mislead; but some are motivated by kindness.   
A euphemism is a kind of lie, and the lies peoples and countries tell themselves are revealing. For instance, in American culture, is something damaging or discreditable does come out, the next best thing is to minimize its awfulness. A leak of radioactivity from a nuclear reactor, for example, may be played down as an **“energy release”**, which carefully avoids any mention of radioactivity.

B. Larin notes that “euphemism by its semantic structure is a kind of a trope, e.g. metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche. The distinction from other tools is in its nomination and use. The purpose of euphemism is not the figurative representation of reality as tropes of literal language but obscuration, coverage of unsightly phenomenon of reality or of immodest thoughts or intents”. L. Timofeev[[5]](#footnote-5) gives the following definition of euphemism: “it is a specific kind of metonymy where rude expressions are substituted more polite ones to soften the form of expression but not the meaning”. A. Katsev[[6]](#footnote-6) gives another definition of euphemism: “there are some indirect substitutions of fearful, disgraceful or odious, contributing to the soothing effect, evoking to life by moral or religious motives” **(есть способствующие эффекту смягчения косвенные заменители наименований страшного, постыдного или одиозного, вызываемые к жизни моральными или религиозными мотивами)**. Also A. Katsev emphasizes three aspects of euphemia: social, psychological and linguistic properly.

There are some examples of euphemisms:

The words like **“diplomacy”**, **“to borrow”**, **“gratitude”** are used instead of words such *lie*, *to steal* and *a bribe*. Lots of euphemisms can be found in English fiction. For example, *swearing* is substituted by the phrase “coarseness of expression”.

During analyzing of euphemisation some of main aspects which are typical for euphemisms we need to take into account. Firstly, it is a functional aspect. B. Larin offered the most general functional classification of euphemism by its spheres of use. He divided these spheres into three categories: 1) widespread euphemisms of the national literal language (death, illness, fears – **“pass away”** instead of *death*) ; 2) class and professional euphemisms **(“surgical strikes”** for *bombing* in political language); 3) everyday “family” euphemisms **(“adult entertainment”** for *pornography*). Depending on spheres of use, context and other circumstances, euphemisms can involve different functional nomination. The function of soothing the meaning of rude, sharp and taboo words or expressions can mainly be found in examples given above.

Euphemistic expressions are used practically in all spheres of speech communication. I.Galiperin[[7]](#footnote-7) singles out four traditional spheres of its use:   
1) religion; 2) moral sphere; 3) medicine; 4) parliament.

L. Barkova[[8]](#footnote-8) notices that “the conceptual spheres, which are fully described fully in linguistic literature, are strongly attracted by euphemistic nominations : illiness, death, physical and mental defects, sex, physiologic functions and so on…The social spheres of communications, as Barkova underlines, “oriented to euphemisms have acquired the fragmentary coverage…Herewith, the most urgent demand in euphemisms is felt by politicians and advertisers”. Nowadays, there is a transference of original euphemism into public spheres: political, military, commercial where it can do more harm than in sex, death and illness’ field. Barkova also emphasizes that the choice of euphemisms in politics is characterized by the pragmatic factor, and euphemism itself is a highly effective method of influence upon public opinion.

That is why the subject of my analysis is political euphemisms.

**(Л. Баркова отмечает, что « в лингвистической литературе достаточно подробно описаны понятийные сферы, тяготеющие к эвфемистическим наименованиям: болезни, смерть, физические и умственные недостатки, секс, физиологические функции и др. … Социальные же сферы общения, как подчеркивает Л. Баркова, “ориентирующиеся на эвфемизмы, получили лишь фрагментарное освещение… При этом наиболее острую потребность в эвфемизмах испытывают политические деятели и составители рекламных текстов”. В наше время происходит перемещение подлинного эвфемизма в общественные сферы, политическую, военную, коммерческую, где они способны принести гораздо больше вреда, чем в области болезни, смерти и секса. Л. Баркова подчеркивает, что выбор эвфемизмов в политике обусловлен в первую очередь прагматическим фактором, а сами эвфемизмы – весьма эффективное средство воздействия на общественное сознание широких слоев общества.**

**2. The history of euphemisms**

The subject of the earliest euphemism was religious. Gods were treated with respect amounting to terror. Since the names of gods were considered identical with them, to speak a name was to evoke the divinity’s power and its displeasure (в значении «немилость»). Such dangerous practices were reserved for priests skilled in negotiating with the supernatural. Consequently, they devised indirect forms of reference to calm the spirit.

