

The Use of Euphemism in Standard and Colloquial Arabic in Al Ahram Newspaper Headlines: Ideological-Linguistic perspective

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Abstract:

The concept of euphemism could be defined as written or oral utterance, words or a group of words that might give another meaning, aiming for, whether intentionally or unintentionally, decreasing the effect of specific actions, to go beyond something or to hide a specific meaning articulated by the language producer; yet they also are sometimes used purposely to lie about something or to deceive the receiver.

Language is used to express ourselves and to understand others. As a means of communication, language in the press reflects the individual, society and culture. In general, language is a very complicated means of expressing our mind which is, in turn, another sophisticated device in which different aspects, elements and factors are interwoven. In any case, we should use language clearly and politely.

Al Ahram Newspaper attempts in all ways to avoid unpleasant words and phrases when referring to affairs, activities, concepts, and processes that they need to talk about or refer to whether they like that or not. However, since this part of language cannot be dropped out or put aside, they tend at least to lessen the embarrassment, shame, etc that may result from it; and here comes the function and position of euphemism in its language.

This paper is an attempt to shed light on euphemism in Arabic, in its standard or colloquial forms from linguistic and ideological perspectives. Analysis of the selected data is done in terms of the discussion made in the theoretical side to show the types and forms of the euphemistic expressions in Arabic speaking Al Ahram Newspaper headlines.

Keywords: Euphemism- Ideology- Language- Newspaper headlines.

ملخص البحث باللغة العربية:

يعد التلطف اللغوي من الظواهر اللغوية المهمة في اللغة بصفة عامة، والتي تستخدم بشكل واسع في الأعمال الصحفية والإعلامية، بما في ذلك جريدة الأهرام. يمكن تعريف التلطف اللغوي بأنه استخدام تعابير أو كلمات بهدف تخفيف حدة الكلام أو التعبير عن الأفكار بطريقة محببة للجمهور.

هذه الورقة تنقسم إلى جزء يتعلق بظاهرة التلطف اللغوي من منظور أيديولوجي ومن منظور لغوي. تسلط هذه الورقة الضوء على ظاهرة التلطف اللغوي من المنظور الأيديولوجي، حيث أن التلطف اللغوي في جريدة الأهرام يستخدم لتحقيق أهداف سياسية أو اجتماعية محددة. فعلى سبيل المثال، يمكن استخدام التلطف اللغوي في عناوين الأخبار لتخفيف حدة الأحداث السياسية أو الاجتماعية الحادة، وبالتالي تقليل القلق لدى الجمهور. كما يمكن استخدام التلطف اللغوي في العناوين للتأثير على الرأي العام، سواء بتحقيق التوافق مع الرأي العام المنطق عليه، أو بتحويل الانتباه العام إلى موضوع معين. من المنظور اللغوي، يمكن استخدام التلطف اللغوي في جريدة الأهرام لتحسين قدرة الصحفيين على التواصل مع الجمهور بشكل أفضل. فعلى سبيل المثال، يمكن استخدام التلطف اللغوي في العناوين لجعلها أكثر جاذبية للقراء، وبالتالي زيادة عدد القراء والمشاهدين. كما يمكن استخدام التلطف اللغوي لتسهيل فهم الأحداث المعقدة والتعبير عنها بشكل أفضل، خاصة في حالات الأزمات السياسية أو الاجتماعية التي تتطلب توضيح وتفسير دقيق.

بشكل عام، يمكن القول إن استخدام التلطف اللغوي في جريدة الأهرام يعد جزءاً من استراتيجيات الإعلام والصحافة، ويمكن أن يستخدم بأشكال مختلفة لتحقيق أهداف مختلفة. ومن المهم الاهتمام بالجانب الأيديولوجي واللغوي للتلطف، لأنه يؤثر على فهم الجمهور للأحداث والموضوعات المعروضة، وقد يؤدي إلى تغيير الرأي العام وتحقيق أهداف سياسية أو اجتماعية محددة. كما أن استخدام التلطف اللغوي في العناوين يعد جزءاً من الثقافة الإعلامية والصحافية، ويمكن أن يساعد في تحسين جودة الإعلام وزيادة عدد المتلقين والمتابعين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التلطف اللغوي - الإيديولوجيا - اللغة - عناوين الصحف.

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1. Background

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) defines this term as it "is a figure of speech in which a delicate word or expression is substituted for one which is offensive to good manners or to delicate ears". The verb "euphemize" means to express by euphemism. Jay (2018) defines euphemism as "practice of referring to something offensive or indelicate in terms that make it sound more pleasant or [more] acceptable than it really is". It is mainly used to avoid offence which may occur in broaching a taboo topic, e.g., religion, death, politics or social issues. To make communication progress smoothly and without conflict, accommodations are, often subconsciously, made (Kadar 2015).

One can say that a euphemism is an expression intended by the speaker to be less offensive, disturbing, or troubling to the listener than the word or phrase it replaces, or in the case of doublespeak (which will be discussed later) to make it less troublesome for the speaker. Hasselgard (1999:28) considers euphemisms as ways of referring to something unpleasant to make it appear less unpleasant (e.g., pass away=die; relieve oneself=urinate; put to sleep=kill ...etc.). Euphemism is also considered as a pragmatic and sociolinguistic phenomenon. It is widely used in everyday conversations and highly related to certain social aspects, especially what is called 'taboo'. Lyons (1981:151) confirms this as he refers to euphemism as "the avoidance of taboo words".

Euphemism, as Aaron (2017:30). defines, is "the practice of referring to something offensive or delicate in terms that make it sound more pleasant or becoming than it really is." Euphemism, thus, is an avoidance linguistic strategy which is used to substitute

an expression with inoffensive, pleasant, or exalted connotations for an expression with offensive, unpleasant, or harsh ones. In this respect, Larson (1984: p.116) notes that “euphemism is used to avoid an offensive expression or one that is socially unacceptable.” For instance, in the euphemistic term for death “pass away”, the unpleasant idea of death is not highlighted but simply indirectly implied. More comprehensively, Allan (2017) offers this definition:

Euphemisms are alternatives to dis-preferred expressions and are used to avoid possible loss of face. The dis-preferred expression may be taboo, fearsome, distasteful, or for some other reason has too many negative connotations to felicitously execute speaker’s communicative intention on a given occasion.

