A Comparative Study of Euphemism and Dysphemism in English and Arabic with Special Reference to Political Discourse

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Abstract

This study aims at analyzing euphemisms in English and Arabic. Euphemisms address culturally sensitive areas and this is why they have not received a lot of academic attention from applied linguists in general and sociolinguists in particular. The study begins by listing the ways of forming euphemism in both English and Arabic. Then it sheds light on English Political euphemism for being a tool for political leaders to control information transmission. Based on some examples, this paper summarises three features which distinguish political euphemism from others. Then, it discusses pragmatically how political euphemism violates all the maxims of Grice's cooperative principle. We briefly discuss dysphemism and in which way its formation process is similar and different from euphemism. Such study of this linguistic phenomenon provides a proof that language is not only a reflection of the objective world but a process of social construction.

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1. Introduction

Language is not simply a formal system of sounds, words and syntactical structures. Language is also a way of communication by human people within their beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviors, social habits, etc. and this is what is meant by culture. Each language society accumulates rules according to which concrete statements are interpreted abstractly and which are valid through common usage.

Some words and phrases in languages live longer than others. Some have a short or a very short life, others longer, and others more permanent. This shows that language is subject to continual change and development. This change and development reflects that languages are the best records for the history of people. Such change and development have linguistic, social and psychological reasons, as well as influence from other languages.

The psychological reasons are connected to euphemisms. English euphemisms are exemplified with pass away "die", intimacy "sexual intercourse", underprivileged "poor", made redundant "dismissed", black "Negro", senior citizen "the old", urban renewal "slum clearance and freedom", and terrorists "fighters". The examples of Arabic euphemisms are:*kullu man alajaha: fa:n* "whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish" = everyone will die, and *nawman ha:dian lilatʃa:l* "quiet sleeping for children" = do not bring children to wedding parties.

Euphemisms are generally divided into positive and negative types (Rawson, 1998: p. 492). Euphemisms are employed positively in considering general social mores and expressing solidarity with the addressee or the referent. Positive euphemisms are exemplified in English with fancy occupational titles, such as environmental engineer instead of garbage men, and dustmen instead of garbage collectors. In Arabic, *muqi:m* "resident/non-citizen" or*wa:fid* "comer" instead of *ajnabi:* "foreigner" and *ʃaġġa:lah* "a working lady" instead of *xa:dimah* "a female servant" are used. A further example of a positive type of euphemism may be seen with "mental hospital" instead of "madhouse" in English compared to *aṣṣiḥah annafsijah* "healthy spirit" in place of *mustaʃfa lamja:ni:n* "mad people hospital" in Arabic.

Euphemisms are employed negatively in preventing face loss by erasing from the language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly and straightforwardly. It appears that most euphemisms in English and Arabic are utilized negatively. For instance, in both languages, poverty in English and *fagr* in Arabic is euphemized with low-income in English and *daxl maḥdu:d* in Arabic.

It is also notable that all euphemisms are used either unconsciously or consciously (Rawson, 1998: p. 493). Unconscious euphemisms are conventionally developed as euphemisms and it is difficult to recall their original motivations. Conscious euphemisms in the course of a speech come across intelligibly in a figurative manner as in political language and advertising. For instance, the government spokesman says "redeployment of troops" meaning withdrawal. Politicians in general select words with care to make lies truths and seem respectable. Consequently, these individuals often have the reputation of speaking in a very diplomatic way because of their use of euphemisms. Briefly, "euphemisms are in a constant state of flux. New ones are created almost daily.

Many of them prove to be nonce terms-one-day wonders that are never repeated. Of those that are ratified through reuse as true euphemisms, some may last for generations, even centuries, while others fade away or develop into unconscious euphemisms, still used, but reflexively, without thought of their checkered origins" (Rawson, 1998: p. 495). However, all dispreferred statements are expressed freely in different societies in terms of their science and nreligion.

Euphemisms are an important part of every language since "a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication" (Burchfield, 1985: p. 29).

Euphemisms can be categorized as "what the user of language should avoid, what he should not say, or write" (Akhmanova, 1976: p. 99). A speaker or writer of any language can subtly alter his language for better (i.e. euphemistic) or for the worse (i.e. dysphemistic) if he/she wishes. Mazid (2004) maintains that the study of euphemisms has concentrated on culturally sensitive areas and this is why they have not received a lot of academic attention. The analysis of euphemisms in Arabic is scattered in linguistic and literary references.

