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THE FUNCTIONS AND ROLE OF EUPHEMISMS IN THE ENGLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Summary. The article deals with the question of the main functions and role of political euphemisms in the political discourse of the English language. Euphemism is the device for neutralizing of the negative connotation of the aspects, ideas or facts that are unpopular in society.

Key words: euphemism, political discourse, speech, taboo, device, recipient.

One of the most important spheres of communication is the political discourse. The politicians are speakers who work in the field of communication with people and they should have their own speech style because language for a politician is the main device of his professional activity. He should be able to create his speech depending on the aim, tactics and communicative situation. Thus the politician should always clearly comprehend and control what and how he says.

The problem of the article. From the ancient times euphemisms are used for neutralizing of words on the stylistic level. This process is called the euphemistic substitution that includes the techniques and devices which are associated with the language requirements. So, the problem of the article is to determine the functional peculiarities role of euphemisms in the political discourse.

The list of important qualities of language has been formed during the ancient times. The great examples of this aspect are the works by Cicero, Aristotle and other Greek and Roman scholars. Characteristic features of Greco-Roman traditions have included correctness, uniqueness, accuracy, multiplicity, language pithiness and the truth of its content. During the last decades the process of forming of euphemisms is provided quite intensively. This is due to the fact that nowadays the most important factor that contributes to euphemisms is the connection with certain social processes that enable them to be a widespread factor in socially important areas of language.

The actuality of research lies in the fact that the use of euphemisms is important because they have an influence on the mass audience of people through the political language that is targeted process. It should be provided according to the requirements of cultural and legal correctness. Many aspects of this question are still to be not analyzed, for example: the question of political euphemisms systematization, the determining of spheres of political euphemisms. These aspects determine **the aim** of the research which is to identify the main features of the use of euphemisms in the English language.

The Object of research is a political discourse characterized by the number of features and complex aspects.

The subject of research is a euphemism as a means of complex mechanism for the implementation of deviation from the truth in the English political discourse.

The analysis of the research works. The problem of euphemisms has been studied by a number of native and foreign researchers like G. Paul, D. Rosenthal, S. Vidlak, O. Akhmanova, O. Reformatskiy. The modern researchers of this question are V. Moskvina, M. Koshova, A. Katsev.

Main material. There are many definitions of the statement «euphemism». According to the work by O. Katseva "Euphemism is the neutralizing stylistic device that provides the substitutions of shameful, confusing and odious elements that are caused by moral or religious motives" [2, p. 65]. V/ Zabolotina has noticed that "euphemism is created as the result of a number of pragmatic reasons such as politeness, delicacy, pedantry, decency, desire to disguise the negative nature of some aspects of reality" [1, p. 103]. Researcher O. Senichkin has given such a definition of euphemism: "a word or expression that is used instead of another which for some reasons is irrelevant" [4, p. 140].

Many aspects belong to the sphere of the use of euphemisms, they are: mental or physical ability, age, appearance, race or nationality, social or financial status, occupation, military themes etc.

Euphemism is the stylistic synonym or the substitute of some language units. They also displace the dominant emotional element and offer a new interpretation of certain phenomena and carry its new moral and ethical evaluation. These aspects allow us to point that the emergence of a significant number of euphemisms is an indicator of social changes in the spheres of human activity. It is also the indicator of presence and consolidation in the society of new socio-political branches.

As the mechanism of linguistic influence euphemisms express certain opinions or assessments in order to fix them in the communicators' mind or in order to provoke it for actions in accordance with the specified aspects. Such political communication in modern linguistics is determined as the «linguistic activity which is specialized on the promotion of certain ideas, emotional influence on citizens and their encouraging for political actions in order to develop a social consensus, to make important social and political decisions in the conditions of multiplicity of opinions in society» [6, p. 4].

So, all these aspects show that the emergence of a great number of euphemisms is connected with some social and historical processes such as decolonization, the emergence of

the movement for women's rights and sexual minorities etc. These events have provoked to the emergence of significant changes in lexis of the English language during the last decade. The decolonization also influenced the choice of books for translation and the choice of lexis. Thus, in the books by Carnegie J. the word «negro» is often used. Nowadays this word is not used in literature at all. There is a similar situation with the title of a piece of literature by A. Christy "Ten little Nigger boys". Then taking into account the rules of the political correctness the title has been changed into "Ten little Indian boys". But despite the changes the original title is saved in the translations into a number of languages including the Ukrainian one. The politically correct euphemism includes the gender neutralization. It has been provided by way of interchanging of the suffixes -man, -woman, -er, -ess into neutral ones. For example: chairman, chairwoman – chairperson, air hostess – flight attendant, waiter, waitress – server [5, p. 216].

Political communication has a broad spectrum in oral and written texts, for example: the program of a political party, analytical article in a newspaper, official political document, speeches in Parliament, political interviews [3, p. 37].

The main purpose of the use of euphemisms in the political sphere is hiding of the true nature of the phenomenon which has negative attitude in society by way of creating the neutral or positive connotations. V. Zobotkina has noticed that one of the motives of the use of euphemisms in the political sphere is "an attempt to create the speech illusion of justifying of unpopular policy" [1, p. 234]. E. Sheyhal has pointed that "the high degree of manipulation of politicians' speech has the aim to hide certain aspects of reality" [7, p. 154]. It is important to point that linguistic euphemisms oppose to political ones because they have a low euphemistic degree. It is connected with the denotation's obviousness as well as for recipient as for communicator. This is the main difference between the political and linguistic euphemisms that are pointed in the dictionary.