Gods could be referred to by their attributes (**“the Thunderer”**), by their symbols or domains (**“the** **Rock”**), by their titles (**“the Lord”**) and so on. The most mysterious of all the types of religious euphemism was that complex variety which referred to the gods by naming what they were not.

## Many of the taboos current during the Anglo-Saxon era survived until the fourteenth century. J. MacDonald, the author of ‘Dictionary of Obscenity, Taboo & Euphemism’[[9]](#footnote-9) mentions the following: “Chaucer’s Pardoner in 'The Canterbury Tales' rails against those who rend the body of Christ by swearing on parts of it: **“by his nailes”**, **“by Goddes precious** **herte”**, **“by the blood of Crist”**. On the other hand, Chaucer seems hardly to bat an eyeflash at describing a woman’s most intimate parts. His famous “Wife of Bath” is actually a mistress of sexual euphemism. Chaucer’s use of her illustrates one of the linguistic tendencies of euphemism that was to flower in Shakespeare. The Wife employs indirect references to sex to amplify, to multiply, to amuse and to seduce – never to avoid”.

In the sixteenth century, by the early 1580s, an English politician, George Blount[[10]](#footnote-10) used the term *euphemism*, defining it is “a good or favorable interpretation of a bad word”. Although the term “euphuism” and “euphemism” do not have the same meaning, they both describe a manner of speaking that leans toward indirectness in the service of pleasantness.

After the Puritan revolution, with the restoration of an aristocratically oriented monarch in 1660, the restrictions against overtly sexual language were relaxed. A burst of linguistic inventiveness and a host of new and colorful terms for body parts and sexual practices were audible on the stage and legible in the new literature. But political language was still leashed and was to remain so, inspiring a continuing and growing number of political works that used elaborate circumlocutions and indirections to disguise references to political parties, policies and persons.

With neo-classicism, euphemizing often took a Latin turn. In an age that strove for classical dignity and elegance, the tendency to Latinize spilled over into perfectly innocent areas, while periphrasis became a stylistic 'consummation devoutly to be wished'. Thus, Alexander Pope[[11]](#footnote-11) would refer to *fish* as **“finny tribe”** and *scissors* as a **“little** **engine”**.

By the nineteenth century, middle-and lower-class influence had expanded and improved the vocabulary and formation of euphemisms. Thieves and criminals of every other sort added their cants and jargons to the language. The motives of these sub-cultures had been to create a special language – the code which enabled them to talk about illegal or hidden ussies openly. Middle-class speakers used hundreds of euphemisms avoiding the subjects of labor, money, sex, death and sin of every sort.

**2.1. Euphemisms in different cultures**

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the British euphemism was developing abroad as well as at home. As the British Empire expanded, the linguistic pattern of the mother country travelled with it. The British colonies were dependencies in language as well as in politics. Though Australians, Canadians and Americans would coin euphemisms with the local color of their new lands and lives, the patterns of formation would follow those of the English middle class.

The British are probably the world champions of euphemisms. The best of these are widely understood, at least among native British speakers of English creating a pleasant sense of complicity between the euphemist and his audience. In British newspapers a *drunkard* will be described as “**convivial”** or “**cheery”**, while “**lively wit”** means *a penchant* for telling cruel and unfunny stories. Someone with a foul temper “**does not suffer fools gladly”**. Uncontrollable appetites of all sorts may earn the ultimate recognition: **“He lives life to the full”**.

Euphemism is so ingrained in British speech that foreigners, even those who speak fluent English, may miss the signals contained in such bland remarks as “**incidentally”** which means *“Now I am telling you the purpose of this discussion”*; and “**with the greatest respect”** meaning *“you are mistaken and silly”.* This sort of code allows the speaker to express anger, contempt or outright disagreement without making the emotional investment needed to do so directly.

Australia, like England, often formed euphemisms by means of rhyming slang, but its special flavor is exactly what one would expect it to be: a mixture of Botany Bay prisoner cant, transplanted middle-class rancher and farmer terminology, the breezy argot of the vast outback and exotic borrowings from the aboriginal tongues.

