INTRODUCTION

The euphemism is a substitution of an agreeable or less offensive expression in place of one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant to the listener,[1] or to make it less troublesome for the speaker, as in the case of doublespeak. The deployment of euphemisms is a central aspect within the public application of political correctness.

It may also substitute a description of something or someone to avoid revealing secret, holy, or sacred names to the uninitiated, or to obscure the identity of the subject of a conversation from potential eavesdroppers. Some euphemisms are intended to amuse.

CHAPTER 1. THE HISTORY OF EUPHEMISMS

1.1 Etymology

The word euphemism comes from the Greek word euphemo, meaning "auspicious/good/fortunate speech/kind" which in turn is derived from the Greek root-words eu (ευ), "good/well" + pheme (φήμη) "speech/speaking". The eupheme was originally a word or phrase used in place of a religious word or phrase that should not be spoken aloud; etymologically, the eupheme is the opposite of the blaspheme (evil-speaking). The primary example of taboo words requiring the use of a euphemism are the unspeakable names for a deity, such as Persephone, Hecate, or Nemesis. Euphemism was itself used as a euphemism by the ancient Greeks, meaning 'to keep a holy silence' (speaking well by not speaking at all).

Historical linguistics has revealed traces of taboo deformations in many languages. Several are known to have occurred in Indo-European languages, including the original Proto-Indo-European words for bear (\*rtkos), wolf (\*wlkwos), and deer (originally, hart; the deformation likely occurred to avoid confusion with heart). In different Indo-European languages, each of these words has a difficult etymology because of taboo deformations — a euphemism was substituted for the original, which no longer occurs in the language. An example is the Slavic root for bear — \*medu-ed-, which means "honey eater". One example in English is "donkey" replacing the old Indo-European-derived word "ass". The word "dandelion" (lit., tooth of lion, referring to the shape of the leaves) is another example, being a substitute for pissenlit, meaning "wet the bed", a possible reference to the fact that dandelion was used as a diuretic.

In some languages of the Pacific, using the name of a deceased chief is taboo. Among indigenous Australians, it is forbidden to use the name, image, or audio-visual recording of the deceased, so that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation now publishes a warning to indigenous Australians when using names, images or audio-visual recordings of people who have died.[2]

Since people are often named after everyday things, this leads to the swift development of euphemisms. These languages have a very high rate of vocabulary change.[3]

In a similar manner, classical Chinese texts were expected to avoid using characters contained within the name of the currently ruling emperor as a sign of respect. In these instances, the relevant ideographs were replaced by synonyms. While this practice creates an additional wrinkle for anyone attempting to read or translate texts from the classical period, it does provide a fairly accurate means of dating the documents under consideration.

The common names of illicit drugs, and the plants used to obtain them, often undergo a process similar to taboo deformation, because new terms are devised in order to discuss them secretly in the presence of others. This process often occurs in English (e.g. speed or crank for meth). It occurs even more in Spanish, e.g. the deformation of names for cannabis: mota (lit., "something which moves" on the black market), replacing grifa (lit., "something coarse to the touch"), replacing marihuana (a female personal name, María Juana), replacing cañamo (the original Spanish name for the plant, derived from the Latin genus name Cannabis). All four of these names are still used in various parts of the Hispanophone world, although cañamo ironically has the least underworld connotation, and is often used to describe industrial hemp, or legitimate medically-prescribed cannabis.

1.2 History of euphemisms in English

A great number of euphemisms in English came from words with Latin roots. Farb (1974) writes that after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066: "the community began to make a distinction between a genteel and an obscene vocabulary, between the Latinate words of the upper class and the lusty Anglo-Saxon of the lower. That is why a duchess perspired and expectorated and menstruated--while a kitchen maid sweated and spat and bled."

In the "good 'old' (read over the hill, chronologically-gifted) days" of the English language, there was a dazzling amount of delightful doubletalk not to mention a smattering of simply hilarious handles as seen below:

"brandy" -- referred to as "French Cream" by time-enhanced tabbies and dowager duchesses who added it to their tea (scandal broth)

"breeches" -- bumfiddles, galligaskins, inexpressibles

"brewer" -- Brother of the Bung

"constable" -- bus-napper

"coachman" -- Brother of the Whip

"dealer in fruit" -- costard monger

"eggs" -- cackling farts

"foot boy" -- catch fart

"footman" -- bone picker

"fiddler" -- gut scraper or tormentor of cat gut

"indigent" -- Gentleman of Three Outs, i.e. without money, without wit, and without manners

"match-maker" -- buttock broker

"parson" -- autem bawler who conducts his affairs in an "autem cacle tub" (church meeting hall)

"pimp" -- Brother of the Gusset

"roundabout story or way" - circumbendibus

"salesman's shop" -- Bow-Wow Shop (because the servant barks and the master bites)

"Sargeant At Arms" -- Brother of the Coif

"schoolmaster" -- bum brusher

"shoe-making" -- the art of gentle craft

"tea" -- cat lap, scandal broth

"undertaker" -- embalming surgeon

"upholsterer" -- bug-hunter

"wife" -- comfortable importance

1.3 Euphemism treadmill

Euphemisms often evolve over time into taboo words themselves, through a process described by W.V.O. Quine, and more recently dubbed the "euphemism treadmill" by Steven Pinker. (cf. Gresham's Law in economics). This is the well-known linguistic process known as 'pejoration' or 'semantic change'.

Words originally intended as euphemisms may lose their euphemistic value, acquiring the negative connotations of their referents. In some cases, they may be used mockingly and become dysphemisms.

For example, the term "concentration camp", to describe camps used to confine civilian members of the Boer community in close (concentrated) quarters, was used by the British during the Second Boer War, primarily because it sounded bland and inoffensive. Despite the high death rates in the British concentration camps, the term remained acceptable as a euphemism. However, after the Third Reich used the expression to describe its death camps, the term gained enormous negative connotation.

