

## SOME FEATURES OF EUPHEMISMS IN LITERAL TEXTS

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to discuss some issues as well as some features of euphemisms in literal texts. The article illustrates some types of euphemisms as a literal and stylistic device. Moreover, some examples are given which euphemisms are used in literal texts.

**Keywords:** stylistic device/trope, euphemism, literal device, abstraction, indirection, litote

### INTRODUCTION

Depending on the structure of the texts, they can be used according to the situation. We use a variety of stylistic tropes and artistic devices in texts to convey the meaning of the text in a more polite way. Stylistic tropes such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony, simile, onomatopoeia and euphemism can be used to make the artistic text more meaningful and colorful. Euphemism is one such stylistic tool, which approaches the meaning of the text in a unique way, making it simpler and suitable for any situation.

Euphemisms are words or phrases that soften uncomfortable topics. It uses figurative language to refer to a situation without having to confront it. For example, if someone was recently fired, they might say they are between jobs, a common euphemism for being unemployed. Moreover, euphemism is a form of figurative language and these idiomatic indirect expressions change harsh, impolite, taboo or unpleasant terms with more delicate phrases. They can be used humorously or to downplay or mask a situation, causing some to find the device deceitful or counterproductive.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The term "euphemism" is derived from the Greek word "euphemismos" or "euphemia" which means "to sound good" or "words of good omen". Many scholars have given their own perspectives about euphemism.

Most of the euphemisms that we use today have winding histories that obscure their origin. It takes a little time for a euphemism to embed into common knowledge, so creating a euphemism from scratch could be a bit difficult. Euphemisms are among many phrases in the English language that rely on local or cultural understanding. Similar figures of speech for euphemisms are slang, colloquialisms, vernacular, and idioms. Among them, slang is a type of language where a word or phrase has evolved from another word and is understood by certain regional or cultural groups. For example, words like "hangry" (hungry + angry) and "bougie" (shortened from bourgeoisie) are both slang terms.

Another one is vernacular and it is language closely associated with a certain cultural or regional group. The word "y'all" could be mentioned as an example of vernacular. Next one is colloquialisms and they are the use of conversational language in writing. Including slang, vernacular, and euphemisms in your writing will make it more colloquial, even if the word "*colloquial*" is, itself, not very colloquial. On the next step, idioms and they are words or phrases that take on a meaning different from their literal translation. Euphemisms are a type of idiom. However, we use idioms in English that are not intended

to cover a difficult or inappropriate situation, all idioms are not considered as euphemisms. An example of an idiom that is *not* a euphemism is the phrase “at the drop of a hat.” English speakers understand that phrase to mean someone is starting a task immediately, not that they are releasing a hat to gravity. Because it does not have to be related to a sensitive or taboo subject, it is not a euphemism.

There are some types of euphemisms as follows:

- 1) Abstraction – which creates an entirely new scene to refer to the situation being discussed. For example, an abstract euphemism for death would describe someone as being *in a better place*.
- 2) Indirection – that creates distance between the speaker and the situation. As an example, *sleeping together* is an indirect euphemism for having sex.
- 3) Litote – which helps to soften the topic by downplaying it. For instance, rather than calling someone filthy rich, you might say that they’re *not exactly poor*.

Going on the research some more types of euphemism can be considered like mispronunciation (the word “frigging” to stand in for its coarser counterpart) and personification (assigning personal names to uncomfortable subjects)

Both Uzbek and English languages are full of euphemisms. We often use them in conversation without giving them a second thought. Even if you are not personally made uncomfortable by a subject, there is a chance you are still using euphemisms around it, simply because they are common to the point of cliché. Some topics like death and money have an abundance of common euphemisms. For instance, here some euphemisms for death and for money and career:

- Passed on
- Kicked the bucket
- Is in a better place

Euphemisms for money and career:

- Bringing home the bacon
- Letting someone go
- In between jobs
- Breadwinner
- Living comfortably

## RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Moreover, there are a number of origin stories for the euphemism “*bought the farm*”, which means that someone has died which means “often in a plane crash or collision”. Some reports recommend the phrase comes from Air Force officers saying that when they retire, they’re going to settle down and buy a farm. Thus, if that officer dies in a crash, it’s said, darkly, that they *bought the farm*. An alternative story is that when Air Force planes crashed in rural areas, the farmers whose land they hit would sue the government for damages and use that money to pay off their mortgage. That plane crash, then, indirectly *bought the farm* for the farmer. There are a number of other origins suggested for the phrase, but all of that is to say, euphemisms rely on a common understanding of the phrase itself, not its literal meaning.

A good example for usage of euphemism in literal passages is George Orwell’s novel “The Party”. George Orwell’s novel is rich of euphemisms. In the story, an overseeing entity known only as “the Party” (a euphemism for the government) sets up “Ministries” to control the population of the country. Each

Ministry title is a euphemism, obscuring the dangerous subjects that they are responsible for with softer, coded language. For example, the “Ministry of Truth” is in charge of propaganda, and the “Ministry of Peace” is in charge of war. With the help of this work, George Orwell tried to illuminate the difficulties of the unjust politicians and simple people of his time using a special literary language.

Another good example for the usage of euphemism in a literal text is a masterpiece written by Ernest Hemingway. His short story “*Hills Like White Elephants*”, and there is a conversation that centers on the subject of abortion.

*“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said. “It’s not really an operation at all.” The girl looked at the ground the table legs rested on. “I know you wouldn’t mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.”*

This story was published in 1927 at a time when abortion was not publicly spoken about. To create a sense of discomfort in the conversation, Hemingway has his character use the word “operation” and the phrase “let the air in” as euphemisms for abortion. With this story he tried to show his attitude for the process with the help of literal way.

## CONCLUSION

All in all, not everyone is comfortable with death. As a society we have come up with a variety of ways to talk about death without ever mentioning death. We’ll say that someone *passed away*, or *kicked the bucket*, or *bought the farm*. All of these phrases are euphemisms, expressions that soften an unpleasant situation.

Euphemisms cannot be interpreted literally, so they rely on a common understanding of their meaning. They are a useful way for writers to show comfort with their language, and they can create a more conversational tone in writing. As mentioned above, euphemisms are a type of figurative language in which a certain topic, often one that is considered taboo, is reworded to be more palatable and “friendly.” Euphemisms help neutralize words that can come off as harsh, insensitive, or “improper.” So they are handy to use to give the idea politely in appropriate way.

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