

## SEMANTICS AND PRAGMATICS OF EUPHEMISMS IN MODERN ENGLISH

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**Annotation:** It will be covered in this article Euphemisms are widely used in modern English to soften harsh or sensitive expressions. Euphemism = polite/indirect expression. Semantics = meaning, Pragmatics = use in context.

From a semantic perspective, euphemisms keep the same meaning but reduce emotional impact. “die” → “passaway”, “unemployed” → “between jobs”.

From a pragmatic point of view, euphemisms depend on situation and intention. “fired” → “let go” is more polite in professional contexts.

Euphemisms help maintain social harmony by avoiding direct reference to sensitive topics. Used for illness, aging, and disability.

They also reflect cultural values and are common. “collateral damage” hides the harsh reality of civilian deaths.

**Keywords:** Euphemism, Semantics, Pragmatics, Politeness, Indirect Language, Social Norms, Communication, Cultural Values

Euphemisms are an essential part of modern language, especially in English, where they are widely used to soften harsh, unpleasant, or socially sensitive expressions. The study of euphemisms involves both semantics, which focuses on meaning, and pragmatics, which examines how language is used in context. Understanding the semantics and pragmatics of euphemisms helps reveal how speakers manage politeness, avoid offense, and adapt to social norms. From a semantic perspective, euphemisms replace direct or potentially offensive words with more neutral or positive expressions. For example, instead of saying “die,” people often say “pass away.” Although both expressions refer to the same

event, the euphemistic version carries a softer and more respectful tone. Similarly, words like “unemployed” may be replaced with “between jobs,” which reduces the negative connotation. Semantically, euphemisms maintain the core meaning but alter the emotional impact of the message.

From a pragmatic point of view, euphemisms are closely related to context, speaker intention, and social interaction. Speakers use euphemisms to be polite, to show respect, or to avoid embarrassing situations. For instance, in professional settings, people may use indirect expressions such as “let go” instead of “fired” to maintain a level of formality and reduce discomfort. Pragmatics explains why certain euphemisms are appropriate in one situation but not in another. Euphemisms also play an important role in maintaining social harmony. In everyday conversations, people often avoid direct references to sensitive topics such as illness, disability, or aging.

Instead, they choose softer alternatives that sound less offensive or more acceptable. This demonstrates how language is shaped by social expectations and cultural norms.

Moreover, euphemisms reflect cultural values and social attitudes. In modern English, many euphemisms are used in areas such as death, illness, politics, and social issues. Political language, in particular, often relies on euphemisms to present information in a less negative way.

For example, terms like “collateral damage” may be used instead of directly referring to civilian casualties. This shows how language can influence perception and shape public opinion. In addition, euphemisms are constantly evolving. New expressions appear as society changes, while older ones may lose their effectiveness over time. What is considered polite or acceptable in one period may become inappropriate in another. Therefore, euphemisms are dynamic and reflect ongoing changes in society and communication.

Euphemisms play a significant role in modern English by bridging the gap between meaning and social interaction. While semantics explains how euphemisms modify

meaning, pragmatics reveals their function in communication. Together, they demonstrate how language is not only a tool for conveying information but also a means of maintaining social harmony and expressing cultural values.

Overall, the study of euphemisms provides valuable insight into how people use language creatively and strategically in different contexts. It highlights the importance of understanding both meaning and usage in order to communicate effectively and appropriately in modern society.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, euphemisms play an important role in modern English by helping speakers communicate in a more polite and socially acceptable way. From a semantic perspective, they modify the emotional impact of words without changing their core meaning. From a pragmatic perspective, they depend on context, intention, and social norms. Euphemisms are widely used in everyday communication, professional settings, and political language. They also reflect cultural values and attitudes, showing how language evolves over time. Overall, understanding euphemisms improves both linguistic awareness and effective communication in different social situations.

### **FOYDALANILGAN ADABIYOTLAR RO‘YXATI:**

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