On the linguistic level, Fromkin & Rodman (1993:305) confirm that "euphemistic terms have linguistic denotative meanings and connotative meanings, reflecting attitudes, emotions, value judgments." Gramley and Patzold (1992:21) add that euphemisms are "the results of changes in a society in areas where it has a communal bad conscience or is afraid to talk about a taboo subject. These topics could include the human body, death, crime, sex, war, money, and government. Commenting on the relation between euphemism and culture, El Zeiny (2005:217) mentions that euphemism is a linguistic tool that is spreading in cultures, and it means using softening linguistic entities to soften an aggressive word or expression.

To confirm the universality of euphemism in various cultures, Alkire (2002) asserts that all cultures typically use euphemisms to talk about things they find terrifying. Euphemisms are used to keep people at safe distance from the taboo itself. Another use of a euphemistic term is to elevate the status of individuals such as educator for teacher, attorney for lawyer; but in general, it

expresses what is socially difficult. Euphemisms are often used to hide unpleasant or disturbing ideas, even when the literal meaning for them is not necessarily offensive, e.g., in politics. In this regard, we can connect the very use of euphemisms with what is called 'face theory'.

Some other linguists connect euphemism with self-image. Widdowson (1990:110) asserts that "those participating in conversational encounters have to have care for the preservation of good relations by promoting the other's self-image, by avoiding offence". This view shows the motivation behind euphemism, i.e. the preservation of good relations and the idea behind face theory which concerns the preservation of self-image.

2. Significance of the Research

The significance of this research stems from the fact that area of euphemism and its applications within the ideological-linguistic domain have not been handled in the journalism context through the standard and colloquial styles of the Arabic Language. Studies from other perspectives have been carried out in Egypt, England, Jordan and many other nations and cultures. To achieve this purpose, the researcher will resort to analyzing the two main levels of the Arabic language (Standard and Colloquial), in the hope that such comparison will enrich the related literature and provide fruitful results. In addition, such a study could raise people's awareness and stimulate their understanding of the power of language.

3. Research Objectives

The research aims at answering the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent ideological strategies of euphemism (Positive or Negative) used by Al Ahram journalists in (standard

and colloquial) levels, pertaining to the certain situations of death, lying, and unemployment?

2. To what extent do the topic and the context determine strategy choice?

3. What are the similarities and differences between standard and colloquial levels of Arabic on expressing euphemism?

4. Problem Statement / Hypothesis

Although many scholars and linguists dealt with euphemism in many cultures, no previous studies, as far as the researcher knows, have dealt with euphemism in Al Ahram Newspaper from an ideological perspective. To achieve this, the researcher divides the analyzed data between classical and colloquial Arabic. Apart from the fact that little attention has been paid to Al Ahram's techniques of using euphemisms, this research is an attempt that might help for a better understanding of any form of euphemistic-laden written discourse. The view adopted in this paper is to expose the hidden meaning and by discussing euphemistic expressions.

This paper attempts to explore and investigate the variation in the use of euphemisms in the Arabic speaking Al Ahram headlines. The Egyptian society accommodates a diverse set of dialectal varieties which motivated the researcher to put effort to identify the many euphemisms reflected in the newspaper. The study investigates the social and dialectal factors that stand behind the use of such euphemisms as euphemisms represent the social and cultural identity.

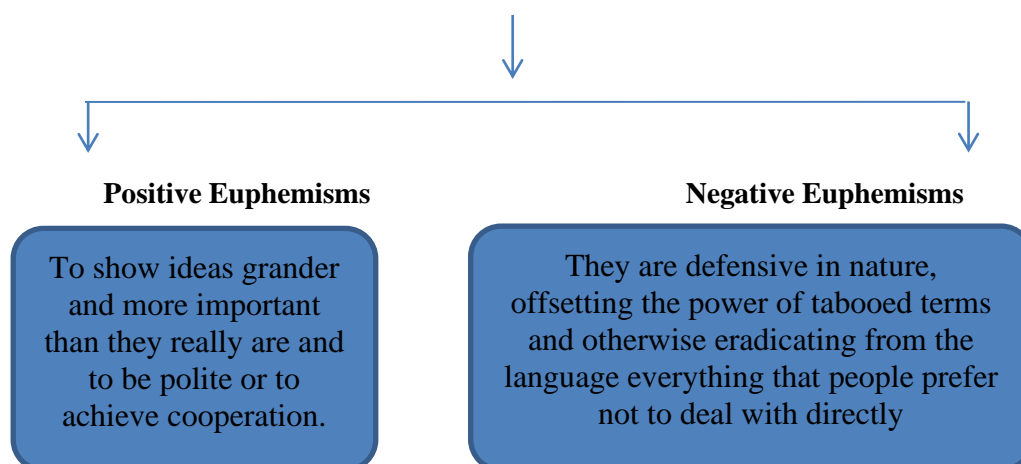
5. Data and Methodology

The small-size corpus of analysis consists of eight samples from the Cairo Based Al Ahram Newspaper headlines where the political, social, and business sections in the newspaper are the main signifiers. The eight samples will be equally divided into Standard Arabic and Colloquial Arabic. Four samples for each one. It is

important to mention that Al Ahram newspaper takes an apparent pro-government stance. There is, however, a lot of space for criticism as long as it does not collide with the country's authorities. There is space for criticism of, for example, the economic status in the country, and the spiking level of unemployment.

The analyzed samples are randomly selected during the period from 2016 to 2017; they represent many similar topics which convey various messages. In this research, few strategies will be examined under the ideological coverage of whether it is a positive euphemism or a negative euphemism.

Ideological classification of euphemism



Strategy of Implication: A misreferred term is implied by the speaker and several steps are needed to retrieve the exact meaning of this implication (Ham, 2005:232). Hence, context plays an important role in comprehending the intended meaning by the listener.

