

**VILNIUS PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH PHILOLOGY**

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**21ST CENTURY POLITICAL EUPHEMISMS IN ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS:
SEMANTIC AND STRUCTURAL STUDY**

MA PAPER

Academic advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Linas Selmistraitis

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**This MA paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of the MA
in English Philology**

By Laura Samoškaitė

I declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any source

Academic advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Linas Selmistraitis

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the political euphemisms that are used in the English newspapers of the 21st century and analyse their semantic and structural features. The objectives of the analysis are: to examine theoretical approaches and studies concerning the concept and features of euphemisms; to identify the political euphemisms used in today's English newspapers; to group euphemisms into classes according to semantic features; and to analyse structural and semantic peculiarities of political euphemisms. The research emerges from the qualitative perspective as the analysis focuses on the description of meanings of euphemisms found in certain situations. The methods used in this study are: descriptive method and content analysis. First of all, different views on euphemisms are presented to demonstrate attitudes of various scholars towards the phenomenon. Political euphemisms are approached from semantic, structural, and pragmatic points of view. For the evidence of the present study, political euphemisms from the English newspaper *The Guardian* are subjected to analysis. The research demonstrated peculiarities of the usage of political euphemisms in the English press, their underlying meaning as well as semantic and structural features.

Introduction

In the beginning was the Word. There followed, at an undetermined but one assumes decent interval, private, harsh, and dirty words. Invention here being the mother of necessity, the need for euphemism arose (Epstein, 1985). Euphemisms are powerful linguistic tools that "are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them," (Linfoot-Ham, 2005, 228). The need for euphemisms is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of 'touchy' or taboo subjects (such as sex, personal appearances, or religion) without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people. Politics is one of the fields where the use of euphemisms is increasing at an alarming rate due to politicians' wish to lead the society better by camouflaging the grim reality with the help of euphemisms.

This paper examines the latest political euphemisms used in the English newspapers. **The research question**, which is to be answered in the present study, is as follows: what political euphemisms are used in the current English newspapers and what are their underlying semantic and structural features?

The main reason for choosing the political euphemisms for analysis was the fact that despite the number of works written in the field, there are still many aspects that have not been examined yet. The usage of euphemisms and structural-semantic features in the past 3 years' political articles of the English newspapers are the aspects which still need to be researched.

The Scope of the Research

The material for the analysis was taken from the online English newspaper *The Guardian*. This newspaper was selected as it is popular and accessible to the readers. In order to find candidates for the analysis, the last three years' *The Guardian* newspapers were searched for political euphemisms. Despite a careful search, this list of euphemisms analysed in the paper should make no claim to being exhaustive due to the possibility of human error. Thus, 70 political euphemisms were subjected to analysis. However, it is not the purpose here to list every euphemism but to investigate formation. Some entries may also be disputed because individual readers interpret euphemism differently. This is unavoidable. The basis for collecting euphemisms was a dictionary of euphemisms *How Not to Say What You Mean* (R.W. Holder, 2002). However, this dictionary is almost 10 years old and some euphemisms are out of use

already. Thus, different articles on euphemisms were searched for the latest political euphemisms as well.

The Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to explore the political euphemisms that are used in the English newspapers and analyse their semantic and structural features.

The Objectives of the Research

1. to study theoretical approaches and studies concerning the concept and features of euphemisms;
2. to identify the political euphemisms used in today's English newspapers;
3. to group euphemisms into classes according to semantic topics;
4. to analyse structural and semantic features of political euphemisms.

The Significance of the Research

The present study:

- defines euphemism and presents the history of its usage;
- gives general characteristics and possible classifications of euphemisms;
- analyses formation, i.e. structural and semantic features of the most recent political euphemisms.

The Research Methods

The research methods used in this study are descriptive method and content analysis. The research emerges from *qualitative* perspective as it focuses on the meaning found in certain situations.

The MA thesis consists of an abstract, introduction, theoretical and practical parts, conclusions, summary, and references. The introduction presents the research question, the scope, the aim, the objectives, significance of the research and research methods. The theoretical part deals with the concept of euphemism, its history, possible classifications, and euphemistic strategies from pragmatic point of view. In the practical part, the analysis of the latest political euphemisms in terms of their semantic and structural features is presented.

1. EUPHEMISMS AS SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

1.1 Conceptual Features of Euphemism

Language is a system of characters that came into being from men's common labour, being developed and enriched in the course of time. With the development of our society, a fair number of words are labelled frivolous, vulgar or at least inconsiderate, and some kinds of languages are forbidden, as different religions, superstitious believes, social customs and other reasons. In communication, for better maintaining social relationship and exchanging ideas, people have to resort to a new different kind of language, which can make distasteful ideas seem acceptable or even desirable (www.docstoc.com). There are words in every language which people instinctively avoid because they are considered indecent, indelicate, rude, too direct, or impolite. As the "offensive" referents, for which these words stand, must still be alluded to, they are often described in a roundabout way, by using substitutes called euphemisms (Antrushina et al, 1985). Geoffrey Leach in his "Semantics" discusses euphemism as "the linguistic equivalent of disinfectant" (1974, 53).

According to Rawson, euphemisms are powerful linguistic tools that "are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them" (Linfoot-Ham, 2005, 228). The need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of taboo subjects (such as sex, personal appearances or religion) and acts as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility (Linfoot-Ham, 2005).

A euphemism is a substitution of an agreeable or less offensive expression in place of one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant to the receiver, or to make it less troublesome for the speaker. The deployment of euphemisms is a central aspect within the public application of political correctness. It may also substitute a description of something or someone to avoid revealing secret, holy, or sacred names to the uninitiated, or to obscure the identity of the subject of a conversation from potential eavesdroppers. Some euphemisms are intended to amuse (www.wikipedia.org).

The following wording presents a euphemism as a word or phrase that stands in for another word or phrase, chosen to mask or soften the true meaning of what is being expressed. A euphemism may be used for superstitious reasons, due to religious or cultural taboos, or for

political reasons. For a fiction writer, euphemisms, in dialogue, can be helpful in revealing character (www.fictionwriting.about.com).

Fromkin and Rodman define a euphemism as “a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening or unpleasant subjects” (1993, 304). “The Oxford Companion to the English Language” (1992) explains a euphemism in a similar way, saying that it is a word or phrase used as polite replacement for another, which is considered too vulgar, too painful or offensive to religious susceptibilities. In the Hutchinson’s encyclopedia a euphemism is defined as a figure of speech whose name in Greek means ‘speaking well of something’ (1990, 400). To speak or write euphemistically is to use a milder, more polite, less direct, or even less honest expression rather than one that is considered too blunt, vulgar, direct or revealing. It is also important to note that euphemism may be treated as a synonym as it can be used to replace a word having a similar meaning. Also, euphemisms present different degrees of euphemisation, i.e. some euphemisms cover the embarrassing or taboo nature of the words better than the other euphemisms.