Also, in some versions of English, "toilet room", itself a euphemism, was replaced with "bathroom" and "water closet", which were replaced with "restroom" and "W.C." These are also examples of euphemisms which are geographically concentrated: the term "restroom" is rarely used outside of the United States and "W.C.", where before it was quite popular in Britain, is passing out of favor and becoming more popular in France and is the polite term of choice in Germany.

Connotations easily change over time. "Idiot", "imbecile", and "moron" were once neutral terms for a developmentally delayed adult of toddler, preschool, and primary school mental ages, respectively.[4] As with Gresham's law, negative connotations tend to crowd out neutral ones, so the phrase mentally retarded was pressed into service to replace them.[5] Now that, too, is considered rude, used commonly as an insult of a person, thing, or idea. As a result, new terms like "mentally challenged", "with an intellectual disability", "learning difficulties" and "special needs" have replaced "retarded". A similar progression occurred with:

lame → crippled → handicapped → disabled → physically challenged → differently abled

although in the case of "crippled" the meaning has also broadened (and hence has been narrowed with adjectives, which themselves have been euphemised); a dyslexic or colorblind person, for example, would not be termed "crippled". Even more recent is the use of person-centric phrases, such as "person(s) with disability, dyslexia, colorblindness, etc.", which ascribe a particular condition to those previously qualified with the aforementioned adjectives.

Euphemisms can also serve to recirculate words that have passed out of use because of negative connotation. The word "lame" from above, having faded from the vernacular, was revitalized as a slang word generally meaning "not living up to expectations". Connotation of a euphemism can also be subject-specific. The term "handicap" was in common use to describe a physical disability; it gained common use in sports and games to describe a scoring advantage given to a player who has a disadvantageous standing in ability, and this definition has remained common, even though the term as describing physical disability has mostly faded from common use. One exception to this is in the United States when designating "handicapped" parking spaces for such individuals.

In the early 1960s, Major League Baseball franchise owner and promoter Bill Veeck, who was missing part of a leg, argued against the then-favored euphemism "handicapped", saying he preferred "crippled" because it was merely descriptive and did not carry connotations of limiting one's capability the way "handicapped" (and all of its subsequent euphemisms) seemed to do (Veeck as in Wreck, chapter "I'm Not Handicapped, I'm Crippled"). Later, comedian George Carlin gave a famous monologue of how he thought euphemisms can undermine appropriate attitudes towards serious issues such as the evolving terms describing the medical problem of the cumulative mental trauma of soldiers in high stress situations:[6]

shell shock (World War I) → battle fatigue (World War II) → operational exhaustion (Korean War) → posttraumatic stress disorder (Vietnam War)

He contended that, as the name of the condition became more complicated and seemingly arcane, sufferers of this condition have been taken less seriously as people with a serious illness, and were given poorer treatment as a result. He also contended that Vietnam veterans would have received the proper care and attention they needed were the condition still called "shell shock". In the same routine, he echoed Bill Veeck's opinion that "crippled" was a perfectly valid term (and noted that early English translations of the Bible seemed to have no qualms about saying that Jesus "healed the cripples").

A complementary "dysphemism treadmill" exists, but is more rarely observed. One modern example is the word scumbag, which was originally a reference to a used condom, now is a fairly mild epithet.[7] This is in stark contrast to the related term douchebag, which is still semi-common but has a much more negative connotation.[citation needed]

Similarly, spastic was once a neutral descriptor of a sufferer of muscular hypertonicity in British English. But after Joey Deacon appeared on UK children's TV programme Blue Peter, children began to use "spastic" (and variants such as "spaz" and "spacker") as an insult and the term is now seen as very offensive. The Spastics Society changed their name to Scope in 1994; children then began to use "Scoper" as a similar insult. While the term was developing into an insult in British English, it was evolving in a radically different fashion in American English. In the U.S., "spastic" became a nonoffensive synonym for clumsiness, whether physical or mental, and nerdiness, and is very often used in a self-deprecating manner. The difference between the British and American connotations of "spastic" was starkly shown in 2006 when golf great Tiger Woods used "spaz" to describe his putting in that year's Masters. The remark went completely unnoticed in America, but caused a major uproar in the UK.

In his remarks on the ever-changing London slang, made in Down and Out in Paris and London, George Orwell mentioned both the euphemism treadmill and the dysphemism treadmill. He did not use these now-established terms, but observed and commented on the respective processes as early as in 1933.

CHAPTER 2. THE EUPHEMISM: ITS USAGE, CLASSIFICATION AND OTHER PECULIARITIES

2.1 Usage of euphemisms

When a phrase is used as a euphemism, it often becomes a metaphor whose literal meaning is dropped. Euphemisms may be used to hide unpleasant or disturbing ideas, even when the literal term for them is not necessarily offensive. This type of euphemism is used in public relations and politics, where it is sometimes called doublespeak. Sometimes, using euphemisms is equated to politeness. There are also superstitious euphemisms, based (consciously or subconsciously) on the idea that words have the power to bring bad fortune (for example, not speaking the word "autism"; see etymology and common examples below), and there are religious euphemisms, based on the idea that some words are holy, or that some words are spiritually imperiling (taboo; see etymology).

2.2 Classification

Many euphemisms fall into one or more of these categories:

* Terms of foreign and/or technical origin (derrière, copulation, perspire, urinate, security breach, mierda de toro, prophylactic, feces occur, sheißt)
* Abbreviations (GD for goddamn, SOB for son of a bitch, BS for bullshit, TS for tough shit, SOL for shit out of luck or PDQ for pretty damn(ed) quick,[8] BFD for big fucking deal, "MOFO for "motherfucker", POS for piece of shit, STFU or STHU for shut the fuck/hell up, RTFM for read the fucking manual /restart the fucking machine)
  + Abbreviations using a spelling alphabet, especially in military contexts (Charlie Foxtrot for "Cluster fuck", Whiskey Tango Foxtrot Oscar for "What the fuck, over?", Bravo Sierra for "bullshit" — See Military slang)
  + Plays on abbreviations (H-e-double hockey sticks for "hell", "a-double snakes" or "a-double-dollar-signs" for "ass", Sugar Honey Iced Tea for "shit", bee with an itch or witch with a capital B for "bitch", catch (or see) you next Tuesday (or Thursday) for "cunt")
  + Use in mostly clinical settings (PITA for "pain in the ass" patient)
  + Abbreviations for phrases that are not otherwise common (PEBKAC for "Problem Exists Between Keyboard And Chair", ID Ten T Error or ID-10T Error for "Idiot", TOBAS for "Take Out Back And Shoot", SNAFU for "Situation Normal: All Fucked Up")
* Abstractions and ambiguities (it for excrement, the situation for pregnancy, going to the other side for death, do it or come together in reference a sexual act, tired and emotional for drunkenness.)
* Indirections (behind, unmentionables, privates, live together, go to the bathroom, sleep together, sub-navel activities)
* Mispronunciation (goldarnit, dadgummit, efing c (fucking cunt), freakin, be-atch,shoot — See minced oath)
* Litotes or reserved understatement (not exactly thin for "fat", not completely truthful for "lied", not unlike cheating for "an instance of cheating")
* Changing nouns to modifiers (makes her look slutty for "is a slut", right-wing element for "Right Wing")
* Names, like John Thomas or Willy for penis, Fanny for vulva (british), etc.
* Slang, eg. pot for marijuana, laid for sex and so on

There is some disagreement over whether certain terms are or are not euphemisms. For example, sometimes the phrase visually impaired is labeled as a politically correct euphemism for blind. However, visual impairment can be a broader term, including, for example, people who have partial sight in one eye, or even those with uncorrected poor vision, a group that would be excluded by the word blind.

There are three antonyms of euphemism: dysphemism, cacophemism, and power word. The first can be either offensive or merely humorously deprecating with the second one generally used more often in the sense of something deliberately offensive. The last is used mainly in arguments to make a point seem more correct.

2.3 The evolution of euphemisms

Euphemisms may be formed in a number of ways. Periphrasis or circumlocution is one of the most common — to "speak around" a given word, implying it without saying it. Over time, circumlocutions become recognized as established euphemisms for particular words or ideas.

To alter the pronunciation or spelling of a taboo word (such as a swear word) to form a euphemism is known as taboo deformation. There is an astonishing number of taboo deformations in English, of which many refer to the infamous four-letter words. In American English, words which are unacceptable on television, such as fuck, may be represented by deformations such as freak — even in children's cartoons. Some examples of rhyming slang may serve the same purpose — to call a person a berk sounds less offensive than to call him a cunt, though berk is short for Berkeley Hunt which rhymes with cunt.

Bureaucracies such as the military and large corporations frequently spawn euphemisms of a more deliberate nature. Organizations coin doublespeak expressions to describe objectionable actions in terms that seem neutral or inoffensive. For example, a term used in the past for contamination by radioactive isotopes is Sunshine units.[9]

Military organizations kill people, sometimes deliberately and sometimes by mistake; in doublespeak, the first may be called neutralizing the target and the second collateral damage. Violent destruction of non-state enemies may be referred to as pacification. Two common terms when a soldier is accidentally killed (buys the farm) by their own side are friendly fire or blue on blue (BOBbing) — "buy the farm" has its own interesting history.[10]

Execution is an established euphemism referring to the act of putting a person to death, with or without judicial process. It originally referred to the execution, i.e., the carrying out, of a death warrant, which is an authorization to a sheriff, prison warden, or other official to put a named person to death. In legal usage, execution can still refer to the carrying out of other types of orders; for example, in U.S. legal usage, a writ of execution is a direction to enforce a civil money judgment by seizing property. Likewise, lethal injection itself may be considered a euphemism for putting the convict to death by poisoning.

Abortion originally meant premature birth, and came to mean birth before viability. The term "abort" was extended to mean any kind of premature ending, such as aborting the launch of a rocket. Euphemisms have developed around the original meaning. Abortion, by itself, came to mean induced abortion or elective abortion exclusively. Hence the parallel term spontaneous abortion, an "act of nature", was dropped in favor of the more neutral-sounding miscarriage.

Industrial unpleasantness such as pollution may be toned down to outgassing or runoff — descriptions of physical processes rather than their damaging consequences. Some of this may simply be the application of precise technical terminology in the place of popular usage, but beyond precision, the advantage of technical terminology may be its lack of emotional undertones and the likelihood the general public (at least initially) will not recognize it for what it really is; the disadvantage being the lack of real-life context. Terms like "waste" and "wastewater" are also avoided in favor of terms such as byproduct, recycling, reclaimed water and effluent. In the oil industry, oil-based drilling muds were simply renamed organic phase drilling muds, where organic phase is a euphemism for "oil".

CHAPTER 3. THE DIVISION OF THE EUPHEMISMS ACCORDING TO THEIR MEANING

3.1 Euphemisms for the profane

Profane words and expressions in the English language are commonly taken from three areas: religion, excretion, and sex. While profanities themselves have been around for centuries, their limited use in public and by the media has only slowly become socially acceptable, and there are still many expressions which cannot be used in polite conversation. One vantage point into the current societal tolerance of profane language is found in the frequency of such language on prime-time television. The word damn (and most other religious profanity in the English language) has lost its shock value, and as a consequence, euphemisms for it (e.g., dang, darn-it) have taken on a very stodgy feeling. Euphemisms for male masturbation such as "bashing the bishop", "waxing the dolphin", "slamming the ham" or "banging one out" are used often among young people (or youths) to avoid embarrassment in public. Excretory profanity such as piss and shit in some cases may be acceptable among informal (and usually younger)[citation needed] friends (while they almost are never acceptable in formal relationships or public use); euphemisms such as Number One and Number Two may be preferred for use with children. Most sexual terms and expressions, even technical ones, either remain unacceptable for general use or have undergone radical rehabilitation.