This study aims to highlight euphemisms in English and compare them with Arabic, since many Arabic speakers are in need of learning English, which is an international language. Then it sheds light on features of political euphemism and how it violates Grice's cooperative principle.

1. Definitions of Basic Terms

2.1 Euphemism

Euphemism is defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (2003) as "Substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant." The word "euphemism" is derived from Greek. The prefix "eu-" means "good, well"; the stem "pheme" means "speak"; the suffix "-ism" means "action or result". The word means "speaking well of…", "good speech" , and "words of good omen". In Concise Oxford Dictionary (1982), for example, the euphemism is defined as a "substitution of mild or vague or roundabout expression for harsh or blunt or direct one." Wilson (1993) defines euphemisms as "words with meanings or sounds thought somehow to be nicer, cleaner or more elevated and so used as substitutes for words deemed unpleasant, crude or ugly in sound or sense." Allan and Burridge (1991) define euphemisms as "alternatives to dispreferred expression, and are used in order to avoid possible loss of face."

Similar meanings are found for euphemisms in Arabic with the Arabic root (*luṭf*) and its derivative (*laṭa:fah*) which are "to be kind, friendly, thin, fine, delicate, dainty, graceful, elegant, nice, amiable, etc., to make mild, soft, and gentle, and to mitigate, alleviate, ease, soothe, moderate, to treat with kindness", etc. (Cowan, 1976). The English term "euphemism" is also translated into Arabic with (*luṭf atta'bi:r*) "kind expression" (Al-Khuli, 1982) and (*ḥusun atta'bi:*r) "nice expression".

2.2 Dysphemism

Whereas the term euphemism is well-known and has wide currency, 'dysphemism' does not. Dysphemism is used for precisely the opposite reason that a euphemism is used, and it is defined as follows: A dysphemism is an expression with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the audience, or both, and it is substituted for a neutral or euphemistic expression for just that reason.

Dysphemisms, then, are used in talking about one's opponents, things one wishes to show disapproval of, and things one wishes to be seen to downgrade. They are therefore characteristic of political groups and cliques talking about their opponents; of feminists speaking about men; and also of macho types speaking of women and effete behaviours.

2.3 Political Euphemism

Political euphemism is created in political life and serves political purposes. Generally speaking, it is a tool for political participants to hide scandals, disguise the truth, guide public thoughts when discussing social issues or events.

1. Suggested Typology of Euphemism

3.1 Euphemistic Mmetonymies

Euphemisms are structurally and basically employed in both languages in metonymy as a linguistic device and a figure of speech. Metonymy is a word or a phrase that is substituted for another depending on some actual relation between the things signified (Lexicon Website Dictionary, 1981: p. 601). Euphemistic metonymies contain common subjects in languages and they may vary from culture to culture, and accordingly from language to language. This includes taboos since they are of major importance in euphemistic metonymies. Leech (1983: p. 45) considers death, disease, crime, punishment, sex and the excretive process of the body as the common subjects of euphemisms. Other euphemistic subjects, which have developed over past centuries, are war, politics, birth, fornication, bodily functions like excretion, reticence, social rank and other social relations (Burchfield, 1985: p. 28). Bertram (1998: p. 314) in the NTC's Dictionary of Euphemisms in English attached in the appendix the following thematic index of euphemisms: advertising, age, alcohol, birth, body parts, body processes, business, class, crime, death, disability, drugs, education, fat, gender, hedge word, intelligent, lying, medicine, mental illness, military, mock swearing, money, political correctness, police, politics, psychology, race, religion, sex, swearing, underwear and violence. No Arabic dictionaries were found for euphemisms. Arabic euphemistic items and phrases are collected from linguistic and literary references. Here is a list of examples of euphemisms in English and Arabic:

Death:

- pass away / expire / depart / go to a better place or world / breathe one's last = die.
- the hereafter / the great certainty / land of no return = death.
- happy release = death – especially after a painful illness.
- at peace / at rest = dead.
- *intaqala ila: jiwa:ri rabbih* "He moved to become near his Lord." = died.
- *intaqala ila: raḥmati rabbih* "He transferred to the Mercy of Lord." = died.
- *arra:ḥa labadijah* "permanent rest" = death.

