



## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TABOOS AND EUPHEMISMS IN THE UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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**Abstract:** As long as people live in society, they constantly communicate with other people about various aspects of life for different purposes in different situations. Here, language performs the task of communication. In the process of the communication, people follow certain legal rules of the society, certain norms that are considered appropriate by the society. This phenomenon is manifested in a person's behavior and language. The aspect we would like to touch on in the article is how well people can use language and its possibilities in certain situations. Because in the internal structure of all languages, there are words that had been formed since ancient times and there are some prohibitions and restrictions on their use in communication, such words are called taboos, and it requires certain skills and knowledge to effectively use the words and word combinations. Hence, it is characterized by the emergence of new expressions, in other words, euphemisms, instead of words that are tabooed by certain peoples and society. Below, we will focus on these features of the language comparatively in the Uzbek and English languages.

**Keywords:** taboos; euphemisms; classification; connection; difference

**Аннотация:** Пока люди живут в обществе, они постоянно общаются с другими людьми о различных аспектах жизни для разных целей в разных ситуациях. Здесь язык выполняет задачу общения. В процессе общения люди следуют определенным правовым правилам общества, определенным нормам, которые общество считает приемлемыми. Это явление проявляется в поведении человека и языке. Аспект, который мы хотели бы затронуть в статье, это то, насколько хорошо люди могут использовать язык и его возможности в определенных ситуациях. Так как во внутренней структуре всех языков есть слова, которые образовались с древних времен и существуют некоторые запреты и ограничения на их употребление в общении, такие слова называются табу, и для эффективного использования слов требуются определенные навыки и знания. Следовательно, для него характерно появление новых выражений, иначе говоря, эвфемизмов, вместо слов, табуированных у определенных народов и общества. Ниже мы остановимся на этих особенностях языка сравнительно в узбекском и английском языках.

**Ключевые слова:** табу; эвфемизмы; классификация; связь; разница

**Annotatsiya:** Odamlar jamiyatda yashar ekan, ular turli vaziyatlarda turli maqsadlarda hayotning turli jabhalari haqida boshqa odamlar bilan doimo muloqot qilishadi. Bu yerda til muloqot vazifasini bajaradi. Muloqot jarayonida kishilar jamiyatning muayyan huquqiy qoidalariga, jamiyat tomonidan maqsadga muvofiq deb topilgan muayyan me'yorlarga amal qiladilar. Bu hodisa insonning xulq-atvorida, tilida namoyon bo'ladi. Maqolada biz to'xtalib

o'tmoqchi bo'lgan jihat – odamlar ma'lum vaziyatlarda til va uning imkoniyatlaridan qanchalik to'g'ri va unumli foydalanishi. Chunki barcha tillarning ichki tuzilishida qadimdan shakllangan so'zlar mavjud bo'lib, ularni muloqotda qo'llashda ma'lum taqiq va cheklovlar mavjud bo'lib, bunday so'zlar tabu deyiladi va so'zlardan unumli foydalanish uchun ma'lum mahorat va bilim talab etiladi. Shu bilan birga, muayyan xalq va jamiyat tomonidan taqiqlangan so'zlar o'rniga yangi iboralarning, boshqacha aytganda, evfemizmlarning paydo bo'lishi tabu va evfemizmlarning o'zaro bog'liq hodisalar ekanligi bilan harakterlanadi. Quyida o'zbek va ingliz tillaridagi tilning ana shu xususiyatlariga qiyosiy to'xtalib o'tamiz.

**Kalit so'zlar:** tabu; evfemizm; tasniflash; bog'liqlik; farqlanish.

### Introduction

Language is an inseparable part of human connection. Language allows us to share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others. The development of society promotes the evolution and evolution of language. During the evolution of a language, there appeared certain type of words that are called taboos. The word "taboo" is collectively referred to as "tabu" and translated into "taboo" or "tabu" in English, which means "sacred and untouchable". The word derives from the dialect of the Polynesian Islands in the Central Pacific Ocean. It is said that James Cook, an Englishman, encountered many peculiar social phenomena in the Tonga Islands in the South Pacific in 1777. On this island, some things are only used by noble people such as gods, kings, monks, chiefs and so on, while ordinary people are forbidden to use them. Ordinary people can't get close to something, and ordinary people can't say some names and words. Therefore, with the development of society, these sacred or filthy things are among the taboos of people. Once people commit taboos, it is said that punishment or retribution will be incurred [1]. Therefore, taboos are often used to reflect two main aspects of life, one is the worship of language, the other is the prohibition or substitution of language. With the development of society, the term "Tabu" has gradually entered the field of anthropology, ethnology, and sociology, and it began to be widely used by different group of people. As a result, "Taboo" has attracted public attention, because it is closely connected with people's daily life, but also reflects people's social life and psychological value. Taboos have gradually become taboos in all aspects of human life. For example, people's taboos on people's life, age, illness or death.