* Religious euphemisms

Euphemisms for deities as well as for religious practices and artifacts date to the earliest of written records. Protection of sacred names, rituals, and concepts from the uninitiated has always given rise to euphemisms, whether it be for exclusion of outsiders or the retention of power among select practitioners. Examples from the Egyptians and every other western religion abound.

Euphemisms for God and Jesus, such as gosh and gee, are used by Christians to avoid taking the name of God in a vain oath, which some believe would violate one of the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20)

When praying, Jews will typically use the word "Adonai" ('my Lord'). However, when in a colloquial setting, this is deemed inappropriate among Jews, and so typically Jews replace the word "Adonai" with the word "HaShem", which literally means, "The Name". It is notable that "Adonai" is itself a word that refers to the Jewish God's name, יהוה or YHWH, the original pronunciation of which is unknown due to a lack of vowels. It was translated as Jehovah for some centuries, but scholars now agree that it was more likely Yahweh. Traditionally, Jews have seen the name of God as ineffable and thus one that must not be spoken. According to the Torah, when Moses saw the burning bush, he asked God, "who are you?" The answer he heard was, "I am that I am". Thus, Jews have for centuries thought that the name of the Almighty is ineffable, because according to their logic pronouncing it would be equivalent to calling oneself God.[citation needed]

Euphemisms for hell, damnation, and the devil, on the other hand, are often used to avoid invoking the power or drawing the attention of the adversary. The most famous in the latter category is the expression what the dickens and its variants, which does not refer to the famed British writer but instead was a popular euphemism for Satan in its time.

* Excretory euphemisms

While urinate and defecate are not euphemisms, they are used almost exclusively in a clinical sense. The basic Anglo-Saxon words for these functions, piss and shit, are considered vulgarities and unacceptable in general use, despite the use of piss in the King James Bible (in Isaiah 36:12 and elsewhere).

The word manure, referring to animal feces used as fertilizer for plants, literally means "worked with the hands" (from the Latin: manus, manūs — "hand"), alluding to the mixing of manure with earth. Several zoos market the byproduct of elephants and other large herbivores as Zoo Doo or Zoopoop, and there is a brand of chicken manure available in garden stores under the name Cock-a-Doodle Doo. Also, a brand of sheep manure is called "Baa Baa Doo." Similarly, the abbreviation BS, or the word bull, often replaces the word bullshit in polite society. (The term bullshit itself generally means lies or nonsense, and not the literal "shit of a bull", making it a dysphemism.)

There are any number of lengthier periphrases for excretion used to excuse oneself from company, such as to powder one's nose, to see a man about a dog (or horse), to drop the kids off at the pool or to release the chocolate hostages (these expressions could actually be regarded as dysphemisms). Slang expressions which are neither particularly euphemistic nor dysphemistic, such as take a leak, form a separate category.

In some languages, various other sensitive subjects give rise to euphemisms and dysphemisms. In Spanish, one such subject is class and status. The word señorito is an example, although the euphemism treadmill has turned it to a disparagement, at least in Mexico.

* Sexual euphemisms

The Latin term pudendum and the Greek term αιδοίον (aidoion) for the genitals literally mean "shameful thing". Groin, crotch, and loins refer to a larger region of the body, but are euphemistic when used to refer to the genitals. The word masturbate is derived from Latin, the word manus meaning hand and the word sturbare meaning to defile. In pornographic stories, the words rosebud and starfish are often used as euphemisms for anus, generally in the context of anal sex.

Sexual intercourse was once a euphemism derived from the more general term intercourse by itself, which simply meant "meeting" but now is normally used as a synonym for the longer phrase, thus making the town of Intercourse, Pennsylvania, a subject of jokes in modern usage.

The "baseball metaphors for sex" are perhaps the most famous and widely-used set of polite euphemisms for sex and relationship behavior in the U.S. The metaphors encompass terms like "hitting it off" for a good start to relationship, "Striking out" for being unlucky with a love interest, and "running the bases" for progressing sexually in a relationship. The "bases" themselves, from first to third, stand for various levels of sexual activity from French kissing to "petting", itself a euphemism for manual genital stimulation, all of which is short of "scoring" or "coming home", sexual intercourse. "Hitting a home run" describes sex during the first date, "batting both ways" (also "switch-hitting") or "batting for the other team" describes bisexuality or homosexuality respectively, and "stealing bases" refers to initiating new levels of sexual contact without invitation. Baseball-related euphemisms also abound for the "equipment"; "Bat and balls" are a common reference to the male genitalia, while "glove" or "mitt" can refer to the female anatomy.

There are many euphemisms for birth control devices, sometimes even propagated by the manufacturers: Condoms are known as "rubbers", "sheaths", "love gloves", "diving suits", "raincoats", "Johnnies" (in Ireland and to a lesser degree Britain) etc. The birth control pill is known simply as "The Pill", and other methods of birth control are also given generalized euphemisms like "The Patch", "The Sponge", "Shots", etc. There are also many euphemisms for menstruation, such as "having the painters in", being "on the rag", "flying the flag" (originally a euphemism for hanging out the bedsheet after a wedding night as a testament to the woman's virginity), or it simply being "that time of the month", Munster playing at home (Irish).

Euphemisms are also common in reference to sexual orientations and lifestyles. For example in the movie "Closer" the character played by Jude Law uses the euphemism "He valued his privacy" for being gay.

As an aside, the use of euphemisms for sexual activity has grown under the pressure of recent rulings by the Federal Communications Commission regarding what constitutes "decent" on-air broadcast speech. The FCC included many well known euphemisms in its lists of banned terms but indicated that even new and unknown coinages might be considered indecent once it became clear what they referenced. George Carlin's "Seven Words You Can't Say On TV" evolved into the "Incomplete List of Impolite Words", available in text and audio form, and contains hundreds of euphemisms and dysphemisms to genitalia, the act of having sex, various forms of sex, sexual orientations, etc. that have all become too pejorative for polite conversation, including such notables as "getting your pole varnished" and "eating the tuna taco". Carlin also did a bit on the uses of the word "fuck", originally only a dysphemism for the sex act but becoming an adverb, adjective, noun, etc. This "diversity" is also mentioned on in the movie The Boondock Saints after the main characters commit a mass murder of bosses followed by a violent joke on a friend who is in the Mafia.

