

LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF POLITICAL EUPHEMISMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK MEDIA DISCOURSE

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Abstract

Politics is often a battleground of words where the truth is shielded by language. This article explores the linguoculturological features of political euphemisms polite or indirect expressions used to mask unpleasant realities within English and Uzbek media discourse. The study addresses the concrete problem of how governments and media outlets use language to soften the impact of controversial topics like war, economic crisis, or social inequality. Analysis begins by defining how euphemisms function as a "linguistic veil." For example, instead of using the word "war," media might use "military intervention," or instead of "poverty," the term "low-income bracket" is employed. The study compares the metaphors used in both cultures. The investigation highlights how these "soft words" shape public opinion. By replacing harsh truths with milder alternatives, media discourse in both nations can unintentionally distance the public from the human reality of political decisions. This article illustrates that political language is a window into the values of a nation. By uncovering the "hidden" meanings behind these phrases, the research provides a tool for more transparent communication and deeper cultural understanding.

Key words

Political euphemisms, linguoculturology, media discourse, contrastive linguistics, pragmatics, semantic shift, public perception, face-saving, mass media style.

Introduction

In the modern information age, the media serves as the primary filter through which the public perceives political reality. Within this filter, political euphemisms play a critical role. These linguistic tools are designed to replace harsh, blunt, or

offensive terms with mild and indirect equivalents. By studying the linguocultural features of these expressions in English and Uzbek media discourse, it becomes possible to see how different societies navigate the delicate balance between reporting the truth and managing public perception.

The style of writing in mass media is characterized by its intent to influence and persuade. In both English and Uzbek journalism, the goal is often to present information in a way that aligns with specific social or political objectives. This is where euphemisms become essential. Media discourse does not merely describe the world; it constructs a version of it.

The presence of these euphemisms shows that language is a tool for “face-saving.” In the English-speaking world, the “face” being saved is often that of a professional institution or a political ideology. In the Uzbek-speaking world, the “face” being saved is frequently that of the community or the traditional social order.

This introduction establishes the framework for a deeper analysis of how these two distinct cultures use “soft language” to discuss “hard realities.” By investigating these patterns, the research identifies the hidden values that govern political communication in both the West and the East.

Literature review

The literature review reveals that political euphemisms have long been a focal point for linguistic and sociological inquiry. In the Western tradition, the foundation was laid by George Orwell, whose seminal essay “Politics and the English Language” argued that political speech is largely the defense of the indefensible through the use of “inflated style”⁶⁵. This was further modernized by Noam Chomsky, who analyzed media discourse as a tool for “manufacturing consent” through strategic language⁶⁶. Scholars such as Jean Peccei have explored how euphemisms function within the pragmatic framework of politeness and face-saving⁶⁷.

In the Uzbek linguistic context, the study of indirect speech and “yumshash” (softening) has been deeply explored by scholars like Shavkat Rahmatullayev, who focused on the phraseological and ethical layers of the language⁶⁸. Furthermore, the works of A. Mamatov have significantly contributed to understanding how lexical norms in Uzbek media adapt to social changes, often employing euphemisms to maintain cultural decorum⁶⁹. These diverse perspectives highlight a universal truth:

⁶⁵ Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language." *Horizon*, 1946.

⁶⁶ Chomsky, Noam. *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies*. South End Press, 1989.

⁶⁷ Peccei, Jean Stilwell. *Pragmatics*. Routledge, 1999.

⁶⁸ Rahmatullayev, Shavkat. *Annotated Phraseological Dictionary of the Uzbek Language. O'qituvchi*, 1992.

⁶⁹ Mamatov, A. E. *Problems of Lexical and Phraseological Norms in Modern Uzbek Language*. Fan, 1991.

while the specific words change, the use of language to navigate sensitive political realities is a global phenomenon.