A.A.Reformatsky wrote that "To replace the taboo words, other words are needed - euphemisms. Euphemisms -these are replaced, permitted words that are used instead of forbidden (tabooed)" [2]. Therefore, two of the phenomena are closely connected with each other, both having the notion of cultural phenomenon. Language is not only the carrier of culture but it is also a social phenomenon as well as a social behavior. In daily communication, people's thinking and expressing their thoughts in certain situations and choosing the appropriate words in the following process also differ from each other. Sometimes they are unwilling or unable to express their wishes directly, thus in this way taboos are produced. Euphemism becomes the best choice for expression when thinking about how to accurately express opinions or ideas that people don't want to express directly. Therefore, some scholars have studied taboos and euphemisms from many angles.

### Literature review

In primitive times, a person who did not know the secret of natural phenomena understood that the only way to avoid fear-inducing magical and harmful evil forces, demons, ghosts, catastrophic diseases and monsters is to refrain from mentioning their names. In

particular, the taboo regarding a person's name is widespread. For example, it is forbidden to say the name of a dead person, the name of a genius or a king, the name of goddesses, and the name of some relatives (father-in-law, mother-in-law, husband, mother-in-law), and they are replaced by appropriate descriptive phrases.

The National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan explains the term "taboo" as follows:

- 1) Prohibition system widespread in peoples at the stage of primitive society.
- 2) Prohibiting the use of certain words, phrases or nouns in linguistics

The names of animals that are hunted, a source of livelihood or animals that frighten people and other events are also sometimes tabooed. For example, the word "scorpion" is called with the following words 'eshak, benom, gazanda, ayriqyruq, beshbo'g'in" and other names in Uzbek dialects. In today's languages, it is possible to include the habit of not speaking directly about death and serious illness, remembering and avoiding mention of unpleasant things. Instead of taboo words, other words - euphemisms are necessary, as in Uzbek, like other languages, such words are the majority (Ochil Boriyev, Abduvahob Madvaliyev) [3,4].

So, taboo words are words and phrases that are not recommended to be used in speech in society for various reasons. Such words are found in all languages. For example, in the Uzbek language, the words "o'ldi" (died), "dead" (o'lgan) are taboos, and instead of them, words such as "vafot etdi", "olamdan o'tdi", "rahmatli bo'libdi", "marhum", "rahmatli" are used, in English they mean "passed away", "perished", "deceased", "the late", "the departed". [5,6,13].

According to Russian scientist A.A. Reformatsky, there are various reasons for the phenomenon of tabooing certain words and phrases. These include the replacement of military units and territories with symbolic representations in order to protect military secrets, the non-disclosure of names of dangerous diseases, the use of secret language by thieves, and the implementation of taboos in formal gatherings to maintain ethical standards [2].

The word "Euphemism" comes from the Greek language. "Eu" means "good" while "phemism" means "language, discourse". Therefore, "Euphemism" literally means "speak with good words or in a pleasant manner"[7]. So, the expression of euphemism means using a pleasant, Euphemistic and vocal words to replace unpleasant, rude, harsh words. Taboo can be used, but words cannot be said, meaning cannot be expressed. Therefore, with the development of social civilization, euphemism, as a language to replace taboos, has come into being. As Fromkin said, "The existence of taboo words or taboo ideas stimulates the creation of euphemism. A euphemism is a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word, or that is used in the attempt to avoid either fearful or unpleasant subjects" [8]. So euphemism itself began to transform into taboo from the moment it was created. For example, people in the English world do not dare to use the name of God without fear of a major disaster, so they seek ethics and seek communication. The purpose is to use Jeepers creepers and gosh darn instead of Jesus and God damn. In the West, people rarely talk about age, especially women. The main reason is to avoid old age because old age means youth is absent, meaning economic status and the decline of political status, so the word old is generally unacceptable, so there is the emergence of euphemism for the elderly.

A. Omonturdiyev, who extensively studied the topic in Uzbek linguistics, identified various categories that fall under the figurative object of euphemism. These include

euphemisms pertaining to family structures, morality, sexual relationships, addressing people, physical and sexual defects, disease names, food and digestion, political concepts, death, and traditions [9].

