

LINGUOCULTURAL AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EUPHEMISMS IN JAPANESE CULTURE**Achilova Ozoda Farkhadovna**Doctor of Philological Sciences (DSc),
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ANNOTATION: This article provides a theoretical and analytical examination of the formation, usage characteristics, and linguocultural essence of euphemisms in Japanese culture. The study explores euphemisms in close connection with social relations in Japanese society, particularly within the framework of the concepts of shame (恥) and collective harmony (和). The pragmatic functions of euphemistic expressions in the Japanese language are comparatively analyzed alongside their Uzbek equivalents, revealing both universal and culture-specific features.

Through Japanese and Uzbek examples related to death, illness, social status, gender, and family relations, the article substantiates the role of euphemisms in mitigating speech, maintaining social hierarchy, and preventing conflict.

Key words: euphemism, Japanese language, Japanese culture, linguoculture, pragmatics, speech culture, face-saving, comparative linguistics

In modern linguistics, euphemisms play a significant role as linguistic manifestations of cultural norms, social values, and national mentality in human speech activity. Through euphemisms, concepts that are uncomfortable, coarse, or socially restricted are softened and expressed in culturally acceptable forms. Especially in societies where traditional values prevail, euphemistic expressions constitute an integral part of speech culture. From this perspective, Japanese culture stands out due to the complexity of its euphemistic system, its foundation in strict social conventions, and its high degree of linguocultural load.

In Japanese society, speech functions not only as a means of information transmission but also as a mechanism for maintaining social relations, ensuring collective harmony, and preserving the interlocutor's "face" (face-saving). For this reason, indirect, implicit, and euphemistic forms are widely preferred over direct and blunt expressions. The concept of 和 (wa), denoting collective harmony, is one of the key factors shaping the formation and use of euphemisms in Japanese culture. According to this concept, causing embarrassment, expressing open criticism, or placing the interlocutor in an uncomfortable position through speech is considered socially inappropriate.

For instance, when pointing out shortcomings in the workplace, Japanese tends to employ softened expressions instead of direct accusations, as in: この点は少し難しいかもしれません ("This point may be somewhat difficult..."). Although this sentence appears semantically neutral, in its pragmatic context it euphemistically conveys the meaning "You have done this incorrectly." A similar phenomenon can be observed in Uzbek, where an expression such as "This aspect might need to be reviewed once again" is used in place of direct criticism.

In Japanese culture, the concept of shame (恥, haji) plays a crucial role in the widespread use of euphemisms. Shame functions not only as a personal emotion but also as a powerful mechanism of social regulation. Consequently, topics such as death, illness, physical disability, age, gender, and marital or family status are rarely mentioned directly. For example, to express the meaning of "to die," Japanese employs euphemistic expressions such as 亡くなる (nakunaru) and 逝去 (goseikyo). Similarly, in Uzbek, euphemisms such as vafot etdi ("passed away") or

olamdan o'tdi ("departed this world") are used instead of the direct verb o'ldi ("died"). This parallel demonstrates that the topic of death is approached with caution in both cultures.

Euphemisms related to illness are also widely used in Japanese. For instance, the expression 体調が優れない ("not feeling very well") may euphemistically refer even to a serious illness. A comparable pragmatic function is observed in Uzbek expressions such as sog'lig'i sal yomonlashib qoldi ("his/her health has slightly worsened"). Through such euphemisms, respect toward the interlocutor is maintained and the negative impact of unfavorable information is mitigated.

Euphemisms occupy a particularly important place in the sphere of social status and labor relations in Japanese society. Since one's workplace is closely associated with personal identity, dismissal or removal from a position is rarely expressed directly. An expression such as 退職していただくことになりました ("it has been decided that [you] will conclude your employment") serves to soften the act of dismissal. Similar euphemistic functions are fulfilled in Uzbek by expressions such as ish faoliyatini tugatdi ("ended his/her work activity") or lavozimidan ozod etildi ("was relieved of the position"). Euphemisms related to gender and family relations constitute a particularly sensitive domain in Japanese culture. Matters such as a woman's age, pregnancy, or old age are rarely stated explicitly. For example, instead of the direct expression 妊娠している ("pregnant"), the euphemistic phrase おめでたいこと ("a felicitous/happy circumstance") is commonly used. When compared with the Uzbek euphemism oyog'i og'ir ("with child"), this example clearly demonstrates that both cultures exhibit a cautious and respectful attitude toward the female body and reproductive status. Similarly, with regard to age, the expression お年を召している ("advanced in years") replaces the more direct term meaning "elderly."

Thus, in Japanese, euphemisms function not merely at the level of lexical units but as a comprehensive speech strategy. Pragmatically, they serve to soften discourse, maintain social hierarchy, protect the interlocutor's dignity and "face," and prevent potential conflicts. Euphemisms in Uzbek perform comparable functions; however, in Japanese culture they are more systematically organized due to their close association with the system of 敬語 (keigo), the language of respect.

In conclusion, euphemisms in Japanese culture emerge as linguistic representations of national mentality, moral norms, and social relations. Through their use, respect, shame, and collective harmony are sustained within society. A comparative analysis with Uzbek reveals not only the universal features of euphemisms but also culture-specific linguocultural characteristics inherent to each language. This confirms that euphemisms constitute an important object of study not only in linguistics, but also in cultural studies and pragmatics.

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