Urination and defecation:

a comfort station / the necessary = a toilet.

ease for oneself = to defecate / urinate.

make or pass water = urinate.

pay a visit = urinate / defecate.

pass gas or wind / back talk / make a rude noise etc. = release intestinal gas through the anus.

dawrata lmija:h "the water-circuit" = a toilet.

bajt arra:ḥah "a house of rest" = a toilet.

ri:ḥ "wind" = release intestinal gas through the anus.

Sexual intercourse:

- make love = have sex.

- playboy = having sex with many women.

- have a roving eye = be interested in having sexual relations outside marriage.

- a lady of evening / a call girl / a fancy woman / a light woman / = a prostitute.

- *hunna liba:sun llakum wantum liba:sun lahunna* "They (wives) are body covers for you (husbands) and you are body covers for them." (Al-Hilali, 2005) = have sexual relations.

- *wata*= "tread" used especially by Islamic scholars refers to "sexual intercourse."

- *aw la:mastum annisa:* "or touch women" (Al- Hilali, 2005) = Or you have been in contact with women (by sexual relations).

- *jana:mu maa zawwjatih* "He sleeps with his wife" = sexual intercourse. *ala:qa jinsijah* "sexual relation" = sexual intercourse by fornication.

- *udu tana:suli:* "propagative organ" or *qadi:b* "bar" = penis

Occupations

Both English and Arabic use euphemisms to mitigate the force of bad connotations. Accordingly, many low occupations have got nice titles. The titles become grand and very pleasant to the ear.

- sanitary engineer = garbage man

- landscape architect = gardener

- tonsorial artist = barber

- prison officer = jailer

- meat technologist = butcher

- law enforcement officer = policeman

- domestic engineer = servant

- house maker = housewife

- hearing-impaired = deaf man

- housekeeper = maid

- flight attendant = steward/ess

- secretary = typist

- *a:milah manziliyah* "female home worker" = *xa:dimah* "female servant." a:mil naẓa:*fah* "a cleanliness worker" = *zabba:l* "trashman."

- *fa:qida labaṣar* "loser of eyesight" = *aama:* "blind."

- *aṣṣarf aṣṣiḥḥi:* "healthy drainage" = *almaja:ri:* "drains" or "urine and stool drainage."

3.2 Euphemistic Synecdoches

Euphemisms are structurally formed also by synecdoche. The linguistic synecdoche is a figure of speech and it is "an expression which means or describes one thing or idea using words usually used of something else with very similar qualities without using the words "as or like" (Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 1993). Such transferred meanings can be utilized as euphemistic expressions as in English "to spend a penny" means to urinate, the lady may declare in public with humor "my friend has come" referring to her monthly period, and to compare the need of urination or defecation to "the call of nature." In Arabic, the examples are ($aljidra:n$ $laha:$ $a:da:n$) "walls have ears" means be careful in your speech, i.e. somebody may be listening,($jabi:$ d$ami:ruh)$ "he sells his conscience" refers that he is dishonest.

The synecdoche is also euphemistically employed by homophones with which items have the same pronunciation but differ in meaning. The meaning is a real or concrete meaning and a figurative one. The figurative meaning and the real meaning are related to one another by one semantic feature. For instance, an eye is a synecdoche for a spy, and the spy uses his eyes in his job. In English and Arabic, some unacceptable descriptions and jobs are euphemized by body parts or animals' names or others as follows: an eye /ajn = spy , a camel / $jamal$ = patience , fox / th$alab$ = deception and cunning, fly / $duba:bah$= coward, ostrich / $naa:mah$ = coward, locusts / $jara:d$, ants/$naml$ = abundance , glass / $kaas$ = alcohol.

Euphemistic synecdoche could employ General-for-specific or part for whole strategy; Revenue Enhancements for 'Taxes' invokes the general for specific ;   U.S. President Richard Nixon's references to *prething* and *postthing*(where 'thing' = Watergate break-in), — these employ general-for-something specific strategy for euphemism. Rather similar is the use of *inexpressible* or *unmentionables* and perhaps *smalls* for 'underclothing'; and so on… the number of general-for-specific euphemisms is probably boundless.

A part-for-whole euphemism is demonstrated in *spend a penny* for 'go to the lavatory' (from the days when women's loos cost a penny to access); and *I've got a cough* may occasionally ignore the stuffed up nose, post-nasal drip, and running eyes. But euphemisms of this kind seem comparatively rare, though dysphemisms are not. This is not surprising given that euphemisms usually aim to conceal or at least disguise.

