

A Comparative Study of English Taboos and Euphemisms in Cultural Contexts

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Annotation: The emergence and formation of taboo words are related to many factors such as social customs, cultural traditions, religious etiquette, ethics, and personal accomplishment. The development of society and the existence of taboo words have prompted the emergence of euphemism. Every country and every nation has its own taboos and euphemisms, which profoundly reflect the development and changes in society.

This article will take the taboos and euphemisms in English and Uzbek as an example, and make a brief analysis from the classification, connection and difference between the two.

Keywords: classification; taboos; euphemisms; connection; to replace language; difference, language change, euphemism formation techniques

1. Introduction

Taboos vary from culture to culture, and some students might use words or gestures that other students, or you, find offensive. You want to create a safe learning space for everyone in your class, you want to teach age-appropriate language and topics, and you want your students to be respectful towards one another. As a teacher, you need to be familiar with the local culture and as well as with some general laws of the country you are teaching in. You want to be sure not to break a law by using a certain language or gesture, or by talking about a taboo topic. Taboos can provide various language learning opportunities. Students can learn about euphemisms, slang, formal and informal language, double meanings, body language, gestures, and politically correct terminology. With the help of euphemism, we try to translate the taboo language. Euphemisms have many different uses. They can help us avoid being overly blunt and remain in a tone of politeness. People will generally understand the meaning of a euphemism, even though we are not "coming right out with it." With that in mind, let us look at a few different categories of euphemisms and their translation. Therefore, this article focuses on a more objective analysis of the two language phenomena. The purpose is not only to help people have a better and more comprehensive understanding of the two language phenomena, but also to help people make scientific, accurate and reasonable distinctions between the two, and to make people aware of the big differences between taboos and euphemisms. Euphemisms are a powerful tool that can be used to persuade people to believe or do a certain thing or they can be used simply to save face in an awkward situation. They can be purposefully or accidentally misleading based on the speaker/writer's intentions.

The Classification of English Euphemisms have been defined by linguists differently. Most linguists take ethic norms of behavior into consideration while speaking about the reasons why euphemisms emerge in language. Allan and Burridge, for instance, refer to euphemisms as "deodorizing spray and perfume". [6]

Today in a globalized society, the need for word substitutions while speaking on sensitive topics has increased. People search for milder alternatives to express their opinions whenever they feel their words might sound abrupt or offensive. These substitutions are called euphemisms.

With the passage of time and language changes, euphemism has become an important communicative language in the Anglo-American society. Some people have divided euphemism into the following categories. [4]

1. Euphemisms closely related to taboo words.

There are some taboo things like birth, old, sick, dead, buried, etc. If expressed directly, it will give people a rude, blunt, harsh feeling. On the other hand, if it is expressed indirectly in an elegant, subtle way, it will not be

unpleasant. For example, the old people are often referred to as the elderly, senior citizen, venerable people; get on years, and so on.

1. -Ko'zinga tuproq to'lsin, iloyo! Tilginang kesilsin, baloga uchragin, Xudoyo xudovando!

-Die soon! Let your tongue be cut off, be in trouble. May God punish you!

2. Akajon, qarang, qarang,

Og'angiz qari ekan.

Og'zida bir tishi yo'q,

Beri emas, nari ekan

In this poem, we can see some euphemism. The author tried not to use taboo language here. Instead of "qari ekan" "old person", there was used euphemism that "there is no a tooth in his mouth" and "the person is going to pass over to the other side" instead of "to die"

A euphemism is a polite expression used in place of words or phrases that might otherwise be considered harsh or unpleasant. These phrases are used regularly, and there are many common examples of euphemisms in everyday language.

It is very essential for people to learn more about euphemisms and how they can use them to address sensitive subject matter with the right degree of tact.

Euphemism is an incredibly useful tool for writers, speakers. It allows you to talk about sensitive subjects while avoiding the collateral damage that loaded words or phrases might bring about.

Uzbek writer A. Khahhor also use euphemisms in order to vary his subject matter and elevate his prose.

"- Mendan qaytmasa xudodan qaytsin... Ota-onam borishimni harna ertaroq eshitsa, harna ertaroq suyunsa...

