



## THE ROLE OF EUPHEMISMS IN TEACHING

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### ABSTRACT

*Our study is dedicated to teaching students how to use euphemisms in speech as a means of developing communicative competence. Since modern education puts forward in the first place such personal communicative qualities of students as the ability to avoid communicative conflicts and failures, not to create communicative discomfort in the interlocutor, learning to use euphemisms in the lessons is considered as a methodological problem, the solution of which is aimed at developing students' communicative competence and is based on the use of communicative-activity, systemic and personal approaches. We examined various interpretations of the concept of "euphemism" and came to the conclusion that at the moment there is no single understanding of the concept of "euphemism". There are many approaches to understanding euphemism (euphemism as tropes, periphrases, substitute, etc.), which do not contradict each other, but complement each other. And due to these approaches we can create new techniques and methods of teaching euphemisms. According to these new methods we can organize new lesson materials based on different aspects and skills.*

**KEY WORDS:** *euphemisms, teaching, methods, aspects, vocabulary, principles, interpretation, approach, skill, task.*

### INTRODUCTION

In connection with modernization in the country's economy, significant changes have occurred in the educational system. The public is faced with the problem of quality training of specialists in various fields of activity. In addition to professional knowledge, communicative abilities are put in the first place, that is, the ability to ensure the correctness of communication, since communicative correct speech helps harmonize the relations of various racial and ethnic groups, harmonize gender relations, relations of people of different ages, social status, material wealth, etc.

The formation of correct speech by students is possible thanks to teaching them how to use euphemisms in speech in accordance with the speech situation.

Today, euphemistic expressions are used in all socially significant spheres of human life. In oral and written speech, euphemisms perform very important functions: they help to avoid conflict in communication, hide unpleasant phenomena of reality, replace direct names for fear of shocking

others, increase the prestige of unpopular organizations and professions, mask the true essence of the signified.

There are various definitions of euphemisms promoted by scientists in their work. Despite a fairly large number of works addressing the phenomenon of euphemism, in the scientific literature there is no single understanding of this phenomenon. The dynamism and multidimensional nature of euphemisms is the reason for the wide variety of their lexical and grammatical forms, emotional neutrality or stylistic coloring, and the variability of their euphemistic potential.

These properties of euphemisms lead to the fact that the problem of determining euphemism presents a certain difficulty for researchers. So, in the linguistic encyclopedic dictionary, ed. O.S. Akhmanova is given the following definition: "Euphemisms are emotionally neutral words or expressions used instead of words synonymous with them and expressions that seem to the speaker indecent, rude or tactless" (Akhmanova, 1966).

We find a similar definition with the researcher D.N. Shmelev, who characterizes



euphemism as “abstinence from inappropriate words, a softened expression that serves under certain conditions to replace such designations that appear to the speaker to be undesirable, not quite polite, too harsh” (Shmelev, 2002).

The Big Encyclopedic Dictionary “Linguistics” edited by V.N. Yartseva gives the following definition of euphemism: “euphemisms are emotionally neutral words or expressions used instead of words synonymous with them or expressions that seem to the speaker indecent, rude or tactless (Yartseva, 1990). They also replace taboo names, archaic. Euphemisms also mean occasional individual-contextual substitutions of one word for another with the aim of distorting or disguising the true essence of the signified.”

Another scientist D.E. Rosenthal gives approximately the same interpretation of euphemism, calling it “a softening designation of an object or phenomenon, a milder expression instead of a rude one” (Rosenthal, 1987).

I.R. Halperin believes that euphemism is “a word or phrase that is used to replace an unpleasant word or expression with a relatively more acceptable one” (Halperin, 1981).

According to A. Katsev, euphemisms are indirect substitutes for the terrible, shameful or odious names that contribute to the mitigation effect, brought to life by moral or religious motives (Katsev, 1977).

E.E. Tyurina notes that “euphemisms are soft and permissible, meliorative-allegorical, and sometimes simply more acceptable for one reason or another, words or expressions used instead of thematically stigmatic or socially incorrect antecedents, instead of words or expressions that seem forbidden to the speaker indecent, unacceptable from the point of view of moral standards accepted in society, or even simply rude and tactless” (Tyurina, 1998).

