



## NATIONAL-CULTURAL EXPRESSION OF EUPHEMISMS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

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**Abstract:** This article, from a comparative-linguistic perspective, examines the national-cultural features of the expression of euphemistic units in Uzbek and English literary texts—based on Gafur Gulom’s short novel “*Shum bola*” and the works of Jerome K. Jerome. The analysis shows that in both literatures euphemisms are used for the culturally acceptable expression of various aspects of reality—physical limitations, social vulnerability, delicate religious-ethical issues, and personal emotions; however, their semantic structure, metaphorical basis, and communicative purpose acquire specific characteristics in each national context. In the article, euphemisms are interpreted as a phenomenon associated with national worldview and social speech behavior.

**Keywords:** euphemism, national-cultural code, comparative linguistics, Gafur Gulom, Jerome K. Jerome, cognitive metaphor, taboo, language and culture, pragmatic strategy, literary text.

**Introduction:** As a linguistic phenomenon, euphemism has a long history, and its essence is not limited to mere word substitution—it also embodies a code of conduct accepted in a given social environment, a system of cultural taboos, and communicative strategies. Studies show that although euphemisms have a universal basis across languages, their formation and scope of use are directly connected with each nation’s historical and cultural experience, religious worldview, and moral values. From this perspective, comparative analysis of Uzbek and English literary texts created in different socio-cultural contexts makes it possible to reveal both universal and culture-specific features of euphemism.

Gafur Gulom’s “*Shum bola*”, vividly depicting life in early 20th-century Tashkent, reflects the most subtle layers of Uzbek national speech culture—folk colloquial expressions, religious-ethical terms, and euphemisms expressing social relations—within a rich artistic framework. In turn, the works of Jerome K. Jerome demonstrate the euphemistic culture of English social life—class relations, extreme politeness, and humorous masking strategies—in a distinctive manner. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of these two literary heritages through the prism of euphemism.

**Literature Review:** The position of euphemisms in linguistic theory is the result of long-standing discussions, and today it has reached the level of an independent field of research. The interpretation of euphemism as a communicative device associated with taboo language and functioning as a “shield” for expressing socially sensitive topics is substantiated in [1] this approach has established the tradition of treating euphemisms not only as a stylistic phenomenon but also as a cognitive-pragmatic issue.

The conceptual system explaining the interaction between language and thought through metaphor was developed in [2] which provided a cognitive-linguistic justification for the metaphorical mechanisms underlying euphemism. The universality and culture-specific realization of metaphor across different cultures is discussed in detail in [4] this study presents

important theoretical conclusions regarding how euphemistic metaphors differ in various cultural environments.

The pragmatic theory of politeness and face-saving strategies is developed in [6] where euphemisms are viewed as linguistic tools that protect both “positive face” and “negative face” in social interaction; this approach served as a theoretical basis for comparing the pragmatic load of euphemisms in Uzbek and English literary texts. The theory of dialogism and polyphony [8] allows euphemisms in literary texts to be interpreted as a result of the intersection of different social discourses.

The national-cultural specificity of euphemisms in Uzbek and Russian languages is thoroughly examined in [3] where the authors demonstrate the strong connection between Uzbek euphemisms and the Islamic-religious code, highlighting their fundamental differences from English euphemisms. Taboo words in the Uzbek language and their influence on the linguistic worldview are studied in [5] identifying the role of euphemistic units in the national linguistic picture. A comparative study of English and Uzbek euphemisms in media discourse and their translation problems is presented in [7] which serves as an important source for illustrating euphemistic diversity in both languages through concrete examples.

Based on the above literature, it can be stated that comparative studies of Uzbek and English euphemisms in literary texts from a national-cultural perspective have not yet been sufficiently conducted. This article is aimed at filling this gap.

**Research Methodology:** The study was conducted based on the text of Gafur Gulom’s “Shum bola” and the works of Jerome K. Jerome. Semantic, pragmatic, and cognitive analysis methods were used to identify and classify euphemistic units. Through semantic analysis, denotative and connotative changes of lexical units replaced by euphemisms were examined. Pragmatic analysis was employed to determine the communicative purpose, audience impact, and illocutive function of euphemisms in context. Relying on the theory of conceptual metaphor, the main conceptual metaphors and their cultural specificity in the euphemistic models of both languages were identified. Using the comparative-typological method, the similarities and differences between Uzbek and English euphemisms were systematically analyzed. Contextual and discursive analysis methods were applied in extracting euphemisms from the text.