Whichever definition of a euphemism we take it is perceived as a kind of polite and roundabout mode of expression, which is used to soften or beautify the unpleasantness of reality. This statement will be based on Williams’ (1975) definition which says that euphemism is a kind of linguistic elevation or amelioration specifically directed toward finding socially acceptable words for concepts that many people cannot easily speak of. This definition best summarizes the essence of a euphemism treating it as linguistic elevation with the aim of finding socially acceptable words for those which are unacceptable.

The word euphemism is derived from Greek where the prefix ‘eu-’ means ‘good, well’; the stem ‘pheme’ means ‘speak’; the suffix ‘-ism’ means ‘action or result’. The word euphemism means ‘speaking well of...’, ‘good speech’, and ‘words of good omen’ (www.saidwhat.co.uk). The eupheme was originally a word or phrase used in place of a religious word or phrase that should not be spoken aloud; etymologically, the eupheme is the opposite of the blaspheme (evil-speaking) (www.wikipedia.org).

From the early beginning of language euphemisms have probably existed at least in the religious aspect. Gods, whether benign or malign, had been treated with respect to terror. As an example, the Ancient Greek term for the Furies and the Avenging Gods was the Eumenides who was regarded as ‘the kindly one’ or ‘the good humored lady’ in the hope that they might be flattered into being less furious.

Anglo- Saxon society was the golden age in the expression of language and the source of four-letter words which were many innuendos and direct references to sex. Many of these taboos during the Anglo-Saxon's era survived until the 14th century. Chaucer's Pardoner in "The Canterbury Tales" rails against those who rend the body of Christ. On the contrary, Chaucer is free in his description of women's most intimate parts (Williams, 1975).

In the 16th century, Shakespeare used an arsenal of sexual innuendos in his dramas and sonnets. He reflected his society's panache and its strange mixture of religiosity and irreverence in his characters' speech about swearing. For instance, in "Henry IV" and "King Lear" there are so many swearing contests reflecting not merely willingness to entertain and expand the invectives but also the importance of class structure in setting linguistic patterns. The swearers were the aristocrats aping the manners of the lower classes. The aristocracy developed their own elaborate court language, so called, 'euphemism' characterized by circumlocutions and excessive verbiage. It was perhaps significant that by the early 1580's, the author George Blunt used the term 'euphemism' in English defining it as a good or favourable interpretation of a bad word.

Euphemisms were in full flourish among the middle English class since the 17th century. They were very conservative enough to avoid the direct references to sex, God, death, excretory functions and the like, while the aristocracy served as an inventive force creating the new language. It was the middle class Victorians in the 19th century who amplified the euphemistic traditions both in England and in America. Polite Victorians would not refer to legs but to 'limbs'. The Victorian lexicon 'frillies', 'unmentionables', 'inexpressibles' reflect the shock that the general populace felt at encountering subjects that had been considered private. It was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that British euphemisms were developing abroad as well as at home. Although Americans would coin euphemisms with the local colour of their new lands and lives, the patterns of formation would follow those of the English middle class. American euphemisms reflected the desires of them for both piety and gentility. Puritans were well known for their concern with language, enacting laws against profanity. As their status was enhanced, they increased their powerful influence that led not only to genteelizing but also to sentimentalizing the language. This sentimental impulse generated a large lexicon of euphemisms for both love and death (www.happynonmun.com). In modern society, euphemism is used in all kinds of areas, and it can be divided into a lot of types, such as occupation, disease, death, sex, crime, politic and so on. Nowadays, with the economic and political developments throughout the world, some powerful countries are making their great efforts to try to control the fate of the human beings. Therefore, to cover their evil purposes, they are widening use of English euphemism into such

fields as in political ones (www.okarticle.com). Politics is one of the fertile fields for the growth of euphemisms. With euphemisms, politicians always justify their actions and beautify the harsh realities for some certain purposes. Only when the public believes that the society under their lead has become better, can their political life survive.

According to historical classification, euphemisms can be divided into euphemisms in the Middle Ages, euphemisms in the Victorian Age, euphemisms in the 20th century, and contemporary euphemisms. In terms of the prevailing time, whether it is long or short, euphemisms can be divided into temporary euphemisms and persistent euphemisms. Some euphemisms are created on impulse on a certain occasion and are never repeated later, while others are coined and reused and ratified by many people and last for generations, even centuries. In these cases, we have nonce euphemisms and sustained euphemisms. For instance, most of the euphemisms concerning the Vietnam War and the Watergate Incident are one-day wonders while many euphemisms connected with taboo areas have become everlasting terms; some have even become idiomatic expressions (www.flybuy.blog.com).

Euphemizing generally exists in almost every nation all over the world, no matter how civilized it is. In all natural languages both large families of languages and languages of minorities using euphemism is a common phenomenon. Nearly all cultures seem to have certain notions or things that people try to avoid mentioning directly, which means using euphemisms in order to avoid painful, offensive or unpleasant words. Thus, universality, which is something that is well - known and accepted by all the people, is one of the characteristics of euphemisms.

Another feature of euphemisms is localization. Various regions have differences in customs, culture, history which embody the localization of language. There are two causes of regional differences. First is a regional cultural difference. In different regions, the culture there will effect the development of euphemism. For example, 'go to W.C.' in the Balliol college of Oxford University, students call 'go to toilet' as 'to visit Lady Periam' because the toilets of that college were built on the land donated by Lady Periam. Of course, the Americans will not agree with this expression. Second is the difference of geographic environment. For example, in seaside, death would be connected with sea and tide and they may use 'go with the tide' to express death. On the contrary, in American west mountain areas, the euphemism for die is '(gone) over the range' or 'to cross the Great Divide'. These are the typical regional euphemisms (www.eng.hi138.com).

The changes of language depend on the need and changes of the society. Language changes all the time, new words appear continuously while the old ones disappear. Euphemism is

not an exception and it undergoes a process of metabolism too. It bears a marked brand of times which means that contemporaneity is also characteristic to euphemisms. For example, 'She is pregnant' has many different euphemistic expressions in different eras.

- (1) She has canceled all her social engagements. (1856)
- (2) She is in an interesting condition. (1880)
- (3) She is in a delicate condition. (1895)
- (4) She is knitting little booties. (1910)
- (5) She is in a family way. (1920)
- (6) She is expecting. (1935)
- (7) She is pregnant. (1956)

But after 1960s, euphemisms of pregnant develop slowly because in modern times, people are not so implicit. They always mention things directly. And now, the phenomenon of pregnancy is a cheerful thing and people will not be shy when mentioning it (www.chledu.com).

It is thought that only upper and middle class use euphemisms but this conclusion is too absolute and can be analyzed in three aspects: difference of gender or age, difference of profession or identity, and difference of style or context. Considering the first aspect it can be said that a study shows that females use more euphemisms than males do. There is a saying in English: 'horse sweat; men perspire; young ladies glow.' It shows that women use obscure words to express the action of sweat. The difference of gender and age usually influences the choice of the synonyms of euphemisms. For instance, there is a variety of expressions about 'to go to toilet'. Men use the expression 'to shoot a lion', adults may say 'to go to w.c.' while children say 'to go to the pot'. Euphemism also changes while the profession and identity changes. For example, the word 'die' can be used in many different ways. In military, people use the expression 'to lose number of one's mess' which originates from the mess system of UK navy. However, in the press, people often use the word 'thirty' because they usually mark '30' in the end of a news article, which means ending. Bearing in mind the difference of style or context it can be noted that stylistically, for instance, the word 'die' has hundreds of euphemisms but in daily communication, people may use 'to be gone' or 'to be no more'. In obituaries, people use 'to pass away' or 'to depart' but 'to die' also has some witty expressions such as 'to pop off' or 'to kick the bucket' (www.chledu.com). In brief, the general characteristics of euphemisms are universality, localization, contemporaneity, difference of gender or age, profession or identity, and difference of style or context.