In the Russian language dictionary edited by A.A. Evgenyeva is written: “Euphemism is a word or expression used instead of another, which for some reason is inconvenient or undesirable to pronounce” (Evgenyeva, 1984). The definition reflects the most general idea of euphemisms, the part in which linguists are unanimous. Such a streamlined definition does not clarify anything. For example, are linguistic substitutions of a reduced style of speech related to euphemisms? Should euphemisms be considered replacements for units with a positive denotation (addressee, name of beloved / beloved, name of God, etc.)?

And one of the last interpretations of euphemism is found by the researcher L.P. Krisin, defining euphemism as “a way of indirect, peripheral

and, at the same time, softening the designation of an object, property or action ...” (Krisin, 2004).

Euphemisms - an ambiguous phenomenon, causing controversy among scientists about their interpretation, signs and functions. But, summarizing the views of researchers, we can present euphemism as a neutral expression in meaning, used to replace indecent or tactless lexemes.

Also in Uzbek linguistics there are some ideas about taboos and euphemisms in connection with the study of euphemistic phenomena. This issue has been scientifically studied by Nemat Ismatullaev (Ismatullaev, 1963). In this study, the author was the first to collect a wealth of information about taboos and euphemisms, react to them, summarize and come to scientific and practical conclusions. When N. Ismatullaev speaks about the causes of euphemisms in the Uzbek language, he groups them. For example, euphemisms used instead of the name of poisonous insects (scorpion); euphemisms used instead of the name of wild animals (wolf, bear); euphemisms used in the language of women (do not name the husband by name). He also analyzed the importance of euphemisms in speech and his devotion to enriching vocabulary. Further, this concept was studied by Omonturdiyev. In his dissertation, he revealed the classification of euphemisms and its use in the field of professions (Omonturdiyev, 2006).

After analyzing the scientific works of various researchers, we came to the conclusion that teaching students to use euphemisms in speech is relevant and promising.

All researchers recognize the importance of teaching euphemisms today, which confirms the relevance of our study. For all the variety of scientific directions in the study of euphemisms, the problem of teaching the use of euphemisms in speech, that is, the methodological aspect of the study, which is of paramount importance in our study, remains poorly understood.

Thus, the relevance of the study is due to several factors:

- firstly, the concept of “euphemism” reflects the turn of linguistic and methodological science towards the study of not only the most effective, but also the most correct use of speech means in various communication situations;
- secondly, the principles and methods of teaching students how to use euphemisms in speech have not yet been developed in scientific linguistic and methodological literature;
- thirdly, the practice of working with students allows us to ascertain the inability of students to correctly construct speech



behavior and behave correctly in specific speech situations, which actualizes the problem of teaching students a speech culture, but in a certain context, in the context of teaching students to use euphemisms in speech.

## **MATERIALS AND RESEARCH METHODS**

Learning to use euphemisms in speech is aimed at developing communicative, linguistic, linguistic, cultural and ethical competencies.

Also, teaching euphemization of speech contributes to the improvement of speech skills in various activities: speaking, listening, writing, reading, which corresponds to communicative competence.

The developed exercise system has a gradual nature, which allows you to enter information about

euphemisms in stages, gradually complicating the type of exercise from stage to stage. Therefore, the developed system of exercises has four stages of training, corresponding to the formed skills. First, students get an idea of euphemisms, learn to perceive them in the text, determine the function of euphemisms. Then learn to distinguish euphemism from other means of expression. Then develop the skill of euphemism formation using various methods and means; drawing up your own euphemisms in accordance with the communicative task, editing incorrect texts.

There are four stages of training:

1. Students are divided into groups which consist of 4-6 members. The teacher distributes the text to each group. From the text, students will have to find euphemisms, explain their meaning and what a crude concept they replace.

### **Task 1.**

#### **Fitting In**

When you travel it's important to abide by the local rules and customs. As we say the UK, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Many tourists fail to blend in when they go abroad. In fact, they stick out sore thumbs and may even get on people's nerves.

You have to watch your P's and Q's in the UK. If you don't say please and thank you you'll end up ticking people off. You can overstep the mark if you start asking personal questions. You shouldn't brag about your achievements or wealth either. If people may think you're a Flash Harry or a show off they'll give you the cold shoulder.

No-one will bat an eyelid if you burp in China. If you do it in other countries you'll get told off. However you'll fall out with people if you whistle. It's considered rude.

If you want to fit in when you visit Spain you should dress up. The grungy look doesn't go down well over there.

Greetings are another potential minefield. If French people greet each other with two kisses. In the UK and America people are more likely to shake hands.

If you do put your foot in it don't worry. Hopefully your hosts will realise you're foreign and turn a blind eye.