3.3 Euphemistic Circumlocutions

Circumlocution is another way of forming euphemism. It is the use of more words that are necessary to express an idea. Euphemistic circumlocutions are to speak in a roundabout and tactful way. Adams (1985: p. 45) states that "depending on the social context, one may have to choose the least unsatisfactory of two evils, or circumlocute, to an inevitably clumsy effect, circumlocution being nothing but euphemism long drawn out". Expressions about the toilet in English are formed with phrases such as "to wash one's hand", and "to powder one's nose." The English expression "in the family way" signifies the fact of pregnancy. In Arabic, people refer to the one who failed as (*fa:*ʃ*il*) for encouragement by (*lam juḫa:lifhu lḥazz*) "luck was not his ally." In both languages, ladies may refer to menstruation instead of the euphemistic phrase "monthly period" in English and "*a:dah ʃahrijjah*" which literally means "monthly habit" in Arabic by using the sentences "My friend has come" in English, and (*ma: alijja ṣala:h)* "I don't pray" in Arabic. In this way, circumlocution encompasses saying more than what is expected.

In Arabic, the context sometimes requires mentioning obscene expressions. If it is so, the native speakers' recourse is to use some euphemistic formulas to mitigate that horrible meaning. Arabic has a number of euphemistic formulas. Some examples are cited below which are translated into English: (*aja:raka Alla:h)* "Allah saves/protects you" (*istaġfara Alla:h)* "I ask Allah for forgiveness" (*ḫa:ʃa: lila:h)* "Allah forbid!" (*la:samaḫa Alla:h)* "Allah forbid!" (*maa iḫtira:mi: a*ʃʃ*adi:d)* "with my high respect" (*maa taqdi:ri):* "with my appreciation" Since these euphemistic formulas are kind of lengthy expressions, they are classified by Arabian linguists as a kind of circumlocution. If that word or phrase is dropped, no change in meaning happens. These Arabic euphemistic formulas are rendered into English by the general euphemistic expressions   "sorry to say" and "Excuse my language" since English lacks these euphemistic formulas (Farghal, 2005). The Arabic euphemistic formals have high usage because of the conservative property of the language.

3.4 Euphemistic Hyperboles:

Hyperboles (overstatements) are found in euphemisms like *flight to glory* meaning death', or *villa in a premier location by the bay* referring to a 'dilapidated artisan's cottage, five streets away from the bay', or *Personal Assistant to the Secretary (Special Activities)* for 'cook' : the longer the title, the lower the rank so longer titles may be used to give a sense of importance to that title. There are euphemistic understatements like *sleep* for 'die" Many general-for-specific euphemisms are also understatements, e.g. *thing* for whatever (Watergate break-in) or *deed* for 'act of murder' (or whatever).

3.5 Euphemistic Borrowing

Euphemism could be formed through borrowing also. In English, "it is permissible for speakers and writers … to express almost any thought they wish, as long as the more risqué parts of the discussion are rendered in another language, usually French or Latin" (Rawson, 1998: p. 497). English borrows from French, for example, liaison for "illicit sexual intercourse" and brassiere for "a bra", and from Latin, halitosis for "bad breath.", the use of *perspire* instead of sweat, expectorate instead of spit, *defecate* and *faeces* instead of *shit, genitals* or *genitalia* instead of *sex organs*, and so forth. Arabic occasionally borrows a few words from English like "tragedy" instead of *ma-sa:h* "consolation", and "comedy" instead of *mallha:h* "amusement". The English language has been open to borrowing and it is one of its word-formation processes; hence, English people can easily adopt words from other languages to euphemize in different subjects. On the other hand, Arabic is conservative and does not easily allow borrowing. However, educated Arabs, who are able to use the English language, as a language taught in their countries because of its international function, tend to use code-mixing and code switching among each other as a strategy of euphemism. Both codes are mostly employed in speech in a form of a temporal usage.

