

## USE OF ASSOCIATIVE PSYCHOLINGUISTIC EXPERIMENT FOR DETERMINING THE EUPHEMISTICITY OF PHRASES

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Euphemistic expressions are characterized as aesthetically appropriate means of transmitting information that replace direct names that are unacceptable for some communicative situation. Attention is drawn to the fact that both euphemistic and dysphemistic statements are used to indicate negative denotation, which are sometimes difficult to distinguish. It is noted that most scientists consider them together, not clearly separating, only emphasize their main function – to replace the direct name.

It is emphasized that some scholars note signs that differentiate euphemisms and dysphemism, because these language units, firstly, have different opinions on associates, and secondly, they have a different degree of expressiveness and emotionality. A clearer demarcation line between euphemism and dysphemism can be helped by an associative psycholinguistic experiment, which to some extent should reveal the status of an associate by modern native speakers. Based on its results, the main factors contributing to a different, essentially opposite, interpretation of one linguistic phenomenon are analyzed: the secondary name “improves” the direct name, “worsens” it, or, possibly, is on that time slice when it loses the euphemistic function and goes into the direct name or dysphemism, that is, on the verge of opposition.

The psycholinguistic experiment “Associate Assessment” was conducted among students of I–II courses of Kharkov National University of Construction and Architecture. Three synonymous series of widely used expressions were proposed with the meanings of “old” (10), “fat” (12) and “stupid, mentally retarded” (20). A detailed analysis of all the results obtained was carried out and it was proved that the definition of a phrase as euphemistic largely depends on the component composition, for example, onyms – male and female names – are inherent in dysphemistic language units. It has been revealed that there are at least two factors that contribute to the “blurring” of the border between euphemism and dysphemism: 1) the individual perception of one associate: either as one that disguises a certain unpleasant phenomenon (then it is a euphemism), or as one that emphasizes on negative features (then it is a dysphemism); 2) the approximation of the associate with the denotate in the semantic structure of euphemism with the simultaneous loss of the associate of a neutral or positive connotation, which results from the prolonged and intensive use of the substitute as a euphemistic one.

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