South African euphemisms take much of their special quality from Afrikaans and local dialects. But above all, they eschew indirection of any kind and a uniquely South African euphemism is a rare species. The sources of Canadian euphemism are more varied. Like America, Canada is a melting pot and draws upon a variety of cultures and languages, including French, Middle European, native Indian, Eskimo, and, of course, the Queen’s English.

American euphemisms reflected the desires for both religiousness and gentility that impelled some of the earliest settlers to seek American shores. Best known for their concern about language were the Puritans, who approved laws against profanity. The resurgence of the Puritan impulse was felt during the Great Awaking of the 1740s and its revival in 1829. By the nineteenth century, the sentimental impulse generated a large lexicon of euphemisms for both love and death. Among the great treasuries of American euphemisms are nineteenth century graveyards. While the classic carvings of the weeping willow avoid the harsh reality of the simple coffin beneath, the text on such stones ranges from the pathetic to the bathetic. One epitaph reads: “Our Lamb is with His Maker.” Another proclaims:

*Under this sod and under these trees  
Here lies the body of Solomon Pease.  
Only his bones are here on these leas  
 For his soul is shelled out and gone to God.*

The greatest changes in American language were felt after World Wars I and II and during the 1960s counterculture movement – itself a reaction to war. Obviously linguistic change has reflected cultural change. Someday it may be duty of a linguistic historian to note that in the 1980s the richest subjects of American euphemisms were money, disease, politics and war.

American euphemisms are in a class of their own, principally because they replace the words they find offensive by phrases that are meaninglessly ambiguous: **“bathroom tissue”** for *lavatory paper*, **“dental appliances”** for *false teeth*, **“previously owned”** *r*ather than *used,* **“wellness centers”** for *hospitals*, which conduct **“procedures”** not *operations*.

Asian people also prefer to soften their speech with euphemism: a mixture of abstraction, metaphor, slang and understatement that offers protection against the offensive, harsh or blunt. In 1945 Emperor Hirohito, the 124th Emperor of Japan, informed his subjects of their country’s unconditional surrender (after two atomic bombs, the loss of 3 million people and with invasion looming) with words: “The war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan’s advantage.”

Some Chinese euphemisms also stem from squeamishness. Talking about a patient’s sex life, the doctor may ask if you have much time for **“fang shi” (*room business*).** And online web sites for adults sell **qingqu yongpin**, literally **“interesting love products”.** But Chinese circumlocution is often a form of polite opacity. Chinese people do not like being too direct in turning down invitations or requests for interview. They will reply that something is **bu fangbian** **(not convenient)**. It means they do not want to do it ever. If they do not want to tell a listener what is going on they will say that they are **bu qingchu – “I am not clear.”**

Amy Tan[[12]](#footnote-12), an American writer, whose works explore the Chinese-American experience, in her article “The Language of Discretion” talks about differences between two languages – English and Chinese – and how to understand English doublespeak if you are an immigrant. She says that as any child of immigrant parents knows, there is a special kind of double bind attached to knowing two languages. Edward Sapir, an American linguist said that “no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.” Indeed, diverse mentalities and perceptions can complicate any conversation between representatives of different societies. It is more difficult to compare both language and behavior in translation.

Sapir[[13]](#footnote-13) was right about differences between two languages and their realities. Amy Tan illustrates why word-for-word translation is not enough to translate meaning and intent. Once she received a letter from China which she read to her non-Chinese speaking friends. The letter, originally written in Chinese, had been translated by Tan’s brother in Beijing. One portion described the time when her uncle at age ten discovered his widowed mother had remarried – as a number three concubine, the ultimate disgrace for an honorable family. The translated version of Amy Tan’s letter read in part:

“In 1925, I met my mother is Shanghai. When she came to me, I didn’t have greeting to her if seeing nothing. She pull me to a corner secretly and asked me why didn’t have greeting her. I couldn’t control myself and cried: “Ma! Why did you leave us? People told me: one day you are ate a **“beancake”** yourself. Your sister in-law found it and sweared at you, called your names. So…is it true?” She clasped my hand and answered immediately, “It’s not true, don’t’ say what like this.” After this time, there was a few chance to meet her.”