Nodirmohbegim yana kaltaklanishidan hayiqmay, Ganjiravonga bir xizmatkorini yubordi. Biroq Unsin peshingacha yetmadi — **uzildi**." [2]

-God bless you! I want my parents to be aware of my returning home and become happy about the news. Without being afraid of her husband's threat, Nodirabegim sent one of her servants to Ganjiravon to inform Unsun's parents about her visiting home. Unfortunately, at midday she passed over to the other side. [2]

2. Euphemisms Related to Courtesy.

Euphemism is also often used to express words that cannot be said or spoken. When people are not willing to say it directly, euphemism is used to show politeness, which is to avoid stimuli, or to seek cooperation, to commemorate some unpleasant things. For example, people often use big, plump, stout or over-weight instead of fat; use thinner or slim instead of thin; use ordinary, homely or plain to refer to ugly. [4]

"Karomat xola shunaqangi semiz ediki, o'zini ba'zo'r boshqarardi. Uni ustiga rosa pakana va baqoloq ham edi."

In Uzbek language, we can also use some euphemism in order to address sensitive topics.

"Karomat xola to'ladan kelgan ayol bo'lib, uzoq yo'l yurganda to'laligi unga biro z noqulaylik to'g'dirardi. Kalta bo'yli, semizgina bu ayol ko'rinishi o'ziga xos tarzda jozibali edi."

If a translator uses word-for-word translation, it will be very unpleasant sentences. E.g. –Aunt Karomat was very **fat and awkward**. She is difficult to control herself. In addition, she was **very old, short, fat and obese**.

We can paraphrase the sentence with the help of euphemism.

-Aunt Karomat was **horizontally challenged and curvy**. In addition, she was **petite, experienced, seasoned woman**.

3. Euphemisms Related to Politics.

In recent years, euphemism has been widely used as a rhetorical device in social activities, political affairs, and business cooperation, and has continued to produce new euphemisms. For instance, a poor nation can be said to be a developing nation; poor people are replaced by low income. In the United States, people refer to blacks as African Americans, Indians as Native Americans, and Mexicans as Mexican Americans, on the one hand, to show equality for everyone, and on the other hand to benefit the unity of all nations. [4]

Politicians are well-known for using euphemisms to disguise their purpose. When a policy provokes outcry, public figures use euphemism to hide the truth:

"Enhanced interrogation techniques" instead of "torture"

"Air operations" instead of "military attacks via drones"

"Extreme vetting" instead of "discrimination against certain refugee groups" [5]

"Qasd qilsa, ikkimizni ham bir yo'la **joyimizni soladi**" [8]

The writer used the verb "wipe out" instead of "to kill"

"If he takes revenge, he will **wipe out us**"

A euphemism is an appropriate expression used in the place of a phrase or words that may be found inappropriate or offensive. Euphemisms are commonly used in daily language and literature to replace language that some may find displeasing.

“Jinoyatchi guruhlar **sizning boshingiz uchun** katta miqdorda pul tiskishibdi.” [9]

The writer used the word “head” instead of “to kill”

“**Criminal gangs are demanding a large sum of money for your “head”** or “You are wanted by criminal gangs”

Euphemistic language is commonly used in literature, especially older works, as a way to convey a message without risking the chance of it being barred to censorship for crude language.

4. Euphemisms Related to Occupation.

In order to decentralize the traditional "low-level occupation", some industry-related euphemisms must be used in life, such as people calling waiter or waitress as dining-room attendants; selling salesman as customer's representative; calling maid as domestic help; The landscape worker is called a landscape architect; the plumber is called a pipe engineer. [4]

Euphemism helps writers to convey those ideas, which have become a social taboo and are too embarrassing to mention directly. Writers skillfully choose appropriate words to refer to and discuss a subject indirectly which otherwise are not published due to strict social censorship e.g. religious fanaticism, political theories, death etc. Thus, euphemism is a useful tool that allow writers to write figuratively about the issues.

Below, we try to find some examples related to euphemisms.

