

## CONTEXTUAL FEATURES OF PERIPHRASES AND EUPHEMISMS

**Mikayilova A. R.**

azadamikailova@gmail.com

*Azerbaijan University of Languages (Baku, Azerbaijan)*

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У статті розглянуто контекстуальні особливості перифрази та евфемізмів. Як фігури заміщення, вони відіграють важливу роль у формування тексту. Використовуючи перифрази, підкреслюють характерні риси концепції, описаної в тексті. Основне завдання перифрази – увиразнити текст і довести особливість ідеї. Перифрази мають ширшу функціональність у літературі, публіцистичному стилі і розмовному мовленні. Носії мови завжди уникають неприйнятних, недоречних та таких, що викликають зніяковіття, слів і висловів для них самих або співрозмовників, тому часто використовують евфемізми. Страх, сором і огида – три основні чинники, які мотивують використання евфемізмів. Дослідження обох фігур заміщення показують, що вони мають велике значення для формування тексту.

*Ключові слова:* стилістичні особливості, вторинна номінація, фігури заміщення, перифраза, евфемізм.

This article deals with the contextual features of periphrasis and euphemisms. As figures of substitution, they play an important role in the formation of a text. The characteristic features of the concept described in the context are emphasized by using the periphrasis, The main goal of the periphrasis is to increase the expressiveness of the text and to prove the validity of the idea. Periphrasis has a broader functionality in literature, in journalistic style and in colloquial speech. Language users always avoid using words and expressions that are unpleasant, inappropriate or embarrassing for them, or those whom they speak. Euphemisms are often used for this purpose. Fear, shame and disgust are the three main factors that motivate the use of euphemisms. The study of both figures of substitution shows that they are of great importance in the formation of a text.

*Key words:* stylistic devices, secondary nomination, figures of substitution, periphrasis, euphemism.

Any element of the language has a certain meaning, but not all the meanings of the linguistic element can have stylistic importance. It is possible to distinguish means of expression and stylistic devices in stylistic semasiology. While speaking about the means of expression, figures of speech, i.e. different methods of secondary nomination are taken into account (Скребнев, с. 120).

The development of human competence leads to new concepts, which can come across in the language, particularly in its vocabulary. But if every new concept is expressed with a new word, then the vocabulary of the language will be extremely large which is beyond the ability of human memory to remember. Economy to the language means and analytical activity of human conscious lead to widespread use of secondary nomination, i. e the use of existing words and word combinations for new concepts.

The secondary nomination is subject to a certain rule. The transfer of names generally depends on the similarity of two objects (real and imagined), for example: *Lamb – animal; lamb – docile.*

Secondary nomination is typical to paradigmatic (synonym, homonym) relations, and in many cases it is stylistically marked. In this aspect, stylistic – semasiological opposition may occur between the elements of different levels: word – word combination (*to love – to fall in love, to die – to sleep in the grave, to decide – to make a decision*), word combination-phrase (e. g. *a sceptical man – I'm from Missouri: you've got to show me*), phrase – phrase (e. g. *Everyone can make a mistake – Homer sometimes nods*), word – text (onion – *You use a knife to slice my head and weep beside me when I am dead*).

A text is not just succession of sentences, but it is a purposeful sequence which is based on the lexical, grammatical, logical and stylistic relationships. This sequence follows a special structural and semantic rules that lead to the pragmatic compliance. It is indisputable that antonyms, synonyms, hyponym-hyperonyms and homonyms among lexical means differ with their text-forming features. Periphrasis and euphemisms as figures of substitution play an important role in the formation of a text.

There have been a growth of scientific interest in pragmatic approach to stylistic problems: stylistic use of language units for communicative purposes in pragmatic aspect, involvement of broader range of contextual factors in stylistic analyses, research of definite word groups in different contexts, etc. According to A. Abdullayev everything with stylistic effect in the analysis of a text has the opportunity of pragmatic usage in the language (Abdullayev, с. 67).

Periphrasis with particular importance in terms of pragmatic quality is one of the stylistic figures of substitution which has a special part in the realisation of creative principles of literature. Periphrasis as a stylistic figure of substitution expresses the objects of reality in a descriptive way. It has expressive and evaluative character.

In his work "French Stylistics", Ch. Bally considers this term as a changed form of repetition. He explains the reason of the appearance of different types of repetitions as the authors' attempt to communicate with their listeners. Ch. Bally gives the following definition: "The expanded form of repetition of the idea is called periphrasis in terminology. This term should be understood as figurative expression of the same idea" (Балли, с. 126).