Euphemistic function is fulfilled by means of lexical substitutions and especially through discursive euphemistic strategies as discussed below.

Lexical substitution is, generally speaking, an effective way to mitigate the pejorative overtones of words considered too blunt or offensive in a given context. Clearly, euphemism responds to the desire to avoid certain taboos that can negatively affect conventional norms of tact as well as the speaker and addressee's social images. This is the case in the allusion to certain taboo concepts deemed unfit for polite conversation, such as sexual organs and sexual play, scatological concepts or ethnic differences. In this way, the substitution of the terms 'fuck', 'shit' and 'nigger' for 'copulate', 'defecate' and 'coloured' respectively is a means of showing respect and deference, not only towards the subject matter, but also towards the interlocutor.

Different types of indirect discursive strategies, directly motivated by the politeness principle as a socio-cultural phenomenon, are more obviously related to the speaker's desire to maintain social relationships. It is interesting to note that these indirect verbal tactics tend to minimize the illocutionary force of a speech act without modifying the content of the message. This is so because indirect speech acts offer a greater degree of optionality to the receiver and minimize their impositive or pejorative strength. In order to avoid conflict in interpersonal communication, language users resort to the following types of palliative strategies:

- *Mitigating apology expressions* like "I'm sorry to say", "I'm afraid", "If you forgive my asking" or the more elaborate "I wouldn't like to appear too inquisitive, but ...". These expressions constitute previous or subsequent apologies for conflictive illocutions, and, thus, are at the speaker's disposal to mitigate the face-affronting power of a distasteful speech act.

- *Pseudo-imperative expressions*, that is, those which downplay the imposition of certain directive speech acts, namely orders, commands or direct requests, modes of verbal behaviour which are considered intrinsically impolite in social discourse. Within this type of strategies, the following euphemistic locutions are to be distinguished:

a) tag questions which accompany directive speech acts, as in "Shut the door, *will you?*";

b) hedging modal verbs (*may, could, would, should, etc.*). These mitigating modal verbs are employed in cases such as "*May* I ask you to put out your cigarette?" and "I *would* do it again", in which the verbs in italics soften the imposition of orders like "Put out your cigarette" and "Do it again", respectively;

c) downtoning adverbs (*possibly, perhaps, etc.*) which allow for some mitigation in conflictive utterances, as in the request "Could you *possibly* help me?";

d) downtoning phrases (*in a way, to some extent, by chance, etc.*), with the same function as the above mentioned downtoning adverbs;

e) conditional sentences used with the euphemistic aim to reduce the harshness of a directive speech act thanks to the optionality which the conditional clause involves. This happens in the following sentence: “*If I were you, I would take that dog to the vet*”.

In consequence, any indirect strategy in the above mentioned examples gives rise to euphemistic speech acts directly motivated by conventions of tact and politeness. In this sense, these mitigating maneuvers stand out as typical resources in indirect communicative strategies and constitute the main exponents of verbal politeness both in its positive and negative dimensions. The discursive behaviour of the mitigating and pseudo-imperative strategies provides us with significant data about euphemistic use in communication. These verbal resources function differently in discourse depending on the degree of formality expected in a given context. So, the greater the need to maintain the social norms of tact and respect, the higher the number of mitigating and indirect strategies (www.revistas.uca.es).

1.2 Semantic and Structural Differentiation of Euphemisms

We use euphemisms in different spheres of life without considering which euphemism to use and when, however, it is not so easy to classify them as there is no uniform standard. Euphemisms can be classified according to different criteria, rules, or principles. The following is a presentation of some possible classifications of euphemisms.

Rawson divides euphemisms into two general types, namely, positive and negative which are distinguished according to the evaluative aspect (1981). Positive euphemisms can also be called stylistic euphemisms or exaggerating euphemisms. The positive ones inflate and magnify, making the euphemized items seem altogether grander and more important than they really are. In order to avoid thrill, to be polite or to achieve cooperation, British and American people, especially contemporary Americans, prefer using the technique of exaggeration to euphemize something unpleasant and embarrassing. The positive euphemisms include the many fancy occupational titles, which save the egos of workers by elevating their job status. For example, ‘exterminating engineers’ is used for rat catchers while ‘beauticians’ stand for hairdressers. It might be said that quite a few positive euphemisms are doublespeak and cosmetic words. They usually appear in the political, military and commercial vocabulary. Other kinds of positive euphemisms include personal honorifics such as the colonel, the honorable, the major, and the

many institutional euphemisms which convert madhouses into mental hospitals, colleges into universities, and small business establishments into emporiums, parlors, and salons. The desire to improve one's surroundings also is evident in geographical place names, most prominently in the case of the distinctly nongreen Greenland, but also in the designation of many small burghs as cities.

The negative euphemisms deflate and diminish. They are defensive in nature, offsetting the power of tabooed terms and otherwise eradicating from the language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly. The negative euphemisms can be called traditional euphemisms or narrowing euphemism. They are extremely ancient, and closely connected with the taboos. A euphemism and its corresponding taboo are in fact two faces of the same coin. They refer to the same thing though they have different looks, the euphemism having a much more pleasant face than the taboo.

Euphemisms, whether positive or negative, can be also divided into unconscious euphemisms and conscious euphemisms. The criterion for classification is the euphemistic meaning whether correlative with the original meaning or not. Unconscious euphemisms, as its name implies, were developed long ago, and are used unconsciously, without any intent to deceive or evade. For example, now standard term as 'cemetery' has been a replacement for the more deathly 'graveyard' since the fourteenth century. 'Indisposition' has been a substitute for 'disease' for a long period; people seldom realize that its original meaning is incapacity for dealing with something. Take 'dieter' for another example, the original meaning taking food by a rule or regulation has been substituted by the euphemistic meaning 'the one moderate in eating and dining for losing weight'. From the above we can conclude that unconscious euphemisms were developed so long ago that few can remember their original motivations. Conscious euphemisms are widely employed, which involves more complex categories. When people communicate with each other, speakers are conscious to say tactfully, and the listeners understand their implied meanings. For example, when a lady stands up and says that she wants to 'powder her nose' or 'make a phone call' at a dinner party, the people present realize the euphemism means 'something else', that is, 'going to the ladies' room'.