Husayn Bayqaro sevimli xotinining o'limi haqida A. Navoiy: “Sarvigul soyasida so'ldi gul, netmoq kerak?” tarzda xabar bergan. Husayn Bayqaro: “Sarvdan tobut yasab, guldin kafan bichmoq kerak!” deb javob bergan.

Great Uzbek poet, the founder of Uzbek Literature, Alisher Navoi used this euphemism instead of “to die”.

He informed about the death of Sultan Khusayn Baykaro' wife in this way: “A flower has faded in the shade of a cypress” Khusayn Baykaro replied: “It is necessary to make a coffin out of cypress and make a flower shroud.” Khusayn Baykaro used polite expression instead of “to bury”.

“Suyunchi! Dilafruz qutulib olibdi.” [10]. The writer S. Zunnunova wanted to use the euphemism instead of “give birth”

“I have happy news. Dilafruz has become a mother”

“Azizlar, ogoh emas ekansizlar-da, afsus, kechikdilaringiz, jigarporamizga “non sindirilgan”. [11]

“Non sindirmoq” means to be engaged to. Uzbek people often use this word combination. If we use word-for-word translation, translation of “non sindirmoq” will be “to break bread”. Let us translate this sentence.

“Oh, my dears. It is a pity that you are too late. Our niece was already engaged”

Euphemisms allow us to soften otherwise difficult or unpleasant things when we speak, especially to children, or people who might be offended or disturbed by the situation we are talking about. They can be used to shelter children from adult subjects, avoid awkward decisive moments with loved ones.

Methods and analyses. Euphemisms are incredibly common in everyday speech. We use euphemisms all the time when we address touchy subjects in polite company. As we know that Uzbek language and British/American English is full of common examples of euphemism, new words and phrases are constantly being adopted to address sensitive topics.

Euphemisms are frequently used to create a particular “spin.” For example, if you are trying to convince someone that a situation is not so bad, you may use euphemisms:

- “My cousin isn’t firing on all cylinders” instead of “My cousin is dumb”
- “He’s lost his marbles” instead of “He’s having a mental breakdown”
- “I’m in-between jobs” instead of “I’m unemployed” [5]

Swear words and taboo words can intensify what is said, but they can shock or give offence. Swearing and the use of taboo words and expressions is quite common in speaking. Unfortunately, we often hear and use it both in private and in public settings and in films, on television, on the radio and our daily conversation.

Qo’chqor. Bilasan, kennoying ketib qoldi. Shu desang, xotinsiz uy-uymasda. Na kiyinishingda tartib bor, na issiq sovug’ingda tayin bor, qidirgan narsang topilmaydi, padariga la’nat! Xullas, qiyin. Shu Alomatxon ro’zg’orga sal munday...nima deydi, qarashib tursa-a, devdim-da. [12] Kuchkor. As you know, my wife has left me alone.

A house without a woman is the devil's own lodging. People say: “Cleanliness makes it easier to see the details” Unfortunately, what I am searching I cannot find. Damn! In one word, it is difficult to live alone. I want Alomatxon to help about the house. Do you agree? [12]

The use of taboo expressions suggests that speakers have, or wish to have, a close personal relationship with others. We also use taboo expressions and swear words when we express strong feelings, or when we wish to

threaten or to be unpleasant to others. Below, we could share some Uzbek taboo expressions, which were taken from Uzbek writer Tokhir Malik's literary works with translation.

"Kelib-kelib ro'zaning birinchi kunida o'g'irlikka tushasanmi, uying kuygur!. Men bu pullarni o'limligimga deb yig'yatuvdim, iloyim o'limliginga buyursin!" (Tohir Malik. Eng kichik jinoyat. Qissa)

"Why you have robbed my savings in the first day of sacred Ramadan, **I want your house to be burned!** I have been saving this money for my funeral ceremony; **use the robbed money for your own funeral**"

- Hoy, Xolisa! O'pkangizni bosib oling! Mening bolam arpagizni xom o'rdimi, buncha **bobilaysiz?** (Tohir Malik. Eng kichik jinoyat. Qissa)

-Hey, Kholisa! Do not be crazy one! Be gentle! Did my son create criminal? Why are you **barking?**

"Tilimizda hamonki "**yomon xotin**" degan ibora mavjud ekan, demak, hayotda ham shundaylari bor ekan. Lekin biz "yomon xulqli xotin" deb izoh bersak to'g'riroq bo'lar. Yomon yoki yaxshi xotin degan tushunchalar ham nisbiydir." [13]

"We can often mention the expression "**bad wife**" in our social life, so there are some ones who live together with us. It would be right, if we used this expression like "**bad-behaved woman**". The notions of a bad or a good wife are also relative".