Strategy of Synonyms: Replacing the tabooed word with another which has identical or nearly identical meaning and less offensive.

Strategy of Understatement: Baldick (2004:142) defines understatement as the way of presenting a tabooed issue as less significant than it really is, as in: *sleep* for *die* (Ham, 2005:232) and (Allan 2017). Sometimes understatements are achieved through expressing the taboo words by denying their opposites.

Strategy of Overstatement (hyperbole or elevating): It is the opposite of understatement. According to Ham (2005), overstatement can be defined as the exaggerated language for emotional effect in which taboo is distorted by making it bigger and better than it really is. Utterances like *flight to glory* for *died* exemplify this strategy.

Strategy of General for Specific: it is also included in the literary term “Synecdoche” (Allan 2017). Using a comprehensive entity to refer to a part of it, such as: *I’ll go to bathroom* for *go to excrete*.

Strategy of Fuzzy words: Huang (2005:46) remarks that this strategy is achieved through the use of vague terms which have a flexible meaning and can be interpreted in different ways, as in: *the things* for *genitals*.

6. Why Euphemism?

Kate Burridge (1991) elaborates that people activate the concept of euphemism in their daily life due to the list of taboo words or sentences that prevail in contemporary societies. These words are described as inappropriate and require cautious interest in oral or written discourse. Any writer or speaker looks for a way of dealing with the discomfort that might happen, and euphemism emerges in this context as a means of dealing both with such provocations and with the emotions they cause.

According to Shabana (2000), the first reason for euphemism is thus a psychological factor that affects the tendency of the speaker towards beautifying his speech. This psychological aspect represents the basic element for all motives for euphemizing. The significance of such factor comes from the fact that the motives for euphemizing are the basic instincts of the human being. All

humans share these instincts; therefore, all have universal motives. Still, a lot of linguists, including (Shabana 2000), Neaman and Silver (1983), agree to the fact that the motives of euphemism are represented in the following parts,

First, Fear and Pessimism:

Both are considered very strong motivation for euphemism, because the speaker tends to use indirect ways about topic he might fear or feel pessimistic about. One example here is talking about death, which may cause painful feelings to both the speaker and the listener, so people move to overcome such feelings by using euphemism. In their dictionary of euphemism, both Neaman and Silver (1983), mention that “mankind’s desire to forget the process of aging that leads inevitably to death is the source of a number of kind words that have made the stage and roles of life seem more bearable.

This is what Al Ahram newspaper is used for using a variety of euphemistic forms of death like (رقد في سلام (Pass away), رقد في سلام Rest in peace.. Pessimism and fear can also be reflected in some jobs, such as in the job of “understaker” حانوتي which is changed to be متعهد بدفن الموتى. Fear of diseases can also push humans to be indirect in these interactions with diseases to overcome the direct real meaning of the disease. This is very clear when it comes to deafness as “hearing disability” or Blindness as “visual impairment.”

Second, Shyness and Politeness:

Euphemism is to escape offending others which might cause them psychological pain, as a result of blunt words. Shyness and politeness are common when a person talks about his private habits. People also become shy when they talk about the private parts of their bodies. So, they use euphemistic forms to avoid any sort of embarrassment.

Such private relations could be reflected in the relationship between man and woman. People talk in a very euphemistic way

instead of using obscene words. So, one may find “to sleep with” or to “make love” instead of referring to “intercourse” which could be offensive to the listener.

Third, Sympathy with Others:

This is clear when someone wants to alleviate the pain of others who suffer difficult circumstances. This can be reflected in the field of medicine when physicians use merciful killing instead of the very blunt word “euthanasia.” Another example is when people use euphemistic expressions for the mentally retarded people as especial needs people, or when someone loses his job, usually they say discontinue instead of saying fired.

Fourth, Political Motives:

Within the political domain, euphemism is used as a shield against criticism of others or as a tool to deceive people with kind words, hiding the real intentions. Fowler (1988) handles the role of euphemism in the political context. He mentions that euphemism is used as a protective device for governments and as a token of a new approach to psychological and sociological problems. He also mentions that euphemism is used by politicians to give things new names in order to improve their appearance. This is clear when we read in Al Ahram newspaper the term “New World Order” and Globalization”, which indicate that the world must be under the control of the superpower. Another obvious example is when Al Ahram mentions the term (lose the credibility *يفقد المصداقية*) as a softening way for referring to a (lie), or using (revenue enhancement *تحسين الإيراد*) instead of (tax increase) which might have negative effect on the readers.

7. Euphemism and Ideology

According to Fairclough (1992), ideologies are constructions of reality which are built into various dimensions within a text. Through power relations implicit in text, ideology can appear. This makes the text as a mode of producing, reproducing, or transforming social identities, social relations, and systems of

knowledge and belief. Fairclough (1992) explains that ideology functions in text in the following points:

1- Ideology has a material basis in the social practices of institutions, discourse practices are material forms of ideology.

2- Ideology and control appear through dominant discourse in terms of what is called "hegemony." Hegemony is a form of control through consensus, as contrasted with control based on coercion (force or threat of force). For Fairclough (1992), hegemony operates through orders of discourse of a society and institutions such as education, media, journalism, business.

To show the relevance between ideology and euphemistic texts, Macdonell (1986:59) believes that all texts, whether employed euphemism or not, are "ideologically positioned: none are neutral." Ideology shows the link between the indirect way of using language, and the social interactions in society.

Van Dijk (1995:244) explains the relation between ideology and language in general. He identifies seven characteristics of ideology. First, ideologies are cognitive and are based on belief systems. Although they are social, political, and related to groups, ideologies involve mental objects such as ideas, thoughts, beliefs, judgments and values. They are the abstract basis of the socially shared belief systems of any group.

Second, ideologies are social, that is they have been defined in sociological or some economic terms. They have been related to groups, or group conflicts, and hence to "social power and dominance as well as their legitimation." Van Dijk (1995:245), however, claims that dominant groups are not the only possessors of ideology, dominated groups also have their ideologies that control their self-identification.

