



EUPHEMISM IN ENGLISH NOVELS AS LEXICAL MEANS OF EMOTIVENESS

**Shukurova Madina Askarovna**

*Associate Professor of English Linguistics Department, PhD*

*Bukhara State University*

**Mustafoeva Umida Komiljon kizi**

*1st year master's student of the specialty "Linguistics: English language"*

*English Linguistics Department*

*Bukhara State University*

**Abstract:** *This article investigates the nature, types, and functions of euphemism in selected English novels, analyzing how authors employ euphemistic language to soften taboos, express politeness, and convey ideological meanings. The research is based on a qualitative descriptive method and focuses on novels by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Orwell, and J.K.Rowling. The findings show that euphemism in English fiction performs multiple functions: maintaining decorum, masking unpleasant truths, providing irony, and reflecting psychological or political motives. Euphemism not only demonstrates the flexibility of language but also exposes the underlying cultural attitudes of different literary periods.*

**Keywords:** *euphemism, politeness, English novels, stylistic device, taboo, cultural norms*

**ЭВФЕМИЗМ В АНГЛИЙСКИХ РОМАНАХ КАК ЛЕКСИЧЕСКОЕ СРЕДСТВО  
ЭМОТИВНОСТИ**

**Шукурова Мадина Аскарровна**

*доцент кафедры английского языкознания*

*Бухарского государственного университета, PhD*

**Мустафоева Умида Комилжон кизи**

*Магистрант 1-го курса специальности «Лингвистика: английский язык»*

*кафедры английского языкознания*

*Бухарского государственного университета*

**Аннотация:** *В данной статье рассматриваются природа, типы и функции эвфемизмов в избранных английских романах, а также анализируется, как авторы используют эвфемистический язык для смягчения табуированных тем, выражения вежливости и передачи идеологических значений. Исследование основано на качественном описательном методе и охватывает произведения Джейн Остин, Чарльза Диккенса, Джорджа Оруэлла и Дж.К.Роулинг. Результаты показывают, что эвфемизмы в английской художественной прозе выполняют множество функций: поддержание речевого этикета, сокрытие неприятных истин, создание иронии и отражение психологических или политических мотивов. Эвфемизм не только*



*демонстрирует гибкость языка, но и выявляет культурные установки различных литературных эпох.*

**Ключевые слова:** *эвфемизм, вежливость, английские романы, стилистическое средство, табу, культурные нормы*

## INGLIZ ROMANLARIDA EVFEMIZM - EMOTIVLIKNING LEKSIK VOSITASI SIFATIDA

**Shukurova Madina Askarovna**

*Buxoro davlat universiteti Ingliz tilshunosligi kafedrasida dotsenti, PhD*

**Mustafoyeva Umida Komiljon qizi**

*Buxoro davlat universiteti*

*Ingliz tilshunosligi kafedrasida Lingvistika: ingliz tili mutaxassisligi*

*I-bosqich magistranti*

**Annotatsiya:** *Ushbu maqola tanlangan ingliz romanlaridagi eufemizmlarning tabiati, turlari va funksiyalarini o'rganadi hamda mualliflar eufemik ifodalarni qanday qilib taqiqlangan mavzularni yumshatish, o'dob va muloyimlikni ifodalash, shuningdek, mafkuraviy ma'nolarni yetkazish uchun qo'llashlarini tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqot sifat tahlilining tavsifiy usuliga asoslangan bo'lib, u Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Orwell va J.K.Rowling asarlariga qaratilgan. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ingliz badiiy adabiyotida eufemizm bir necha vazifalarni bajaradi: nutq odobini saqlash, noxush haqiqatlarni yashirish, ironiyani yaratish va psixologik yoki siyosiy motivlarni aks ettirish. Eufemizm nafaqat tilning moslashuvchanligini namoyon etadi, balki turli adabiy davrlarning madaniy qarashlarini ham ochib beradi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *eufemizm, muloyimlik, ingliz romanlari, uslubiy vosita, taqiq, madaniy me'yorlar*

**Introduction:** Language reflects the culture, morality, and psychology of a society. Among the many expressive tools used in literature, euphemism stands out as a form of linguistic creativity that allows writers to speak about sensitive issues without violating decorum or social taboos. Euphemism makes communication more polite and indirect by replacing harsh, unpleasant, or socially forbidden expressions with milder alternatives.

In English novels, euphemism serves as more than a tool of politeness – it becomes a marker of social behavior, class identity, and moral sensitivity. Writers use it to shape character dialogue, create atmosphere, and highlight contrasts between appearance and reality. For example, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, euphemisms reflect social restraint and politeness, while in George Orwell's *1984*, they expose political manipulation through "Newspeak".

This article aims to explore euphemism in English novels from different periods and analyze its artistic and social functions. The study focuses on how euphemism reveals the moral codes of society and contributes to the stylistic richness of literary discourse.