Besides the divisions mentioned above, euphemisms can be divided into six semantic categories:

1. Profession euphemisms:

In western countries, mental work is considered to be the high job whereas physical labor is recognized as humble work, besides there is a great difference in the remuneration. Thus, most

of the people hold that people with different occupations have different status in society. Some lowly paid or indecent jobs are often used in English culture just for saving face and expressing politeness. Therefore there are fewer occupations called jobs, many have become professions. Some words and forms like engineer are more popular among people in the communication. English euphemisms are used to express some fancy occupational titles, which can elevate the people's status. Many previously unwelcome professions have now taken more appealing names. For example, in profession euphemisms, people always use *cleaning operative* for road sweeper or dustman, *sanitation engineer* for garbage man, *meat technologist* for butcher, and *hairstylist* has turned into beautician, etc.

2. Disease euphemisms:

In the disease euphemisms, people always use *long illness* replaces for *cancer*, *social disease* replaces for *syphilis* and *AIDS*, also they use *lung trouble* substitutes for *tuberculosis* and so on. And if someone with a mental illness, we cannot say psychosis directly, we should say he or she is a little confused, meanwhile, we should use *hard of hearing* in stand of *deaf*.

3. Death euphemisms:

In many societies, because death is feared, so people tend to avoid mentioning death directly and talk about it in a euphemistic way. They try to employ pleasant terms to express the ideas. So death has hundreds of soft, decent, and better-sounding names, such as *breathe one's last*, *fall asleep*, *go west*, *join the majority*, *lay down one's life*, *pass away*, *pay the debt of nature*, *reach a better world*, *to be at peace*, *to return to the dust*, or *he worked until he breathed his last*, etc.

4. Sex euphemisms:

Euphemisms concerning sex: *the great divide*, *willing woman*, *gay boy*, *lost girl* can be used to replace *divorce*, *loose woman*, *male homosexual* and *prostitute*.

5. Crime euphemisms:

In the field of crime euphemism: *five-fingers*, *gentleman of the road*, *hero of the underground*, *the candy man* are often used to substitute for *pickpocket*, *robber*, *heroin*, and *drug pusher*.

6. Political euphemisms:

Since the function of euphemism can reduce the unpleasantness of a term or notion, it is natural that announcements of governments will often resort them to understate the facts, e.g.

student unrest can be used to replace *student strike*; *police action*, *search and clear*, *war games* are used to substitute for *aggression*, *massacre* and *war exercise* (www. 51lw.name.html).

Besides semantic classification, a linguist Warren presents a classification which is based on both structural and semantic features of euphemisms (1992). By structural features Warren means types of word formation devices, phonemic modification, and loan words. The sub-categories of structural features of euphemisms with several examples are presented below following Warren's model.

i) Word formation devices:

- 1) Compounding: 'hand job' [masturbation], the combining of two individually innocuous words forms a euphemism for an otherwise unacceptable term.
- 2) Derivation: 'fellatio' [oral sex], the modification of a Latin term ('fellare', to suck) to form a printable modern English word (Rawson, 1981).
- 3) Blends.
- 4) Acronyms: SNAFU ['Situation Normal All Fucked Up'], a military euphemism for a possibly catastrophic event.
- 5) Onomatopoeia: 'bonk' [sexual intercourse], here the sound of 'things' hitting together during the sexual act is employed to refer to the act itself.

ii) Phonemic modification:

- 1) Black slang: 'enob' [bone/erect penis] and 'epar' [rape]. The words are reversed to avoid explicit mention.
- 2) Rhyming slang: 'Bristols' [breasts], a shortened, and further euphemised, version of 'Bristol cities' [titties] which becomes a 'semi-concealing device'.
- 3) Phonemic replacement: 'shoot' [shit], i.e. one sound of the offensive term is replaced with double 'o'.
- 4) Abbreviation (shortening): 'eff' (as in 'eff off!') [fuck (off)].

iii) Loan words:

- 1) French: '*mot*' [cunt] '*affair(e)*' [extramarital engagement] and '*lingerie*' [underwear].
- 2) Latin: '*faeces*' [excrement] and '*anus*' [ass-hole].
- 3) Other languages: '*cojones*' [testicles] is a Spanish loan word.

Despite a detailed classification of structural features of euphemism, what Warren does not explain in her model the notion 'blend', which is a sub-category of word formation devices. What is more, it can be argued whether an abbreviation can be treated as a euphemism which is presented as a sub-category of phonemic modification here. It is courageous, for instance, to

claim that 'butt' is a euphemism for 'buttocks' or that 'bra' is a euphemism for 'brassiere' because the abbreviations do not make these words more agreeable.

As far as semantic features are concerned, in her model Warren also includes euphemisms resulting from particularization, implication, metaphor, metonymy, reversal, understatement, and overstatement. The following is a presentation of sub-categories of each type of semantic feature (the numbering is presented following the original one in Warren's model).

iv) Semantic innovation:

1) Particularisation: a general term is used, which is required to be 'particularised' within the context to make sense, e.g. 'satisfaction' [orgasm] and 'innocent' [virginal], both of which require contextually based inference by the reader/listener to be comprehensible.

2) Implication: In this case, several steps are required to reach the intended meaning, e.g. 'loose', which implies 'unattached', which leads to the interpretation [sexually easy/available].

3) Metaphor: A multitude of colourful metaphorical euphemisms surround menstruation, centring around 'red', e.g. 'the cavalry has come'- a reference to the red coats of the British cavalry, 'it's a red letter day' and 'flying the red flag,' Other metaphorical euphemisms include 'globes', 'brown eyes' and 'melons' [breasts]

4) Metonymy: Otherwise called 'general-for-specific', this category includes the maximally general 'it' [sex] and the contextually dependent 'thing' [male/female sexual organs, etc.].

5) Reversal: or 'irony'. Including 'blessed' [damned] and 'enviable disease' [syphilis], both of which enable reference to something 'bad' by using opposites.

6) Understatement: or 'litotes'. Examples like 'sleep' [die], 'deed' [act of murder/rape] and 'not very bright' [thick/stupid] fall into this category.

7) Overstatement: or 'hyperbole'. Instances include 'fight to glory' [death] and those falling under "basic rule of bureaucracies: the longer the title, the lower the rank", for example, 'visual engineer' [window cleaner] and 'Personal Assistant to the Secretary (Special Activities)' [cook].

According to Warren, semantic innovation consists of seven main sub-categories but two of them, namely, particularization and implication may be easily confused due to lack of strict distinction between them. Thus, it depends on individual point of view when deciding to which sub-category to assign one or another euphemism.

1.3 Euphemistic strategies from pragmatic point of view

The past twenty years have witnessed an ever-growing interest in pragmatics and it has been defined in a number of ways. According to Crystal, pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication (1997). Stalnaker tends to be briefer, in his words, pragmatics is the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed (www.tlumaczenia-angielski.info). According to Yule, pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning: the focus is upon the interpretation of what people mean by their utterances rather than what the phrases in the utterances mean by themselves. Pragmatics also aims at investigating the invisible meaning: how what the unsaid is recognized to be a relevant part of a conversation. The proportion of what is said and unsaid is determined by a physical, social or conceptual distance. In this respect, pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance. Thus, his definition of pragmatics could be summarized in the following way: pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning, contextual meaning, the expression of relative distance, and the study of how more gets communicated than is said (Yule, 1996).