Third, ideologies are socio-cognitive, that is, they are both cognitive, involving basic principles of perception, judgments, knowledge, and understanding and social values, shared by members of groups or institutions, and related to the socio-

economic or political interests of these groups. Fourth, ideologies are not true or false, rather they represent the partisan, self-serving truth of a social group. They are efficient frameworks of interpretation of such groups if they are able to further the interests of these groups.

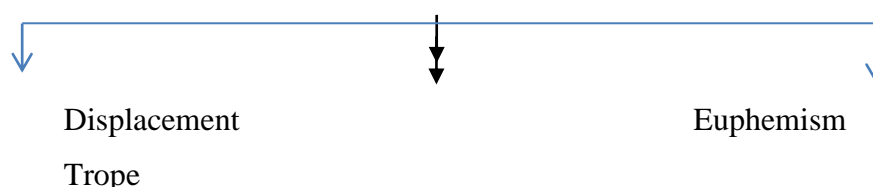
Fifth, ideologies may have various degrees of complexity. They range from simple and basic propositions to complex and well-organized frameworks such as, the ideologies of democracies or socialism. Sixth, ideologies have contextual variable manifestations. Personal and contextual variation of ideological discourse may be due to the existence of several groups with several ideologies, general social norms or laws.

Lastly, ideologies are general and abstract. They are situation independent. Their expressions may be locally produced and contextually constrained. It is important to mention that ideology can be also manipulated for the abuse of power since our mental representation and misrepresentation of the distribution of power in our society is governed and sustained by ideology.

Thompson (1990) sheds light on the concept of ideology and euphemism. He shows that euphemism could be employed ideologically to create what is called “*dissimulation mode*” whereby power is maintained by “being concealed, denied or obscured, or by being represented in a way which deflects attention from existing relations.” (Thompson, 1990:62) One of the strategies used for activating this ideological mode is displacement which is a process where ‘a term customarily used to refer to one object or individual is used to refer to another.’ *Euphemization* is another strategy used to achieve *dissimulation*, where “actions, institutions or social relations are described or re-described in terms which elicit a positive valuation.” (Thompson 1990:62)

Tropes “figurative language” plays a great role in achieving *dissimulation*. Examples of tropes would be synecdoche (using a part to refer to the whole or vice versa) or metaphor. Each of these techniques is used to dissimulate social relations by different methods.

Thompson's Dissimulation Mode



8. The Concept of Euphemism and Face

Farghal (1995:2) confirms that the idea of “face is a key factor to understand the speaker’s intentions and subsequently the lexical correlates in his/her utterances.” Hence, “face” is not only important in choosing our utterances, but also in understanding the intentions of these utterances. As Allan (2017) point out, “what we say is likely to maintain, enhance, or damage our own face.” The speaker’s option for euphemism is apparently meant to enhance their own face or by softening negative connotations or including positive ones. The employment of euphemism explains much about the relationship between the speaker and the addressee or some third party.

According to Shehab, Qadan, and Hussein (2014), this is clear since the speaker’s option for euphemism is deliberate. For instance, a speaker would employ euphemistic expressions to focus on the intended meaning to be conveyed through language, since euphemism is generally associated with positive emotiveness. The concept of euphemism, however, varies from one language to another. This difference is due to differences in cultural backgrounds. With reference to Arab culture, for example, many red lines are drawn on certain topics such as sex. To talk about sex, one either conveys the idea implicitly, or uses euphemism.

The same goes in Arabic as one can speak of the devil freely (ibid), and thus the Arabic word الشيطان which is equivalent to (devil/Satan), is frequent. In English, however, the situation is different: euphemistic expressions are used in the case of talking

about the devil, to possibly lighten fears aroused when it is mentioned. Despite the peculiarities of different cultures, one must admit the existence of an overlapping domain among cultures due to the universality of some values and ethics such as those concerned with death occasions, for example.

All cultures would have difficulty to express the death of a dead person. English would use passed away than died, Arabic would use انتقل إلى رحمة الله than مات In other words, euphemism helps the euphemism users within cultural contexts to converse about certain taboo topics among each other. There might be a problem in cross communication areas, when considerations related to a certain topic differ from one culture to another, and when a certain culture considers some subjects as taboos.

9. Euphemism and Taboo

Euphemism is obviously connected with 'taboo'. As Pyles and Algeo (1968:201) elaborate that a word that has a lot of meanings and that is away from polite use. Many languages have words which are regarded dangerous or shocking and could be employed in some situations or by certain people. English has three main groups of taboo words and expressions.

As mentioned by Swan (2005:564-65), these include: a. a number of words connected with the Christian religion. For example, the names 'Christ' and 'God' are considered holy by some people. These people prefer to use such words only in formal and respectful contexts, and they may be upset or shocked by the 'careless' use of them. b. Certain words relating to sexual activity and the associated parts of the body: for example, the F word is regarded as shocking by many people. Thirty or forty years ago some of these words could not be printed or broadcast, and they are still comparatively unusual in public speech and writing. They are usually replaced by 'making love' or 'having sexual intercourse'. c. Some words referring to the elimination of bodily waste (what one does in the lavatory) and the associated parts of the body, are also

regarded 'dirty' or 'shocking' (e.g. piss, shit). They are often replaced by more 'polite' words and with same meaning (e.g. urinate, defecate) or by substitutes (e.g. go to the lavatory, wash one's hands).

Swan (ibid) also adds that swearwords are regarded shocking since they show strong emotions. When people swear, taboo words usually change their meanings completely. For example, 'piss off' have nothing to do with sex or urinating. They are simply violently rude ways of saying 'go away' and they had better be avoided as well. Attitudes considering taboo in a speech community are strong, and violations may be represented by imputation of immorality, social ostracism, and even illness or death. There is no topic that could be forbidden, that is, what cannot be said in one language can in another and vice versa. Linguistic taboos are not restricted to a specific notion, since they are related to cultural-specific beliefs, practice in religion and decorum and social control (Troike,1982:199).

Stubbs (2002: 370) mentions three types of taboo.