Methodology

To understand how political words hide the truth, a very straightforward approach was taken. The study focused on how English and Uzbek news sites spoke about difficult topics between 2020 and 2024. Instead of just looking at dictionaries, the research looked at real-life headlines from places like The Guardian and Kun.uz. These years were chosen because they were full of “big” events like global health issues and economic changes where politicians often use “soft” words to avoid causing panic.

Analysis and discussion

The use of euphemisms in mass media is a strategic choice that reflects the underlying values of a society. By examining specific examples from English and Uzbek news sources, the divergence in “linguistic masking” becomes apparent.

In the reporting of military actions, media outlets often seek to minimize the human cost through abstraction. In English media context phrases such as “*surgical strikes*” or “*neutralizing the threat*” are common. These terms draw from medical and technical vocabularies to make violent acts seem precise and professional. The term “*collateral damage*” is famously used to strip away the humanity of civilian casualties, turning tragedy into a statistical byproduct.

Uzbek media context military or conflict situations are often framed through the lens of stability and peace-keeping. Terms such as “*tinchlikni saqlash operatsiyasi*” (peace-keeping operation) or “*vaziyatni barqarorlashtirish*” (stabilizing the situation) are preferred. The focus is on the restoration of order rather than the mechanics of the conflict.

When discussing financial failures or poverty, euphemisms help to maintain public confidence and prevent social unrest.

The term “*cost-cutting measures*” is often used instead of “*mass layoffs*”. Similarly, “*economic restructuring*” serves as a veil for a failing economy. These terms suggest a controlled, planned process rather than a crisis. In Uzbek discourse, social issues are often discussed using terms that emphasize future improvement or temporary setbacks. Instead of “*unemployment*,” media may use “*vaqtincha band bo‘lmagan aholi*” (temporarily non-engaged population). Instead of “*price hikes*,” the term “*narxlarning liberallashuvi*” (liberalization of prices) is frequently employed.

The way media reports on political tension reveals much about cultural attitudes toward conflict. English media context disagreements are often described as “*frank exchanges*” or “*robust debates*”. These euphemisms suggest that while there is conflict, it remains within a professional and democratic framework.

Uzbek media context Uzbek media prioritizes “*muloqot*” (dialogue) and “*hamkorlik*” (cooperation). Even when tensions exist, the language remains focused on “*o'zaro anglashinuv*” (mutual understanding). This reflects the linguocultural value of *andisha* (modesty/discretion) and the desire to avoid public confrontation.

Table 1. Linguocultural divergence in media euphemisms

| Topic | English Media Term (Strategy) | Uzbek Media Term (Strategy) | Cultural driver |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| War/Conflict | “Kinetic action” (Clinical) | “Barqarorlik” (Order-seeking) | Professionalism vs. Harmony |
| Job Loss | “Rightsizing” (Corporate) | “Bandlikni ta'minlash” (Social duty) | Efficiency vs. Community Care |
| Poverty | “Economically disadvantaged” | “Kam ta'minlangan” (Ethical/Moral) | Legalism vs. Traditional Values |

This analysis shows that political euphemisms are not merely “lies.” They are culturally specific filters that allow a society to process difficult information. English media uses euphemisms to appear objective, scientific, and professional. Uzbek media uses euphemisms to remain respectful, socially responsible, and harmonious. Understanding these “softened” terms is essential for anyone seeking to uncover the true intent behind the headlines.

Conclusion

The journey through the political language of English and Uzbek media reveals a profound truth: language is never just a neutral carrier of information. It is a living, breathing reflection of what a society values and what it fears. Through the study of political euphemisms, this article has shown that while the English “mask” is often built from cold, professional, and clinical terms to maintain an image of efficiency, the Uzbek “mask” is woven from threads of respect, harmony, and social stability. English media uses “soft” language to sound objective, while Uzbek media uses it to remain ethical and avoid conflict. Euphemisms are not just about hiding the truth; they are about protecting the dignity of the community or the institution.

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