From these explanations, we can clearly know that euphemism is mainly based on human psychology. Euphemism is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a cultural phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon, which reflects the values, aesthetics, and virtues of society. Euphemism is indirect, pleasant, polite, and mild. And from the knowledge in our minds we may find that euphemism is closely related to taboo. When giving up a taboo word, people will find another word to replace it, which creates a euphemism. In English language, euphemism is widely used in the daily communications. And in English language, there are many ways to express euphemism. And those ways can be categorized into three classifications. The first is through the change of the speech sounds, for instance, it is usually said "Gosh" instead of "God". The second way is semantic method, such as synonymy, negation and vague expressions. And the last method is using kinds of figures of speech, for example, understatement, metaphor and metonymy. **Research methodology**

The Classification of Uzbek and English taboos and euphemisms

The Classification of Uzbek and English Taboos

There always seem to be some taboo words in every language, which are always limited to some certain aspects, Uzbek and English are no exception. Many contraindications involve human excretion, sexual behavior, illness, and death. As for taboo words, different dictionaries often use different methods of processing.

The classification of taboos in Uzbek and English can vary due to cultural differences and sensitivities. Here, a general classification based on common taboos found in both languages is provided:

1. Language and Insults:

- Vulgar language, including sexual or excretory terms.
- Swearing and cursing.
- Derogatory terms for specific groups or individuals.

2. Religion and Sacred Objects:

- Disrespectful or offensive remarks about religious figures.
- Insulting or ridiculing religious practices.
- Disrespect towards sacred objects or places of worship.

3. Sexuality and Obscenity:

- Explicit discussions or explicit language regarding sexual acts.
- Making inappropriate sexual remarks or gestures.
- Sharing explicit images or videos without consent.

4. Social Etiquette and Behavior:

- Public nudity or indecent exposure.
- Gross or offensive bodily functions.
- Racial slurs or discriminatory language.
- Offensive jokes targeting specific groups.

5. Cultural Sensitivities:

- Mocking or disrespecting cultural traditions.
- Insulting or belittling national symbols or heroes.
- Criticizing or undermining cultural norms and values.



The so-called blasphemy is that for some people, because of the reasons of faith, some words such as "God, Jesus" are regarded as sacred and inviolable, only in the formal and solemn occasions, or under religious occasions can these words be used. When it comes to words that are injurious, they mainly refer to abusive words involving human excretion. The abusive words are mainly animal names, such as "bitch, pig, cow" and other words. There are also words such as "fart, piss, shit" which are the most typical words related to human excretion and cannot be used casually.

In the Uzbek language there are also some words related to the family formation such as the word 'to marry' can be expressed by different words. For instance, with the reference of boys, our parents use the word 'uylantirmoq' instead of 'xotin olib bermoq' or for their daughters 'turmushga bermoq, egasiga topshirmoq' instead of 'erga bermoq' are preferred in their speech.

In the book of 'Bygone Days' by Abdulla Qodiriy, there are some scenes with the mentioned words, such as in Uzbek: " - Biz Otabekni Toshkanddan uylandirib boshini bog'lamasak, kun sayin uning Marg'ilon yugurishidan qutila olmasmiz" [10]. In English it can be conveyed as following: "If we do not marry Otabek from Tashkent finding a better half, we will not be able to get rid of him running to Margilan every day.

In addition, with the development of society, some words about aging, disease, death, poverty, obesity and other topics have naturally become taboo words to a certain extent.

#### The Classification of Uzbek and English Euphemisms

With the passage of time and language changes, euphemism has become an important communicative language in modern society. Regarding their meaning and use in speech we can classify euphemisms into the following categories:

##### 1. Euphemisms closely related to taboo words.

There are some taboo things like birth, old, sick, dead, buried, etc. If expressed directly, it will give people a rude, blunt, harsh feeling. On the other hand, if it is expressed indirectly in an elegant, subtle way, it will not be unpleasant. For example, the old people are often referred to as the elderly, senior citizen, venerable people, get on years, and in the Uzbek language the word "chol" which means an old man can be replaced by the following words: "keksa", "yoshi ulug'", "nuroniy", "oqsoqol", "mo'ysafid" and so on.

##### 2. Euphemisms Related to Courtesy

Euphemism is also often used to express words that cannot be said or spoken. When people are not willing to say it directly, euphemism is used to show politeness, which is to avoid stimuli, or to seek cooperation, to commemorate some unpleasant things. For example, people often use big, plump, stout or over-weight instead of fat; use thinner or slim instead of thin; use ordinary, homely or plain to refer to ugly [11]. In the Uzbek language there are the words of "to'lacha, to'lachadan kelgan" instead of saying directly "semiz" (in the meaning of "over-weight") or it is preferred to use "qotmacha" in place of "ozg'in, eti suyagiga yopishgan" (in the meaning of "thin").