- 1- Profanity, offence against religion.
- 2- Obscenity, which is an offence against morals, it involves the sex-related terms.
- 3- Vulgarity is an offence against good taste. (Stubbs, 2002:370).

9.1 Antonyms of Euphemism

According to Khanfar (2012), among many antonyms, there are dysphemism and cacophemism. The first can be either offensive or undermining. The second one is employed to be intentionally offensive. Euphemism is "making something sound better", while dysphemism is "making something sound worse" (Allan 2017). Sampson (2001:1) states that if euphemism means talking about something unpleasant in a way that makes it sound less unpleasant, then the opposite would be talking about it in a way that makes it

sound more unpleasant than it is". Allan (2017) refers to two kinds of (euphemism and dysphemism):

1. Conventional types; are the words which are only used to make a reference to a taboo in a polite or impolite way: "shit" vs. "defecate", " etc.
2. General types; are ways of describing a situation, event or thing which convey an attitude towards it: "terrorist" vs. "freedom fighter", "henchman" vs. "associate"...etc.

10. The Functionality of Euphemism

Ren and Yu (2013:46) explains that euphemisms are mostly used in conversation or in written texts, so the concept of functions of euphemism, understood as its effects, evokes a relationship of reciprocal co-ordination between the speaker's (writer's) intention and the hearer's (reader's) reception of this strategy. However, it is the speaker who exerts the ultimate control over this co-ordination, since it is up to him to use a euphemism or to decide on a direct designation. In this sense, a specific intention underlies the use of a euphemism, which generally concerns its reception by the hearer. There are two basic functions attained by a euphemism: the "function of concealing" and or the "function of veiling". The distinction between the two functions is problematic because the two verbs used to name them are synonymous. In fact, a single euphemism can simultaneously fulfill both functions in discourse. This therefore requires an attempt to delimitate the meaning and the range of each function.

They both (2013) assert that if euphemistic expression fulfils a function of concealing, there is some fact or topic (or the name it is known by) that is deliberately hidden or left out of the discourse interaction. Again, this decision takes into consideration other factors, such as the fact that there are unmentionable subjects of discourse, e.g. conventionally established taboos and linguistic taboos, and conventions regarding discourse, which submit taboo to avoidance and replacement by euphemism. In other words, the

social conditioning of linguistic expression leads to the need to avoid a certain aspect of a word or concept, which could violate the established norms.

In such cases, the way out is in softening that aspect by choosing a less explicit designation, which ensures respect for those norms. Concealing euphemisms provides the linguistic possibility to regard conventions and thereby to keep them. Examples of concealing euphemisms are fear-based euphemisms such as “growth” for “tumor”, or shame-based alternatives, such as “pass water” for “urinate”. In public discourse, it is also possible to find euphemisms which subscribe to this function: this is the case of vague alternatives for “war” such as “crisis”. Euphemisms like these rely on a delicate compromise: hide it, but do not make it vanish.

11. Features of Euphemism

Pan (2013:2108) explains that there are certain features for euphemism as the following;

A. Euphemism in Our Daily Life.

Words of euphemism were and still are widely used in our daily life. In different cultures, things related to sex and sexual relationships are avoided. For example, fuck, have sexual intercourse etc. were usually replaced by "go to bed together", "have relation" etc. Old people are usually sensitive to old age and death. People would use "elderly" or "experience" to describe their physical condition.

B. Euphemism in Different Genders

Nowadays, with the development of society, women's social and family status has been higher and higher. Words related to women's physical situation have been greatly avoided. Much euphemism was and is still used in our daily life. We often hear young ladies refer to their monthly period as "the old friend" or

something like that. Of course, we have to show respect to women both physically and linguistically. In many countries words related to women's physical condition are taboos. Even today we can never say a fat lady "being fat". Instead, we use words like "overweight" or something like that. All this helped people to use euphemism in our daily life.

C. Euphemism from Different People of Social Status

Generally speaking, there are three classes of ordinary citizens among the population, namely, upper, middle and lower classes. Each class helps to use euphemism respectively. The upper class do not have to worry about the taboos in their daily life as they have the power both economically and psychologically because they are wealthy and they receive good education. Those who belong to the lower class want to improve their social status. They are very cautious about the language they use in daily utterances for fear of offending the rich and powerful people. Middle -class people help to develop and spread the euphemism in their daily lives. People never used the words like "death", "naked" etc. This phenomenon greatly promotes the use and spread of euphemism which in turn encouraged people to use euphemism.

D. Euphemism from Psychological Point of View in Ancient Times

Euphemism is the reflection of people's social psychology. It is closely related to the development of society. In the ancient times when people were uncivilized, uneducated, and primitive, they couldn't explain strange occurrences like earthquake, solar and lunar eclipse, death of people etc. Therefore, people invented elegant/softening words to replace words of obscene, vulgar and profane. For example, the most fearful word "death" was expressed in various sorts of ways like "pass away", "fall asleep", "go away" etc.

12. The Purpose of Using Euphemisms in Al Ahram Newspaper

In the domain of implicit interaction between Al Ahram and its readers, euphemism is in fact indirect communication, e.g., the writer is expressing his/her view indirectly. In this respect, Linfoot-Ham (2005) states that euphemisms are of speakers' interest for different reasons:

- a. It helps us understand the historical background of the words. For example, the English toilet from French toilettes 'towels'
- b. It helps us to understand what concepts cause people psychological and social discomfort. In reality, people tend to use euphemistic expressions to replace those things that would cause fear or panic in their mind. For example, people always desist themselves from direct mention of such words as "die, old, sick"; therefore, euphemism is quite abundant in this aspect of natural phenomenon. Here are few examples of the euphemistic expressions of

1- "die" in English and their rendering in Arabic: *dearly departed, decease, departure, has gone, left, pass away, no longer with us, at rest, in heaven* whereas in Arabic speaking Al Ahram; *الله توفى، توفاه*; *رحمه الله، جاء أجله، الأجل، وافته المنية، انتقل الى رحمة الله، في ذمة* ...etc.

2- For intimate relationships (sexual activity), *go out with, sleep with, make love*, in Arabic, *يتبادل الحب، عاشر، يتلامس، نام* ...etc.

