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# Social & Technical Aspects Of Language: Euphemisms & Jargons

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## ABSTRACT

Language is a mode of communication that has the ability to carry out communications. Today, the use of euphemisms and jargon has been employed in high-frequency domains like politics, health, science, and law. The present research paper reveals how these are perceived in a context by the people and aims at identifying them in various aspects. It explores the various strategies such as understatement, metaphors, synonyms and substitution and their part in making the speaker more intrinsic and considerate. The analysis revealed insightful points and its influence on the recipients. The study illustrates their pros and cons and recommends their usage for more active communication. It also emphasizes on their traits and how it came into being in the professional world. Language is a powerful medium to connect people as it creates harmony among them and if it is not used judiciously, it brings bitterness and spoils the sublimity of the language. It is the language which distinguishes the mankind from the animals. Therefore, it is advisable to use the language sophisticatedly and avoid euphemisms and jargon as much as possible. They could be used either with the same profession or from an entertainment point of view informally.

**Keywords:** Language, Speaking skills, Sublimity, Jargon, Terminology & Euphemism.

## INTRODUCTION

Euphemism is referred to as the language of strategic fouling (Miroslav Imbrisevic). John L. Austin was one of the most famous and leading philosophers of the twentieth century. In his book *How to do things with words*, Austin concluded that words not only describe the world but also change the world [1]. A euphemism, whose primary purpose is to excuse the action, is a word or a phrase that substitutes an offensive or derogatory expression to a decent or agreeable one in contrast to dysphemism which is an unpleasant term used instead of a decent or neutral one. These are in disguise and are yet to be figured out by the grammarians.

Euphemisms were introduced to maintain harmony in the society and in a way giving power over making use of unacceptable topics acceptable in discussions. Its role was presented in Herbert, 2016 in healthcare communication for particularly considering the patient's emotions and suffering in mind, which increases the understanding of their condition and is an approach in making their experience less frightful [2]. There are clear situations where using euphemism might confuse the situation such as equating sleep with death; in such circumstances it is often preferable to give straight forward scenario. It is suggested that the vague words act as the hindrance in the patient's ability to think and contemplate about the actual illness. It should lie somewhere in between the vague terms and the medical jargon. Caution should be practiced with children. For example, if a sibling of a child (who has died) has been told that he is sleeping then the sibling might believe that he would wake up. Since, children are amazingly concrete thinkers, they might experience that their sibling did not wake up from the "sleep" and in turn sleep can become their nightmare. In fact, the public did try, according to a survey performed in the UK, to substitute the word death with passed away, deceased, kicked the bucket, passed on. Culture also has a huge impact. Encoding and interpreting of the expressions are very specific in every culture and of course language. The term 'finishing up' is the culturally appropriate euphemism for dying among the Aboriginal Australians. This process also has to do a lot with the speaker's assessment of the subject matter and contemplate if the discussion otherwise requires rudeness, indecency, harshness, etcetera.

Euphemism was then known for smoothing the taboo language. The words that are forbidden to use in a language are generally referred to as a taboo. To avoid the words that are rude and are not cool, it is very necessary to learn the language (especially the unacceptable words) and inhibit the culture. It, in turn, will maintain the cultural values and initiate continuous communication.

In social affairs too, it has been observed that a person who is harsh or rude, but is not bad at heart, is not acceptable. It is noticed that a person who is polite but is cunning is portrayed better to a good person but with a blunt mouth. Somewhere it's euphemism that plays its part. Political debates showcase the full-fledged list of euphemisms without they are impossible. "Euphemism Treadmill" was coined by Steven Pinker in 2003, wherein old euphemisms are replaced with the new ones as the outdated ones were now socially

unacceptable in the modern world [3]. According to the principle of linguistic relativity, language influences thoughts. In a way, using euphemism would cut off the rude words in turn saving us from the effects of negative speaking. It provides the mask to the impolite statements in turn making the situation manageable, less-serious and under control.