3.6 Euphemistic Remodellings, Clippings, Acronyms and Abbreviations

Remodellings clippings, acronyms and abbreviations are other ways for forming euphemisms. Remodellings are like one-for-one substitutions in which either the onset or rhyme of the dispreferred term is retained, but complemented by the rest of some semantically unrelated word like *sugar* or*shoot* for 'shit', *tarnation* for 'damnation', *cripes* or *crumbs* for 'Christ'. There are clippings like *jeeze* for 'Jesus', *bra* for' brassiere' (both end-clipped), and the archaic *nation* for 'damnation'; **acronyms** like snafu for 'situation normal, all fucked up'; **abbreviations** like S.O.B. for 'son-of-a- bitch. Although those strategies are common in English, they are not used in Arabic widely.

Dysphemism employs most of the same strategies as euphemism, but there are two main differences. One is that part-for-whole dysphemisms are far more frequent than general-for- specific ones, which is the converse of the situation with euphemisms (e.g. the use of the figurative epithets like in *He's a prick)*. The other is that the antithesis between 'hyperbole and understatement' is inappropriate. Hyperbole may be used to magnify the offence, and this is often achieved by diminishing or downgrading the person addressed or what is being spoken of: the consequence is, paradoxically, to usurp the function one would expect to be assigned to understatement, so that if there ever is understatement, it is just this dysphemistic hyperbole.

Other differences between the strategies for euphemism and those for dysphemism are predictable: circumlocution is most usually dysphemistic when it manifests an unwanted jargon; the use of borrowed terms and technical jargon is only dysphemistic when intended to offend the audience; and so forth. Consider some examples. NATO has a *deterrent* (euphemism) against the Russian *threat* (dysphemism). In the mid-1980s the U.S.S.R. claimed to have been *invited* (euphemism) into Afghanistan; the Americans claimed that the Russians were aggressors (dysphemism) there.

Dysphemism is also indicated by the term *so-called:* e.g. *the so-called democracies of the Eastern block* doesn't make a dysphemism out of 'democracies', but it does indicate disagreement with and disapproval of the presupposition that there are such things as democracies in the Eastern block. The latter phrase, *Eastern block,* is itself dysphemistic: note the totalitarian and obstructive connotations of 'block' when contrasted with the free-among-equals connotations of *Western alliance.*

In comparisons of personal behaviour like *I'm generous, but she's spendthrift; I'm careful, but he's mean; I'm strong-minded and he's plain obstinate,* etc. the second clause is intentionally dysphemistic by comparison with first. Dysphemistic terms of insult found in personal disputes of a colloquial nature include:

(A) Comparisons of people with animals conventionally ascribed certain behaviours, e.g. calling someone a *louse, mouse, bird, coot, galah, chicken, bat, rat, cat, dog, bitch, vixen, rabbit, sow, pig, cow, bull, ox, goat, ass/donkey, mule, snake, ape, monkey*, etc. (see Leach 1964).

(B) Epithets derived from tabooed bodily organs, and sexual behaviours.

(C) Ascriptions of mental or physical inadequacy, such as *idiot, fuckwit, nincompoop, fool, cretin, maniac,* etc.; *spastic, weakling, baldy, four- eyes,*etc.

(D) Finally there are terms of insult or disrespect, some of which invoke slurs on the target's character: e.g. *biddy, crone, hag, bag, battle-axe, codger, geezer, crank, fuddy-duddy, fuss-budget, grump, fogy, galoot,* etc.

Dysphemism, like euphemism, is not just a property of the word itself, but of the way it is used. There is nothing intrinsically dysphemistic in the word Asian, but many people from Asia feel that being described as "Asians" rather than more particularly as Chinese, Indian, or Thai etc. is dysphemistic. Like euphemisms, dysphemisms interact with style and therefore have the potential to produce stylistic discord; an example would be where someone at a formal dinner party publicly announced *I'm off to have a piss*, rather than saying something like *excuse me for a moment*. Like euphemisms, dysphemisms are motivated by fear and distaste, but also by hatred and contempt; and, in contrast to euphemisms, they are motivated by the desire to offensively demonstrate such feelings and to downgrade the denotatum or addressee (when deliberately used). Therefore, they may both function as in-group identity markers and even to amuse an audience.

1. Political Euphemism and dysphemism

4.1 Features of political Euphemism

4.1.1 Greater Degree of Deviation from its Signified

According to Swiss linguist Saussure, language signs are a combination of the signifier, the phonetic forms of language and the signified, objects in existence represented by linguistic forms. Due to the lack of direct or logical relations between the two, they have a discretionary relationship with each other, making it possible to create euphemism by replacing the signifier. Because euphemism is just created by transforming the signifier to enlarge the association distance between the signifier and the signified, euphemism meanings stay relative to their former zero-degree ones.