When Amy finished, her friends cried: “What! Was eating a **“beancake”** so terrible?” The **“beancake”** was simply a euphemism. A ten-year old boy did not dare question his mother on something as shocking as concubinage. **“Eating a beancake”** was his equivalent for committing this selfish act, something inconsiderate of all family members. Therefore, the widowed mother’s response to what seemed like a silly charge of gluttony was what it was. By this means Chinese is indeed a language of extreme discretion. A culture without euphemism would be more honest but rougher.

**3. Euphemisms in language and speech**

Analyzing the issue of euphemism we need to take into account that it has two aspects: linguistic and speech. Herewith, both euphemisms in language and in speech require the specific consideration because there is essential difference between them in form, definition and use. **(При исследовании проблемы эвфемизмов следует иметь в виду, что она имеет два аспекта – языковой и речевой. При этом как эвфемизмы в языке, так эвфемизмы в речи нуждаются в специальном рассмотрении, так как между ними имеются существенные различия в форме, в значении и употреблении)**

As far as the question of correlation of language and speech is still the subject of many discussions in linguistics, it is necessary to analyze it in detail. The difference between language and speech is the fundamental principle of modern linguistics. (**Поскольку вопрос о соотношении языка и речи до сих пор является предметом дискуссий в лингвистике, необходимо несколько подробнее остановиться на этой проблеме).**

The difference between language and speech is a fundamental principle of modern linguistics. The idea about the necessary distinction between terms *language* and *speech* was first put forward by Swiss scientist Ferdinand de Saussure[[14]](#footnote-14) in the beginning of the 20th century. “The study of language activity, - writes Saussure, - is divided into two parts: the subject of the first one, which is basic, is language, i.e. something social in substance and independent from an individual…the other one is secondary and its subject is the individual side of speech activity – speech itself, including speaking.” **(Различие между языком и речью является основополагающим принципом современного языкознания. Мыль о необходимости разграничения понятий «язык и речь» впервые была выдвинута швейцарским ученым Ф. де Соссюром вначале двадцатого века. «Изучение языковой деятельности, - писал Соссюр, - распадается на две части: одна из них, основная, имеет своим предметом язык, то есть нечто социальное по существу и независимое от индивида…другая – второстепенная, имеет предметом индивидуальную сторону речевой деятельности, то есть речь, включая говорение».)**

Saussure emphasizes that both concepts are closely relative and **взаимопредполагают друг друга**. In such a way, since Saussure linguistics puts forward two objects instead of the single subject – language and speech. Ferdinand de Saussure was also the first linguists who proclaimed the necessity of linguistics’ development of speech along with linguistics of language. (**Соссюр подчеркивает, что оба этих понятия тесно взаимосвязаны и Таким образом, исходя из этого, со времен Ф. де Соссюра вместо единого предмета исследования лингвистика выдвигает два объекта – язык и речь.   
Соссюр был также первым, кто провозгласил необходимость разработки лингвистики речи наряду с лингвистикой языка).**

The Saussure’s ideas are widely used in modern linguistics. By now many modern linguistics institutions have formed with different points of view on the issue of language and speech’s correlation. They can be narrowed down to the three main: 1) language and speech are compared as independent objects, differed from each other by summation of substantial features and as a result the two independent scientific disciplines are singled out – linguistics of language and linguistics of speech; 2) The duality of the linguistics’ object has become firmly established, i.e., in despite of distinctions between language anв speech, they in total form the object of linguistics; 3) It is approved that there is no need to differentiate language and speech.

**(Идеи Соссюра получили широкое распространение и развитие в современной лингвистике. К настоящему времени сформировались современные школы, имеющие различные точки зрения на проблему соотношения языка и речи. Их можно свести к трем основным: 1) язык и речь противопоставляются как самостоятельные объекты, отличающиеся друг от друга совокупностью существенных признаков, и в связи с этим выделяются две самостоятельные научные дисциплины – лингвистика языка и лингвистика речи; 2) утверждается двойственность объекта лингвистика, то есть, несмотря на различия, существующие между языком и речью, они в совокупности образуют объект лингвистики; 3) утверждается, что разграничивать язык и речь нет никаких оснований».)**

Thus, for instance, G. Kolshansky[[15]](#footnote-15) does not recognize the difference between language and speech and put forward the idea **соединяющей в себе изучение языка и речи, так называемую коммуникативную или прагматическую лингвистику.** Although, by now the majority of linguists recognize the necessity of differentiation of language and speech. Herewith, they give definitions differing from these ideas.