I. R. Galperin considers periphrasis as one of the means of secondary nomination from the point of view of nomination. "By performing definite qualities of a language, periphrasis realises its search for new names for the objects, and reflects the renomination of the objects and the events of the language. Such nomination which is the object's sole representative in the speech can be expressed figuratively" (Гальперин, с. 167).

The speakers' ability of the use of periphrasis is also based on their knowledge of synonyms of the language. There are repeatedly used periphrases that are synonyms to the words expressing the same object, for example: *a gentleman of the long robe – lawyer; my better half-wife*.

Periphrasis can be logical and figurative. Logical periphrasis with a descriptive expression is based on a logical relationship between any particular aspect of the denotation. There are two options here: 1) Any characteristic of the objects is used as a substitute for the entire object. For example: *weak / fair sex – woman, strong sex – man*. 2) A broader nomination is used to refer to a specific subject or personality. For example: *the instrument of destruction – a gunman, a guardian of public order – a policeman*.

Figurative periphrasis is based on metaphor and metonymy. For example, *root of evil, to tie the knot – to marry, gray-haired – old, young blood – enthusiast*.

...The porter went in the door, followed by the *gray-haired woman*, then came hurrying back (Hemingway, p. 92).

Periphrasis is usually found in literature which is regarded as a feature of personal style. For example: *Books were beyond her interest*. In the intuitive graces she was still crude (Dreiser, p. 4).

In this example, "Books were beyond her interest" can be used as "She was not interested in books" without any change in the meaning.

With the use of periphrasis in the context, the peculiarity and quality of the described concept are emphasized. The main task of the periphrasis is to increase the expressiveness of the text and to prove the validity of the idea. Periphrasis has a broader functionality in literature, publicist style, and in colloquial speech. For example:

She hunted out an unassuming restaurant and entered, but was disturbed to find that *the prices were exorbitant for the size of her purse*. A bowl of soup was all that she could afford, and with this quickly eaten, she went out again. It restored her strength somewhat and made her moderately bold to pursue the search (Dreiser, p. 20).

In this example, “the prices were exorbitant for the size of each purse” was used in the meaning of “expensive”. As you can see, the periphrasis enhances the power of the text.

According to the above-mentioned factors we may summarize that periphrasis:

1) it keeps the reader's attention focused on the main topic, and enriches the information. Periphrasis adds new meanings to existing information, enriches it with new details;

2) its main subjects are considered within the communication; participants of the communication, their knowledge and thoughts, social statuses and positions are key components of communicative conditions. Periphrasis provides an author's opinion on concrete conditions.

3) its text-forming function is that it facilitates the structural-semantic organisation of the text. Periphrasis provides structural-semantic relationship of the text.

...Returning I had to cross before the *looking-glass*; my fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed. All looked colder and darker in that *visionary hollow* than in reality; and the *strange little figure* there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit (Bronte, p. 7).

In this example “visionary hollow” is figuratively used as the synonym of “looking-glass” and makes the sentence more colourful. “Strange little figure” is used to describe Jane, the main hero of the text.

Another way of making speech attractive and colourful is euphemisms. Euphemisms are the elements in the language system that differ from other words according to their definite features. Euphemisms are the means that help soften the meaning of a content, and transfer them into pleasing form. Their existence and use in the language are conditioned by the reduction of unpleasant, negative impact, and prevention of bad mood.

Language users always avoid using words and expressions which are unpleasant, inappropriate or embarrassing to them or to whom they are conversing. This censoring of language occurs primarily unconsciously through applying euphemistic expressions. The contribution of euphemisms to maintaining interpersonal interactions on safe grounds is undeniable. Fear, shame, and disgust are three principal factors motivating the use of euphemisms. People sometimes do not name the things, objects and concepts directly. This is particularly susceptible when the participants of the communication attempt to minimize the bad effects of the words and phrases they use. They try to keep away from any expression that may affect the fluency and understanding of the communication. The global community we live in shows a growing demand for the substitution of words when speaking on certain subjects. As we mentioned above, people, feeling that their words may sound rude and offensive, use their substitutes – euphemisms which are more gentle. They may seem very simple at first glance. In fact, this way of expression of words is convincing. In this case, euphemisms are viewed mostly from a social point of view in modern society. First of all, it is necessary to determine which social factors determine the selection of these substitutes. It is believed that the first euphemisms were more religious. Even in modern society, people from different cultures have had superstitious beliefs that words can attract negativity. For example, the name of some diseases: tuberculosis, cancer, cirrhosis, etc. Naming such diseases with euphemisms weakens their bad influence. For example, French ache – syphilis; cardiac incident, cardiac arrest, heart problem – heart attack; off your head, off your tree, off your trolley – mad. In terms of social life, more precisely, for speaking about death, religion, etc. people began to use euphemisms that are considered to have social features. High level of education and the development of society have created enormous opportunities for searching suitable negotiation techniques for almost all topics.