Although euphemism and its former zero-degree signifier refer to the same signified, political euphemism is different from those commonly used euphemistic forms in that it deviates greatly from the meaning expressed by its former signifier, or even a complete distortion. For example, Former US President Reagan once named the 10-warhead intermediate-range missile as "peacekeeper"; some later political participants named their attack as "active defense"; they even replaced "recession" with "negative growth" because it sounded offensive to the ear.

It is quite obvious that these expressions are not a simple replacement of the former zero-degree signifier, but quite opposite meanings to their literal meanings, just like replacing "black" with "white". We might as well mark euphemism's deviation degree with a range from 1 to 10, within which a greater number refers to a greater degree of deviation. In this

case, the above mentioned political euphemism expressions should be marked with 10 while some ordinary expressions such as "overweight" and "fat" can only be marked as 1.

4.1.2 More Vague Meanings

Euphemism, characterized by replacing direct expressions with implicative, obscure and vague ones, plays a quite essential role in demystifying the connotation of political discourse when serving political purposes. Some commonly employed demystifying methods in political euphemism include replacing specific meanings with general ones, replacing hyponyms with superordinates and replacing derogatory meanings with neutral or even common ones. For instance, people often refer to the atomic bombs used in Hiroshima as "the gadget", "the device", "the thing" or other vague meanings. When talking about American army's invasion into Grenada in 1983, President Reagan was quite dissatisfied with the word "invasion" used by the journalists, instead, he expressed it as "a rescue mission", glorifying their military invasion as their help offer to other countries. Similarly, US air attacks in Vietnam and Libya were called "air operation; President Bush also glorifying their military attack to Iraq with some neutral and general expressions such as "military operation" or "disarm" in his speech delivered on the very day they made war against Iraq in 2003.

4.1.3 Strong Characteristic of Times

Euphemism is the language reflection of Social culture, therefore changes in social development will propel those in language. In each international vicissitude, political euphemism will be booming. Due to US's important role in international politics as well as its dynamic domestic politics and economy, rich soil is provided for the creation of political euphemism. For example, from US economic decline are "recession", "disinflation" and "negative growth" created, hence giving birth to some euphemistic expressions such as "downsize" or "workforce adjustment". After Watergate Scandal, quite a few euphemistic expressions were produced to hide such political scandal.

In addition, military actions are also an extension from politics. It is said that war has brought about not only death and destruction but new euphemistic expressions because they will make death sound less horrible. US Department of Defense named their air attack in Vietnam as "air support" and "protective action", their destruction over Vietnamese villages as "pacification program" and those homeless refugees as "ambient non-combat personnel. Similarly, deaths and injuries caused by their bombardment over other nations were expressed as "collateral damage". It is no wonder that English Teachers' Council of US once awarded the Best Political Euphemism Award to its Department of Defense. Besides, its characteristic of times can also be reflected in the variation in the signifier of the same objective phenomenon with time.

Let's take the different euphemisms of military attack in different periods as an example. In 1950s, Truman described Korean War as "police action"; in 1960s and 1970s, Vietnam War was called "Vietnam Conflict" by US; in 1983, US invasion into Grenada was said to be "a rescue mission" instead of "incursion"; its invasion into Panama was also called "Operation Just Cause" and Bush Government said Iraqi War beginning in March, 2003 as "Operation Iraqi Freedom". Inside the language system, such constant changes with time evolve from the relationship between the signifier and signified. Although there is no relation between linguistic signs and their signified, people tend to relate euphemism to its signified after it has been used for a period. As a result, the former vagueness and sense of distance disappear and euphemistic color fades away. Consequently, politicians will rack their brains to find alternative expressions.

The Bush administration will no doubt be remembered for torture, Guantanamo, and Abu Ghraib, as well as for catchy euphemisms like "enhanced interrogation" and histrionic catch-phrases like "the Global War onTerror.The Following Paragraphs are extracted from political speeches delivered by George w. bush and Obama the bold expression are examples of euphemisms and the bold underlined are dysphemism:

In his speech on Iraq on Iraq delivered January 11, 2007, Bush say: Tonight in Iraq, the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged in a **struggle** that will determine the direction of the **global war on terror** — and our safety here at home. The new strategy I outline tonight will change America's course in Iraq, and help us succeed in the **fight against terror**.

