POLITICAL EUPHEMISMS IN MODERN ENGLISH DOLCE

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This paper examines political euphemisms as part of the modern English language. Political euphemisms have become commonplace these days, leading to overuse and sometimes misuse in order to distort the reality of what is happening. Particular attention is paid to the significance and reasons for their existence from both a political and a social perspective. Several categories of euphemisms, such as euphemisms related to war and terror, climatic, economic and others, as well as their origins are analysed. The uniqueness of this paper is the large number of both euphemisms and direct examples of their use in the media and politicians' statements.

Key words: modern linguistics; professional speech; political communication; media influence; political science.

WHAT ARE EUPHEMISMS?

Cambridge International Dictionary defines it as "[the use of] a word or phrase used to avoid saying another word or phrase that is more forceful and honest but also more unpleasant or offensive" [1].

Euphemisms, which aim at softening words and phrases in order to reduce the unpleasantness of the interlocutor, are very close to the language of diplomatic communication. They are similar in that they are not restrictive, tolerant or evasive, and there is a possibility of avoiding conflict. Euphemisms are widely used in speech, especially in the political sphere.

Politicians and diplomats have to follow the norms of political correctness and in order to make political communication effective, increasingly resort to some distortion of objective reality, softening and, in some cases, substitution of various notions.

EUPHEMISMS RELATED TO MILITARY ACTION AND TERROR

One should note here that the plethora of wars (war in Vietnam, Iraq, etc.) and terrorism as a new threat to society have left their mark on the English language. In the press, for example, the word "terrorist" is not commonly used. Journalists prefer euphemisms. Take the London Underground incident of July 2005 as an example; analysis shows that there are many euphemistic units for the word 'terrorist' in official statements by officials: *bomber / attacker / insurgent / militant / misguided criminals / assailants / captors / ex-*

tremists / fighters / group / guerrillas / gunmen / hostage-takers / radicals / rebels / separatists.

Euphemisms describing temporary disturbances, cataclysms occurring in society are a topical phenomenon in contemporary political English [2]. In addition, many economic disasters seriously affected people's financial situation. As trends show, politicians and public figures are trying to "brighten up" the situation and are actively using euphemisms in their speeches.

For example, euphemisms related to the global economic crisis of 2008-2010 have become particularly common. And no wonder: a huge wave of dismissals occurred as a result, and people lost their capitals and their property. Consequently, politicians were tempted to hide them behind a veil of euphemisms in order not to irritate their country's citizens. "Economic crisis" has been replaced by "economic downturn". "Taxes increases" has been replaced by expressions such as *some inflows / revenue enhancements / balancing / fairer revenue increases / progressive revenue / progressive taxation* [3]. For example, "In continuing our effort to highlight states where progressive revenue-raising options are gaining support" – Capitol's report says.

Moreover, the euphemistic phrase of the *Fourth World* (the world's poorest and least developed countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America) is used to reduce the obvious differences in economic development:

"The Fourth World Conference on Women is taking place as the world stands poised..." – The Guardian puts it.

In examining the issue, I have found that political euphemisms tend to euphemise official statements and reports on **global warming**. In our opinion, the expressions "Global Warming" and "Climate change" are euphemisms that conceal true causes of natural disasters. *"This summer, Clinton joined John McCain... and two other senators for a tour of Alaskan areas hard hit by climate change". "Bush outlines goals to fight climate change,"* – CNN reports says.

It didn't take long for the Trump administration to wheel out one of the more ridiculous euphemisms of recent times. The day after Trump's inauguration, the counsellor to the US president, Kellyanne Conway, came up with the much-derided *"alternative facts"* [4] to counter accusations that the then White House press secretary Sean Spicer had lied about the crowd size at Trump's inauguration.

The public in general tend to believe that politicians of all stripes quickly come to realise how useful it can be to soften the impact of unpopular actions with some carefully chosen weasel words. Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair was a great user of euphemisms in his political discourse. Many examples can be found in his interviews and speeches in 2003 to justify the Second Gulf War on Iraq, for example. He spoke of the *"liberation of Iraq"* (meaning

occupation), *"peace-keeping"* (meaning war) and these could only be achieved by *"removing Saddam"* (meaning his death rather than forcing him from a position of power) [5].

A decade earlier, the slaughter, torture and imprisonment of Bosnian Muslims in Serbia was described as *"ethnic cleansing"* when there is nothing purifying about these war crimes.

The US government's *"enhanced interrogation techniques"* is another example of strategic word choices to disguise systematic torture. Barack Obama tended to avoid using the word "war", preferring to use words such as *"effort"*, *"process"*, *"fight"* and *"campaign"* to describe the military action against ISIS, Iraq and Syria as it lessens the violence that war connotes [2].

Few political debates are as riddled with euphemisms as immigration. The accurate legal term *"illegal alien,"* which was once said without political bias and is now almost exclusively used by nativists, was replaced with *"illegal immigrant"* which was supplanted by *"undocumented immigrant"* and, in rarer cases, *"unauthorized immigrant."* Goofy terms like *"border infiltrator"* and *"illegal invader"* have not caught on yet [5]. Proponents of the new term "undocumented immigrant" argue that nobody can be illegal, so the term "illegal immigrant" is inaccurate as well as rude. Definitely, nobody is undocumented either, as they just lack the certain specific documents for legal residency and employment. Many have drivers licenses, debit cards, library cards, and school identifications that are useful documents in specific contexts but not nearly so much for immigration." *Misdocumented immigrant"* would be better if the goal was accuracy, but the goal seems to be to change people's opinions on emotional topics by changing the words they use.

An important effect of threat frame euphemisms is that they can dehumanize and attach negative attitudes to certain groups [6, c. 23]. Consider the euphemisms *"anchor baby"* and *"catch and release"*." *Anchor baby"* stands for children born to foreign nationals who are in violation of their immigration status while on U.S. soil. Those children have automatic citizenship under the U.S. Constitution. Such children are called *"anchor babies"* in order to highlight the idea that they are used by their parents to secure their stay in the country although that rarely actually happens. The term dehumanizes both the parents and their children by describing these individuals through association with an inanimate object, the *"anchor"*, and that the only purpose for the existence of the children is to resolve the parent's problem with immigration law. Threat frames also extend to other criminal activity related to immigrants.

To draw the conclusion, one can say, that euphemisms in contemporary political discourse abound. They touch upon various problems of the modern world, and there is a process of euphemisation of issues of the private life of

politicians and public figures. This is a modern trend of the English language, which speaks of the convergence of the political institution of power and the citizens of countries, as well as the desire to hide the real seriousness of certain problems.

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