Find the euphemisms from the text and match them with the phrases in the box.

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| notice                       |
| _____                        |
| pay no attention             |
| _____                        |
| difficult situation          |
| _____                        |
| make a faux pas              |
| _____                        |
| someone who brags            |
| _____                        |
| someone to brags about money |
| _____                        |
| be polite                    |
| _____                        |
| do the same as the locals    |
| _____                        |
| be totally different         |
| _____                        |
| go too far                   |
| _____                        |
| it's not accepted            |
| _____                        |
| exclude somebody             |
| _____                        |
| annoy somebody               |
| _____                        |

1. *Is there a nearby restroom?*
2. *Katherine, a domestic engineer, had her work quietly received.*
3. *Her doctor informed her that he was fading quickly and that the end was near.*
4. *The policeman was dismissed for personal reasons.*
5. *To increase fiscal positioning, the treasury will make rate adjustment.*
6. *The discussion revolved around cultural issues and unauthorized occupant withdrawal.*
7. *Most penitentiary attendants operated the correctional institution with inhumanness.*

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| <i>brutality</i>                |
| <i>armed guards</i>             |
| <i>illegal prisoner escapes</i> |
| <i>toilet</i>                   |
| <i>fired</i>                    |
| <i>housewife</i>                |
| <i>ignored</i>                  |
| <i>he will be dead soon</i>     |
| <i>racism</i>                   |
| <i>profits</i>                  |
| <i>government</i>               |
| <i>dying</i>                    |
| <i>increase taxes</i>           |
| <i>jail</i>                     |



2. Students are divided into groups which consist of 5 members. The teacher distributes dialogues to each group, where rude and incorrect words are used. Students will need to pick up euphemisms for these words and replace them with euphemisms.

#### Task 2.

##### Dialogue #1.

*Monica and Abby are stretching at the back of the class.*

*Abby: Any luck of finding anything?*

*Monica: No. Not at all. I applied for 128 jobs online, and only got two interviews.*

*Abby: What happened?*

*Monica: One offered me a job in Hong Kong.*

*Abby: That's a pretty crazy. Living in Hong Kong.*

*Monica: That's all they had available so I turned it down. I have my family to think about.*

*Abby: What about the other one?*

*Monica: Yeah that one was a real winner. Not only did they expect me to be an expert, they wanted me to order food for client meetings and serve coffee, do dishes.*

*Abby: I see what you mean. Degrading.*

*Monica: I was supposed to get another four months of unemployment, then this week I get a letter telling me our state doesn't qualify anymore for the federal funding that's paying for it now.*

##### Dialogue #2.

*Kalvin, Dutch, Jay and Wally huddle close together and walk down the sidewalk.*

*Dutch: Goddamn, it's cold! What the hell did you make us walk for?*

*Jay: Seriously. I shouldn't have driven.*

*Kalvin: You are in no condition to operate a car.*

*Besides, it's not too much further.*

*Wally: There going to be a lot of drinks at this place, Kal?*

*Kalvin: I don't know. I'd assume so.*

*Jay: Well, your little "Lois Lane" is going to be there. She got any friends or roommates.*

*Kalvin: Hmm. That's a good question.*

*Jay: What do you mean?*

*Kalvin: I don't think I've ever seen her with any friends.*

##### Dialogue #3.

*Abby: It sucks. I guess I'm like everyone, doing what they gotta do to survive, and wanting to find something else.*

*Monica: Yeah that's part of the problem.*

*Not only is it the unemployed, but all the people like you applying for the same positions as me.*

*Abby: Don't worry. Forget it all for a while.*

*By the way, where's your friend Chloe?*

*Monica: I didn't call her. I wasn't in the mood.*

*Abby: Now you're talking.*

3. Students are divided into two groups. Each group presents its own theme, which was previously set by the teacher. Students will need to show a polite form of speech using euphemisms. Each group speaks on different topics reveals the area for which they prepared in advance. The subject may be of a different nature:

##### Task 3.

*a conversation between the cashier and the buyer, the doctor and the patient; conversation between diplomats, etc.*

4. The teacher gives students a list of euphemisms that are used in the press. Each student will have to write his own article as a reporter, using the appropriate euphemisms by selecting from the list.

##### Task 4.

1. "Spending more time with the family" is used as a general statement by politicians who have been forced to resign because of some low-level scandal they don't wish to admit / comment on.