But in 2006, the opposite happened. The violence in Iraq — particularly in Baghdad — overwhelmed the political gains the Iraqis had made. Al-Qaida **terrorists** and Sunni **insurgents** recognized the mortal danger that Iraq's elections posed for their cause. And they responded with **outrageous acts of murder aimed at innocent Iraqis**. They blew up one of the holiest shrines in Shia Islam — the Golden Mosque of Samarra — in a calculated effort to provoke Iraq's Shia population to retaliate. Their strategy worked. Radical Shia elements, some supported by Iran, formed **death squads**. And the result was a vicious cycle of sectarian violence that continues to-day

The consequences of failure are clear: **Radical Islamic extremists** would grow in strength and gain new recruits. They would be in a better position to topple **moderate governments,** create chaos in the region, and use oil revenues to fund their ambitions. Iran would be emboldened in its pursuit of nuclear weapons. **Our enemies** would have a safe haven from which to plan and launch attacks on the American people. On September the 11th, 2001, we saw what a refuge for **extremists** on the other side of the world could bring to the streets of our own cities. For the safety of our people, America must succeed in Iraq.

Many listening tonight will ask why this effort will succeed when previous **operations to secure Baghdad** did not. Well, here are the differences: In earlier **operations**, Iraqi and American forces cleared many neighborhoods

of **terrorists** and **insurgents** — but when our forces moved on to other targets, the **killers** returned. This time, we will have the force levels we need to hold the areas that have been cleared. In earlier **operations**, political and sectarian interference prevented Iraqi and American forces from going into neighborhoods that are home to those fueling the sectarian violence. This time, Iraqi and American forces will have a green light to enter these neighborhoods — and Prime Minister Maliki has pledged that political or sectarian interference will not be tolerated.

The Obama administration has introduced a new lexicon that includes words like "fairness," "values," and "the Constitution." The Obama administration has even invented its own euphemism. In his Speech On American Values and National Security delivered 21 May 2009, National Archives, Washington, D.C, President Obama spoke only of "prolonged" detention, not of indefinite detention, or preventive detention, or detention without charge.

Our goal is not to avoid a legitimate legal framework. In our constitutional system, **prolonged detention** should not be the decision of any one man. If and when we determine that the United States must hold individuals to keep them from carrying out an act of war, we will do so within a system that involves judicial and congressional oversight. And so, going forward, my administration will work with Congress to develop an appropriate legal regime so that our efforts are consistent with our values and our Constitution.

The label is new, but what of the substance behind it? To the many prisoners at Guantanamo who've already been held for more than seven years, "prolonged" may be to detention what "enhanced" was to interrogation.

4.2 Prgamatics of Political Euphemism and Dysphemism

The objective of politicians is to defend their status of domination and safeguard their own interests. Thus political euphemisms violate the four maxims of Cooperative Principle when we take the four maxims into political language environment.

4.2.1 Quantity Maxim

Quantity Maxim requires that the contribution should be informative enough, but not more informative than required. In some measure, political euphemisms violate this maxim. For getting the best result, officers and politicians use vague language to extend scope of information. In this way, speaker's purpose can be achieved. A typical example is the words spoken by Defense Secretary of the U.S. Donald H. Rumsfeld in 2003 when he talked about the nuclear weapon in Iraq. He said "Reports that say something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns, there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are something we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know."(From:**http://www.saidwhat.co.uk/quotes/political/donald_rumsfeld/reports_that_say_that_something_hasnt _2905**) Rumsfeld uses these words like "known knowns", "known unknowns", and "unknown unknowns" instead of those things that official cloud not speaks out or about national interest. The public may not understand what his really means. The use of these words and phrases keep him from being embarrassed. He deliberately violates the quantity maxim and successfully hides what others want to know. We can see that these political euphemisms violate Quantity Maxim of Cooperative Principle.