**Literature review:** The study of euphemism has long been a subject of interest in linguistics, stylistics, and literary criticism. Scholars such as Allan and Burridge, Rawson,



and Holder [1, 224] define euphemism as “the substitution of an agreeable or less offensive expression for one that might be harsh or unpleasant”. Euphemism arises from the human need to avoid direct mention of taboo subjects or socially uncomfortable realities.

In the literary domain, euphemism is not merely a reflection of politeness; it is an artistic tool that shapes narrative tone and reader perception. Leech [4, 81] notes that euphemisms contribute to the aesthetic quality of literature by softening harsh realities through linguistic creativity. Similarly, Lakoff and Brown [5, 91-149] associate euphemism with politeness theory, emphasizing that indirectness in language helps maintain social harmony and mitigate face-threatening acts.

Within English novels, euphemism manifests through various stylistic strategies – metaphor, understatement, circumlocution, and irony. Historical shifts in English society, from the prudish norms of the Victorian era to the liberal tendencies of the 21st century, have also influenced the nature and frequency of euphemisms. While early novels often used euphemisms to preserve moral propriety, modern literature employs them to challenge political correctness or expose social hypocrisy.

Despite its ubiquity, euphemism in novels remains underexplored compared to its linguistic study. This research bridges that gap by analyzing euphemistic usage across representative English novels, focusing on both its linguistic features and narrative functions.

**Methods:** This research follows a qualitative descriptive method based on textual analysis. The approach focuses on meaning, context, and function rather than numerical data. The study analyzes four novels representing different periods in English literature: *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813), *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens (1838), *1984* by George Orwell (1949), and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* by J.K. Rowling (2000). These works were selected because they show how euphemism evolves from social politeness to ideological and psychological expression.

The analysis involved identifying euphemistic expressions in the novels and examining their linguistic forms, communicative functions, and social meanings. The classification of euphemisms followed Allan and Burridge’s framework, which distinguishes between orthophemisms (neutral expressions), euphemisms (pleasant alternatives), and dysphemisms (offensive counterparts). Each euphemism was interpreted within its literary and cultural context to determine how it contributes to the overall message and aesthetic of the text.

**Results:** In *Pride and Prejudice*, euphemism appears as a natural part of polite conversation. The language of Austen’s society reflects the ideals of refinement and modesty. Phrases such as “a lady’s delicate situation” for pregnancy or “impropriety” for sexual misconduct reveal how people avoided direct mention of taboo subjects. Through these expressions, Austen not only mirrors the conventions of her time but also uses irony to criticize their artificiality. Her euphemisms highlight the gap between outward civility and inner judgment, exposing the tension between social expectation and personal truth.

In *Oliver Twist*, Dickens uses euphemism as a tool of moral and social criticism. The official language of institutions hides cruelty under a mask of charity. The so-called “workhouse”, described as a place of care, is in reality a place of suffering and neglect.



Dickens shows how euphemism can distort reality and protect those in power. His ironic use of gentle words to describe harsh conditions makes the reader aware of the moral hypocrisy of Victorian society.

In 1984, Orwell gives euphemism a completely new dimension. The political regime in the novel manipulates language to control thought. Words like “Ministry of Peace” for war and “Ministry of Love” for torture are deliberate euphemisms that disguise the regime’s brutality. Orwell’s concept of Newspeak illustrates how euphemism can become an instrument of totalitarian control, used not to protect feelings but to eliminate truth. Through this, he warns that linguistic manipulation can lead to moral and intellectual enslavement.

In *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, Rowling’s euphemisms are psychological and emotional rather than political or social. The most striking example is “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named”, a euphemism for Voldemort. It expresses fear and avoidance, reflecting the belief that naming evil gives it power. This euphemism connects language with emotion and belief, showing how words can both protect and restrict individuals. Rowling’s use of euphemism also helps address dark themes such as death and loss in a way that is suitable for young readers.

**Discussion:** The analysis shows that euphemism performs several key functions in English novels. In Austen’s work, it maintains social politeness and moral restraint. It is part of the linguistic code of a society that values modesty and civility. In Dickens, euphemism serves an ironic function, exposing the contrast between moral ideals and social reality. In Orwell, euphemism becomes a political weapon, proving that control of language can lead to control of thought. In Rowling, it functions as a form of psychological defense, showing how people use language to avoid fear or emotional pain.

Euphemism also evolves stylistically across literary history. In the early nineteenth century, it was used mainly for politeness and propriety. In the Victorian period, it became a means of criticism and satire. In the twentieth century, it reflected ideological manipulation, and in contemporary fiction, it expresses emotional sensitivity. Despite these changes, the core purpose of euphemism remains the same: it mediates between truth and expression, between what must be said and what must be concealed. Another important aspect is that euphemism enriches literary style. It adds depth to characterization, creates irony, and conveys subtle emotional shades. It allows writers to express moral and psychological complexity while respecting cultural limitations. Euphemism also reveals how language shapes thought and behavior, making it not only a linguistic but also a philosophical and ethical phenomenon.

