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У роботі подано деякі факти біографії Найдена Герова, що перш за все пов'язані з написанням відомого словника, який можна порівняти із словарем В. І. Даля, а його автора – із самим В. І. Далем.

*Ключові слова:* Найден Геров, В. І. Даль, лексикографія, словник.

В работе представлены некоторые факты биографии Найдена Герова, прежде всего связанные с написанием знаменитого словаря, который можно сравнить со словарем В. И. Даля, а его автора – с самим В. И. Далем.

*Ключевые слова:* Найден Геров, В. И. Даль, лексикография, словарь.

In the article, some biographic facts of Niden Gerov are given, which foremost related to the writing of the famous dictionary which can be compared to the dictionary by V. I. Dal, and his author – with very V. I. Dal.

*Keywords:* Niden Gerov, V. I. Dal, lexicography, dictionary.

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## **THE ROLE OF EUPHEMISMS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

The study deals with euphemisms in politics and scrutinizes the current role of politically correct vocabulary in the functioning of the English language. In the twentieth century, the social-political public sphere was an important supplier of lexicon and phraseology, a source of origin of new word formation models and elements. It is worthwhile to note that political neologisms, which include a significant number of euphemisms, make 13% of all the new vocabulary of modern English [1, p. 53]. In my essay I intend to show that euphemisms can both contribute to the positive and progressive changes in the society and at the same time serve as tools for deception and the source misleading doublespeak. I shall argue that the distinction of politically correct vocabulary from deceptive and hypocritical language is extremely important.

Political euphemisms relevant for modern English were firstly used in bourgeois press, as a way of describing capitalist reality: capitalism was framed as *free enterprise*; starvation was described as *undernourishment*, etc. The first euphemisms are considered to be such passive forms as «made redundant», «it has long been known that...», etc. R. Macaulay notes that such «writing was savagely attacked by George Orwell, who particularly disliked the use of the passive voice, since it leaves unstated who is responsible... *Six hundred people were made redundant at the Smith works last week* makes it seem as if this just happened, without

human intervention. In actual fact, some powerful, rational, warm-blooded human beings sat down and decided to fire six hundred people» [2, pp. 105 – 106]. Another euphemistic construction, often used to obscure the agent, is nominalization, when the effect achieved is the same and the event is described as inevitable and objective: *The dismissal of all the personnel of AeroSvit was announced yesterday.*

The speculation on the Gulf War of 1991 was one of the first major contributors to the euphemistic domain of linguistics in the last century: «The English *Guardian Weekly* published a list of expressions used in the British press to refer to the two sides in the Gulf War. We have *reporting guidelines*, they have *censorship*; we *take out* or *eliminate*, they *destroy* and *kill*; we *launch first strikes preemptively*, they *launch sneak missile attacks without provocation*; our planes *suffer a high rate of attrition*, their planes *are shot out of the sky*» [2, p. 106]. Since Noam Chomsky, linguists take great interest in cases of euphemistic and misleading framing that politicians resort to. The use of euphemisms borders on withholding or skewing the information worthwhile for the public sphere. As a result, the public sphere is subjected to bias and the consequent decision making is impaired by vested interests and partisan views.

Today political euphemisms are widely spread especially in the political press and are used to denote different political notions correctly. The following categories of political euphemisms, describing people, are traditionally distinguished: 1) politically correct euphemisms calling the invalids and sick persons: deaf person = *person with hearing impairment*; cancer patient = *patient with cancer*; 2) politically correct euphemisms denoting sexes: man = *human being, human, person, individual*; 3) politically correct euphemisms denoting the sexual minorities: homosexual = *a person with different sexual orientation*; 4) politically correct euphemisms denoting age groups: the aged = *older adults, older people*; 5) politically correct euphemisms denoting racial and ethnic groups: Negro = *African American*. In the political sphere of communication euphemisms appear to be controversial in their origin and pragmatic characteristics. On the one hand, euphemisms develop and improve the cultural sensitivity (CS) and political correctness (PC) of discourse. On the other hand, political euphemisms may be a form of delusion and doublespeak.

Firstly, we would like to consider PC/CS terms where the euphemism is inextricably linked to the problem of taboo. CS/PC terms comprise typical English terms used in a new set of combinations to avoid evident reference to gender, race, sexual preference, disabilities, and ethnicity. Thus, CS/PC terms seem to function as euphemisms of alternative names that have become taboo [3, p. 390].

The term *taboo* (*ta* meaning «mark», *bu* meaning «exceedingly») is of Polynesian origin, specifically from Tongan, where it denotes anything linguistic and nonlinguistic that is prohibited or forbidden [4, p. 34]. In theoretic linguistics, taboo is related to a situation «in which a word or name can be used in a community only under special conditions, whether only by certain persons or only in certain circumstances» [5, p. 65].