Noticing that Saussure F. has defined the correlation between language and speech as social and individual, Trubetskoy N[[16]](#footnote-16). as a system and its manifestation, Solganik G.[[17]](#footnote-17) writes that “language as a system of symbols is impersonal to speaker. It is correlated with the objective reality and addressed to the world of objects and ideas. Speech is always personal; it is primarily addressed to “я”, to the speaker and defined by position of the speaker, **исходит из нее**”.

**(Отмечая, что Ф. Де Соссюр определял соотношение языка и речи как социальное и индивидуальное, Н.С. Трубецкой как систему и ее манифестацию, Г.Я. Солганик пишет, что «Язык как система знаков безличен, безразличен к говорящему. Он соотнесён с объективной действительностью, обращен к миру вещей и миру понятий. И в этом соотношении он объективен. Речь же всегда лична, персонализирована; она прежде всего обращена к «я», к говорящему, определяется позицией говорящего, исходит из нее»)**

The difference between these definitions is not crucial. There is a variant of the general definition of language and speech in “General linguistics” edited by Suprun A.[[18]](#footnote-18) “Summing the different points of view about the considered problem, we single out that language and speech are related to one substance – speech activity and, in spite of it, the terms defining these concepts are used in deferent meanings. On the one hand, language are considered as a device by means of which **порождается и понимается речь,** and, on the other hand, as a system of rules and set of units abstracted by specialists **из фактов речи**. These definitions are correlated because language as a device means substance which is cognizable by means of revealed rules and units in it. Speech is performed as a process of production of utterances and as a result of the linguistic tool’s activity.

**(Различия между этими определениями не являются принципиальными. В учебнике «Общее языкознание» под редакцией А.Е. Супруна содержится вариант обобщённого определения языка и речи. «Суммируя разнообразные точки зрения по рассматриваемой проблеме, отметим, что язык и речь относятся к одной сущности – речевой деятельности, однако, не смотря на это, термины, обозначающие данные понятия, употребляются в разных смыслах.** **Язык, с одной стороны, рассматривается как устройство, с помощью которого порождается и понимается речь, а с другой стороны, как система правил и набор единиц, абстрагируемых специалистами из фактов речи.** **Оба эти понимания взаимосвязаны, поскольку язык как устройство обозначает сущность, которая познается с помощью вскрываемых в ней правил и единиц. Речь представляется, во-первых, как процесс порождения высказываний и, во-вторых, как результат деятельности языкового устройства.)**

Savchenko A[[19]](#footnote-19). notices that **“в языке слово является названием, обозначение того или иного понятия, обобщенного образа, класса предметов или явлений действительности,** i.e. the nominative unit and its meaning as any symbolwith rare exceptionhas the generalized disposition.Word in speech becomes a compound element of **одного целого –** sentence and through it – text and dialogue. It becomes an element of the communicative unit, the main feature of which is predicativity.”

Speech has the pragmatic communicative direction. Thus, as Savchenko indicates, it should be “expressively optimal, i.e. as adequate to the meaning of the thought…communicatively optimal, i.e. precise, logically coherent and brief. The last feature in full measure appears only in speech…”.

“As a result of the actions of these factors, - writes Savchenko, - word in speech acquires some properties which have no in the system of language and in spite of speech is consisted of the same symbols as language, there are differences between them which cannot be neglected”.

Interconnection and difference between language and speech are vividly appeared in texts with euphemisms. It is important to distinguish euphemisms in language and euphemisms in speech. As only words and expressions fixedly connected with the corresponding denotates are referred to the language sphere, **к эвфемизмам в языке могут быть отнесены только те из них, которые постоянно используются для эвфемистического обозначения определённых денотатов.** Apparently, using such euphemistic substitutions, the meaning of the expression is saved, only the soothing the form is happened.

Euphemisms existing in language are naturally used in speech. However, in speech (in verbal and written speech) there are also words and expressions which are euphemisms only in a concrete context, in a concrete moment. In this case, it is necessary to speak about euphemisms exactly in speech not in language. Boschaeva[[20]](#footnote-20) N. defines speech euphemisms as “situational conditioned, nontraditional words and expressions, masking and **мелиорирующие** the stigmatic denotate”.