**Conclusion:** Euphemism in English novels is a dynamic and multifaceted device that reflects both linguistic creativity and cultural consciousness. From Austen’s polite society to Dickens’s moral realism, Orwell’s ideological critique, and Rowling’s emotional symbolism, euphemism evolves with the times but always serves to mediate between reality and expression. It conceals pain, softens taboo, maintains decorum, and at times manipulates perception. Through euphemism, authors reveal how language can both hide and expose truth. The study confirms that euphemism is not a simple act of substitution but a complex communicative and artistic strategy. It mirrors the values and anxieties of



each age, offering insight into how people use words to manage discomfort, preserve dignity, and construct meaning. In the context of English fiction, euphemism stands as a bridge between language and life, between politeness and power, between silence and speech.

#### THE LIST OF USED LITERATURE:

1. Allan, K., & Burrige, K. Euphemism and dysphemism: language used as shield and weapon. oxford university press. 1991. – 246 p.
2. Holder, R. W. How not to say what you mean: a dictionary of euphemisms. oxford university press. 2008. – 416 p.
3. Rowling, J. K. Harry potter and the goblet of fire. bloomsbury publishing. 2000. – 636 p.
4. Leech, G. N. (*Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman. 1983. – 250 p.
5. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. *Politeness: Some universals in language use*. Cambridge University Press. 1987. – 336 p.
6. Askarovna, S. M., & Djurabayevna, D. N. (2019). Some principles of the formation and development of ethical terms in the English language in the XVI-XVIII centuries. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 2(6), 31-39.
7. Askarovna, S. M. (2021). General linguistic theories in English linguistics of the XVI-XVII centuries and the practice of norms in vocabulary. *European Scholar Journal*, 2(4), 504-506.
8. Shukurova, M. A. (2017). Coherence and cohesion as essential parts in effective writing. *Міжнародний науковий журнал Інтернаука*, (1 (1)), 143-145.
9. Askarovna, S. M. (2021, March). Comparative investigation on the semantic meaning of some terms of ethics of the XVI-XVII centuries. In *E-Conference Globe* (pp. 285-287).
10. Шукурова, М. А. XVI-XVIII АСРЛАРДА ИНГЛИЗ ТИЛИДА ЭТИКА АТАМАЛАРИНИНГ РИВОЖЛАНИШИГА ДОИР БАЪЗИ МАСАЛАЛАР НЕКОТОРЫЕ ВОПРОСЫ РАЗВИТИЯ ЭТИЧЕСКИХ ТЕРМИНОВ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ XVI-XVIII ВЕКОВ SOME ISSUES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TERMS OF ETHICS IN THE. *ANIQ VA TABIIY FANLAR*, 165.
11. Шукурова, М. (2023). REVIEW OF LINGUISTIC THEORIES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE OF THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD. *ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ* (*buxdu. uz*), 41(41).
12. Шукурова, М. А. (2021). Анализ специальной лексики английского языка XVI века по аспектам терминологичности. *МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ЖУРНАЛ ИСКУССТВО СЛОВА*, 4(2).
13. Shukurova, M. A. (2017). Useful strategies in teaching grammar in english language classes. *Міжнародний науковий журнал Інтернаука*, (1 (1)), 146-148.



14. Askarovna, S. M. (2021). Historical background on the systematization of the vocabulary of ethics. *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 11(3), 25-29.
15. Шукурова–БухГУ, М. А. (2020). КОРРЕЛЯЦИЯ СОЗНАНИЯ, ЯЗЫКА И СТИЛЯ НАУЧНО-ФИЛОСОФСКОГО ИЗЛОЖЕНИЯ ПЕРИОДА XVI-XVII ВЕКОВ. *ТАЪЛИМ ТИЗИМИДА ЧЕТ ТИЛЛАРНИ ЎРГАНИШНИНГ ЗАМОНАВИЙ МУАММОЛАРИ ВА ИСТИҚБОЛЛАРИ* *Халқаро илмий-амалий анжуман 5-6 март 2020 йил*, 597.
16. Askarovna, S. M. (2023, October). MODERN LINGUISTICS AND SOME PROBLEMS RELATED TO TERMINOLOGY. In *INTERDISCIPLINE INNOVATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CONFERENCE* (Vol. 2, No. 13, pp. 65-68).
17. Шукурова, М. (2021). Stages of the development process of the lexicoconceptual field of ethics. *ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ (buxdu.uz)*, 5(5).
18. Шукурова, М. А. (2016, April). Социоллингвистическая природа этической лексики, формирование и систематизация. In *VII Международной научно-практической конференции*.
19. Shukurova, M. A. (2021, February). COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SEMANTIC PROCESS OF ETHICS TERMS OF THE XVI-XVII CENTURIES. In *Archive of Conferences* (Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 258-260).
20. Shukurova, M. A. (2020). COMBINATORIAL-COMPONENT AND FUNCTIONAL-SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF TERMINOLOGICAL UNITS. *Scientific Bulletin of Namangan State University*, 2(4), 309-316.