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THE FUNCTIONING OF EUPHEMISMS IN ENGLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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The article is dedicated to the euphemisms' use peculiarities which often occur in English political discourse. Examples of euphemistic nominations that are used to substitute words or phrases thought to be offensive, harsh or blunt are provided.

Key words: euphemism, political discourse, taboo words, politeness.

The English language is one of the most widespread languages on Earth. That is the reason why people often talk about English as a global language or lingua franca. At the same time, due to the long history of formation the English language has developed an extremely rich vocabulary that attracts a lot of linguists and scholars.

Politicians resort to euphemism as a safe way to deal with unpleasant subjects and criticize their opponents without giving a negative impression to their audiences. In this regard, it is important to pay attention to the notion of the euphemisms. First of all, we have to emphasize that euphemism is the generally innocuous word or expression used in place of one that may be found offensive or suggest something unpleasant. Some euphemisms are intended to amuse; while others use bland, inoffensive terms for things the user wishes to downplay. Euphemisms are used to refer to taboo topics (such as disability, sex, excretion, and death) in a polite way, or to mask profanity [1, p. 75].

Euphemism is often employed in an attempt to make polite reference to physical or psychological disability, though some people argue that while a trend toward ever more euphemistic language seems to accord people so labeled more respect, euphemism can also diminish the public perception of the seriousness of the condition [4, p. 65].

Nowadays euphemisms are also used as a linguistic means to conceal facts and manipulate the audience. It is necessary to understand the contemporary usage of euphemisms by two perspectives, i. e. as a neutral word or phrase that is used instead of a synonymous one which is impolite or politically incorrect; and also as an individual, occasional contextual substitutions aimed at misrepresenting or concealing facts, their real meaning, etc. [2, p. 55]

In the process of the investigation, we have also paid attention to the practical study of the euphemisms in the English language. The euphemism is a polite or mild word or expression used to refer to something embarrassing, taboo, or un-

pleasant. Euphemisms are especially common in reference to bodily functions and illegal behavior, and to substitute curse words [3, p. 41].

On the other hand, euphemisms are widely used in everyday speech by politicians. Now its usage is unconsciousness, due to the fact that people are polite and often prefer to soften their speech with a mixture of abstraction, metaphor, slang, and understatement that offers protection against the offensive, harsh or blunt. Euphemisms range promiscuously, from diplomacy (“*the minister is indisposed*” in the meaning he “*won’t be coming*”) to the relations (“*to cheat on somebody*”). But it is possible to attempt a euphemistic taxonomy. One way to categorize them is ethical. Some euphemisms do distort and mislead, but some are motivated by kindness [2, p. 54].

Euphemism boasts a long history. Everything began from taboo words and the way people tried to find other words to say things, which were forbidden to pronounce due to the principles of morality or some religious beliefs [2, p. 53].

Euphemisms may be used to amuse, downplay the severity of a situation, or conceal the speaker’s embarrassment about something. Euphemisms can develop over time to avoid having to say a particular word, though sometimes euphemisms themselves become taboo once they are closely associated enough with the offensive concept. For example, “*The Prime Minister went away last Tuesday. Everybody was shocked by this lost* [5].” In the process of the investigation, we have investigated the political discourse of the

English language and as a result, we have found a lot of vivid examples of the usage of euphemisms. For example, in the above-mentioned sentence, we have noticed that the euphemism “*passed away*” was used instead of “*died*”.

In the process of the study, we have analyzed the next sentence: “*Ethnic cleansing was on the territory of Ukraine by the USSR government* [5].” During the research, we have also taken into consideration the prior quotation that was taken from the political discourse. Here, we have seen that the euphemism “*ethnic cleansing*” is used instead of the word “*genocide*”.

As figurative language plays an essential role in political discourse. We want to pay your attention to the next sentence: “*A lot of young girls we caught because they turn a trick* [5].” During the investigation the euphemism “*to turn a trick*” is often used in the English media discourse. We have to admit that in this sentence the euphemism “*to turn a trick*” has the meaning “*to engage in prostitution*”.

What emerges from this piece of research is that politicians resort to euphemism in order not to give a bad impression to their audiences when approaching controversial or delicate topics. Euphemisms respond to an essential goal in political language: to safeguard the politicians’ image. However, we have to admit that euphemisms are everywhere and they often occur in the media discourse for different purposes. In addition, euphemism referring to such delicate topics as death and euthanasia seems to

show a true concern and consideration for the feelings of those involved.

In general, euphemism serves different purposes: avoidance of discrimination to disadvantaged groups, concern for people's sensitivity, polite criticism and mitigation.

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