* Euphemisms referring to profanity itself

In the Spanish language, words that mean "swear word" are used as exclamations in lieu of an actual swear word. The Spanish word maldición, literally meaning "curse" or "bad word", is occasionally used as an interjection of lament or anger, to replace any of several Spanish profanities that would otherwise be used in that same context. The same is true in Italian with the word maledizione.

In Greek, the word κατάρα "curse" is found, although βρισιά, from ύβρις(hubris) is more commonly used, and in English (especially British usage), an exclamation that is used in a similar style is curses. The stereotyped "Perils of Pauline" silent film might have the villain tying his victim to a railroad track. When the hero rescues the heroine, the card might say, "Curses! Foiled again!" in place of whatever cursing the character presumably uttered.

* Euphemisms for death and murder

The English language contains numerous euphemisms related to dying, death, burial, and the people and places which deal with death. The practice of using euphemisms for death is likely to have originated with the magical belief that to speak the word "death" was to invite death; where to "draw Death's attention" is the ultimate bad fortune — a common theory holds that death is a taboo subject in most English-speaking cultures for precisely this reason. It may be said that one is not dying, but fading quickly because the end is near. People who have died are referred to as having passed away or passed or departed. Kick the bucket seems innocuous enough until one considers that such might be fatal if such removes a commonplace stand that prevents a suicidal hanging. Deceased is a euphemism for "dead", and sometimes the deceased is said to have gone to a better place, but this is used primarily among the religious with a concept of Heaven. Was taken to Jesus implies salvation specifically for Christians, but met his maker may imply some judgment, content implied or unknown, by God.

Some Christians often use phrases such as gone to be with the Lord or called to higher service (this latter expression being particularly prevalent in the Salvation Army) or "graduated" to express their belief that physical death is not the end, but the beginning of the fuller realization of redemption.

Orthodox Christians often use the euphemism fallen asleep or fallen asleep in the Lord, which reflects Orthodox beliefs concerning death and resurrection.

The dead body entices many euphemisms, some polite and some profane, as well as dysphemisms such as worm food, or dead meat. Modern rhyming slang contains the expression brown bread. The corpse was once referred to as the shroud (or house or tenement) of clay, and modern funerary workers use terms such as the loved one (title of a novel about Hollywood undertakers by Evelyn Waugh) or the dear departed. (They themselves have given up the euphemism funeral director for grief therapist, and hold arrangement conferences with relatives.) Among themselves, mortuary technicians often refer to the corpse as the client. A recently dead person may be referred to as "the late John Doe". The term cemetery for "graveyard" is a borrowing from Greek, where it was a euphemism, literally meaning 'sleeping place'. The term undertaking for "burial" is so well-established that most people do not even recognize it as a euphemism. In fact, undertaking has taken on a negative connotation, as undertakers have a devious reputation.

Contemporary euphemisms and dysphemisms for death tend to be quite colorful, and someone who has died is said to have passed away, passed on, checked out, bit the big one, kicked the bucket, bitten the dust, popped their clogs, pegged it, carked it, turned their toes up, bought the farm, cashed in their chips, fallen off their perch, croaked, given up the ghost (originally a more respectful term, cf. the death of Jesus as translated in the King James Version of the Bible Mark 15:37), gone south, gone west, gone to California, shuffled off this mortal coil (from William Shakespeare's Hamlet), Run down the curtain and joined the Choir Invisible, or assumed room temperature (actually a dysphemism in use among mortuary technicians). When buried, they may be said to be pushing up daisies, sleeping the big sleep, taking a dirt nap, checking out the grass from underneath or six feet under. There are hundreds of such expressions in use. (Old Burma-Shave jingle: "If daisies are your favorite flower, keep pushin’ up those miles per hour!") In Edwin Muir's 'The Horses' a euphemism is used to show the elimination of the human race 'The seven days war that put the world to sleep.'

Euthanasia also attracts euphemisms. One may put one out of one's misery, put one to sleep, or have one put down, the latter two phrases being used primarily with dogs, cats, and horses who are being or have been euthanized by a veterinarian. (These terms are not usually applied to humans, because both medical ethics and law deprecate euthanasia.) In fact, Dr. Bernard Nathanson has pointed out that the word "euthanasia" itself is a euphemism, being Greek for "good death".

Some euphemisms for killing are neither respectful nor playful, but instead clinical and detached, including terminate, wet work, to take care of one, to do them in, to off, or to take them out. To cut loose or open up on someone or something means "to shoot at with every available weapon". Gangland euphemisms for murder include whack, rub out, hit, take him for a ride, or "put him in cement boots" or "put him in a concrete overcoat", the latter two implying disposal in deep water, if then alive by drowning; the arrangement for a killing may be a simple "contract", which suggests a normal transaction of business. One of the most infamous euphemisms in history was the German term Endlösung, frequently translated in English as "Final Solution" as if it were the consequence of a bureaucratic decision or even an academic exercise instead of a systematic plan for genocide.

Some dysphemisms, especially for death are euphemisms or dysphemisms for other unpleasant events and thus are unpleasant in their literal meaning, used to generalize a bad event. "Having your ass handed to you", "left for the rats", "toasted", "roasted", "burned", "pounded", "bent over the barrel", "screwed over" or other terms commonly describe death or the state of imminent death, but also are common in describing defeat of any kind such as a humiliating loss in a sport or video game, being unfairly treated or cast aside in business affairs, being badly beaten in a fight, and similar. Such an execution device as the electric chair has been known as "Old Sparky" or "Yellow Mama", and the device that delivers lethal chemicals to the condemned in a lethal injection is reduced to "the needle".