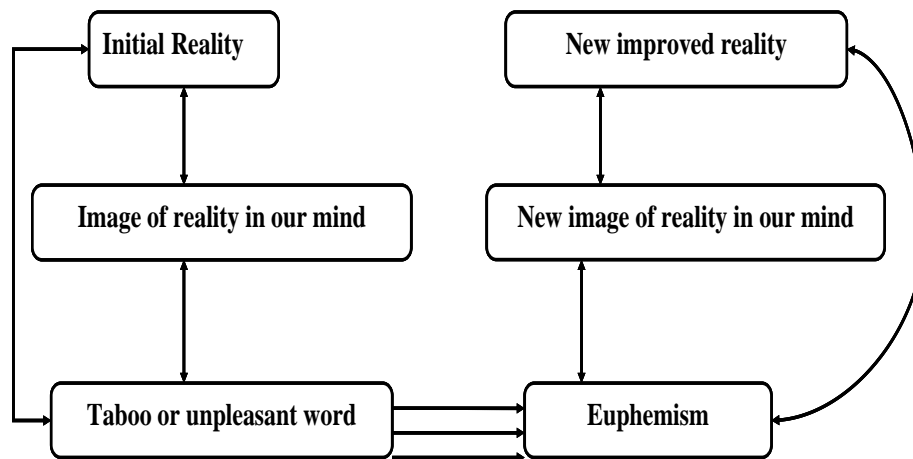
Nevertheless, there is enough evidence to assume that the use of taboo terms in periods of crisis and hardship is an important emotional compensation for those speakers and hearers who dare to break the taboo. This type of behavior, which is often considered to be the sign of a disfavored social group, is quite common, for example, in military service and in prison and prison-camp settings. In any case, taboo exists in all societies, ranging from the most primitive to the most civilized and modern [4, p. 56]. Yet, beyond the broad guidelines referred to above, who determines which terms are to be considered taboo? Adler contends that taboo in modern society is «dictated by the upper, the ruling class» [4, p. 40]. For current

CS/PC usage, it is not clear who, if any one group is indeed dictating usage. Perhaps it is this lack of clarity of source that evokes objections from particular groups, or perhaps objections arise because the source is perceived to have originated in a context that does not intersect with the group of speakers who object to CS/PC terms [3, p. 395].

The nonlinguistic issues of PC/CS terms' application involve ethnic, racial, gender-based, and other problems in our modern world, which are the consequences of inequality, prejudice, oppression, and other injustices in contemporary world. These are crucial tensions that deserve serious solutions. On the other hand, there is a question that must be addressed in this context – does a linguistic response, lexical substitution, solve the extralinguistic problems in our society or even facilitate future solution of such problems? Any possible answer to this question necessarily involves discussion of the relationship between language and thought. Does lexical usage determine or change the way in which a speaker views the extralinguistic world? These questions have been speculated on throughout the history of philosophy, linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and semiotics.

Edna Andrews claims that «Peircean semiotic theory gives a framework that allows language to be perceived as one of many potential sign systems that serve to organize perceptions of the world around us. In other words, Peircean theory defines language as a semiotic system that is necessarily derived from and defined within the context of a larger, nonlinguistic sign system» [3, p. 392]. This way Peircean view is similar to Vygotsky's quintessential claim that language organizes thought [6, p. 31 – 33]. It becomes overt that language can be used to be for inhibiting in inducing change as it is also, most recognizably, a system of conventions in the Saussurean and Peircean sense. Therefore, although language is both separable and separate from thought [7, p. 44], linguistic usage can template extralinguistic reality in a somewhat rigid fashion. Thus, initiating cultural change via linguistic change is a reasonable deduction.

The relationship between language and thought is necessarily of a relative nature. Supporters of the strong connection between language and thought claim that modified lexical usage of common and proper names will most certainly change perception within the targeted speech community. Likewise, it would seem that one of the reasons for the vocal negative reaction by some groups against using CS/PC terms puts these groups into the same camp vis-a-vis the nature of language – that is, they, too, seem to be convinced that there is a very strong implicational relationship between language and thought. Therefore, they reject these new terms in the fear that (1) these terms may eventually change the social order or that (2) they will not change the social order, but the use of euphemism in these instances is a form of social or political punishment and infringement of individual rights [3, p. 393]. The influence of using a euphemism rather than taboo can be demonstrated the following way (Fig. 1):



**Figure 1: How political euphemism can change political and social reality.**

At the same time, the process may be reversed, i.e. initial reality which presupposed social or any other injustice changed for better and the taboo word becomes obsolete. This obsolescence of a taboo word creates extralinguistic necessity for a new word. Perhaps, we do not use the word “man” for person not because of advocacy and a small vocal group of feminists but because of the eradication of the patriarchal society and establishment of equal opportunities. It is unequivocal that there should always be some possibility to change the initial reality for the new politically correct term to emerge. At the same time, CS/PC terms induce this first impulse to change the image of the reality and reality itself.