2. "Sometimes.... I park my car in the wrong driveway" Roger Stirling's apology to Don Draper [in US drama Mad Men] for being highly flirtatious with Don's wife while drunk.

3. "Extreme Rendition" A term coined by our "allies" to cover the illegal transportation of foreign nationals (possibly "terrorists") across international borders, illegally.

4. Unfavourite euphemism. "Passed away" or "Lost" as in "I lost my husband". People do neither of these things. They DIE.

5. In the 70s a lot of LSD seemed to be produced in or around Lincoln and it was common when asking what someone was doing at the





*weekend to have them reply "I am going to Lincoln" meaning they were going to be dropping acid.*

6. *My favourite is the phrase "operative statement" which a Nixon White House press secretary used to describe any of those statements he made which were actually true. False statements were dubbed "inoperative", much to the disbelief and amusement of the Washington press corps.*

7. *"Likes their Wagner" So much more polite way of describing a member of the aristocracy who thought that the Nazis were a breath of fresh air in European politics.*

At each stage of training in the use of euphemisms in speech, we indicate the goals that we set at this stage; indicate the teaching methods; we give a system of exercises according to the level of difficulty (reproductive, productive, creative).

Reproductive exercises - finding euphemisms in the text, determining the functions of euphemisms, determining the scope of use.

Productive exercises - the ratio of incorrect words and euphemisms; the formation of euphemisms using various linguistic means; selection of synonymous euphemisms for the nominee in various fields of use.

Creative exercises - creating text for various speech situations, editing text.

Students need more time to master specific vocabulary. At these stages, students are well versed in the basics of grammar and lexicology, morphology and syntax, and are also familiar with traditions and customs.

For this process to become more productive, euphemisms must be studied in sociolinguistic aspects, since this process will facilitate students' understanding of the close relationship between language and society, and will help to take into account social changes in the language.

One aspect of sociolinguistics is the stylistic aspect. Linguist L.G. Luzina believes that the stylistic meaning is associated with the interpretation of the relevance or inappropriateness of the choice of a language unit in different conditions of communication (Luzina, 2004). The phrase should be appropriate, both in relation to the topic of speech, and to the participant in communication.

The next aspect in which it is worth considering and explaining the nature of euphemism is ethical. The ethical aspect is the moral and ethical justification for the use of one or another expression. It is worth saying that the ethical standards of speech depend on the mentality of the inhabitants of the country. To maintain the right atmosphere of communication, students should be able to choose euphemistic nominations to mitigate inappropriate expressions.

The etymological aspect is inextricably linked with the history of the language and culture of the people. Etymology draws data from such sciences as archeology, history, ethnography, geography. The etymological approach in explaining the lexical layer provides valuable material for a better understanding of the characteristics of a particular language community.

After researching the methods and techniques of working with specific vocabulary, we came to the conclusion that the following methods of working with euphemisms can be used: direct, conscious, intense and combined.

Direct teaching methods are focused on creating direct associations between words and corresponding concepts, bypassing the native language. The meaning of linguistic facts is revealed with the help of visualization, context or interpretation. Material is administered only orally.

Conscious teaching methods are focused on students comprehending linguistic facts and methods of their application in speech activity.

Intensive teaching methods rely on the psychological reserves of the student's personality that are not used in regular learning. They are characterized by: collective forms of work, the use of suggestive means of influence.

Combined teaching methods is a group of teaching methods that have features inherent in direct and conscious teaching methods. They are based on the following principles: intuitiveness combined with consciousness; oral advancing; speech orientation of training; parallel mastery of types of speech activity.

Each of these methods involves the use of certain methods of interpreting euphemisms: the interpretation of euphemisms, the use of antonymic and synonymous lexical units, the introduction of euphemisms in context, etymological information, visualization, dialogue using euphemisms.

Another technique for interpreting specific vocabulary is the selection of synonyms and antonyms for the unit under study. The advantages of this method are that it helps to establish semantic tokens nests. Although euphemisms can be interpreted in an audience where students speak a language at a threshold level, this method of semantization of euphemisms is best used at an advanced stage of training, since it requires students to have a rich vocabulary and an understanding of the stylistic coloring of words. This is a rather difficult task, which requires students to have a deep knowledge of the language, speech styles and a large vocabulary. It also all depends on the speaker's personal perception and situation.