In pragmatics two types of context can be differentiated: linguistic context and physical context. Linguistic context, sometimes called co-text, is the set of words that surround the lexical item in question in the same phrase, or sentence. The physical context is the location of a given word, the situation in which it is used, as well as timing, all of which aid proper understating of the words. There are numerous frequently used words which depend on the physical context for their correct understanding, such as *there*, *that*, *it*, or *tomorrow*. Terms like that are known as deictic expressions. Depending on what such words refer to they can be classified as person deixis *him*, *they*, *you*; spatial deixis *there*, *here*; and temporal deixis *then*, *in an hour*, *tomorrow*. However, in pragmatics it is assumed that words do not refer to anything by themselves and it is people who in order to grasp the communicated idea perform an act of identifying what the speaker meant. This act is called reference.

Another act involved in the analysis of discourse so as to make an association between what is said and what must be meant is inference and it is often used in connection with anaphora. Anaphora is subsequent mentioning of a formerly introduced item, as in the following sentences: 'He went to a shop', 'It was closed'. When shop was mentioned for the second time the pronoun it was used to refer to it. Moreover, when people make use of such linguistic devices

they necessarily make some assumptions about the knowledge of the speaker. Although some of the assumptions might be wrong, most of them are usually correct what makes the exchange of information smooth. What the producer of discourse correctly assumes to be known by the text's recipient is described as a presupposition.

In addition to that, pragmatics is also concerned with the functions of utterances such as promising, requesting, informing which are referred to as speech acts. Certain grammatical structures are associated with corresponding functions, as in the interrogative structure 'Do you drink tea?' the function is questioning. Such a case can be described as a direct speech act. However, when the interrogative structure is used to fulfill a different purpose as in 'Can you close the window?' where it clearly is not a question about ability, but a polite request, such a situation is described as an indirect speech act. The use of both direct and indirect speech acts is strongly connected with the linguistic concept of politeness (www.plato.stanford.edu).

The main function of euphemism is polite function. Polite function of euphemism is to avoid inelegant things and make people feel pleasant. As Channell put it, "vagueness is used as one way of adhering to the politeness rules for a particular culture, and of not threatening face" (1994, 36). It means that in real life, when people meet with some unpleasant things or behaviors, they usually choose some vague expressions to avoid making bold or hurting other's feeling, i.e. they choose to use euphemism. When English-speakers refer to the appearance, they do not use the word 'ugly' or 'awful', which has strong derogatory sense. Instead, they use the word 'plain-looking' or 'not pretty'. Westerners are sensitive to age. In their opinion, 'old' equals to 'useless' in some extent. In order not to hurt the feeling and self-esteem of the old, 'senior citizens' or 'seasoned men' replace 'old men'. Politeness plays an important role in human communication as it oils human relationships. It is viewed as one of the major social constraints on human interaction that regulates participants' communicative behavior by constantly reminding them to take into consideration the feelings of the others. It is necessary to consider their feelings so as to establish levels of mutual comfort and promote rapport, which in turn accelerate and facilitate human communication. The final goal of politeness is to make all of the parties relaxed and comfortable with one another. Euphemism and politeness are mutually dependent phenomena in the sense that the need to be polite determines euphemistic use in a considerable way. The indirectness provided by euphemism, in turn, contributes to avoid offence and insure politeness in its double dimension: *positive* (oriented towards the public self-image and social prestige of the participants) and *negative* (related to the interlocutor's freedom of action and freedom from imposition in the communicative encounter). Politeness is closely related to Face Theory,

proposed by Goffman (1967). The notion of *face* is related to the self-image that the participants in the communicative context claim for themselves. In correlation with the double side of politeness, already mentioned, face is also two-dimensional: *positive face* (identified with the individual's desire to be positively regarded in social context) and *negative face* (concerned with the participant's desire to be autonomous and free from imposition). Euphemism acts on each of these two dimensions of face: first, it responds to the speaker's need to soften potential social conflicts which may alter the interlocutor's prestige; second, it supposes a way to minimize a threat to the interlocutor's autonomy. Thus, face is so closely connected with euphemism that the latter has been defined by Allan and Burridge with reference to the concept of face as follows: "A euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offence, that of the audience, or of some third party" (1991, 11). Of course, there is in polite social interaction a wish to protect the interlocutor's face by minimizing the potential conflict of face threatening speech acts, which involves saving, at the same time, the speaker's own face. Politeness and face are so mutually dependent that there exists reflexivity between them: the need to conform to conventions of a socially adequate behaviour motivates euphemistic use which aims preserve the face of the participants in the communicative act.

In Pragmatics euphemisms perform a taboo function as well. Taboo is the main psychological basis of the emergence of euphemism. Euphemism is the avoidance of the unpleasant, inelegant things. A famous sociolinguist Yuan once said: "Generally speaking, the coming into being of euphemism all begins from taboo" (www.eng.hi138.com). Euphemism has been used for a long time, and it is closely related to taboo. In fact, euphemism dates back to the language taboo in the early period of human civilization. When people try to avoid and give up taboo words, they have to find another word to replace this vacancy at the same time. There are some taboo things, such as birth, death, funeral, sex, nakedness, defecation, and urinate. If they are expressed directly, they are called taboo words and the feelings they give us are vulgar, crude and harsh, whereas if they are expressed indirectly, they are called euphemism, and the impressions they made on us are elegant, implicit and polite. The evading function of euphemism also works today. Some taboo notions cannot be easily removed from people's mind.

Another function could be called a covering up function as deliberately withholding information. What is so called 'cover up' means not giving information that the speaker possesses and which could be appropriate in the situation. Western political life gives birth to euphemism. Some politicians and news medias have made good use of the vagueness of

euphemism to cover up the facts of some events for the purpose of making the politics, economy, and military more steady. People use 'depression' instead of 'economic crises' and the word 'striking' has been beautified as 'industrial action'. They are used to cover up the true nature of events, deceiving the public with nice-sounding and pseudo technical words.

Sometimes, people use euphemism to make their statement more persuasive. Thus the cosmetic words have a special communicative function, which is called inducing function. Euphemism has been widely applied in advertisement and sales promotion activities. Some airline companies divided the grades of passenger compartments into four ranks. They used 'deluxe' or 'premium class' to replace 'first class'. The 'second class' is transformed into 'first class' while the 'third class' is revised as 'business class' or 'tourist class'. They sound more pleasing. The rooms of hotel are also compartmentalized in the same way. They can be divided as first class, standard and private. Those words are sweet sounding and have nothing to do with customers' self-esteem. Also, 'antiques' is the substitution of 'second-hand furniture'. In the merchants' eye, the former will make the price higher. People often use 'compact car' to replace 'small car'. Though their meanings are the same, 'small' will be associated with an image of cheap and bad while 'compact' emphasizes the image of artistic, delicate, and terse. Those euphemisms desalinate the unpleasant feeling that the former concepts give us and intensify a feeling of more reliable and elegant. As a result, those products will be identified with the consumers and achieved the promotion goal. From the pragmatic view, the achieving of inducing function is caused by the glorification of the intrinsic meaning.