To terminate with prejudice generally means to end one's employment without possibility of rehire (as opposed to lay off, where the person can expect rehire if business picks up), but the related term to terminate with extreme prejudice now usually means to kill. The adjective extreme may occasionally be omitted. In a famous line from the movie Apocalypse Now, Captain Willard is told to terminate Colonel Kurtz's commission "with extreme prejudice". An acronym, TWEP has been coined from this phrase, which can be used as a verb: "He was TWEPed/TWEPped."

The Dead Parrot Sketch from Monty Python's Flying Circus contains an extensive list of euphemisms for death, referring to the deceased parrot that the character played by John Cleese had purchased. The popularity of the sketch has itself increased the popularity of some of these euphemisms — indeed, it has introduced another euphemism for death, "pining for the fjords" — although in the sketch that phrase was used by the shop owner to assert that the parrot was not dead, but was merely quiet and contemplative.

A similar passage occurs near the beginning of The Twelve Chairs, where Bezenchuk, the undertaker, astonishes Vorobyaninov with his classification of people by the euphemisms used to speak of their deaths. The game Dungeon Siege contains many euphemisms for death as well. Likewise the videogame Secret of Mana uses the phrase sees the reaper to mean death.

Also, a scene in the film Patch Adams features Patch (Robin Williams) dressed in an angel costume, reading out various synonyms and euphemisms for the phrase "to die" to a man dying of cancer. This evolves into a contest between the two men to see who can come up with more, and better, euphemisms, ending when Patch comes up with "and if we bury you ass up, we'll have a place to park my bike."

The name of the village of Ban Grong Greng in Thailand is a euphemism for Death Village. It literally means the Village of the Dreaded Gong. It is so named because it is the home to Wat Grong Greng (temple of the dreaded gong) at which the burning of bodies at funerals is preceded by the beating of a gong.

3.2 Euphemisms in job titles

Euphemisms are common in job titles; some jobs have complicated titles that make them sound more impressive than the common names would imply, such as CPA in place of car parking attendant. Many of these euphemisms may include words such as engineer, though in fact the people who do the job are not accredited in engineering. Extreme cases, such as sanitation engineer for janitor, or 'transparent-wall maintenance officer' for window cleaner, are cited humorously more often than they are used seriously. Another example is Henny Youngman's joke that his brother-in-law claimed to be a "diamond cutter" — his job was to mow the lawn at Yankee Stadium. Less extreme cases, such as custodian for janitor or administrative assistant for secretary, are considered more terms of respect than euphemisms. Where the work itself is seen as distasteful, a euphemism may be used, for example "rodent officer" for a rat-catcher, or "cemetery operative" for a gravedigger. In the British comedy series Yes, Minister episode The Skeleton in the Cupboard, the civil service in general and Bernard in particular refers to civil service rat-catchers as "environmental health officers"

3.3 Common examples

Other common euphemisms include:

* getting smashed or hammered instead of 'drinking' or 'being drunk'
* big, fluffy, full-figured or heavy-set instead of 'fat'
* lost their lives for 'were killed'
* wellness for benefits and treatments that tend to only be used in times of sickness
* restroom for toilet room in American English (the word toilet was itself originally a euphemism)
* a love of musical theatre, light in the loafers, good fashion sense or confirmed bachelor for male homosexuality
* woman in sensible shoes for lesbian
* acting like rabbits, making love to, getting it on, cheeky time, doing it, making the beast with two backs, or sleeping with for having sex with
* sanitary landfill for garbage dump (and a temporary garbage dump is a transfer station), also often called a Civic Amenity in the UK
* ill-advised for very poor or bad
* an intestinal release of pressure for fart
* pre-owned vehicles or even "pre-loved" for used cars
* motivation for bribe
* a student being held back a grade level for having failed or flunked the grade level
* correctional facility for prison
* peer homework help or comparing answers for cheating
* the north of Ireland for Northern Ireland, which is seen by many Irish people as a term imposed by the British and therefore a profanity; however, saying the north of Ireland may be primarily a way of identifying oneself with the Irish Nationalist cause, rather than a euphemism
* the big C for cancer (in addition, some people whisper the word when they say it in public, and doctors euphemistically use technical terminology when discussing cancer in front of patients, e.g., "c.a." or "neoplasia"/"neoplastic process", "carcinoma" for "tumor"); euphemisms for cancer are used even more so in the Netherlands, because the Dutch word for cancer can be used as a curse word
* bathroom tissue, t.p., or bath tissue for toilet paper (usually used by toilet paper manufacturers)
* custodian or caretaker for janitor (Also originally a euphemism — in Latin, it means doorman. In the British Secret Service, it may still carry the ancient meaning. It does in the novels of John le Carré.)
* sanitation worker (or, sarcastically, sanitation officer or sanitation engineer), or garbologist, for "bin man" or garbage man
* economically depressed neighborhood or culturally-deprived environment for ghetto or slum
* force, police action, peace process or conflict for war
* alcohol-related, single-car crash for drunk driver
* mature or been around the block for old or elderly
* haem or heme (Americanism) for blood, often used in medical settings ("severe heme loss").
* enhanced interrogation technique for torture
* persuasion for torture
* take legal action for sue
* fee for fine
* gaming for gambling
* specific about what one eats for being a picky eater
* intellectually challenged for being mentally retarded
* Before that, mentally retarded for feeble minded
* Before that, feeble minded for halfwit
* adult entertainment, adult material, or erotica for pornography
* to have been paid for 'being fired from or by one's employer'
* to cut excesses (in a budget) for to fire employees
* legal capital for stated capital
* gravitationally challenged for clumsy
* gender reassignment for sex change
* differently abled for disabled
* chemical dependency for drug addiction
* dual-diagnosed for having both mental illness and drug problems
* co-morbidity for simultaneous existence of related mental and physical health issues (a dysphemism, perhaps...)
* gentlemen's club for go-go bar or strip club
* fertility center for infertility center
* mental health center for mental illness center
* it's snowin' down south for your slip is showing
* vertically-challenged for short
* feeling no pain (and dozens of others) for drunk
* your fly is undone for your zip is down

These lists might suggest that most euphemisms are well-known expressions. Often euphemisms can be somewhat situational; what might be used as a euphemism in a conversation between two friends might make no sense to a third person. In this case, the euphemism is being used as a type of innuendo. At other times, the euphemism is common in some circles (such as the medical field) but not others, becoming a type of jargon or, in underworld situations especially, argot. One such example is the line "put him in bed with the captain's daughter" from the popular sea shanty Drunken Sailor. Although this line may sound more like a reward for getting drunk to non-seamen, the phrase "captain's daughter" was actually a euphemism used among sailors for the cat o' nine tails (itself a euphemism for a kind of whip).

Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, in his controversial speech that triggered the 2006 anti-government protests, used a number of vulgar phrases that were translated euphemistically by the media as "screwed up" and "did not bother".

Euphemisms can also be used by governments to rename statutes to use a less offensive expression. For example, in Ontario, Canada, the "Disabled Person Parking Permit" was renamed to the "Accessible Parking Permit" in 2007.[11]

The word euphemism itself can be used as a euphemism. In the animated short It's Grinch Night (See Dr. Seuss), a child asks to go to the euphemism, where euphemism is being used as a euphemism for outhouse. This euphemistic use of "euphemism" also occurred in the play Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? where a character requests, "Martha, will you show her where we keep the, uh, euphemism?" It is analogous to the 19th-century use of unmentionables for underpants.

Also, lots of euphemisms are used in the improvised television show, Whose Line Is It Anyway?. They are used often in the game 'If You Know What I Mean', where players are given a scene and have to use as many obscure clichés and euphemisms as possible.

CONCLUSION

The word euphemism itself can be used as a euphemism. In the animated short It’s Grinch Night (See Dr. Seuss), a child asks to go to the euphemism, where euphemism is being used as a euphemism for outhouse. This euphemistic use of “euphemism” also occurred in the play Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Where a character requests, “Martha, will you show her where we keep the, uh, euphemism? It is analogous to the 19th century use of unmentionables for underpants.

Euphemisms are substitutes for their synonyms. Their use and very existence are caused either by social conventions or by certain psychological factors. Most of them have stylistic connotations in their semantic structures. One can also assume that there is a special euphemistic connotation that can be singled out in the semantic structure of each such word. Let me point out, too, that euphemistic connotations in formal euphemisms are different in “flavour” from those in slang euphemistic substitutes. In the first case they are solemn and delicately evasive, and in the second rough and somewhat cynical, reflecting an attempt to laugh off an unpleasant fact.

Euphemisms always tend to be a source of new formations because after a short period of use the new term becomes so closely connected with the notion that it turns a word as obnoxious as earlier synonym.

And as linguistic phenomenon euphemism is needed to be investigated in many aspects: in comparison with other languages, definition of the time and reason of their appearance, determination of usage in literary and scientific books. It helps us to get information of the world people.

There are stable euphemisms, and are depending on situations. If constant is a constant synonym of the certain concept situational depends on the contents which at it is put or a context in which it is used.

It is possible to allocate also types euphemism behind features of construction. Is one-worded – synonyms – «features – crafty», is two-worded and an adjective – «evil spirit».

As a result of distribution and influences of mass media and different psychological levers on language presently constructing type euphemism will intensively penetrate into all spheres colloquial and a literary language. Were especially strongly distributed tendencies in the English language in the USA where advertising and business really without any restriction «break» language on the order. Not surprisingly because some American linguists even suggest to distinguish two languages: «language of the facts» (fact language) and «language of ideas» (іdea language).

For the translator it is very important to know about features of the use euphemism in language correctly to estimate a role of implied sense, it is especial while translating publicist materials or fiction.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL OTHER EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH EUPHEMISMS

OTHER WORDS FOR OTHER PLACES

There are plenty of words for places we need but would like to avoid in polite conversation:

Brothel: common bawdy house, house of entertainment, house of ill-repute, massage parlor, red-light establishment, (where littering and loitering are strictly prohibited).

Garbage Dump: Sanitary landfill, municipal refuse yard

Jail: hoosegow, holding unit, secure facility

One Room Living Unit: alternative lifestyle choice, smart-growth choice, studio suite, efficiency unit, granny suite, transit-oriented young lifestyle choice

Bathroom: ablution hut, boghouse comfort station, garderobe, gentleman's quarters, "his" and "hers", House of Honor, ladies room, lavatory, men's room, necessarium, place of convenience, place of ease, porcelain palace, public washroom, powder room, privy, room 100, the john, the jakes, the redorter, throne room, washroom, water closet, W.C.

Elderly Accommodation: senior-oriented residence, continum of care lifestyle community, all-inclusive retirement living community, full-service lifestyle residence, assisted-living facility, independent-living facility, wellness and vitality residence

RESPONDING TO THE CALL OF NATURE:

To powder one's nose, to see a man about a dog, to frost a rock

PRETTY NAMES FOR UNPLEASANT REALITIES OF LIFE

Neil Postman in his book, Crazy Talk Stupid Talk (New York, Delacorte Press, 1976), suggests that a euphemism is an exalted term used in place of a down-to-earth term, or "an attempt to give prettier term to an uglier reality."

And, speaking of "death" and "taxes", American spin doctors have come up with a new term to describe the ravages of war and innovative ways to use tax-payers money to rebuild sandcastles in Iraq as "post-kinetic development".

So, taking our cue from this learned author, there are oodles of pretty names one can use to describe unpleasant realities of life such as "death" and "taxes".

It seems that "taxes" are getting such a bad rap these days that spin-doctors have been working overtime to come up with new variations on one very unpleasant civic duty, to submit to taxation ...otherwise known as "the process of plucking the most amount of feathers from a goose with the least amount of hissing." Whoa, let's celebrate "Tax Free Day"!

It is therefore not surprising that we have an amusing array of terms for taxation: "access fees/charges", "carbon footprint contributions", "civic assessment fees", "direct universal service support", "economic incentives", "economic stimulus packages", "environmental externality factors", "impact fees", "income shifting options", "innovative sources of financing", "late fees", "redistribution of wealth alternatives", "redeployment of revenue", "restructuring of budgets", "revenue enhancements", "service charges", "socially-responsible public investments", "social support subsidies", "transfer payments", "universal service charges", "value-added revenue opportunities", and "user-fees".

