

EUPHEMIZATION AND DYSPHEMIZATION OF DISEASE NAMES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This article covers the issues of euphemization and dysphemization of disease names in English. Diseases cause dark periods of human life, unpleasant moments. Any person who has seen the face of this world, regardless of the level of development and advancement of the medical field, will involuntarily experience such dark days during their lifetime. As talking about one's own and loved ones' illnesses sometimes causes hesitation, sometimes shame, sometimes fear, sometimes hatred, and many similar feelings in a person, the names of diseases are rich in euphemisms and dysphemisms. It is for this reason that linguists are focusing on what words people use when they or their loved ones are sick.

Keywords: euphemization, dysphemization, disease, English language.

In English linguistics, a number of works have been done on the euphemistic and dysphemistic study of disease names, including scientific works of Crawford Ellison's research on terms related to women's body and death, Susan Sontag's study of disease as a metaphor, Allan Keys and George Keith [1] on taboo words. Denis Jamet's scientific research on euphemization and dysphemization of disease names is also of particular importance for our ongoing research. In his research paper on the euphemization of disease names in English and French it is said: *"Just think of the phrase healthcare in English, or services de santé in French; if no attention is paid, it may go unnoticed that the very notion of disease has completely disappeared from the negatively-connoted expressions they are substituted to – respectively medical treatment and soins médicaux – to leave room to the nouns health and santé, which are positively connoted. Think of mad house / mental hospital / (insane) asylum / looney bin in English,... which respectively became mental health institution / mental home / sanatorium / sanitarium ... Consciously or unconsciously, we all tend to sugar-coat unpleasant reality with sweet-talking techniques, a.k.a. euphemisms."* [2]



Issues of euphemization and dysphemization of disease names have been studied in detail in relation to phraseological nomenclature – for example, L.K. Bayramova's dissertation work entitled "Diseases in Russian, English, German, French and their phraseological euphemistic nominations" lists the following phraseological nominations of disease names:

Nausea – *“В английском языке при описании тошноты также используются эвфемистические выражения: shoot / toss one's cookies (букв. Выбрасывать/метать домашнее печенье). И поскольку приступ тошноты нередко наступает у некоторых людей во время их морского путешествия, то тошнота может передаваться эвфемистически как: feed the fishes (букв. Кормить рыб), то есть человека стошнило прямо в море”* [3] (In English, when describing nausea, euphemistic expressions such as: shoot / toss one's cookies are used. And since an attack of nausea often occurs in some people during their sea voyage, nausea can be euphemistically transmitted as: feed the fishes, that is, a person vomited right into the sea).

As it can be seen from the examples chosen by L.K. Bayramova nausea during a sea voyage is used as a typical model in the speech of the English-speaking world. Using the British National Corpus [4], the following contexts were selected:

1. *We've got a search party out there right now, but I'm getting more and more worried about some of our guys feeding the fishes.*
2. *I was seasick on the ferry and had to feed the fish.*
3. *He drank so much that he's feeding the fish.*

In the BNC (British national corpus) [5], we identified the following contexts with the participation of phraseological units representing the state of diarrhea:

Basra belly

1. *The best way to avoid Basra belly is to drink bottled water.*
2. *The Basra belly hit me while I was on the bus.*

Montezuma revenge:

1. *The best way to avoid Montezuma's revenge is to drink bottled water.*
2. *I had a little touch of Montezuma's revenge the second day, but other than that we had a wonderful time.*

Aztec two-step:

I was there for only two days before I was struck down with the Aztec two-step.



Delhi belly:

1. *It would have been a great trip if it weren't for the Delhi belly I had towards the end.*
2. *I've got something you can take for Delhi belly.*

According to L.K. Bayramova's classification, "shameful" and "dirty", physiologically unpleasant diseases are euphemized – diarrhea belongs to this category. Diarrhea itself is not actually a disease, but a symptom of a number of different diseases, such as intestinal flu, dysentery, etc.

The role of euphemisms and dysphemisms in medical discourse is very large, the Uzbek people say that "яхши сўз жон озиғи" (a good word is life-giving), "буғдой нонинг бўлмаса, буғдой сўзинг бўлсин" (don't have wheat bread, let wheat be your word), "яхши сўз билан илон инидан, ёмон сўз билан қилич қинидан чиқади" (with a good word snake comes out of its den, with bad word a sword comes out of scabbard). In his famous work "Қобуснома" Kaikovu recommends not to scare the patient during medical issues[4]. In conclusion, we can say that euphemisms and dysphemisms have a great power, softening the impact of the disease (a good word gives strength to overcome the disease, the patient believes that he/she will recover and overcomes the pain), or, on the contrary, the power of worsening (a harsh word makes the disease look more frightening, the hope for recovery fades, even leading to suicide). Disease euphemisms appear to soften a particular name, and over time these euphemistic units themselves become "scary", and are replaced by new euphemistic units... This process happens again and again, endlessly.

List of Used Literature

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