

**TABOOS AND EUPHEMISMS IN THE ENGLISH AND KAZAKH
LANGUAGES: SOCIAL ASPECT**

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В данной работе рассматриваются эвфемизмы и табу в казахском и английском языках.

Ключевые слова: эвфемизм, табу, словарный запас, суеверия.

The present article is devoted to taboos and euphemisms in the English and Kazakh languages and their social aspect.

Key words: taboo, euphemisms, word-stock, social beliefs, superstitions.

Taboos and euphemisms have always been of great interest as they act as one of the important factors influencing the process of enriching and enlarging word-stock and speech itself. The system of ethnographic taboo including language taboo originally developed on the basis of religious beliefs. However, taboo words are not just the words which are not widely-used because of certain religious beliefs, these are the words which appeared due to some social reasons like politeness, delicacy and eagerness to keep preserve appearances.

Taboo words in linguistic meaning are the words which are banned because of mythological beliefs, superstitions, prejudice and to avoid rude or curse words and phrases. As for euphemisms they are the results of language taboos. A euphemism is a generally innocuous word or phrase that replaces an offensive one. The nature and peculiarities of taboo and euphemisms have been widely studied by many scientists such as James George Fraze who considered taboo as something magic. According to him magic is a system of beliefs of ancient people grounded on their assurance in their abilities to rule the world. Euphemisms make the big part of the language lexis and phraseology [1, 32].

Euphemisms have been widely studied since the XIX century. G.Paul in his works defined euphemisms as a scheme of semantic changes. However now they

deserve much attention because of their extra-linguistic character. The process of creating euphemisms is studied as a complex, multilayered one, which has three interconnected aspects: social, psychological and linguistic. The social aspect implies moral and religious basis under the influence of which some events or subjects that have negative character are replaced by others having more positive meanings [3,1 32].

Euphemisms soften the reality of what we are communicating to the listener or reader. They are a universal feature of language usage. Every culture typically uses them to talk about terrifying things. The genesis of taboo in both English and Kazakh languages is rooted in religious beliefs. A great number of things have been banned because of the beliefs of people and as a result they were euphemized. The following common groups can be distinguished of tabooed subjects in the English and Kazakh languages:

1.Names of animals. There has always been a ban on naming certain types of animals in the Kazakh culture. From the ancient times the Kazakhs have avoided the word “wolf”. It is connected with the fact that wolves attacked the flocks and they were named as “kara kulak” (black ears), “it-kus”(dog-bird). Another example of animal the name of which was tabooed was “snake”. People tended to call it “tuime”(button), “tuime bas” (the one that has a head like a button), “kamschy”(lash) and “uzyn kurt”(a long worm).

According to the superstitions people were even afraid to pronounce the word “bug” as it was believed that saying the name “bug” loudly led to their breeding. The name was replaced by such euphemisms as “kyzyl”(red), “sasyk”(fetid) and “kebek”(offals).

However there are no bans on animal names in the English language, but some meals made of animals were replaced by their more polite variants. The distinctive feature is in the class of people. For example, the poor working class, who raised and killed the animals, used the words chicken, pig, lamb, cow. The nobility – who had the pleasure of eating the meat and naming the dishes without having to handle any livestock – spoke French. So it has evolved that many names for meat in English

actually have romantic – rather than Germanic – roots: beef/boeuf, mutton/mouton, poultry/poulet, pork/porc.

2. *Names of diseases.* H.L.Mencken points out that in order to avoid the direct reference to illnesses and diseases, people use circumlocutions and abbreviations in order not to show the illnesses and diseases plainly[2,73].

The Kazakhs have been always afraid of naming diseases and illnesses that attack people and animals. The Kazakh history suggests many examples of euphemisms in this field their rise is particularly noticeable during epidemy. They believed that epidemy is caused by their misbelief in god. The following names of diseases were replaced by their substitutes “kyzyl koilek”(red dress) for measles, “meiman”, “konak”(guest)-smallpox and for plague they used “kyz”(girl), “kempir”(an old lady) and “ak baipak” (white stocking).

Some other serious diseases were avoided as well, mainly tuberculosis by “kurt auruy” (worm disease), “zhotel auruy”(cough), “kokyrek auruy”(breast infection) and “zhynishke auruy” (a delicate disease).

In the English language the more serious disease “ syphilis” was tabooed and another variants of it were widely used such as “certain disease” and “condition to allude to any kind of diseases”. Another group of euphemisms relating to medical terminology are represented by the word “lame” which is substituted by “crippled” and “spastic” . More polite and politically correct variants the word “handicapped” are “physically challenged ” and “differently abled”. “The big C” is a term that has been widely used instead the word “cancer” both in written and oral speech.

Many people believe that much of the doctors’ curative powers lie in the words they use. Very often doctors try to give a sense of mystery to something which is already abnormal by using Latin and Greek names which serve as euphemistic expressions. These words result in patients’ worries as they they are usually not known to them. Among such euphemisms is the Latin ‘conjunctivitis’ which is used instead of ‘sty’ (Ibid) or “ *maniae*” for “madness” and “*perspiration*” for “sweat”, initials are also employed euphemistically: *M.D.* for mentally deficient and *G. B. H.* for grievous bodily harm.

Names of body parts. The subject of body parts is a potent source for euphemisms in both Kazakh and English languages as naming them directly may seem indecent and vulgar. For example, the Kazakhs has substituted the word “emshek” (breasts) by “tuime”(button), “anar”(pomegranate). Genitals are also tabooed and belong to this group “atalyk mushe”, “analyk mushe”, “uyatty zher”, “erkektyn zhynys mushelery”, “aieldyn zhynys mushelery”. The same prohibition concerns genitals in the English language which are often replaced by such words as –“apparatus”, “nether parts”, “bits”, “down there”; and there is a gender distinction between male genitals “lady-wear”, “baby-maker” and female – “gate of life”.

Subsequently, some natural processes like bowel and bladder habits are tabooed in both languages such as “ulken daret”(do number one), “ulken daret” (do number two) in Kazakh and “do one’s business”, “use paper” for the phrase “to defecate” in the English language .

4. *Other names of “death”.* Fear of death evokes the same emotions for words related to it and it comes as a result of the fact that people associate symbols with things that they symbolize. Many people in English instead of saying died use expressions like ‘*passed away*’, ‘*went to his reward*’, ‘*departed*’ or ‘*went West*’. In the Kazakh culture it has always been difficult to inform the relatives about the death of the close person. The most unusual way of saying about the death was using poems. The expressions used instead of the word “death” are “*kaitty*” (returned), *kaitpas saparga keeti* (went to trip from which there is no way back), *o duniage zhoneldy* (went to another world) and etc.

The results of our analysis show that there are many similar points in Kazakh and English languages in the field of taboos and euphemisms as they are the most important aspects of any language. Taboos and euphemisms contribute a lot to the development of the language culture as languages culture implies the appropriate means of language that suit the aim of the speech situation.

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