##### 3. Euphemisms Related to Politics

In recent years, euphemism has been widely used as a rhetorical device in social activities, political affairs, and business cooperation, and has continued to produce new euphemisms. For instance, a poor nation can be said to be a developing nation; poor people are replaced by low income. In the United States, people refer to blacks as African Americans,

Indians as Native Americans, and Mexicans as Mexican Americans, on the one hand, to show equality for everyone, and on the other hand to benefit the unity of all nations.

#### 4. Euphemisms Related to Occupation

In order to decentralize the traditional "low-level occupation", some industry-related euphemisms must be used in life, such as people calling waiter or waitress as dining-room attendants; selling salesman as customer's representative; calling maid as domestic help; The landscape worker is called a landscape architect; the garbage man is called a sanitation worker [12]. In the Uzbek language the job "qorovul" is often replaced by more polite expression "the person who works for the security".

#### The Connection between Uzbek and English taboos and euphemisms

The connection between Uzbek and English taboos and euphemisms lies in the fact that both languages employ similar linguistic strategies to avoid taboo topics or soften the impact of offensive language. Taboos are cultural or social restrictions on certain subjects, actions, or words. Euphemisms, on the other hand, are indirect expressions used in place of harsh or offensive language. Both taboos and euphemisms serve to maintain polite or respectful communication by avoiding sensitive or controversial subjects.

In Uzbek and English, taboo topics often revolve around religion, sexuality, bodily functions, and death. In both languages, certain words or phrases associated with these topics may be considered offensive or inappropriate in polite conversation.

To handle these taboo subjects, both languages employ euphemisms or alternative language choices. For example, words associated with bodily functions might be replaced by more polite terms or metaphors. This is done to maintain social decorum and avoid causing offense or discomfort in the listener. Additionally, cultural and historical context play a role in shaping taboo and euphemistic language use. Certain periods or events in a society's history may lead to specific taboos or euphemisms developing. These influences may be reflected in both Uzbek and English, with different taboo topics and euphemisms emerging in distinct cultural contexts.

Overall, while Uzbek and English may have different specific taboos and euphemisms, they share a common purpose of maintaining polite communication by avoiding offensive language and sensitive topics. The strategies employed in both languages reflect the importance of cultural and social norms in shaping language use.

#### The Difference between Uzbek and English taboos and euphemisms

It is crucial to recognize the distinct cultural context in order to discern the differences between taboos and euphemisms in Uzbek and English, as these vary across cultures and languages. Here are a few key points to consider:

##### 1. Subject matters

Taboo subjects can differ between Uzbek and English. For example, in Uzbek culture, discussing personal finances or asking about someone's salary is considered impolite and taboo. In English culture, discussing personal matters such as age, weight, or salary can also be considered taboo, but certain topics related to religion or politics may vary as taboos between the two languages.

##### 2. Language and expressiveness

Uzbek and English might utilize different euphemisms in order to soften or avoid direct discussion of taboo topics. For instance, in Uzbek, there are various euphemisms used for

disocussing topics related to bodily functions, whereas English might utilize different expressions to convey the same meaning.

### 3. Cultural norms and sensitivities

Cultural norms play a significant role in determining taboos and euphemisms in both languages. For example, in Uzbek culture, it is considered disrespectful to address someone by their first name unless they explicitly offer permission. In English, using certain offensive words or slurs related to race, gender, or religion is strongly discouraged.

### 4. Contextual understanding

Understanding the context and cultural sensitivities is essential when navigating taboos and euphemisms in both languages. What might be taboo or euphemistic in one context might not be in another. Thus, cultural awareness is crucial for effective communication.

## Conclusion

Language serves as a vessel for carrying culture and holds a significant place within a nation's cultural identity. Societal taboos are prevalent in everyday life, leading people to use euphemisms as substitutes for sensitive topics or ideas. As a result, both taboos and euphemisms are indicative of cultural phenomena, observable across various languages and present in every country. Taboos and euphemisms play a crucial role in Uzbek and English cultures, profoundly shaping the usage of their respective languages. While there are similarities and differences between Uzbek and English taboos and euphemisms, a comprehensive understanding of these cultural, traditional, and customary aspects enhances language proficiency, encompassing even the minutest aspects of life. Through a comparative analysis of taboos and euphemisms, a deeper comprehension of cultural and psychological disparities can be gained. This, in turn, facilitates the mitigation of cultural conflicts, successful intercultural exchanges, and improved cross-cultural communication skills.

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