People in poverty have an intense feeling of vulnerability, marginality, and dependency. Since, we belong to a group of decent people; we use “economically disadvantaged” instead of “poor”. The speech serves a purpose of transferring the information. It would be helpful if it done in a respectful way. In a professional gathering, it is highly recommended to mind one’s words and actions to give away that elegant, courteous vibe. For instance, restroom is used instead of bathroom, ‘between jobs’ in place of ‘unemployed’ and ‘economical with the truth’ instead of liar. These would add to the aura and would magically change your life. These phrases might seem long, but they are perfectly suited for the long run.

## **PURPOSE**

Some style guides objectify against euphemisms as misleading and uncandid, distracting from the real, precise sense of meaning. Jails are euphemized as rehabilitation centers sometimes. If a person was needed to be corrected or rehabilitated, jail is certainly not the place he would choose. Raising the revenue means increasing the taxes in concealed form used by the Government. Nuclear weapons are replaced by special weapons and investment by government spending. The full coverage of military riots in Iraq or Afghanistan was represented by the expressions such as mistreatment, slap on the face, forbidden techniques excluding torture, a “spin” which is the part and parcel, deliberately shading the darker news in the media. The speech is persuasive, consists of empty words, rhetorical in nature and half-statements to camouflage the truth. This is what makes it political. It is noticeable that the government resorts to this technique in order to conceal the aspects of policy and the propaganda. Dwight Bolinger identified the major processes: euphemisms, dysphemism and mystification which portray the theme of shaping the social aspects of language. These are more formal and stable, abstracting and covering up the real facts to make the economy of the country look steadier. The politicians focus on the type of the audience and their preferences in hope to receive an affirmative response. The United States Department of the Homeland Security is not named as Federal Anti-Terrorism Department, which would have given a clearer idea about what the department actually does. A person having toxic life is told that his life is ‘teachable’.

Also, euphemizing is employed in advertising texts such as in cosmetic and medical products. For instance, if we consider the promotion of anti- ageing products, most of them exclude the hostile words such as old, acne, darkness, etc. The slogan, ‘Gently wash away skin worries’, of the Clean and Clear and ‘Give mature skin the extra care it deserves’ by Olay, couldn’t be more crystal clear in the justification of the above proposition. This is because the open talk about, for instance, skin problems, is looked upon as nasty and gross; plus it can negatively

impact the sales of goods. The Child Health Foundation intends to forbid smoking by stating, 'Children of parents who smoke, get to heaven earlier' with a metaphorical smoke halo overhead.

Likewise, eating disorders is preferred to anorexia. This indirect nomination of words softens the discussion of unwelcomed topics. Social ads rather use escalating words such as kill, abuse, death, and black or white in contrast with the ads of the beauty industry to enhance their suggestive potential to manipulate the human psyche and trigger certain states of mind [4].

According to the observations by sociolinguists, William Labov and Peter Trudgill, women are "hypercorrect", which implies that they talk more formally and use a higher proportion of standard, feminine forms in their speech than men do. This is generally because women tend to gain their social status through the way that they appear; hence the language plays a critical role too, than men, who are judged by their job/income. This is witnessed everywhere in the modern society and thereby still remains the actual reality. The purpose here is to explain that men have historically been allowed much greater freedom in not veiling the impolite topics or terms than women. The existence of euphemisms depicts the exercise of power by men over women [10].

These also serve as the stylistic devices in paper used to attract attention. Etiquette euphemism saves the person from offending the other person such as referring the person with the pronouns like he/she instead of the direct name. This is the reason behind asking the interviewer in a professional interview what they should be liked to be referred as. The coinage of a new term, "Euphemantics" is the new language science. The person addressing with speech etiquette governs the external manifestations of human relationships.