3-For money ownership: *well-off, comfortable, doing well, relaxed*, in Arabic: *محتاج، شعبان، مرتاح ماديا، مكتفي، غير* ...etc.

4- For mental and physical disability: *visually impaired, physically challenged, disabled,crippled*, in Arabic: *نوي الحاجات الخاصة، تأخر، ... ضعيف الفهم*

Euphemisms have a strong bond with taboos in language. Language taboos stem from people's incorrect understanding of the relations between language and objective world. Also, the demands of politeness place us in a double bind: on the one hand, we want

to be friendly, and on the other hand we do not want to be overbearing. Hence, in some versions of English, toilet room, itself a euphemism, was replaced with bathroom and water closet, which were replaced (respectively) with restroom and W.C that might be rendered into Arabic as بيت الراحة (literally, the comfort home). This expression is used because humans in this place will be alone and there is no limitations for their actions, which are usually not allowed in other places. In addition, it is a place that relaxes the body by getting rid of the waste, and thus functioning normally such thinking properly, doing daily exercises, praying and continuing to function as a day-to-day living and doing other hobbies.

13. Euphemism as Indirect Strategy (Indirectness)

Indirectness is a universal phenomenon that occurs in all natural languages and in any discourse, whether it is verbal or non-verbal. To support this view, Thomas (1995:119) highlights the idea of indirectness by pointing out the following observations:

- A) Intentional indirectness.
- B) Indirectness is risky and costly.
- C) Through indirectness, it is assumed that the speakers are behaving in a rational manner, and given the universality of indirectness, they obtain some social or communicative advantage through employing indirectness.

In his review of the first point, Thomas (1995:120) argues that "not all indirectness is intentional; some is caused by linguistic inadequacy". For instance, if a person does not know the correct word for some object in a foreign language, he may use some physical signs to refer to this object. Although in pragmatics we are interested in intentional indirectness, it is not always possible to say with certainty whether indirectness is intended or not.

Stressing the fact that it may have negative features, Thomas (1995:121) notes that indirectness might be costly and risky. It is

costly in the sense that indirect utterance takes longer for the speaker to produce and longer for the hearer to process. It is risky in the sense that the hearer may not understand what the speaker is getting at. Through indirectness, it is known that the speaker uses the language in a rational manner, even though to do so may cost him/her unnecessary effort.

One possible conclusion is that the speaker obtains some advantages or avoids some negative consequence by employing indirectness. The speaker may wish to avoid hurting someone else or show how clever he is. Nevertheless, whatever the underlying motivation for using indirectness, the use of indirectness itself is perfectly rational if it is between the speaker and hearer. The general idea is that the enables the speaker to achieve his goal or to avoid unpleasantness.

Furthermore, indirectness is universal in the sense that it occurs to some degree in all languages. Individuals and cultures vary widely in how, when and why they use an indirect speech act in preference to a direct one. The factors governing indirectness are universal, but the way they are applied varies from one language to another. These factors can be summed up into the relative power of the speaker over the hearer.

Obviously, there is a connection between indirectness and the social distance speaker tends to use a greater degree of indirectness with people who have some power or authority over him or her than to those who do not. For instance, the speaker would probably be more indirect about conveying to his or her employer that he is annoyed by the fact that he or she always arrives late, than in conveying the same to his brother. This is partly because his employer can influence his career in a positive (reward power) or negative power (coercive power) way.

Indirectness does not just refer to utterance level and the level of illocutionary force, but also to the directness with which the speaker achieves his or her illocutionary goal. In his search for the reasons of using indirectness, Thomas (1995:142) discusses the

point of why we use the strategy of indirectness. It is well known that people obtain some social and communicative advantages from its use. A variety of reasons have been put forward for the universal use of indirectness, including:

- A) The desire to make one's language more/less interesting.
- B) To increase the force of one's message.
- C) To compete goals
- D) To achieve politeness with regard for face

In his evaluation for these reasons, Thomas (1995:142) argues that interestingness is probably the least significant of the reasons given above, but its importance should not be underestimated. People may use indirectness because they enjoy having fun with language. For example, a speaker may talk about the story of his father's death. The speaker's father was killed when a pig fell on his head and every time the speaker talks about this story, people laugh. The speaker relates the story in this way in order to get the people find the subject entertaining and interesting.

The second objective, increasing the force of one's message, is quite closely related to the first objective. The user of indirectness can increase the impact or effectiveness of his message by employing indirectness. If the hearer has to work at understanding the message, he or she puts forth a greater effort in receiving that message. Indirectness is often employed because we have competing goals. For example, if a teacher has to tell a student that the student's work is not up to standard, the teacher's need to tell the truth may conflict with the desire not to hurt the student's feelings or discourage him or her.

The effectiveness of an indirect utterance relies upon the hearer's ability to detect his mistakes in order to understand what the teacher means. In their argument in the function of indirectness, Brown and Yule (1983:3) claim that there are, in speech acts and indirectness, two main macro functions of talk; the transactional function and the interactional function of language. Brown and Yule (1983:4) describe the transactional as the function which

language serves in the expression of content and the transmission of factual information. Interaction is that function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes.

Obeng (1997) sheds light on the importance of indirectness to deliver meaning. He describes it as multi-functional in talking on delicate topics. Firstly, it helps respondents detach themselves from negative events and/or socially stigmatized topics. Secondly, indirectness strategies may help to minimize and sometimes totally eliminate risks of open confrontation and thereby help to protect the face of interactional participants. Thus, avoiding direct disputes through indirectness, interactants maintain smooth relationships with the other parties in the interaction. Thirdly, when the respondents are asked to talk about risky topics, indirectness can help them to express their covert resistance against the invasion of their private territory in face-threatening situations.

14. Forms of Euphemism

Euphemism can be achieved in many ways. Some of the basic strategies for achieving euphemism in English are elaborated by William (1956) as the following.