Euphemisms are appeared somewhere during the process of language communication as euphemisms in speech. Little by little, by measure of making the strong connection of some euphemisms with **обозначаемыми ими денотатами,** these euphemisms came in language. However, not all euphemisms appeared in speech can be euphemisms in language. Émile Benveniste[[21]](#footnote-21) writes:

Although not every euphemism appeared in speech can be euphemism in language. Thus Émile Benveniste writes: « It depends on the notion’s charakter which can be evoked in the human’s mind and at the same time evoid it naming. If this notion belongs to those which are discussed by moral and social norms, then euphemism is not maintained permanently ».

(**Однако далеко не все эвфемизмы, возникшие в речи, могут стать эвфемизмами в языке. Так, Э. Бенвенист пишет: «Все зависит от характера того понятия, которое хотят вызвать в сознании и вместе с тем избежать его называния. Если это понятие принадлежит к числу тех, которые осуждаются моральными и социальными нормами, то эвфемизм не сохраняется надолго.)**

It needs to take into account the specific of the concept of communicative and emotional optimality in using the political euphemisms. Political euphemisms are mainly used for naming the negative socially political phenomenon. Thus, from the subject’s point of view, using political euphemism, and the communicative optimal is a transfer of distorted information, hiding the unsightly truth. And emotionally optimal is forming of distorted estimate of the described phenomenon.

Euphemism in the political speech much more depends on the context than euphemisms in other spheres of speech. As Benveniste writes, «to charakterise euphemisms it needs to rebuild how it is possible, the terms of its use in speaking...Only a situation defines the euphemism and depending on if it is typical or accidental, it forms the type of euphemistic expression in accordance with the norms of one kind or another language ».

Naturally there are euphemisms in political speech which are reffered to the language. For instance, the expression «to launder the money» is a stable euphemistic denotation of hidng illigel sources of income. The verb “to launder” is often used in the euphemistic meaning. It is proved thereby that this word can be found in the Holder’s Dictionary of American and British euphemisms[[22]](#footnote-22). This dictionary also includes the word “initiative”. It gives the following definition of this euphemism: “the denotation given after the event”. The dictionary gives the example: **«…имел место заговор в высших сферах.– Нет, неправильное слово…инициатива…инициатива на высшем уровне, в объединенном комитете начальников штабов».** The use of the word “initiative” has become the most vivid example of functioning a linguistic political euphemism in speech.

The majority of revealed political euphemisms are related only to speech. The expression “dirty tricks” is a vivid example. In English language this expression cannot be referred to euphemisms. It is just quite an unflattering characteristics of someone’s activity. Although, in a particular context it turns into a soothing euphemism, hiding criminal actions of the Nixon’s administration.

**(Большинство же обнаруженных мной политических эвфемизмов относятся только к речи. Характерным примером можно считать выражение “dirty tricks”. В английском языке это выражение никоим образом нельзя отнести к эвфемизмам. Оно представляет собой достаточно нелестную характеристику чьей-либо деятельности. Однако, в определенном контексте оно превратилось в смягчающий эвфемизм, скрывающий преступные действия администрации Никсона.)**

**4. The formation of euphemisms**

Joseph M. Williams[[23]](#footnote-23), a professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Chicago, suggests five general semantic processes by means of which euphemisms are created, but there are others as well.

* Most obviously, euphemisms may be made by borrowing words from other languages – terms that are less freighted with negative associations. Thus, Greek and Latin expressions are used for many body parts and functions. Speakers of English have coined **halitosis** (*bad breath*) from the Latin **“halitus”** for *breath* and they have substituted micturition for the more vulgar Middle English (from Old French) piss.
* Euphemisms may be made by a semantic process called widening. When a specific term becomes too painful or vivid, speakers move up in the ladder of abstraction. In this way, cancer becomes a growth and a girdle becomes a foundation. Sometimes the negative connotations of a single direct term are divided between two or more words. Instead of saying *syphilis* openly, people speak of a **“social disease”**.
* Euphemisms may be made by a process called metaphorical transfer, the comparison of things of one order to things of another. The euphemism **“blossom”** for *a pimple* compares one flowering to another, more acceptable variety. The euphemisms are often used to soften or poetize the original word in order not to hurt a listener’s feelings.
* Euphemisms may be created by phonetic distortion. When we come across things “that dare not speak their names”, we abbreviate, apocopate (shorten or omit the last syllable), initial, convert and reduplicate them.