As some have suggested, "taxation" (is a legal and mandatory system of professional if not progressive pick-pocketing), better known as a marvellous method of "robbing Peter to pay Paul".

And, when one is complaining about why one's wallet is just a tad lighter these days, just remember what Mark Twain had to say on this matter: "The only difference between a tax man and a taxidermist is that the taxidermist leaves the skin."

A TIME-HONORED TABOO TOPIC

Do you dread using the "d" word? The subject of unpleasant realities of life would not be complete without a glimpse at the time-honored taboo topic of "death". And, if one wishes to avoid using this five-letter word, there are a myriad of other quaint if not quirky expressions from which to choose:

A

arbitrary deprivation of life, ashes to ashes and dust to dust, asleep, assumed room temperature, ate his last supper

B

basting the formaldehyde turkey, be taken, bereft of life, bite the biscuit, bite the big one, bite the dust, bought the farm, bump[ed] off, buried, buy a pine condo, buy it

C

cadaverous, called to a higher place, carked it, cashed in their chips, cashed out, ceased to be, check out, checking out the grass from underneath, cold, conk, croak, crossed over, crossed the bar, crossed the River Styx, cut-down, cut-off

D

danced the last dance, deceased, dead, dead as a doornail, dead meat, defunct, demise, departed, destroyed, diagnostic misadventure of high magnitude, dirt, dirt nap, disappeared without warning, disincentivized, donated the liver pate, done for

E

eat it, enjoy his/her last dance, enter the slumber room, erased, executed, expended, expired, executive actioned, extinction of the person

F

faded quickly, failed to fulfill his/her wellness potential, failed to thrive, fatally wounded, final solution, finished, fragged, fried

G

gathered to his people, get your wings, give up the ghost, going into the fertilizer business, going to the big place in the sky, gone, gone belly-up, gone into the west, gone to a better place, gone to meet their Maker, gone to be with the Lord, gone to sleep, got a one-way ticket

H

heaven-bound

I

in a better place, in Heaven/Hell, in a kinder gentler place, in repose, in his/her box, in the casket, in the clover, in the eternity box, in the grave, in the ground, in the mortuary, interred

J

joined the choir invisible, joined the White Buffalo in the sky

K

kicked the bucket, kicked off, killed

L

late, left us, lie down with one's fathers, lifeless, liquidated, living-impaired, lost

M

member of the Boot Hill brigade, metabolic processes are now history, mortified

N

negative patient care outcome, neutralized, no longer a factor, no longer with us, no more, non-living, nonviable

O

offed, off the twig

P

paid Charon's fare, passed away/on/over, pegged it, perished, permanently indisposed, permanently out of print, pining for the fjords, popped his/her clogs, popped off, promoted to Sub-Terranean Truffle Inspector, pushing up the daisies, put down

R

remains, rest in peace (R.I.P.), returned to the ground, rode off into the sunset, rubbed out, run down the curtain

S

sell the farm, shuffled off the mortal coil, six-feet under, sleeping with the fishes, snuffed, snuff it, snuffed out, sprouted wings, stiff, stone-dead, succombed, suffered an unfortunate turn of events, sustained a therapeutic misadventure

T

taking a dirt nap, taken from us, terminal episode, terminally-inconvenienced, terminated, terminated with extreme prejudice, that good night, took his/her last breath, T.U. - Toes Up, turn their toes up, turn into a ghost

V

VSA - Vital Signs Absent

W

wandering the Elysian fields, went to the big blue baseball field/shopping mall in the sky, whacked, with the ancestors, and last but not least, worm food.

GENTLE WORDS FOR GENTLE MEN?

The eighteenth century is full of fun...from inns of inequity to palaces of pleasure, and the English language from Shakespeare onwards has been a riot of linguistic wit and mirthful mayhem.

Here are a few choice phrases referring to the flamboyance of some fly-by-night fellows.

* Gentleman Commoner: An empty bottle.
* Gentleman's Companion: A louse or gnit.
* Gentleman's Master: A highway robber.
* Gentleman of Three Ins: A gentleman who is in debt, in jail, and in danger of remaining there for life.
* Gentleman of Three Outs: A gentleman who is without credit/money, without wit, and without manners.

The English language is full of colorful terms for the expulsion of "vagrant airs and volatile subjects" by members of the animal kingdom.

Those who perpetrate foul winds in enclosed places or at inopportune times such as "Puff the Methane Dinosaur" may be referred to as "frigging freepers" "flaming farteurs", "flutterblasters", "fundusbreakers" or simply those who are known by family and friends as "Flatus Factory.

The "random if not reticent release of a wayward wind", or perhaps several "entertaining emissions" may also be referred to in mixed company at a social gathering as "a cocktail party "calico", "a party paradiddle" or "a sumptuous slider". Scientific snobs also known as "Princes of Plotch & Scotch" prefer to define these "enigmatic emanations" as "self-processed, self-propelled and self-stoked organic fuels in a self-contained power plant".

The real question is whether they're willing to accept the entertaining euphemisms for the "elderly": active-lifestyler, advanced in years, bat, biddy, chronologically-gifted, contemplative character, codger, cougar, crone, curmudgeon, dentured dandy, empty-nester, fogey, Freedom 55er, gaffer, geezer, golden-ager, granny, gramps, grey-hairs, Little Old Lady (LOL), Little Old Man (LOM), longer-living, mature individual, ninny, noteworthy for his/her character lines, octogenarian, old biddy, old coot, old dog, old fox, old soul, oldster, old-timer, over-the-hill, positive ager, prime-timer, retiree, salt-and-pepper generation, self-caring person, senior citizen, senior, seasoned citizen, silver fox, Third-Ager, wise woman, women of a certain age, woman of substance, and young-at-heart.