- 1- Borrowing: e.g. WC and toilet for lavatory
- 2- Semantic expansion: by which the connotations of a word are expanded to widen the scope of meaning of that word, and to make it more appealing to the hearer. (e.g. to sleep for sexual intercourse)
- 3- Semantic shift: a total change in the meaning of a word is created by inventing a new use for it (e.g. pass away for die).
- 4- Metaphorical transfer: in which an indirect expression replaces a harsh meaning or word, because of the embarrassment that might happen in such case. (e.g. under for underwear).
- 5- Phonetic distortion: which is produced by using phonetic alternation to avoid uttering an embarrassing word (e.g., vamp

for vampire). In Arabic, this sort of euphemism could be found like شوشو for شيطان , especially in informal or slang discourses.

15. The Analysis

15.1. Euphemism in Al Ahram Newspaper (Standard Arabic- Part I)

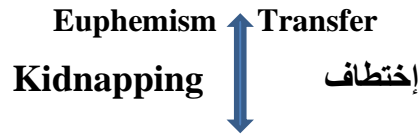
1- الخميس 4 من ربيع الآخر 1437 هـ - 14 يناير 2016

بعد فحص 111 حالة إدعاء تغيب وإختفاء قسري
عبد الكريم: الحالات بينها متهمون في قضايا عنف

By checking 111 cases of absence and enforced disappearance claims, Abdel Karim; Few cases are indicted in violence cases.



(euphemistic term) إختفاء قسري enforced disappearance



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2- الثلاثاء 7 من جمادي الاولى 1437 هـ 16 فبراير 2016 السنة 140 العدد 47188

نصر: التركيز على مشروعات التعليم والبنية التحتية والفئات الأكثر احتياجا

Nasr: The Focus on the educational projects, infrastructure, and most needy sects.



الأكثر إحتياجا
transfer
(euphemistic term)
Euphemism

الأكثر فقراً

3- الثلاثاء 5 من رجب 1437 هـ 12 أبريل 2016 السنة 140 العدد 47244

على عبدالعال ينتقد نشر معلومات مغلوطة حول الجزيرتين

Abdel Aal criticizes spreading misinformation over the two islands



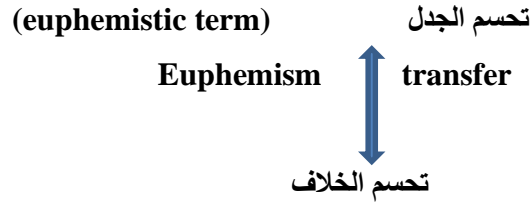
معلومات مغلوطة
transfer
(euphemistic term)
Euphemism

أكاذيب

4- السبت 29 من ذو الحجة 1437 هـ 1 أكتوبر 2016 السنة 141 العدد 47416

اليوم.. الدستورية تحسم الجدل حول قانون التظاهر

Constitutional court settles controversy over demonstration law



With the development of the Egyptian society, it can be reflected on the way Al Ahram employs his language to its readers. So, it seems that one of the motives for Al Ahram is to show that its language is civilized and sophisticated. So, when there is any reference to something unpleasant, they prefer to employ some mild, implicit and euphemistic expressions. A clear strategy used in the above data is the usage of synonyms by saying الإختفاء القسري ; that is replacing the tabooed word by another which has identical or nearly identical meaning and less offensive.

In such cases, the practice of euphemism shows its politeness function. Here, the key point of politeness function is to respect others, to express something politely, so as to keep people from being hurt and make them accept those things pleasantly. It seems that Al Ahram believe that words like، الأكثر إحتياجاً، تحسم الجدل، الإختفاء القسري، is worth euphemizing to reduce the degree of unpleasant effect of the term on its readers. In communication with others, euphemisms can help people form a positive communication atmosphere and establish harmonious social relationship and eventually obtain the communication goals.

Another example is “مريض نفسي” “psychologically sick” The motivation behind this is that Egyptians view mental illness as a shameful and mysterious disease which needs to be hidden or to be spoken about euphemistically and politely. Furthermore, the use of

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euphemism such as ملموس occur when it comes to the euphemizing the meaning of psychological problems in Egyptian context. Since sickness doesn't mean, in a way or another, a dreadful disease therefore, that is why Egyptians use the word (مريض) without euphemizing it since it is not a source of fear.

Another clear strategy used here is the implication by saying معلومات مغلوبة: A dispreferred term is implied by the journalist and context plays an important role in comprehending the intended meaning by the reader. In addition, from the previous samples, there is another strategy used which is fuzzy words such as الأكثر احتياجاً, that is achieved through the use of vague terms which have a flexible meaning and can be interpreted in different ways. By means of euphemism and by virtue of indirectness, Al Ahram attempts to hold a correspondence between their words and face considerations without affronting the reader's face.

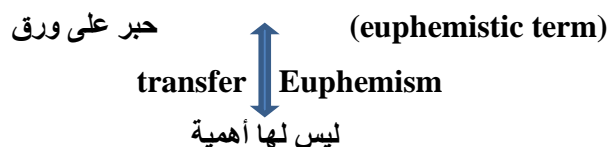
15.2 Euphemism in Al Ahram (Colloquial Arabic-Part II)

5- الأربعاء 29 من جمادى الأولى 1437 هـ 9 مارس 2016 السنة 140 العدد 47210
القمامة تتحدى المسنولين بالدقهلية.. والغرامات حبر على ورق

A) Garbage challenges the officials in Dakahalyia..Fines are just



ink on papers



6- الثلاثاء 5 من رجب 1437 هـ - 12 أبريل 2016 السنة 140 العدد 47244
مشاكل بالجملة تواجه صيادي دمياط والثروة السمكية في خطر

b) Damietta fishermen face a lot of problems, and dangers surround fisheries.



مشاكل بالجملة (euphemistic term)
transfer Euphemism
مشاكل كثيرة

الجمعة 20 من شعبان 1437 هـ - 27 مايو 2016 السنة 140 العدد 47289
7- 21 حفيدا في رقبتي.. وعمرى 86 سنة
أنا تعبت.. الشقا كسر ضهري

c) I am 86 year old woman, with 21 grandsons, I became very tired..
I am broken by life obstacles.