Also there are general tendencies that shape changes in language, and these are found in all cultures. Words with neutral connotations, for example, tend to polarize, becoming either laudatory or pejorative. Often when a word develops strong negative connotations, people create a milder, more positive term or euphemism for it.

A linguistic tendency called elevation creates euphemistic phrases.   
**“A penthouse”**, the magnificent domain of the rich, is really an elevated form of *pentice,* *a lean-to shack*. In this case, a word is applied to an object more highly esteemed than its early referent.

Degradation, the opposite tendency, appears when a formerly polite term gradually decreases into a negative one. In the fourteenth century, **“uncouth”** simply meant *unknown*. Today **“uncouth”** is *a profound insult* and has lost its original meaning.

The result of these tendencies is the constant need for new terms to replace older ones that have become too specialized, loaded or negative.

**5. Classifications of euphemisms**

The most full and logical classification of euphemisms was proposed by   
Moskvin V.[[24]](#footnote-24). He has developed a functional-thematic classification based on G. Frazer’s work called *“The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion”* (1890). Moskvin maintains that “functional types of euphemisms are closely connected with the thematic spheres of corresponding referents, which confirms that it's impossible to separate the description of a sign from its semantics.” By “thematic zones” Moskvin means “a line of lexical classes acting as a description of a typical situation (a frame) and connected with frame associations”. There are eight functional-thematic groups of euphemisms, such as euphemisms denoting the phenomenon of fear, death euphemisms, everyday euphemisms, erotic euphemisms, and so on and so forth.

The most complete classification was created by Holder R. He singles out sixty lexical-semantic subclasses of euphemisms. His classification demonstrates a variety of groups of stygmatizable denotata, for which euphemisms are used: *abortion* and *miscarriage*, *age*, *aircraft* and so on. At first glance the last lexical-semantic group of euphemisms seems unusual. It is probable that flights in a plane are associated with a heightened risk of dying and people try to hide their fear by using euphemisms. The expression “**loss of separation”***,* for example, means f*lying dangerously close to another aircraft*. For example, “the Tristar then flew within a few miles of an Air Lingus Boeing 747 heading for Shannon and had “**loss of separation”** (flew closer than the legal safety limit) with two other planes” (Daily Telegraph. 21 August 1991). R. Holder also writes about the disadvantages of his classification: “Classification under specific headings is necessarily inexact and intended only to give the reader a quick guide to the most common areas of euphemism/ it is not possible to avoid an overlap between such categories as, for example, death, funerals and killing and suicide.

There are also psychological classifications of euphemisms. It is reiterated here that people use euphemisms when it is important not to offend the interlocutor or to hide the direct meaning of an expression. Holder offers the following classification:

* Taboo-words (personal names, religion, sickness, death);
* Fear and displeasure;
* Magnanimity and sympathy;
* Pudency;
* Euphemisms illustrating political motives.

The next type of classification is the social classification where the criterion for choosing the word is the fact that it belongs to a particular language variety employed by a certain social group or collective of people. Larin B.[[25]](#footnote-25) singles out three groups of euphemisms:

* Widespread euphemisms of the national literary language;
* The jargons of professions;
* Everyday euphemisms.

**4.1. The other classifications**

**Figures of speech**

1. Ambiguous statements:

* **“it”** for *excrement*;
* **“the situation”** or **“a girl in trouble”** for *pregnancy*;
* **“going to the other side”** for *death*;
* **“do it”** or **“come together”** in reference to *a sexual act*;
* **“tired”** and **“emotional”** for *drunkenness*.

1. Understatements (statements that make something seem less important, serious, big than it really is):

* **“sleep”** for *die*;
* **“hurt”** for *injured*.

1. Metaphors (words or phrases that mean one thing and are used for referring to another thing in order to emphasize their similar qualities):

* **“beat the meat**” – a term for *male masturbating*;

*“He liked to beat his meat whilst watching Anna Kournikova play tennis.”*

* **“choke the chicken”** – another term for *male masturbating*;

*“My grandma caught me choke the chicken last night.”*

* **“take a dump”** for *defecate*;

*“Come on, find a rest stop already. I have to take a dump.”*

1. Comparisons (the process of considering how things or people are similar and how they are different):

* **“buns”** for *buttocks*;
* **“weed”** for *cannabis*.