Jargons helped in veiling the insensitive issues. Jargons play a crucial role in technical and scientific communication where the practitioners translate these details to the audience in layman terms that lack training in these areas. A study by New York University revealed that people supported and trusted the clear and concise statements rather than the sentences that had terminology (jargons), which might make them feel alienated by the context. The latter was considered untrustworthy and couldn't give them vivid knowledge of the scenario. Whenever anything seems well-known, and no negative relations are emotionally involved into such a feeling, then it is assumed the theme or idea or object is harmless and usually positive. The CBS news when reported this study explained that when something is picturable or contemplated, it gains more trust and is believed. Even at family gatherings, when asked what we do for a living, analogical communications are highly anticipated rather than the high-brow jargon, which will most probably annoy the recipients in turn making you sound condescending and pretentious, on the offshore Artificial Intelligence model that you are preparing. Jargons aim at ill-informing and impressing the audience. Jargons can harm you professionally if you are into Google blogs writing or Google websites. The majority

of the people in the search engine will search for the words in the article that they are accustomed to and if you include the filler jargon words in your blogs, then it breaks the searching algorithm of Google Analytics, making you fall in the pit by decreasing the monthly searches exponentially. Similarly, while delivering a speech or a presentation, the most important step is to focus on the type of the audience. It's certainly possible to garner some jargons but only suitable when the audience is from the same firm, or you are a part of the team or a project (particular audience). Professor Joseph Kimble, a distinguished scholar on legal writing, shared that formal expressions in legal writings must be avoided. Instead, plain language should be encouraged. He was also a longtime editor of the "Plain Language" column in the Michigan Bar Journal. In one of his books, he introduced such forbidden words: hereby, thereafter, aforementioned, wherein, whereof; this is because it's important to use the words clearly in addition to dropping off the archaic and the ambiguous terms. The sentences which are long, complex use zombie and buzz words give headache and are needed to be said in better way of understanding things. It doesn't make one sound smarter if the person can't decode them into plain speech. Words like leverage, paradigm shift are used countless times in business writing without the thought of the writers how these are understood by the readers. Business writing etiquette rejects jargon no matter how tempting it can be to include impressive words.

## **FINDINGS**

Someone once defined a sales fax as a 'high-ranking digital envoy.' Some of the American Human Resource teams usually prefers the phrase "a refocusing of the company's skills-set" instead of firing. Others might use "career change opportunity" or "negative employee retention". Jargons sometimes act as the filler words or precisely phrases, such as, for all intents and purposes, thinking outside the box, etc. This just makes the conversation hollow. According to the BBC News, following are the worst examples of business jargons:

- 1) As of yet: means until now.
- 2) Bandwidth: time or capacity
- 3) De-risk: potentially decreasing the risk
- 4) Forward Planning: totally points out at colloquialism

Why do we still use Jargons in spite of its prominent backlashes. We all have to admit that jargons somehow put you in a position of power. If the readers community with a strong grasp of the industry, you may place yourself up as an expert with the use of jargon [5]. In order to sell a product you'll not only have to euphemize it but also use extensive vocabulary to provide a mask to its flaws. Robert W. Bly indicated that used cars are now called as "Certified Pre-Owned Vehicle" where the term provides a gravitas and hence serves as a business tip. It initiates precision.

Studies have substantiated that language represents experience in academic discourse. For successful and impressive writing and learning at a university, teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) have recognized the importance of students' vocabulary.

Acronyms or abbreviations also are a part of jargons. It is strictly recommended to avoid them as much as one can and convert the maximum into full forms in order to not annoy the audience. If you don't prefer the full forms, it is advised to let the recipients know about the acronym. It doesn't mean to weed out the complexities or making the conversation unprofessional but targets at increasing the clarity. "Even the best-educated people don't resent simple words," says John Caples. Small words are superior to big words as they can be understood by a great majority of public. It might occur that small words can ignore your writing. But the most famous Shakespeare's sentence, "to be or not to be", the longest word is three letters long. Long complex words can turn off the readers who don't understand the technical shorthand. It's significant to be concise, specific and straight to the point than beating around the bush giving the listeners its musty smell.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Euphemism takes after the Greek word 'Euphemia' where eu means well and phemia means to speak, hence the word. 'I do (take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)'- as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony. An objection to it may be this: if we convert the proposition above and put it like: 'to say a few certain words are to marry' or 'to marry is simply to say few words'. This can also be interpreted as something negative. For instance, 'my tongue swore to, but my heart did not' the classic expression which is to be found in the Hippolytus. One can perceive how excess of profundity has paved the way for immorality.

