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A Bit of Honeyed Talk: Exploring Euphemisms for Spouses

Ruziyeva Nafisa Zarifovna

Bukhara State University Teacher of English Linguistics Department

***Abstract:** At the current stage of modern linguistics, euphemisms are deeply studied not only from the point of view of lexicography but also in the field of linguo-pragmatics, and research is being conducted in this direction. For example, the study of euphemisms by separating them into specific thematic groups is becoming popular in modern linguistics. This article is devoted to the study of the origin of euphemisms, their usage according to the culture of speech, and the use of euphemistic units in the speech of couple's relationship in two unrelated languages.*

***Key words:** euphemisms, softening the speech, gentle units, relationship, and societal norms.*

The change of communication between society and people over the centuries has made it necessary to change the methods and ways of communication between people. To beautify and soften the speech and at the same time adapt it to the requirements of speech etiquette people tried to use special words. In this place, the concept of using aesthetically gentle units instead of words that are rude to be spoken during human communication appeared, and these units are called euphemisms.

As a result of the passing of years, due to the need and demand for the art of public speaking euphemisms are researched as a phenomenon with its own evolutionary history. The history of the study of euphemisms has been studied since the time when linguistics was not yet formed as a science and the term euphemism did not appear. That is why the use of euphemisms has become a necessity of the communication culture to soften the uncomfortable, inappropriate, rude word or to express it through a unit that replaces it. The usage of euphemisms corresponds to the heyday of schools of oratory. More specifically, the idea about softening and embellishing words and phrases structured in a semantic framework can be found in the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle's work "Rhetoric" of 300 BC. The art of oratory of the Roman philosopher Cicero, who lived two centuries after Aristotle, became world famous. He is known for his oratorical examples of effective word choice, including the judicious use of euphemisms that remove or defuse rudeness.

Because in essence, euphemisms are a form of social culture, the use of euphemisms is mainly caused by the presence of extralinguistic and linguistic issues. There are several interpretations of the term

euphemism in European culture. According to Democritus euphemism is a philosophical term, which means peace of mind, cheerfulness and true happiness. In addition, there is another phonetic form of this term, euthymia, which means “peace of mind” that everyone should strive for.

In every language and culture, people use euphemisms to express ideas that may otherwise be too direct or intimate. When it comes to relationships, there are a myriad of affectionate and endearing euphemisms for spouses that convey love, closeness, and sometimes even humor. This article explores the rich tapestry of euphemisms that people use to refer to their significant others, offering insights into the tenderness and playfulness inherent in their relationships.

1. Across Cultures:

- Different cultures have their own unique euphemisms for spouses that reflect their traditions, values, and beliefs. In English, terms like better half, partner, and significant other are commonly used to refer to a spouse, emphasizing the idea of unity and equal partnership in a relationship.
- In other languages, such as Uzbek, people have been valuing family relations since time immemorial. Here, family values represent a collection of beliefs, principles, customs, respectful relationships, and affection passed down from generation to generation, expressed through euphemisms, and adherence to certain moral principles that strengthen the unity, trust and love of family members. For Uzbek people as a symbol of nationality it is a taboo phenomenon for the bride and grooms to say each other's names after marriage. They express their mutual names by the name of their eldest child. In addition, in the Uzbek language, directly calling the spouse "husband" or "my wife" in public means impoliteness and shame. Instead of these euphemisms they use turmush o'rtiq (life partner), xo'jayin (Lord) for husband, begoyim (mistress of my house), rafiqa (partner) for wife.

2. Historical and Contemporary Euphemisms:

- Euphemisms for spouses have evolved over time, reflecting changes in societal norms and language usage. In the past, terms like my dear or beloved were popular euphemisms for spouses, highlighting the formality and respect inherent in relationships during those times. In Uzbek language, begim (Lord), uyning kattasi (the oldest of the house), dadasi (father of my children) for husband and begoyim (mistress of my house), uyinning bekasi (mistress of my house), onasi (mother of my children) for wife.
- In contemporary settings, more informal and playful euphemisms have emerged, such as hubs, wifey, boo, or main squeeze, reflecting a shift towards casual and affectionate expressions of intimate relationships. In Uzbek language, to'ra, xo'jayin for husband and uyinning farishtasi, qalbim bekasi, uyinning bekasi for wife.

3. Endearment and Affection:

- Euphemisms for spouses often carry a sense of endearment and affection. Terms like darling, sweetheart, love, or baby are used to express fondness, tenderness, and emotional closeness between partners. These euphemisms serve as verbal expressions of love and care, reinforcing the emotional bond within a relationship. In Uzbek language, spouse tend to call each other like asalim, jonim, hayotim, sultonim(for husband), qirolicham (for wife).

4. Humor and Playfulness:

- Some euphemisms for spouses are infused with humor and playfulness, adding a lighthearted element to the relationship. Terms like ball and chain, old lady, old man, or the boss playfully

acknowledge the dynamics of a relationship and the shared humor between partners. While playful, these euphemisms underscore the comfort and ease that comes with familiarity and intimacy. Uzbek people use especially men ironically call their spouses like xotin aka as if their wives are in higher position in the family. Wives in contrast address their husbands with super segmental means like adajonisi, or adding husband's surname to the word o'rtoq- o'rtoq Rashidov;

5. Gender-Neutral and Inclusive Euphemisms:

- With changing attitudes towards gender and relationships, there's a growing trend towards using gender-neutral and inclusive euphemisms for spouses. Terms like partner, significant other, and life companion are increasingly used to refer to one's spouse, emphasizing equality and inclusivity within relationships. In Uzbek, people use turmush o'rtoq, jufti halol, umr yo'ldsoh both for husband and wife.

Conclusion:

Euphemisms for spouses serve as linguistic expressions of love, closeness, and familiarity within relationships. Across cultures and languages, these creative and endearing terms reflect the diverse ways in which people express their affection for their significant others. From historical formalities to contemporary playfulness, euphemisms for spouses capture the evolving dynamics of intimate relationships, enriching our understanding of love and connection.

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