Finally, euphemisms also perform a tactical function. For example, on the plane, there are some bags that can be used by the passengers to shoot his cookies. People do not print the words 'vomit bag' on the surface of the bag. Instead, they use the words 'for motion discomfort'. The result proved that the vomit phenomenon has reduced because compared with the former words, the words 'for motion discomfort' prevents the passengers from vomiting when in a state of airsickness. This is the tactical function of euphemism. All in all, there are five pragmatic functions of euphemisms, namely politeness, taboo, covering up, inducing, and tactical, which show a wide application of euphemisms in various contexts (www.englishthesis.cn).

1.4 Political Euphemisms in Political discourse

Though euphemizing is now an accepted and established practice, it has acquired a dubious connotation in light of its tendency to deliberately disguise actual meanings of words in

political discourse. Lutz, an English professor at Rutgers University, a champion of rhetorical canons and the art of clear writing across numerous discourses, focuses his work on ethical considerations in using euphemisms, what he calls “the morality of rhetoric” (1989). He makes an immediate distinction between euphemisms proper and doublespeak: when a euphemism is used to deceive, it becomes doublespeak. The sole purpose of doublespeak is to make the unreasonable seem reasonable, the blamed seem blameless, the powerless seem powerful. The term doublespeak was coined as an amalgam of two Orwellian expressions, doublethink and newspeak, both of which appeared in Orwell’s dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Basic to doublespeak is incongruity: the incongruity between what is said, or left unsaid, and what really is; between the essential function of language (communication) and what doublespeak does – misleads, distorts, deceives, inflates, obfuscates (Lutz, 1989). Chomsky noted that to make sense of political discourse, it’s necessary to give a running translation into English, decoding the doublespeak of the media, academic social scientists and the secular priesthood generally (Chomsky, 1993). Opposition to the use of doublespeak has noticeably increased since the 1970s due to mounting concern of the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) over the manipulation of language by the government and the military in reporting and discussing the Vietnam War. Since 1974 a Committee on Public Doublespeak has made an annual award to a public utterance that is grossly unfactual, deceptive, evasive, euphemistic, confusing, or self-contradictory, especially one that has pernicious political and social consequences (Lutz, 1989). The recipient of the 2003 NCTE Doublespeak Award was President George W. Bush, who made unequivocal statements regarding the reasons that the United States needed to pursue the most radical actions against another nation – acts of war – reasons which remained unsubstantiated.

A popular synonym for euphemism in the media is ‘spin’. According to *the New York Times* columnist William Safire, spin is “deliberate shading of news perception” (www.npr.org). Linda Wertheimer, a reporter for National Public Radio, defined spin as “not quite lying,” “not quite truth.” The presidential campaign of both candidates in 2004 heavily relied on designated spinners or spin-doctors, whose mission was to publicly defend or downplay errors made by their candidate. The highly staged and hyperbolic spin operations, for example, included monitoring the candidate’s every word and comparing his statements with public records through a computer matrix for possible exaggerations or misstatements, sending the computer-generated list of responses via emails to reporters and partisans all over the country. The intent was to reshape public perceptions of the candidates’ performances and personalities. For example, the Kerry campaign methodically highlighted the incumbent’s inability to face the reality and accused him

of spinning by presenting a 'rosy' view of Iraq and the economy to the public, though the word 'lie' was never used. "He can spin till he's dizzy," the President lives in "a fantasy world of spin," one Yale gentleman charged another. Interestingly enough, commentators on both sides also avoided using the 'L-word' (lie). Instead, they chose to euphemize the instances when the political opponents 'misspoke', 'misstated' or 'stretched the truth'. For example, *USA Today* accused the Bush administration of putting an optimistic face on the worsening conflict in Iraq and called it 'upbeat spins'. There were numerous euphemisms coined by spin-doctors of the Bush administration in the wake of 9/11. They all can be classified under the rubric of national security euphemisms. *9/11* is one of them. The euphemism is an index, a minimal deictic, which refers to the terrorist attack on America on September 11, 2001, when the country lost nearly 3,000 people. The terrorist attack was designed by Osama bin Laden and executed by 18 terrorists from different Arab countries. Being an escapist expression, it removes dreaded connotations of horror and pain that the nation experienced as the victim of the attack. Jacques Derrida, in a post-9/11 interview, attempted to explain the minimalist aim of this dating.

He argues that the meaning of the event being ineffable, the language admits its powerlessness and is reduced to mechanically pronouncing a date, repeating it endlessly, as a kind of ritual incantation. 'War on terror' became a pervasive euphemism for the war on militant Islam. To use religion as the target of military engagement would be diplomatically perilous for the United States. It could have alienated Muslim countries which have been the country's allies in the post 9/11 period, and inflamed millions of Islam believers worldwide. 'Terror' does not define the enemy explicitly; it refers to enemy activity on the emotional level, singling out violence as its core sense. The invasion of Iraq was called 'a liberation' (though it was later defined as an occupation), 'a broad and concerted campaign', executed with the help of the 'Coalition of the Willing' (among them the United Kingdom is the only ally which has contributed significantly to the occupation). The war was also defined as 'tearing down the apparatus of terror', 'confronting dictators', and 'regime change' in an attempt to justify the invasion for a humanitarian reason. The outcome of the war in Iraq was portrayed euphemistically in the political narratives of the Republicans. The war on terror has brought a number of euphemisms intended to blur legal boundaries to justify illegal treatment of American citizens or detainees from other nations. Among them are 'unlawful combatants' or 'enemy combatants' rather than 'prisoners of war' or 'criminals'. The euphemism 'prison abuse' was coined after the Abu Ghraib prison scandal broke in spring 2004 in order to avoid the word 'torture', which clearly characterized what some American soldiers and civilian contractors did in

one of the most notorious prisons of Saddam's former regime. 'Abuse' is a misdemeanor or mistreatment, while 'torture' denotes a violent crime which involves an infliction of severe physical pain as a means of punishment or coercion. According to military officers at Abu Ghraib, they were encouraged to create 'favorable conditions' for interrogation, which is another euphemism for 'rough' and 'aggressive techniques', approved by the government for conducting interrogation procedures. These techniques entailed a systematic 'softening up' of prisoners through isolation, privations, insults, threats, and humiliation – methods that the Red Cross concluded were 'tantamount to torture'. Originally, the above techniques were used against Qaeda enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay, but later the Guantanamo-style interrogation methods were exported to Abu Ghraib, even though the Iraqi war was supposed to have been governed by the Geneva Conventions (www.ling.wisc.edu).

