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THE EUPHEMISTIC WAY OF NOMINATION IN THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The article describes the euphemistic way of naming in the Russian language, which, according to the data of the Russian language, confirms this research and occupies an important place in the system of modern nomination methods. Euphemistic denominations are formed and used at all levels of the language system. If the lexical level of euphemization includes dictionary units that characterize the static linguistic picture of the world, then the syntactic level not only translates these units into a plan of active use but also connects specific means of syntactic nomination to phrase euphemization – phrase names, which is typical for a dynamic linguistic picture of the world. Phrasal names as predicative means of denoting fragments of the linguistic picture of the world are one of the bright, flexible and multifunctional means of nomination. The space of phrasal euphemism provides the organic interaction of the linguistic and linguocultural sides of the phenomenon denoted euphemistically. In this regard, the systematization of data on phrasal euphemisms extends the traditional approach to euphemization from the point of view of the dictionary. Nomination-syntactic semiosis is the basis that allows the speaker expressing his/her human principle in the space of a linguistic (speech) sign, and in this case, a euphemistic one. The study of phrasal euphemization as a special way of compensating nomination in the Russian language has further prospects both in terms of structurally functional (semiotic) and linguistic-cognitive, psycholinguistic, linguistic-stylistic, typologically-contrastive, etc.

Keywords: Euphemization, methods of nomination, syntactic nomination, phrase nomination.

1. Introduction

The relevance of the study of euphemization as a special way of nomination becomes apparent when it comes to anthropocentric (or rather anthropogenic) understanding of the process of assigning certain units of language and speech to the denotation area. Studies of recent years in the field of naming theory, in particular, the theory of syntactic nomination (Burov, 1994), made it possible to reach a level of understanding of the dynamic approach to acts of signified objects and phenomena of reality, and therefore to the linguistic picture of the world as a form of consolidating this reality in social and individual linguistic consciousness.

2. Problem Statement

Euphemisms, traditionally the object of analysis mainly in linguistic stylistics and rhetoric, derivatives of a semiotic nature, whose functions are clearly more complicated than simply solving the artistic and visual problems of a softened designation of the facts of certain denotative areas.

3. Research Questions

The euphemistic method of nomination is currently analyzed in two nominal spatial dimensions – lexicocentric and textocentric. The lexico-centric dimension which is the linguistic one is associated with the traditional approach to euphemisms as members of the «lexico-phraseological unity» of names: Euphemisms are generally regarded as lexical units.

It should be noted that today in the Russian studies there is no more or less fundamental research of the euphemization. In most scientific and educational books on linguistics, the Russian language, stylistics, in linguistic dictionaries, the authors only note the main property of euphemisms – the designation of such concepts that the speaker wants to evoke in consciousness and at the same time avoid their name. Moreover, as a rule, euphemisms are defined as emotionally neutral words and expressions that replace forbidden words (taboo) and weaken the unwanted objective-conceptual orientation of the lexical meaning, eliminate the negative meaning of words, and ennoble speech. Euphemisms can also be understood as occasional individual author replacements of some words by others with the aim of distorting or disguising the true essence of the signified.

Meirieva (2004), summarizing the study of this phenomenon, interprets euphemism as replacing an uncultured word with a more cultured one, a grosser name with a less coarse, softening one; direct name veiling allegorical; frank direct names more modest, restrained, not affecting the honor and dignity of a person; direct names with words of a more general nature, the use of hints instead of direct nominations for the purpose of diplomacy; use of ambiguities, verbal «camouflage» of expressions that have an indefinite, general meaning.

Thus, euphemisms are viewed from different perspectives: as words and expressions inscribed in the lexical system; as an object of traditional, cognitive and pragmatic linguistics, taking into account the linguistic and extralinguistic features of euphemistic vocabulary.

The text-centric dimension of euphemization involves the consideration of euphemisms as derivatives of speech activity, as functioning in the speech of any language units. Thus Burov (1994)

believes that euphemisms are completely independent, special means of designation that are designed to make up for the imaginary (conventional) insufficiency of vocabulary signs (Burov, 1994). The use of euphemisms is caused by the requirements of the norms of speech behavior, which allows you to remove the emotional tension caused by the dialectical contradiction between the speaker's desire for a direct designation and the prohibition that is imposed on the use of this designation. Thus, according to the researcher, speech comes into a kind of conflict with the dictionary. This conflict is resolved precisely through the euphemistic naming.