Visualization as a method of semantization consists in demonstrating a certain reality. Most



often, visualization refers to the use of visual teaching aids: presentations, slides, layouts, diagrams. On the Internet there are many images of not only objects and faces, but also situations. However, it is not always easy to find an illustration of a particular situation or an abstract phenomenon, and the search for the necessary pictures can take a lot of time from the teacher.

Creating dialogs using certain euphemisms is very effective, as students remember the correct grammatical, syntactic and situational use of the euphemistic unit. Through dialogue, students fall into the natural environment for the manifestation of the communicative functions of the language.

Having examined the possible methods and techniques for interpreting euphemisms in the classroom, we can conclude that the most effective principle will be the combination of methods, techniques and teaching aids for these language units. Only in aggregate will they lead to the necessary results - students will be able to determine euphemisms in oral and written language, learn to use them depending on the situation, understand their hidden meaning and manipulative effect.

A lesson on the topic of euphemism, you can build on different models. Regardless of the purpose of a particular lesson, it will be advisable at the beginning to tell what a euphemism is, give a definition and explain why euphemisms should be used in speech.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

One of the main tasks for teachers is to arouse interest and involvement in the subject, even if the students are not initially interested in it. It is by their choice of topic, activity, and linguistic content that they can turn the class over. It is because of their attitude towards participating in the lessons, their integrity, humor and seriousness that they can influence their students. It is through their behavior and enthusiasm that they can inspire students. For some students, writing, reading or listening can also cause fear. Whenever we tell students about some language tasks, they feel annoyed or monotonous. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to words when giving assignments to students. To some extent, teachers can give the task as a pleasure, showing it euphemistically. Some suggestions, of course, may come from students, and the teacher may make some additions. As a result, students are easily given the task of having more oral practice, and, of course, they are willing to accept this, because some of them are their own ideas. In short, for the sake of educational reform and the relationship between student affective factors and language teaching,

euphemism should occupy an important place in language teaching and learning.

Based on this, when teaching the use of euphemisms in the students' speech, the requirements for universal educational actions in the lesson were taken into account. Learning to euphemize speech helps to build the ability to conduct dialogue on the basis of equal relations and mutual respect and increase motivation in the lesson, builds the ability to analyze, classify, teaches you to work in groups and pairs, teaches you how to independently regulate the learning process. After training, the final test was carried out, allowing identifying skills in the use of euphemisms in speech. In order to identify the level of formation of these skills, students were offered two tasks.

The first task was oral. This task tested the ability to find euphemisms in the text, to explain their meaning. And to test this skill, fragments of literary works and fragments of colloquial speech were used. Students needed to find euphemisms in the text, write them out and explain what word they were replacing. The test took into account whether the student was able to find all euphemisms and correctly determine the meaning of euphemisms, based on the context.

Based on the data obtained, it can be stated that students have a higher level of formation of the ability to determine the meaning of euphemism. The high results demonstrated by students prove the advisability of introducing theoretical information about euphemisms, their functions in the text and methods of education. Consequently, conducting test work contributed to increasing the level of knowledge about communicatively correct speech in students.

The second task was written, where the composition was to consist of 150 words. It was aimed at identifying whether students use euphemisms in their speech and whether the euphemisms they bring correspond to context or situation. To this end, they were asked to write the essay "The Modern World", in which it is necessary to describe modern life, modern innovations, possible problems (social, environmental, etc.).

The results of the second task allow us to say that students actively use euphemisms in their own speech. Based on the data, it can be argued that the level of skills and knowledge in the field of speech euphemization among students has increased significantly. Thus, we can conclude that carrying out special work on teaching the use of euphemisms in speech helps to increase communicative competence, and the final results confirm the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed training system on the use of euphemisms in speech.



## CONCLUSION

Therefore, training in the use of euphemisms in speech enhances communicative competence, enriching vocabulary. The study of euphemisms and training in the use of euphemisms in speech harmoniously correlates with the training program at various stages. The exercise system generates correct speech behavior with various participants in communication in various speech situations.

The analysis of the learning results confirms the appropriateness and effectiveness of the proposed teaching methodology on the use of euphemisms and gives grounds to assert that it helps to increase the level of students' speech development and positively affects the formation of their ethical, aesthetic, creative attitude to the word.

Thus, training in the use of euphemisms in speech helps to increase the communicative competence of students, and forms correct speech behavior. Also, the study of euphemisms and teaching the use of euphemisms in speech is harmoniously correlated with the training program at various stages, since the proposed system of exercises not only supplements knowledge, but also contributes to the formation of the student's communicative competence.

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