One would imagine that many of the current CS/PC terms have arisen as suggestions given by those particular speech communities. In many cases, these communities will overlap and involve multiple subsets of communities. It may appear that it would be persons who chair departments that decided what they would like to be called or members of the fire department who decide what they would like to be called. However, it probably is not true that the majority of persons who chair departments or the majority of members of the fire department or postal service decided which name is CS/PC. Perhaps the proposal came from a small, but vocal, minority. This may well be the case with some of the CS/PC terms. The usage of CS/PC terms is, in this regard, a reaction to and an attempted solution for reincorporating into our society those persons who have become increasingly alienated as the parameters of inequality increase and deepen. The multifaceted problems associated with CS/PC show the dynamic interplay of linguistic signs as they act and react within the constantly changing social context [3, p. 401 – 402].

Apparently, not all CS/PC terms are equal in their significance and propriety. Some CS/PC terms appear to be distorted and awkward, while others are generally perceived as simple and stylistically elegant. We posit an assumption that CS/PC terms may be divided into two major groups: 1) legitimate euphemisms, recognized by the majority of people and based on eradicating injustice; 2) illegitimate euphemisms, recognized by a small minority and not dealing with elimination of any injustices. As you can see, illegitimate euphemisms can border on doublespeak if used to mislead the audience.

J.D. Sadler wittily recounts: «Some years ago, when George Smathers was running for the Senate in Florida against Claude Pepper, he made terrible accusations before some of his audiences. «Years ago my opponent came to our fine state university and he even

*matriculated*. He is a *shameless extravert* and he has been known to *indulge in nepotism*. In the past he has often been *addicted to celibacy*. He has a brother who is *a practicing homo sapiens* and a sister who is *a Thespian*.» Senator Pepper's political demise was reported as «death by assonance» [8, p. 169].

This example illustrates the functioning of euphemism as doublespeak. William Lutz defines doublespeak as «a blanket term for language which pretends to communicate but doesn't, language which makes the bad seem good, the negative appear positive, the unpleasant attractive, or at least tolerable. It is language which avoids, shifts or denies responsibility, language which is at variance with its meaning» [9, p. 13]. Doublespeak is exactly the notion that can describe the above-written speech of the future senator.

Euphemisms that are used to mislead the audience are usually unregistered and devised carefully by the speaker. However, such euphemisms draw public attention and a critical thinker can always understand the real purpose of producing doublespeak. The main problem in this regard is that the majority of people are not critical thinkers and their consciousness is severely influenced – even distorted by such euphemisms.

As a matter of fact, serious doublespeak is carefully designed and constructed to appear to communicate but in fact to provide biased messages. These euphemisms are highly strategic and are harmful for susceptible audience.

In Orwell's 1984 Syme, the terrible destroyer of language proclaims: «It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.» Speaking to Winston Smith, Syme deliberates: «Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought. In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten... Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. Even now, of course, there's no reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrime. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality control. But in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect» [10, p. 20].

In conclusion, it is essential for the political sphere that politicians and the media be always responsible for their language use and do not resort to euphemisms if they do not feel that the audience needs them. The process of introducing politically correct vocabulary is extremely important and negotiation of the germane notions and framing should be one of the priorities for those who actively engage in political discourse. It is understandable that euphemisms are sometimes a necessity but the problem is that there can be two contradicting purposes for their use. The first reason translates into our need to be politically correct and not to abuse and estrange individuals and even groups of people. The second reason may be the need for euphemisms to suppress facts from the public and mislead it. Public debates and open negotiation make the distinction between these two motivations much more transparent and understandable.

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Автор статті розглядає структуру такого стилістичного засобу, як евфемізм, у просторі політичного дискурсу. Виокремлюються загальні категорії даного поняття, досліджується взаємозв'язок між евфемізмами, лексикою, яку вони замінюють у мовленні, і соціальною реальністю.

*Ключевые слова:* соціолінгвістика, стилістика, табу, евфемізм.

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The author scrutinizes the structure of such stylistic device as euphemism in political discourse. General categories of political euphemism are distinguished in the study and the correlation between euphemisms is analyzed, as well as the lexicon which is being substituted and social-political reality. The essay shows that euphemisms can both contribute to the positive and progressive changes in the society and at the same time serve as tools for deception and the source misleading doublespeak. The author argues that the distinction of politically correct vocabulary from deceptive and hypocritical language is extremely important.

*Key words:* euphemism, sociolinguistics, stylistics, taboo.

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