The history of euphemisms is related to social, economic and cultural factors. Thus words or phrases may be adopted differently by the public at different times, in various social, economic and cultural environments, and after some time they may lose their certain influence or be replaced by new ones. Such factors as region, its culture, tradition and location may have an important value in the formation of euphemisms. For example, in Azerbaijani culture, spouses did not use to call

each other by their names directly as a sign of respect for the elderly people. This rule has lost its influence over time. In today's globalized society there is no topic that is banned or not spoken.

Euphemisms can be divided into two parts for the purpose and reason of their usage. The first group includes the use of soft, pleasant, more polite words instead of partially rude and unpleasant words. There is no restriction here, and their use depends on the speaker's wish.

The second group includes the use of partially polite words instead of the words usage of which is inappropriate in the spoken language, in the public places, i.e. the words of the second group are close to taboo words.

The main difference between these groups are the followings:

The euphemisms of the first group have almost the same meaning with the words they replace. The content is the same either for the euphemistic word or for the word that they substitute, and both are easily understood. It is true that the euphemistic word is different from the word it substitutes for its structure, i.e. the words, phrases and even the sentences are not similar but the content is not misinterpreted, and it is easily understood. For example, when using "to go west, to expire, to depart, to decease, to join the majority, to go the way of all flesh, to pass away, to breathe one's last, to go to one's last reckoning, to kick the bucket" instead of "to die" the meaning keeps the same. The general content of "to die" can be expressed in different forms. There is no need for a dictionary to catch the meaning, and sometimes it is clear even without a text.

Mr. Reed had been dead nine years: it was in this Chamber he *breathed his last* (Bronte, p. 7).

However, the euphemisms of the second group differ from those of the first group for some reasons. Euphemism expressing the meaning of taboo word differs from the substituted word both for the form and the content. In particular, the meaning they express is different from each other, and there is no relationship between them. It is difficult to understand them without a specific explanation or without a context. For example, Latin words are used to express some parts of human body since it is considered impolite to use them directly. This keeps their names secret to some extent, and only professionals understand it.

Social, cultural, ethical and aesthetic views of society shape the positive and negative value of objects and events, and determine whether their names are appropriate for certain social conditions. In other words, social conditions have a direct impact on the use of words and promote the use of euphemisms for the words the usage of which is considered to be inappropriate. For example:

God – Lord, Heaven, goodness;

Dead – the deceased, the departed;

Starvation – undernourishment;

Poor people – less fortunate elements;

Euphemisms in literature may be synonymously used instead of useless repetition, in the function of cohesion and so on. For example:

The porter rang the bell, then knocked on the door, then he opened the door and went in. When he came back there was an *elderly woman* wearing glasses with him. Her hair was loose and half-falling and she wore a nurse's dress (Hemingway, p. 92).

...I heard her (Mrs. Reed) *sweeping away*; and soon after she *was gone*, I suppose I had a species of fit: unconsciousness closed the scene (Bronte, p. 9).

B. Warren made a model which is based on the idea that "novel contextual meanings", i.e. new meanings for words in a particular context, are constantly created in language. This creation is rule-governed and the acceptability of new meanings depends on, for example, the strength of ties between the novel term and its referent, whether the novel term is considered to be of lasting value, i.e. the referent has no other name, or if the novel term is a "desirable alternative" (Warren, p. 130). This is the situation that results in the creation of euphemistic terms. B. Warren gives four devices for euphemism formation, the fourth of which is called "Semantic innovation" In this case, a "novel sense for some established word or word combination is created," (ibid., p. 133).

*How sad to be lying now on a sick bed, and to be in danger of dying! This world is pleasant – it would be dreary to be called from it, and to have to go who knows where?* (Bronte, p. 47).

In this example the features that euphemism performs in a text include: to reduce monotonous repetition, have humorous effect, describe characters more vividly.

The research of both figures of substitution shows that they are of great importance in the formation of a text. One of the peculiarities of having knowledge about the language is the ability of a speaker or a writer to use these figures of substitution, i.e., to express the thoughts in different ways without any change in the content. The peculiarity and quality of the objects and events are emphasized in the context or communication where they are described by periphrasis and euphemism. The main purpose of using these stylistic devices is to increase the expressiveness of the text, and to prove the authenticity of the images, ideas and conditions.

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