As is has already been stated, a euphemism is a tool for political participants to hide scandals, disguise the truth, guide public thoughts when discussing social issues or events. In spite of some common features political euphemism shares with others, it has three typical features:

1) Greater Degree of Deviation from its Signified

According to Swiss linguist Saussure, language signs are a combination of the signifier, the phonetic forms of language and the signified, objects in existence represented by linguistic forms. Due to the lack of direct or logical relations between the two, they have a discretionary relationship with each other, making it possible to create euphemism by replacing the signifier. Because euphemism is just created by transforming the signifier to enlarge the association distance between the signifier and the signified, euphemism meanings stay relative to their former zero-degree ones. Although euphemism and its former zero-degree signifier refer to the same signified, political euphemism is different from those commonly used euphemistic forms in order to avoid death and other physical phenomena in that it deviates greatly from the meaning expressed by its former signifier, or even a complete distortion. For example, Former US President Reagan once named the 10-warhead intermediate-range missile as 'peacekeeper'; some later political participants named their attack as 'active defense'; they even replaced 'recession' with 'negative growth' because it sounded offensive to the ear. It is quite obvious that these expressions are not a simple replacement of the former zero-degree signifier, but quite opposite meanings to their literal meanings, just like replacing 'black' with 'white'. It might as well mark euphemism's deviation degree with a range from 1 to 10, within which a greater number refers to a greater degree of deviation. In this case, the above mentioned political euphemism expressions

should be marked with 10 while some ordinary expressions such as ‘overweight’ and ‘fat’ can only be marked as 1.

2) More Vague Meanings

George Orwell pointed out two characteristics of political discourse in *Politics and the English Language* (1946), that is, the obsolescence and vagueness of figure of speech. Euphemism, characterized by replacing direct expressions with implicative, obscure and vague ones, plays a quite essential role in demystifying the connotation of political discourse when serving political purposes. Some commonly employed demystifying methods in political euphemism include replacing specific meanings with general ones, replacing hyponyms with superordinates and replacing derogatory meanings with neutral or even commendatory ones. For instance, people often refer to the atomic bombs used in Hiroshima as ‘the gadget’, ‘the device’, ‘the thing’ or other vague meanings. When talking about American army’s invasion into Grenada in 1983, President Reagan was quite dissatisfied with the word ‘invasion’ used by the journalists, instead, he expressed it as ‘a rescue mission’, glorifying their military invasion as their help offer to other countries. Similarly, US air attacks in Vietnam and Libya were called ‘air operation; President Bush also glorifying their military attack to Iraq with some neutral and general expressions such as ‘military operation’ or ‘disarm’ in this speech delivered on the very day they made war against Iraq in 2003.

3) Strong Characteristic of Times

Euphemism is the language reflection of social culture; therefore changes in social development will propel those in language. In each international vicissitude, political euphemism will be booming. Due to US’s important role in international politics as well as its dynamic domestic politics and economy, rich soil is provided for the creation of political euphemism. For example, from US economic decline are ‘recession’, ‘disinflation’ and ‘negative growth’ created, hence giving birth to some euphemistic expressions such as ‘downsize’ or ‘workforce adjustment’. After Watergate Scandal, quite a few euphemistic expressions were produced to hide such political scandal. In addition, military actions are also an extension from politics. It is said that war has brought about not only death and destruction but new euphemistic expressions because they will make death sound less horrible. US Department of Defense named their air attack in Vietnam as ‘air support’ and ‘protective action’, their destruction over Vietnamese villages as ‘pacification program’ and those homeless refugees as ‘ambient non-combat personnel’. Similarly, deaths and injuries caused by their bombardment over other nations were expressed as ‘collateral damage’. It is no wonder that English Teachers’ Council of US once

awarded the Best Political Euphemism Award to its Department of Defense. Besides, its characteristic of times can also be reflected in the variation in the signifier of the same objective phenomenon with time. In 1950s, Truman described Korean War as 'police action'; in 1960s and 1970s, Vietnam War was called 'Vietnam Conflict' by US; in 1983, US invasion into Grenada was said to be 'a rescue mission' instead of 'incursion'; its invasion into Panama was also called 'Operation Just Cause' and Bush Government said Iraqi War beginning in March, 2003 as 'Operation Iraqi Freedom'. Inside the language system, such constant changes with time evolve from the relationship between the signifier and signified mentioned previously. Although there is no relation between linguistic signs and their signified, people tend to relate euphemism to its signified after it has been used for a period. As a result, the former vagueness and sense of distance disappear and euphemistic color fades away. Consequently, politicians will rack their brains to find alternative expressions (www.ccsenet.org).

II. EUPHEMISMS IN POLITICAL TEXTS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

2.1 Semantic features of political euphemisms

Due to the lack of classifications of political euphemisms according to semantic groups, we propose our own classification in this research that is based on the topic of articles a political euphemism may occur in. All articles can be divided into nine groups:

1. Articles on civil and public services policy;
2. Articles on welfare;
3. Articles of trade union issues;
4. Articles on tax and spending issues;
5. Articles on economic policy;
6. Articles on election issues
7. Articles on defence policy;
8. Articles of terrorism policy;
9. Articles on political parties issues.

1. The smallest group with only one prevailing political euphemism *fat cat* is articles on civil and public services policy. *Fat cat* is a euphemism for a person who exploits a senior appointment for personal gain. It is usually used to describe politicians and company directors, who display greed and self-satisfaction, although they do not actually purr. It seems that *fat cat* is not a euphemism because it has a negative connotation, but we follow a scientific ethic code and ascribe it to euphemisms since it is found among political euphemisms in a dictionary of euphemisms “How not to Say What You Mean” (2002). In the succeeding example a euphemism *fat cat* is used in collocation with ‘pensions’ where the use of *fat cat* implies generous pensions, i.e. the ones received by high rank politicians.

- *The head of the civil service today criticizes the media, lambasting the "absurd" misrepresentation of civil servants as enjoying footballer-style salaries, luxurious conditions and fat cat pensions (guardian.co.uk, 11 November 2010).*

2. The other group with only two dominant political euphemisms *tax relief* and *disadvantaged* is articles on welfare. *Tax relief* is a euphemism for tax cut while *disadvantaged* is a euphemism for poor. Controversial tax cuts are more palatable when called *tax relief* whereas using *disadvantaged* rather than poor is non-offensive and less sympathetic. In this case *tax relief* performs a covering up function in order to hide the true nature of the issue of cuts whereas

disadvantaged performs a politeness function in order not to insult people by using the word 'poor'. For example:

- *More than half of those losing out under the scheme will be people working more than 30 hours a week; those receiving tax credits; and anyone not claiming housing benefit or council **tax relief** (guardian.co.uk, 17 February 2011).*
- *It also reveals that the future funding mechanism for the new £430 "pupil premium", which will be announced tomorrow, could concentrate the money on **disadvantaged** pupils in shire schools instead of urban ones (guardian.co.uk, Sunday 12 December).*

3. The political euphemisms *agitprop* and *tiny minority* are most often used in the articles on trade union issues. *Agitprop* is the term being a blending of the word agitation and propaganda which today refers to a special type of propaganda that is designed to arouse intense, even violent, emotions within people who are exposed to it. The term originated in the Soviet Union, whose information bureau was originally called the Department for Agitation and Propaganda. *Agitprop* serves a covering up function to hide the negative effects caused by agitation and propaganda, for instance:

- *Yet in one of the short **agitprop** videos submitted for the event's competition a chap called Steve Price gave his audience what could prove the germ of an idea that might resonate better with a cuts-agnostic public than smashed windows in the West End: mockery (guardian.co.uk, 29 March 2011).*

The euphemism *tiny minority* is used to minimise failure and justify inaction, rather than to finesse evil. The following example illustrates the use of this euphemism in the articles on trade union issues:

- *And while we should be sensitive to the fact that 100,000 people a year are expected to lose their jobs in the public sector, we should remember that, in the context of a 30 million-strong workforce, they are a **tiny minority** (guardian.co.uk, 19 November 2010).*

Tiny minority in this case performs an inducing function because the politician's aim is to convince that 30 million people out of work is a very small number.