1. Metonymy (expressions in which you refer to something using the name of something else that is closely related to it, as, for example, when journalists use the expression “Downing Street” to refer to the British Prime Minister):

* **“lose a person”** for *dying*;
* **“drinking”** for consuming *alcohol*;
* **“boy's room”** for *men's toilet*.

***Others***

1. Using an adjective to refer to an element of a person, rather than using a noun to define them, for example, “...makes her look slutty” instead of “...is a slut”;
2. Reverse understatements or litotes (the use of a negative statement to say something positive, for example by describing something as ‘not unreasonable’) such as “not so big” for “short”, “not exactly a supermodel” for “ugly”, or “not true” for “a lie”;
3. Using a positive context (“Inspired by” instead of “ripped off” or “plagiarized”, “streamlining the workforce” for “laying off/firing (workers)”).
4. Using the term “challenged”. The most common example of this is using “mentally challenged” to describe mental retardation. There are many others, though, from “vertically challenged” for short people, to “vocally challenged” for those with mediocre singing voices;
5. Using the word “bleep” (onomatopoeia for the broadcasting censored tone), a common word like “sofa”, or even the word “profane” or “euphemism”, to replace profanity.

**The motives for euphemizing**

The motives for generating euphemisms depend on the range of human emotions. Fear and desire were probably the original reasons for euphemizing. Afraid to go against social and moral conventions, people refer to their lovers as companions, thus disguising the unconventional or socially unacceptable nature of the relationship. Human fear of specific diseases has led to coining a lexicon of euphemisms for insanity and retardation, epilepsy, venereal disease, cancer, heart attack and stroke. We also suffer from a terror of every sort of *disability* – the word itself is a euphemism – and *disfigurement* and, while we fear these conditions, we are equally afraid of the social rejection that might attach to us if we had them.

Another motive for contemporary euphemizing is our strong desire to avoid offending others. This worry of causing psychic pain, this desire to be well thought of leads us to use “kind words”. We prefer *to discontinue* rather than *fire* employees. In our enthusiasm to avoid deflating our egos and those of others, we often create euphemisms that inflate them, for example by conferring overblown titles on people, places and jobs. The term *professor* has been attached to bartenders, magicians and snake oil salesmen, as well as academics. The term *institute* and *college* have been applied to schools for auto mechanics, television repairmen, barbers, embalmers and others.

**5. Functions of euphemisms**

Attempts to identify the functions of euphemistic units were made by many linguists like Berdova N.[[26]](#footnote-26), Moskvin V., Boschaeva N.[[27]](#footnote-27), Turganbaeva L.[[28]](#footnote-28) and others. In their works they touched upon questions considering the functioning of euphemisms in the spheres of social life and in political discourse.

Researchers identify the functions of euphemisms in different ways. Thus, L.S.Turganbaeva singles out the following functions:

1. The intentional function, that is the use of euphemisms to achieve a particular communicative effect (in Krysin’s[[29]](#footnote-29) analysis this function is called softening);
2. The social-regulative function (reflects linguistic conventions, ethical standards of communication and speech etiquette. This function is in many respects consonant with the previous one but is not emphasized in Krysin’s work);
3. The function of naming frightening objects (death, illness, abortion);
4. The aesthetic function;
5. The ironic function.

Boschaeva singles out the following functions:

1. The co-operative function (is focused on preventing social tension). In other words, the softening function).
2. The preventive function (is focused on prevention of communicative conflict by using euphemisms);
3. The rhetorical function (the speaker’s attempt to exert impact on the addressee’s value judgments);

Euphemisms are typically used in situations of communicative tension. They are caused by the need to name objects and phenomena whose mention can be painful for the interlocutor and for people around. A euphemism is intended to ease or reduce the tension by softening the expression of the idea. Consequently, the aim of using euphemisms is to avoid communicative conflicts, to try not to create any feeling of discomfort in the interlocutor. Euphemisms are used to soften the direct nomination, figuring in a more polite form as compared to other methods of nomination of an object, action or a property: *hard of hearing* for *deaf, vision impaired* for *blind*, *big-boned* for *fat*, *confused* for *drunk* and so on.

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