Most swearing and most uses of taboo expressions in English and Uzbek also refer to religion or to parts of the body and bodily processes.

In English, swearing which involves 'religious' taboo expressions is likely to be weaker than swearing that involves 'parts of the body' taboo expressions. In addition, taboo language is language variation used by people to show their feeling such as angry, disappointment and dissatisfaction. People usually produce taboo words because it is the most powerful ways to express their dissatisfaction. They sometimes emphasize people's real attention. When we swear, we commonly use interjections. These can be single words or short phrases or clauses. We most commonly use them to express strong feelings, especially feelings of anger.

Euphemism is frequently used in everyday life. Some examples will be given below.

1. He is a special child (**disabled/retarded**).
2. We do not hire mentally challenged (**stupid**) people.
3. He is always tired and emotional (**drunk**).
4. You are becoming a little thin on top (**bald**).
5. My aunt is in the family way (**pregnant**).
6. He is not a liar (**he is just careless with the truth**).

Some definitions of Taboo expressions involving religions in translation

Damn! She has borrowed my camera without telling me. (Jin ursin! U meni fotoapparatimni so'ramasdan olib ketibdi)

Oh, bloody hell! Just leave me alone, will you. (Oh, bu yer jahannamni o'ziku! Meni tinch qo'ying, maylimi?)

Christ! Why did not you tell us how much the new brakes were going to cost! (Yo, Xudoyim! Nega yangi tormoz qancha turishini aytmadigiz!)

Why the hell is he driving so fast! (Nima balo ajal quvib kelayapdimi? Namuncha tez haydaydi bu)

Where is the bloody key? (Padariga ming la'nat! Kalitim qaniya?)

- Bu kuningdan o'lganing yaxshi, Norboy! Sen axmoqni qiyma-qiyma qilib tashlagan odam savobga qoladi! To'g'ilish bilan onang tagiga bosib o'ldirib qo'yganida ming martalab yaxshi bo'lardi. Senday palidga kafan ham kayf, go'r ham xayf... [14]

- You are better to die, Norboy! The person who chopped you up would be rewarded! It would be better, if your mummy killed you when you were just born! You are not worth crying! [14]

- Ovozingni o'chir! Men gapirayapman, haddingdan oshma! Sen xotining o'ldirganini, u yoqlarda yurib kelganingni unut. Ammo Asadbek akangni unutma! Asadbek akang, Xudoga shukr, tirik. Mabodo, u o'lib qolsa, o'ligidan ham qo'rq. Men go'rimda ham tinch yotmayman. [14]

- Shut your mouth! I am talking, do not overdo it! Forget where you have been before and about your wife's death! Thanks to Alloh, Asadbek is alive! If I am going to die, be afraid of my corpse! I will not rest in peace even in my grave! [14]

- Chaynalma! Kimlarni so'rayotganimni bilib turubsan. Sen Men bilan mushuk-sichqon o'ynama. Mayda baliqlar hammavaqt kattalariga yem bo'ladi. Senlar chivinsanlar, men-burgutman. Farqi bormi? [14]

- Oh please, do not hang noodles on my ears! You know about whom I am asking. Do not trick on me! "Big fish eat little fish". You are flies, I am an eagle! Do we have differences? [14]

Uzbek writer, Tokhir Malik skillfully chose appropriate words to refer to and discuss a subject indirectly. Here, he used some taboo language, because the main characters of the literary work are drug addicts and killers. Below, we try to translate the dialogue.

