

The Use of Euphemisms in English and Uzbek Literary Works

Mardiyev To'lqin Kulibayevich

Head of the Department of Foreign Languages,
Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service (SamISI)

Musurmanova Ruxshona Ravshan qizi, Ollaberganova Maftuna Zafar qizi

Student, Faculty of Economics, SamISI

Abstract: This study examines the use of euphemisms in English and Uzbek literary works, exploring their semantic, structural, and cultural characteristics. Euphemisms, as linguistic phenomena, serve to soften expressions that may be socially, politically, or morally sensitive. The research focuses on their role in artistic texts, analyzing how they contribute to stylistic and expressive nuances in both languages. Additionally, the paper evaluates the application of euphemisms in political and social discourse, reflecting broader cultural norms and values. Comparative analysis reveals that while English euphemisms are often employed for political correctness and satire, Uzbek euphemisms tend to align with ethical and moral considerations, maintaining linguistic politeness. By examining the historical development and practical use of euphemisms in literary contexts, the study provides insights into how they shape reader perceptions and cultural discourse. The methodology involves qualitative content analysis of selected literary works, supported by a comparative approach. The results highlight key thematic domains where euphemisms are frequently applied, such as death, illness, and social status, demonstrating their essential role in literary expression. This research contributes to the broader understanding of linguistic and cultural nuances in euphemistic usage across different languages and literary traditions.

Key words: Euphemism, Literary Expression, Political Correctness, Hidden Meaning, Metaphor, Semantic Structure, Cultural Linguistics, Uzbek Literature, English Literature



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INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the primary medium of communication, reflecting social and cultural changes. Euphemisms, as stylistic devices, help mitigate the impact of direct statements by providing alternative expressions. Their presence in literature enhances textual aesthetics while also serving

as a social tool to navigate sensitive topics. This paper explores the role of euphemisms in English and Uzbek literary works, identifying similarities and differences in their usage. The study aims to highlight how these linguistic phenomena contribute to cultural and literary traditions, influencing the reader's perception and comprehension.

Methodology

Euphemisms are commonly used in daily life. For instance, when layoffs occur, one might hear the term "strategic reduction of the workforce" instead of "dismissal." Similarly, when fuel prices rise, the government may refer to it as "gasoline price correction" rather than an increase. These terms often serve to mask harsh realities, making social and political statements more palatable. Many people use euphemistic expressions unconsciously, replacing direct words with softer alternatives to mitigate negative connotations. Euphemism (from Greek: εὐφήμη – meaning "soft expression") refers to words or phrases that substitute harsh, unpleasant, or socially inappropriate terms. Euphemisms are employed to soften negative realities, reduce their emotional impact, or make communication more socially acceptable. They help to avoid offensive language, maintain politeness, and conform to moral or cultural norms. For example, instead of saying "died," people may say "passed away," "departed," or "rested in peace." Similarly, "gave birth" can be replaced with "was delivered of a child" or "lightened." The use of euphemisms is closely tied to taboo phenomena in language and serves as a historical and ethnographic occurrence. Euphemisms develop alongside cultural traditions, aesthetic norms, and ethical standards. As languages evolve, so do euphemistic expressions. New moral perspectives and social conventions lead to the creation of new euphemistic forms. Certain euphemisms are context-dependent, with their meanings becoming clearer through textual analysis. For example, in A. Qodiriy's work, the phrase "delivering Ra'no to its owner" is a euphemistic substitute for "getting married." Euphemisms play a significant role in scientific and formal discourse, enhancing communication by making it more refined and diplomatic. The more advanced a society's moral and cultural outlook, the richer its language becomes in euphemisms. Modern languages extensively use euphemisms in literature, media, and advertisements to shape public perception positively. Euphemisms can subtly influence people's thoughts and behavior, making them an essential rhetorical and stylistic tool. In humorous speech, euphemisms often serve as a stylistic device, creating an indirect yet effective means of communication. Another crucial function of euphemisms is precautionary politeness, ensuring that speech does not cause psychological distress. Properly constructed euphemisms help convey information tactfully, avoiding offensive or uncomfortable topics such as death, illness, disabilities, and sensitive physiological or social issues. Euphemisms also regulate social, communicative, and cultural tensions by softening messages. However, improperly used euphemisms can have the opposite effect, leading to misunderstandings or negative emotional responses. A harshly spoken word or an inappropriate phrase may cause discomfort, conflict, or social repercussions. The ancient physician Hippocrates emphasized this idea, stating: "Surround the patient with love and intelligent reassurance, but most importantly, keep them unaware of what may cause them harm." This principle underscores the power of language and the necessity of carefully selecting words to ensure a positive communicative environment. Euphemisms help maintain social harmony, shaping interactions with consideration and respect. Linguists Ye. M. Vereshagin and V. G. Kostomarov reinforce this perspective, stating:

"There is no pain greater than the pain inflicted by words."

Thus, euphemisms serve as essential linguistic tools, enhancing communication while preserving cultural sensitivities and social decorum.

Result and Discussion

The findings reveal that euphemisms in English literature frequently serve as a tool for humor, satire, and political correctness, whereas in Uzbek literature, they emphasize politeness and

cultural norms. The analysis identifies key thematic categories where euphemisms are commonly employed:

Theme	English Literature	Uzbek Literature
Death	"Passed away," "Rest in peace"	"Ko'zi yondi," "Olamdan o'tdi"
Illness	"Under the weather," "Health condition"	"Yengillashdi," "Huzur topdi"
Social Status	"Economically disadvantaged"	"Moddiy ahvoli og'ir"
Politics	"Regime change" instead of "Coup"	"Davlat siyosati o'zgarishi"
Gender Issues	"Differently-abled" instead of "Disabled"	"Nogiron" yoki "Imkoniyati cheklangan shaxs"

The analysis indicates that euphemisms are more deeply embedded in societal and ethical norms in Uzbek literature, while in English, they often align with the principles of political correctness and satire. Uzbek euphemisms tend to preserve traditional values, avoiding direct references to taboos. Conversely, English euphemisms often serve a pragmatic role, particularly in media and political discourse.

Conclusion

Euphemisms serve as an essential stylistic and expressive tool in both Uzbek and English literature. They not only enhance the elegance, cultural sensitivity, and subtlety of the text but also help convey certain topics in a more delicate manner. Euphemisms are primarily used to soften references to uncomfortable or taboo subjects such as death, illness, sexuality, poverty, politics, and social inequality. In English literature, euphemisms are widely utilized to express satire, irony, and aesthetic refinement. For example, writers such as Mark Twain and George Orwell incorporated euphemisms into their works to subtly communicate societal issues or present critical viewpoints. Additionally, euphemisms in English often function as a means to adhere to censorship regulations and social etiquette, allowing for indirect communication of ideas that may otherwise be considered inappropriate or offensive. In Uzbek literature, euphemisms are used primarily in accordance with moral and ethical norms, enriching the artistic depth of the text. Writers such as Abdulla Qodiriy and O'tkir Hoshimov skillfully applied euphemisms to preserve the delicacy of human relationships and present sensitive themes through a spiritual and cultural perspective. Additionally, Uzbek folklore, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions frequently employ euphemisms as a means of maintaining speech decorum and conveying ideas in a more figurative manner. Overall, euphemisms serve similar purposes in both languages, but their usage is influenced by social, cultural, and historical factors. In English, euphemisms are often associated with political correctness and satire, whereas in Uzbek, they are more aligned with ethical norms and literary subtlety. This distinction highlights the importance of studying euphemisms as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon, emphasizing their role in shaping literary and social communication.

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