4.2.2 Quality Maxim

According to Quality Maxim, what speakers say should be true, and what he or she says is not false or does not lack adequate evidence. Politicians are usually liers. They are used to space in an indirect way and what they talk are usually far from truth. For example, "If we don't take the initiative, others will take the initiative before us," Peres told Israel Radio from Brussels. "Israel is facing a series of unprecedented challenges and tests and we cannot remain without a plan." Here, "take the initiative" means take the first step in a military undertaking. Other examples, the crime of breaking and entering is known as intelligence gathering activity, government sponsoring is known as White House horror, lying is known as less than truthful, cheap flattery is known as stroking, containment is known as withholding information

From these examples, a common conclusion can be made that these political euphemisms avoid stimulations through extending the facts to disguise themselves. Another way is to hide partial truth. Especially when they talk about something unpleasant. The following two examples are illustrated to prove the point:

Example one: As the Three Mile Island situation developed beginning on Wednesday, March 28(1979), the Commissioners met to discuss the nature of the event. Here, "event" means nuclear accident. This is a way of changing major troubles into minor ones; it is a good way to mitigate the influence of calamitous accident.

Example Two: Many thousands of persons would be dead and injured and mangled, the transportation systems are destroyed, and sanitation systems all gone. This is not preventive war — this is war. Aggressive war is called preventive war, it seems that they have taken action to safeguard nation's safety, but this is not the truth.

According to these examples, Quality Maxim of Cooperative Principle is violated in political euphemism.

4.2.3 Manner Maxim

Manner Maxim requires that speaker's contribution is perspicuous, and avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity. But when speaking of sensitive issues, official and politicians use political euphemisms to explain the issue vaguely and obscurely. This avoids the first detail and the second detail of Manner Maxim. The first detail is avoiding obscurity of expression, and the second detail is avoiding ambiguity.

The first detail is avoiding obscurity of expression when talking. But the nature of some political euphemisms requires official and politicians speak of sensitive issue vaguely. Example " On Mar. 21,2005 US Secretary of State C.Rice has said if effects to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program fail, Washington and their international community will pursue 'other ways'. The Secretary of State gave a hint that US was prepared to use other measures—possibly seeking international sanctions at the United Nations should the talk fail. Here, Rice avoids the first detail of Manner Maxim on purpose to prove that they will use force to safeguard their safety. She uses "other ways" and "other measures" instead of "military operation", or "by force". These political euphemisms make the real meaning of this case vague; the public could not understand the truth. What the obscure and vague words mean? Maybe only speaker understands. This political euphemism avoids the first detail of Manner Maxim.

The second detail is avoiding ambiguity. An good example in *A Dictionary of English Euphemisms* (2001), "There was still no realistic estimate as to exactly how many people would be killed, maimed, or come down with leukemia if an 'energy release' hit a populate area." "Release" and "explosion" are two different words, and their meanings are different. It produces ambiguity easily. In the case, does energy release or nuclear exploid? When energy releases, nuclear explosion is not sure of happening. So this political euphemism avoids the second detail of Manner Maxim.

Typical euphemisms are motivated by fear and/or distaste — both of which are driven by a desire not to offend. The speaker or writer chooses either to use or to not-use a euphemism in order to create a certain effect on a given occasion; e.g. there are occasions when one chooses between saying I'm going to the loo and I'm going for a piss for different effects, and others when good manners absolutely constrain the choice to the former. What motivates the choice is in many ways similar to what motivates the choice between saying Abu Nidal is a freedom fighter or Abu Nidal is a terrorist. On some occasions at least, the latter can be regarded as a 'dysphemism' because the term terrorist has unfavourable connotations, and is selected for that purpose. A dysphemism, then, is used for precisely the opposite reason that a euphemism is used.

1. Conclusion

The chief purpose of a euphemism is to present a situation, a person or an object in a more agreeable, more reassuring or politer light than would be afforded by the hard glare of reality or by crude, direct definition. The study's aim is realized in English and Arabic through the present comparison. Both languages couch euphemisms mainly in three figures of speech: metonymy, synecdoche and circumlocution. Also, both languages borrow from other languages as a euphemistic process. Metonymy is the basic figure of speech of euphemisms and it is mainly formed in both languages for the sake of euphemisms. English also uses hyperboles, Remodeling, clipping, Abbreviations and Acronyms to form euphemism. English and Arabic euphemisms have more resemblances and less distinctions. This shows that euphemism is a universal phenomenon in natural languages and it is expected that most of similarities and differences between English and Arabic may possibly be found among other natural languages. Moreover, the study discussed features of political euphemism and how it violates Grice's cooperative principle. Thus, this study presents a way for understanding euphemism and dysphemism for textbook writers, teachers, learners and translators of English and Arabic as nonnative languages.

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