- Kechirasiz, bu uyda chekish mumkinmas, yosh bolalar bor. Erim ham balkonga chiqib chekadi,-dedi juvon ensasi qotganini yashirmay.
 - Avval salomlashish kerak, - dedi Xongirey pinagini buzmay.-Undan tashqari men sening ering emasman, shu yerda chekaveraman. Men sening o'gay akang-man. Mening otam sening onangning birinchi o'ynashi edi.
 - Nimalar deb valdirayapsiz, esingiz joyidami?-dedi ayol dag'al ohangda.
 - Mening esim joyida, singilginam, ammo sening esing kirdi-chiqdi bo'lib qolibdi. Sen qachon tug'ilganingni unutib qo'yibsan. [14]
 - I am sorry. I cannot allow you to smoke here. I have little children at home. My husband smokes in the balcony-she said showing her disagreement.
 - Firstly, you have to greet with me, -said Khongirey with no emotion. -besides, I am not your husband to obey your commands, I am smoking here. I am your stepbrother. Your mommy was the first mistress of my daddy.
 - What are you twaddling? It is fabrication-said woman with anger.
 - I have a good memory, my lovely sister, but you are absent-minded one. You have forgotten when you were born. [14]
- Euphemism is a useful tool that allow writers to write figuratively about the issues. We try to practice the translation of this dialogue with the help of euphemism.
- I am sorry. If it is not difficult for you, could not you smoke in the balcony? My husband also smokes there.
 - Let us greet to each other, my sister, - said Khongirey hiding his disagreement. As you know, I am your guest. Let me smoke here. Besides, I am your stepbrother. My daddy and your mummy were best lovers.
 - Are you joking? You are just careless with the truth; I cannot believe your story, -said woman hiding his anger.
 - I think you are mentally challenged woman. Please, work on your memory.

Conclusion and suggestions. "Euphemism" literally means, "speak with good words or in a pleasant manner". Therefore, the expression of euphemism means using a pleasant, Euphemistic and vocal words to replace unpleasant, rude, harsh words. Taboo can be used, but words cannot be said, meaning cannot be expressed. Intelligent person has to speak more fluently so that our thoughts and words stream together in sync helping we present our thoughts and ideas in an intelligent and precise manner. Language is the carrier of culture and an important part of the national culture. We must speak more confidently so that our listeners like and trust us, and therefore believe what we are saying without using taboos. In real life, people always use taboo words for some reasons or things and substitute them in euphemism. Therefore, both taboos and euphemisms are cultural phenomena, which are common phenomena in various languages and exist in every country.

Taboos and euphemisms in English are an integral part of the culture. They profoundly and permanently influence the use of the English language. They have similarities and differences, and a more detailed and in-depth understanding of the culture, traditions, and customs of English-speaking countries. Even the details of life, the more correctly the language can be used. By comparing taboos and euphemisms, we can better understand the differences between the two in terms of culture and psychology. We have to be aware of expressing our opinions, ideas, and thoughts easily and well in meetings and in social events. Only by conducting in-depth discussions and comparative studies, we try to do experimental studies on taboo and euphemism for deeper examination to these areas. Depending on the results of the study, the recommendations are as follows:

1. As teachers, we have to teach our young generation to avoid taboo. If we are writing/speaking/sending messages about a taboo subject, euphemism can go a long way in allowing you to convey information without offending your readers'/ listeners' sensibilities.
2. People have to avoid taboo, provide variety to a narrative, develop a character's personality, or inject humor. However, the downside of the device is that it can come across as vague, dishonest, or prudish. As such, youth, adult people must use euphemisms mindfully, with intent and audience reception in mind.
3. Sometimes you cannot say what you mean because it will hurt someone or negatively affect your reputation. In these circumstances, it is best to teach youngsters to use a euphemism and control them especially in classes.
4. Teachers have to give some vulgar, slung words as examples and to analyze the learners' reaction to them. Euphemisms can be used to change the negative connotation that has been developed with some words.
5. As educated people in our society, we must avoid confrontation, avoid hurting people's feelings, or substitute for profanity. Here, we have to be examples and models for our students.
6. Taboo should be prohibition in public places.
7. People should encourage using euphemism in their daily lives.

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