A descriptive name seems to be considered euphemistic if it provokes an idea of an object or phenomenon whose vocabulary, common name is undesirable for one reason or another of a religious, moral or aesthetic nature (Sakhno, 2018). For example: *It turns out that on the eve a friend of his father fell under the tram. Someone has to identify the body. The father was taken to the hospital, they opened some kind of box where **what was left of a friend** was lying. And the father looked there.*

The use of euphemisms, thus, allows the speaker filling the imaginary, conventional, lack of vocabulary (lexical and phraseological) means of nomination. Consequently, at least two questions arise: on the one hand, does euphemization represent only the vocabulary level or does its unit reach the level of speech use of any language units, and on the other hand, does euphemization represent a purely functional fact or is it a deeper phenomenon of the language that characterizes not only a plan of expression but also a plan of content?

We consider euphemisms as completely independent, special means of designation that make up for the imaginary insufficiency of vocabulary signs. We are talking about the complex nature of the relationship that euphemistic denominations enter into. The fact is that in some cases the euphemism does allow substitution with a synonym, but most euphemisms either have no synonym or their synonymization is undesirable, because their purpose is precise to hide the true essence of the signified. E.g.: *I was lying ... drunk, and I heard my Sonya saying: «Well, Katerina Ivanovna, is it really for me to **make such a thing**?» And she answered her: «Well, then – what to spare? Is it a treasure? «... Since then, Sonia has been living with a **yellow ticket** separately from us, the neighbors opposed (F. Dostoevsky).* The combination «a yellow ticket» in this example is a vocabulary-marked euphemism, therefore, we can consider it a real nominative unit. «Such a thing» is a potential euphemism, its meaning is clear only in this context. In addition, it should be noted that the replacement of these euphemistic names is not acceptable because it causes a negative assessment of the phenomenon.

The following examples can be presented:

*1) The bear's real name was «зах». But instead they said aloud «вурр». It was only onomatopoeia. So the «зах» grumbles when, having climbed into the den, licks his paw. The bear's name was also **«shaggy»** or **«the one who likes honey»** or **«the one who sucks his paw».***

*2) The proximity of Sennaya, the abundance of **famous shops** and the handicraft population dazzled the general view of such subjects, which would be strange to be surprised at.*

*3) Far away, far from Griboedov, in a large hall illuminated by thousand-candle lamps there **was lying on three zinc tables, which until recently was Mikhail Alexandrovich**.*

Speaking about the peculiarities of these euphemisms, it should be noted that the language means of all levels act as euphemistic names in the examples: words, sense-groups, predicative parts, and

onomatopoeia. All these names are based on secondary, alluding to the phenomenon, its signs, which are associated with the signified, as a rule, indirectly. Therefore, context is the most important condition for euphemistic functioning. It makes it possible to correlate an imaginary designation with a forbidden one, moreover, regardless of the degree of «strictness» of the imposed taboo.

However, the relationships that taboo and euphemistic nominations enter into are complex. If in some cases euphemisms can indeed be replaced by a stylistic and even a general linguistic synonym, then for the most part the names under consideration either simply have no synonym or their synonymization is undesirable since it violates the underlying communicative and expressive purpose.

In fact, the difference between the names «зах», «bear» and the synonyms *«бурр», «shaggy», «the one who likes honey», «the one who sucks his paw»* lies in the field of normative-stylistic (possibility / impossibility, expediency / undesirable use in this context), then the euphemistic sense-group of «famous shops» has such a synonym, the use of which is already undesirable. As for the phrase euphemism *«that which until recently was Mikhail Alexandrovich»*, then it does allow any synonymization.

Thus, euphemisms are completely independent, special means of designation that are designed to make up for the imaginary (conventional) insufficiency of vocabulary signs. The use of euphemisms caused by conventional norms of speech behavior, allows removing the emotional tension of the message created by the contradiction between the desire for a direct, concrete naming and the prohibition to use it. Thus, speech comes into dialectic contradiction with the dictionary (language, Uzus), which is resolved in particular due to contextual guess and euphemistic naming. All this shows that the euphemization as naming has a surprisingly flexible «mechanism» to regulate the relationship between the speaker and the world around in which often very complex feelings, thoughts, etc., as well as facts indirectly included in communication make the reference object.