الشقا كسر ضهري (euphemistic term)
transfer Euphemism
العمل الكثير أرهقتني

8- الخميس 21 من ربيع الآخر 1438 هـ 19 يناير 2017 السنة 141 العدد 47526
مصنع أعلاف كفر الشيخ ..خارج الخدمة!

D- Kafr Sheikh's forage factory is out of service



خارج الخدمة (euphemistic term)

Euphemism ↑ transfer

↓
متوقفة عن العمل

The emergence of euphemisms in colloquial style (which is sometimes employed by Al Ahram) also has something to do with the cultural and social dimensions in the Egyptian society. When people began to know beauty and ugliness, to distinguish between kindness and evil, they had already got some specific words. And with the development of society, the range of lexical sensitivity is spreading. This provides an open air for the gloss-over function of Euphemisms. Even in the modern world today, people may still feel somewhat shameful when speaking of some words or phrases. Al Ahram sheds light indirectly to the euphemistic function of avoiding taboo by using some words or phrases like كسر ضهري...حبر على ورق...ساعته جت

Euphemisms are associated with taboos, which exist in every language. Euphemisms can be used as substitutes in order to avoid embarrassment, anxiety and public shame caused by taboo words. For example, "die" by "pass away". Taboo is one way in which a society expresses its disapproval of certain kinds of behavior believed to be harmful to its members, either for supernatural reasons or because such behavior is held to violate a moral code. Consequently, so far as language is concerned, certain things are not said or certain objects can be referred to only in certain circumstances, for example, only by certain people, or through deliberate euphemism.

It is important here to mention that one of the functions of euphemism is to disguise the real truth. So instead of saying ليس له أهمية (does not have any significance), Al Ahram uses the words (Ink on paper) حبر على ورق. Al Ahram employed euphemism in this context to beautify things to avoid negative impact. By using euphemism, ambiguity can be produced, and truth can be hidden. In the above-mentioned samples, there is semantic expansion or innovation; in which the connotations of a word are expanded to widen the scope of meaning of the word to make it appealing to the reader. Pan (2013) shows that it is not just for what is written in newspapers, but in fact some profiteers and politicians are likely to use euphemism to make it a language of deceit. He (ibid) gives a clear example for that. In 1983, American arms invaded Grenada. President Reagan got upset because news reporters used the words "invade" very much in reporting the news. On the other hand, Reagan called it a "rescue mission".

Pan (2013:2110) explains that since euphemisms often express something in an implicit and indirect way, sometimes this may cause ambiguity and people may feel confused about them. So, according to his view, politicians, statesmen and businessmen always make full use of this feature to mask the reality, exonerate their guilt and raise high the quality of their goods, thus making euphemisms have the disguise function. Obviously, the strategy of Implication is employed here by saying مشاكل بالجملة: A dispreferred term is implied by the speaker and context plays an important role in comprehending the intended meaning by the listener. The strategy of Understatement is activated by saying حبر على ورق as the way of presenting a tabooed issue as less significant than it really is. The strategy of Overstatement

(hyperbole or elevating): by saying *الشقا كسر ظهري* as the exaggerated language for emotional effect in which taboo is distorted by making it bigger and better than it really is. It is clear that by employing the ideological positive euphemistic way, the writer wants to activate the inducing way which makes the statement more persuasive.

16. Concluding Remarks

Euphemism, as a phenomenon of language, is observed everywhere in all human societies and it is used in all human interactions. Using euphemism is an active strategy of speakers in a certain time and a certain situation. It is obvious that euphemism could gain more publicity, legitimacy and respectability. As a matter of fact, euphemism is penetrating every corner of the world through the main channels, as do movies, music, books, magazines, radios, televisions and newspapers. Since euphemism is so important in the world of journalism and it is always ideologically loaded. On the basis of research findings, the most important conclusion is that certain tabooed topics and concepts receive a fair euphemization in the Egyptian society and through Al Ahram Newspaper headlines in certain topics such as, death, mental illness, garbage collector, memorial ceremony, stupid person and mental illness hospital. In addition, such a study could raise people's awareness and stimulate their understanding of the power of language.

Al Ahram Newspaper writers/editors use the euphemisms appropriately and successfully in their daily articles. In other words, they apply the euphemism and indirectness strategy as part of their communication with their readers intentionally. They use this sociolinguistic phenomenon to bring the sense of pleasantness in communication, thus they make the communicators get along better with others. Their tendency to use euphemistic expressions varies from one tabooed concept to another according to their social concerns, cultural issues and situational context. There are a number of reasons for using euphemisms by Al Ahram journalists; that is in addition to using euphemisms to avoid "taboo" and express "politeness", they can be used to "disguise" as in politics, and

economy. Additionally, they can serve as a kind of "elegance" to avoid vulgarism in issues concerning love, excretions, bodily parts.

It is clear that the use of euphemistic strategies could benefit not just those trying to understand language, but also those wrestling with the nature of humanity. Considering the motivation for euphemism in Al Ahram permits the reader to have a view of deep thoughts and different interpretations from the words. Besides, euphemism shows how people encode their ideals and beliefs within societal boundaries.

At the beginning of this paper, the definitions are introduced and based on the related literature review; its basic functions are explored from the perspective of sociolinguistics. The analysis of euphemism from a sociolinguistic perspective reveals that euphemism, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, can be better explained by examining cultural and contextual factors that influence it. Language is influenced by culture and is a vehicle of culture, so is euphemism. The influence of euphemisms can only show itself when they are used in communication.

Recommendations

The major goal of this research has been to investigate euphemism in the headlines of Al Ahram Newspaper from a linguistic ideological perspective. Accordingly, it recommends the following for future research:

1. A contrastive study which investigates euphemisms in the headlines of Ahram newspaper and euphemisms in an US or British newspaper.
2. A pragmatic study which investigates euphemism in the media and journalism in certain critical topics such as wars and revolutions at that time in order to study how soft language is used to persuade and convince audience.
3. Since the euphemistic headlines are in Arabic, there is a need to conduct a study investigating their translatability into English in terms of equivalence and meaning.

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