The etymology of the word jargon is the old-French word jargon which literary means twittering. Jargon was used to refer to unintelligible, vague or meaningless gibberish both in speaking and writing. Back then it had a complete different meaning; but now it indicates the unique language of a profession or a trade.

We owe some words to Shakespeare. People before Shakespearian Era own things but "belongings" came into being since his infamous plays. The all-time favorite Romeo and Juliet had "ladybird" as the word for endearment which is now obsolete and archaic which should now have a comeback. This reflects the notion that members of community, sometimes feel the need to invent new words which would give it a much narrower meaning than the general or the looser one, left to their imagination, which avoids confusion and keeps them from going haywire. Jargons serve to provide members of a cult with an identity and may seem peculiar to others. Similarly, authors use jargon because it's very quick to write but isn't used that much to not put readers in perplexity.

Jargons shape the character of a novel into a real human being and make a fictional story seem realistic and engage the readers. It would be strange if the character (for instance, "he")

spoke normal and understandable lines. For example, in a mystery fiction, he can't help using police jargon to make the conversation seem official wherein police jargon is a specialized language. He should sound like a cop and have that lingo. Therefore, the writer uses acronyms to let the reader picture the scene. One such snippet of the play Hamlet includes the words tenures, conveyances, statutes, recognizances. Apart from the jargons which one can find in great books, literature itself covers plenty of them? For example, onomatopoeia, cacophony, symbolisms, anticlimax, and many more.

**Following are such more terms:**

- a) Suspects  
doubt the genuineness or truth of.
- b) 10-4  
This means "understood" or affirmative.
- c) Tango: A code word representing the letter T which is used in radio communication but can be used anywhere. It means "Thank You!"
- d) Zebra: black and white cars of police.
- e) CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.
- f) Breaking & Entering
- g) Grand Theft Auto
- h) Witness

Similarly, video games are now super trendy and have appealed to a huge mass of people. With it comes the glossary of video game terms. It has somewhat become the second language of the gamers and has succeeded in becoming the newfound world of slangs constituting its major part in the informal urban dictionary and makes this generation feel cool and modern. Some of these include ping, noob, imposter, vent, sup, AAA, gg, etc.

As per recent study by FMRI, Morrison, Decety and Molenberghs (2012) advocated the claim that self-identities of the people are connected with their group identities [6]. The people working in an organization or community groups have standardized speech and with time develop their own ways of communicating. It unites people in profession such as a criminal judicial system. This is what differentiates them from the people other than the group because of the vocabulary that they develop. As per the Jargonists, it takes less time to understand the specialized words or the in-group words thereby making communication easier. It spreads from a narrow group until it is understood by a larger fragment of the population. Such as the word proctor is now the buzzword in the university going students which earlier was not because of the importance it has gain through the online examination. It describes the relationship between an individual and the group. Likewise, lawyers have their legal terminology which might sound foreign to the ears but in meaning are the most basic. Moreover, it might be baffling, but the confusion caused by jargons can in a way help

the doctors and the patients. Physicians caring for patients with limited health literacy employ unclarified jargon during key clinical functions [7][8].

## **CONCLUSION**

Euphemisms are not taught; they are unconsciously learned and practiced with time. It is inferred that it is best to avoid euphemisms and jargons in all academic writings, reports, proposals, etc. because of the diplomatic vibe it gives. There are a lot of parameters to use them, but they must be used judiciously and in the right situations. These serve as the “comfort words” that reduce the tension and confusion respectively. It is suggested to speak more candidly. In accordance, these are mild and direct that should be brought into use when talking about sensitive and unwelcomed topics.

Jargons must be limited to correct circumstances. These always help in cutting the communication short and less elaborate, hence saving the time and energy. These should be incorporated when one has fully-fledged knowledge of the type of the audience and with that it aids rather than hindering people. Most of the times, jargons can only be understood by the people of the same industry and not others. New words are coined as they are required. Therefore, jargons can also be seen as a response to the need. This fast pace with which the society is changing is reflected in the language.

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