4. Purpose of the Study

Approach to euphemisms as manifestations of general language categories of convention and approximation (Arutyunova, 1998; Bocharova, 2001; Ionova, 2005) from the point of view of the nomination-syntactical semiosis contributes in our opinion to the actualization of those aspects of the case study in language, which allow including in the sphere of analysis of euphemization as a special way of nomination an entire area of pre-contactors, expressed by an advantageous variety of place-relative appendages of complex proposals of non-dismembered type and acting as names of objects and phenomena of the surrounding reality. In the linguistic tradition, this area received the status of a phrasal nomination (Burov, 2000; Maksimov, 1971).

5. Research Methods

The research used a wide range of methods of analysis of theoretical and actual linguistic materials. In addition to observation, description, comparison, systematization, generalization, we use the so-called method of intuitive guess when the presence of euphemism in the text is detected intuitively). In addition, we rely on the cognitive characteristics of the text and partly on the phenomenological principle of the analysis of the narrative.

6.   Findings

In our opinion the use of euphemisms is a broader phenomenon than lexical euphemism. It is represented at various levels of the language (lexical, lexicological-phraseological community of euphemisms, non-predictive (euphemisms-periphrases) and predicative (phrasic) euphemisms. Phrasic euphemisms are the names that perform a euphemistic function (Burov, 1994; Sakhno, 2018). For example:

And speaking of little things, and slowly as if accidentally gets under the skirt, presses the corset and catches what was a secret, alas, for us at the age of sixteen.

2) I remember how surprised we were on the night of the wedding, when she, pale and in tears, ran away from him and, shaking with her whole body, said that she couldn't even say what he (her husband) wanted from her.

3) Some thoughts – clear and sedentary – said how disgraceful it was for a woman to sell to the first counter what no one can sell to anyone.

Actual materials prove that phrase euphemisms make a convenient tool for concealment and visualization of non-language sense. Therefore, euphemization can be presented not only at the lexical (lexico-phrasological) level but also on the level of the sentence, in particular – a complex proposal with a bynoterious place-relative type. This allows stating that euphemization as a way of nomination has several ways of identifying non-lingual content (lexical, phraseological, syntax), which in turn proves that due to the presence of different forms of expression the euphemistic meaning of the euphemistic way of naming has the right to exist.

Based on the provision that both the field of euphemism and the phrasal nomination belong to an indirect method of naming, it can be assumed that phrase euphemisms act as indirect designations of taboo phenomena. Here are some examples:

1) In the absence of Tikhon and the doctor, the women washed away what he was, and the head was tied with a handkerchief.

2) Bending his head to the shoulder, with his heart beating, Bestuzhev peered through that dreadful, cooling down, sinking in the bedding.

*3) Far away, far from Griboedov, in a large hall illuminated by thousand-candle lamps there **was lying on three zinc tables, which until recently was Mikhail Alexandrovich**.*

4) Sometimes he wanted to scream and drive everyone out and be alone with the mysterious and cold that just a few hours ago was his father.

*5) It turns out that on the eve a friend of his father fell under the tram. Someone has to identify the body. The father was taken to the hospital, they opened some kind of box where **what was left of a friend** was lying. And the father looked over there.*

Euphemisms are completely independent, special means of designation that are designed to make up for the imaginary (conventional) insufficiency of vocabulary signs. The use of euphemisms caused by conventional norms of speech behavior, allows removing the emotional tension of the message created by the contradiction between the desire for a direct, concrete naming and the prohibition to use it. Thus speech comes into dialectic contradiction with the dictionary (language, Uzus), which is resolved through the use of a euphemistic name that implements the speaker's linguistic guess.

7. Conclusion

Euphemistic units falling into the composition of a speech act and finding themselves in a particular communicative-sign situation, are considered in conjunction with the pragmatic circumstances of communication that accompany it: the intent of the sender of the message, pre-suppositive background, the atmosphere of communication, interpretation and understanding of the message. It is in this case that a communicative-pragmatic situation arises in which euphemisms are actualized and mutual understanding of communicants is ensured. Euphemistic names regardless of which group they belong to and with what sphere they are connected are oriented at a pragmatic complex based on the intention of the sender of the message, pre-suppositive background, and the atmosphere of communication, interpretation and understanding of the message.

All this shows that the euphemization as naming has a surprisingly flexible «mechanism» to regulate the relationship between the speaker and the world around in which often very complex feelings, thoughts, etc., as well as facts indirectly included in communication make the reference object.

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