There is a certain connection between the semantics of political euphemisms and the pragmatics of their use. It means that they have a special linguistic peculiarity. English euphemisms have a great pragmatic potential that allows politicians to manipulate, hide or veil the aspects that are unpleasant for them and to describe certain events with an advantageous position due to the displacement of the pragmatic focus.

A characteristic feature of political euphemisms is the fact that they are based on the mechanism of associativity. It means that euphemistic effect is the result of the association with positive denotation. Using a euphemism the recipient does not have time to recognize it in the context. As a result, there may be the process of forming of inadequate informational model reality. These processes are primarily connected with the political idea that is promoted in society on a particular historical level of development or in the boundaries of a certain value system of society. Let's analyze the suggestions the US president's administration about Guantanamo. Its main idea is the possibility to carry out the death sentence without trial:

"The proposal would ease what has come to be recognized as the government's difficult task of prosecuting men who have confessed to terrorism but whose cases present challenges. Much of the evidence against the men accused in the Sept. 11 case, as well as against other detainees, is believed to have come from confessions they gave during intense interroga-

tions at secret CIA prisons. In any proceeding, the reability of those statements would be challenged, making trials difficult and drawing new political pressure over deatainee treatment" [8, p. 71].

Thus, in this example the undetermined character of the linguistic unit "intense interrogation" leads to neutralizing of negative connotation. This is due to the desire to neutralize the negative effect of unpopular political decision.

A similar example is the sentence from the same decision: *"The provision could permit military prosecutors to avoid airing the details of brutal interrogation techniques"* [9, p. 2].

There's the example of the use of the statement «interrogation techniques» instead of a certain more clear and determined phrase that would characterize the use of threats or physical force. So, in this case the euphemism conceals the actions that violate human rights by way of manipulating by the public opinion.

"The Taliban remains a force to be reckoned with, determined to reestablish its power base in Afganistan" [11, p. 1].

The phrase "to reestablish its power" means "to invade". In this case, the euphemism is an example of the desire to conceal aggressive intentions of the opponent and to "lighten" the reality. This refers to the Taliban attack on NATO troops. The information about this attack is neutralized in order to avoid panic among the people.

The similar example is a sentence from the English newspaper:

"The admission is the most serious warning yet that Britain is preparing for some sort of military involvement in the country. Britain could intervene militarily in Syria in months" [10, p. 1].

In this example, the expression "some sort of military involvement" serves as a euphemism instead of the more direct meaning "to break in" or "to invade". This article presents the information about Britain's idea of the limited intervention in Syria but in many other sources of information the term "invasion" has been used.

Analyzing the euphemisms in the speeches of politicians, we have noticed that they also perform a similar function. The great examples of such phenomena are present in Barack Obama's speeches.

There is an example of using of the complication of the statement's structure on the syntactic level:

"We are willing to look out for one another and help people who are vulnerable and help people who are down on their luck" [8, p. 43].

The expression «down on their luck» is used instead «poor» in order to soften the expression.

Generalization is also widely used element in the B. Obama's speeches that also serves as a euphemism in the sentence, for example:

"They had some sort of chronic condition that had to be tended t" [8, p. 51].

These examples of using the euphemisms in all the cases help a speaker to hide the essence of a certain problem due to the formation of a neutral or positive connotation that is based on weakening of the "taboo" word concentration.

Conclusion. After the investigation we have made a conclusion that euphemism is an important part of a complex mechanism called political discourse that aims to conceal or soften unpopular facts or certain aspects in society. History

of the euphemisms is very rich and it starts from the ancient times. The emergence of a great number of euphemisms is associated with modern social and political processes that lead to certain changes in the lexical structure of English. The mechanism of using a euphemism is based on the effect of associativity with the "taboo" word that leads to the further substitution of the word. Euphemism is a powerful device for providing the ideas or attitudes among great quantity of people with the aim to fix these ideas in the minds of the recipients of communication. The main function of euphemisms is the neutralization of the negative connotation of certain aspects or facts. On the syntactic level this function is provided through the complication of a phrase structure and generalization. Prospects for further research may be the deeper analysis of the functions of political euphemisms or the questions of the role of euphemisms in other aspects of social life.

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Правдивцева Ю. С., Булавин М. А. Функции та роль евфемизмов в английском политическом дискурсе

Анотация. У статті розглянуто питання головних функцій і ролі політичних евфемизмів у політичному дискурсі англійської мови. Евфемізм – це засіб для нейтралізації негативної конотації різноманітних аспектів, ідей або фактів, які є непопулярними серед населення.

Ключові слова: евфемізм, політичний дискурс, промова, табу, засіб, реципієнт.

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Аннотация. В статье рассмотрен вопрос главных функций и роли политических эвфемизм в политическом дискурсе английского языка. Эвфемизм – это средство нейтрализации негативной коннотации различных аспектов, идей или фактов, которые являются непопулярными среди населения.

Ключевые слова: эвфемизм, политический дискурс, речь, табу, средство, реципиент.