**Analysis and Results:** The comparative analysis shows that in the works of Gafur Gulom and Jerome K. Jerome, euphemisms are manifested in four common thematic directions—physical limitation and lack of freedom, religious-ethical sensitivity, social identification, and emotional-psychological state expression. However, the manner of expression and cultural grounding of these directions differ in each cultural context.

*Euphemisms expressing physical helplessness and compulsion.* In Gafur Gulom’s story, in the episode where the protagonist is forced to hide inside a oven, the phrase “*ammo badanda bir sarkash a'zo bor, u mening ixtiyorimdan tashqari, o'zboshimcharoq. Unga mening hukmim o'tmaydi*” expresses hunger as a physical need in a euphemistic way. Here, “*sarkash a'zo*” and “*ixtiyorimdan tashqari*” present the need as an entity independent of personal will, giving it a culturally humorous and metaphorical frame. This depiction shows typological similarity with Jerome’s works, where physical discomfort is also not stated directly; however, in the Uzbek version the metaphor is more figurative and philosophical, grounded in national cognitive patterns.

Similarly, in the phrase “*xumga qamalgan yumronday bo'lib qolsa, albatta, zirikadi-da*”, the state of confinement and lack of freedom is expressed through an animal metaphor. This is not

a lexical euphemism but a cognitive euphemistic representation, where the situation is placed into a metaphorical frame instead of being directly named.

*Religious and ethical euphemisms.* In Gafur Gulom's text, euphemisms related to religious-ethical norms form a distinct group. In the phrase "*Ul nopokning vujudi bir osh pishgunga qadar ko'zdan g'oyib bo'lib ketdi*", the word "*nopok*" functions as a euphemistic adjective for a socially and religiously condemned person. Likewise, in "*muborak qo'llari bilan peshonamni silab*", the adjective "*muborak*" represents a euphemistic elevation of a simple action.

The phrase "*tarkidunyo devonabachchani*" combines both religious and social euphemistic layers, where "*tarkidunyo*" and "*devona*" together represent social marginalization in a culturally mediated form.

*Euphemisms of social identification and status difference.* In the passage "*Birpas qamalib yotdi, keyin bechoraga rahmim kelib, mirshabga bir so'm pora berib, yigitni qutqazib yubordim*", detention and bribery are expressed in a neutralized communicative form. The phrase "*rahmim kelib*" serves as emotional justification, while "*qamalib yotdi*" softens the legal seriousness.

In Jerome's stories, similar euphemisms appear in expressions such as "*being asked to leave*" or "*voluntarily resigning*", often accompanied by humor and irony.

In the episode "*Bozorma-bozor aylantirib, boshimga qamchi bilan urib, 'sazoyi kishi odam o'ldirsin', degan so'zni baland ovoz bilan takror qilishga majbur qilar edilar*", the term "*sazoyi*" functions as a culturally specific euphemism that slightly neutralizes public humiliation.

*Euphemisms of emotional-psychological state.* In "*shaytonga 'hay' berib, zo'rg'a o'zimni to'xtatib qolaman*", immoral impulses are attributed to "*shayton*", shifting responsibility to a metaphysical force [1]. In Jerome's works, similar states are often expressed through understatement and irony, reflecting the English tradition of *understatement*. Comparatively, Gafur Gulom's euphemisms are based on religious-metaphorical structures, whereas Jerome's rely on social convention and humorous distance. However, both authors use euphemism as a means of indirectly representing socio-cultural reality.

**Conclusion:** Comparative analysis of Uzbek and English literary texts from the perspective of euphemisms led to the following main conclusions. First, euphemisms are a universal linguistic phenomenon, and their thematic domains—death, physical condition, social status, and moral prohibitions—are similarly manifested in both literatures. Second, behind this universality lie profound national differences: in Gafur Gulom's prose, euphemisms are closely connected with the Islamic-ethical code, folk mysticism, and the cognitive models of Uzbek social thinking. Third, in Jerome's works, the blending of euphemisms with English politeness, class relations, and the tradition of "*understatement*" determines their specific literary function. Fourth, it was demonstrated that euphemisms in both literary traditions are not merely lexical substitutions but phenomena closely linked to cognitive metaphor mechanisms, pragmatic face-saving strategies, and dialogic text structure.

The results show that the study of national-cultural euphemism can significantly contribute to linguistic theory, translation practice, and the methodological foundations of comparative linguocultural research.

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