4. Another semantic group with only a few typical euphemisms is articles on tax and spending issues. The prevalent political euphemisms here are *demonstration*, *reprioritization* and *restraint*. *Demonstration* is a euphemism for a mass assembly to protest about a specific issue while *reprioritisation* is a contemporary euphemism for cuts, for instance:

- *It started as a tweet, quickly became a Facebook group and now hopes to grow into a fully-fledged "alternative" to last month's anti-cuts **demonstration**, which brought more than a quarter of a million people on to the streets of London (guardian.co.uk, 8 April 2011).*
- *However, the money will come from a "**reprioritisation**" of existing MoD spending plans, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity (guardian.co.uk, 14 December 2009).*

The use of a euphemism *demonstration* in the given example makes the protest against cuts less important and less evident while *reprioritisation* significantly diminishes the negative meaning of cuts. Thus, both euphemisms serve a covering up function.

The euphemism *restraint* is a complex one as it may refer to two different issues depending on the context. First of all, *restraint* may be a euphemism for an attempt to limit wage increases (1) but it can also refer to a recession (2). It is a usage of politicians who wish to avoid the dread word 'recession' and to imply that the economic mess is caused other than through their own policy. In both cases *restraint* obviously performs a covering up function as the politicians aim at hiding the thorny issues of wage cut and recession. The following examples show the usage of this euphemism in context:

- *(1) Andrew Burnham, the health secretary, told the Guardian that savings would come from wage **restraint**, cutting management costs by a third, and asking "some nurses and doctors to take on different roles in different locations outside of hospital (guardian.co.uk, 26 April 2010).*
- *(2) The Cabinet Office admitted that during a period of financial **restraint**, this is one area likely to come under the most pressure (guardian.co.uk 21 December 2010).*

5. Political euphemisms such as *freeze*, *full and frank discussion*, *urban renewal*, and *pork barrel* form a group of euphemisms which are dominant in the articles on economic policy. *Freeze* is a euphemism for an attempt to contain public expenditure by reducing wages or recruitment.

- *Many of those marching from the Embankment to Hyde Park are expected to be public service workers angry over the pay **freeze** and job losses resulting from the government's drive to eliminate the deficit by cutting public spending. (guardian.co.uk, Thursday 10 February 2011).*

The euphemism *full and frank discussion* refers to an argument. For instance:

- *Those who saw them depart together presumed it must have been for yet more "full and frank discussions" over the defence budget (guardian.co.uk, Sunday 17 October 2010).*

In this case *full and frank discussions* performs a tactical function because using the euphemism instead of the word argument makes the issue of discussing the defence budget less burning and complex.

Urban renewal is a euphemism for slum clearance. For example:

- *George Osborne, the chancellor, will set out his plans on Saturday for creating at least 10 enterprise zones across Britain, in a scaled down revival of the Thatcher government's urban renewal scheme (guardian.co.uk, Saturday 5 March 2011).*

This euphemism significantly softens a painful issue of slum clearance for some people and thus performs a covering up function.

Pork barrel is a derogatory term referring to appropriation of government spending for localized projects secured solely or primarily to bring money to a representative's district. *Pork barrel* originally referred to American slaves' rushed attempts to obtain some of the pork given to them as a group in large barrels. The term entered the political vocabulary after the Civil War. Nowadays, 'pork' typically involves funding for government programs whose economic or service benefits are concentrated in a particular area but whose costs are spread among all taxpayers. In the following examples *pork barrel* performs a taboo function because to speak directly about the appropriation of the government's money for a particular area's benefit is a taboo topic for most politicians.

- *It means that the US government is too ready to stimulate its economy with badly thought-out tax cuts or **pork-barrel** public spending increases, and to take appallingly stupid risks with monetary policy (guardian.co.uk, 7 November 2010).*
- *And who could begrudge Clegg a bit of pork barrel – one of the 21 new enterprise zones will be in Sheffield – after he made such a poor job of protecting the Sheffield Forgemasters? I just wish he wouldn't be so priggish when other politicians play constituency **pork barrel** too (guardian.co.uk, 24 March 2011).*

All the above mentioned euphemisms such as *freeze*, *full and frank discussion*, *urban renewal*, and *pork barrel* are more often used in the articles on economic policy than in other types of articles.

6. Articles on election issues contain a considerable number of political euphemisms, namely *cut*, *inflammatory language*, *banana skin*, *Buggin's turn*, *disinvestment*, *lame duck*, and

HIPC. Cut is a reduction of in the size of the increase desired or expected by the recipient. *Cut* is usually used to speak about spending in public sector, for example:

- *He claims it is in the gutter that issues like jobs, mortgages and cuts to public services are debated and decided. He insists that negative campaigning works (guardian.co.uk, 21 April 2011).*
- *The BNP says it is focusing on the elections to the Welsh assembly, where it claims it could secure two seats, but anti-Griffin rebels say the BNP should be making more progress in England as cuts bite and economic instability increases (guardian.co.uk, 22 April 2011).*

Inflammatory language is a euphemism for hate speech in the articles on election issues. The following example illustrates the importance of the issue of prejudice against newcomers during the period of elections in Britain where *inflammatory language* is used instead of hate language in order to soften the deplorable immigrants' situation. For instance:

- *Some agreed it was becoming increasingly acceptable for Britons to use the kind of racist and inflammatory language about eastern Europeans that they would never direct at black, Asian or Middle Eastern people (guardian.co.uk, 29 April 2010).*

Banana skin is a euphemism for a potentially embarrassing or dangerous situation, for example:

- *Cameron did not attempt to join in the race: an obstacle course of 12 tyres, three upturned benches and a lot of what could have been soapboxes from John Major's day is one slippery PR banana skin (guardian.co.uk, 8 April 2010).*

In this example a political euphemism *banana skin* makes the situation of David Cameron not joining in the race with non-voters less embarrassing. Cameron's election campaign seems to be more successful and more convincing with the emergence of *banana skin* rather than presenting the situation directly.

Buggin's turn is a euphemism for the appointment of a person by rotation or promotion on the basis of length of service rather than merit or level of qualification. Buggins, which was a typical surname in the early 20th century, is an incompetent or unambitious employee who stays a long while in the same job. Nowadays this euphemism is frequently used in the articles on election issues, for instance:

- *People want change, but are no longer willing to see it delivered on the basis of a **Buggins' turn** attitude of Tories alternating with Labour. (guardian.co.uk, 2 May 2010)*

The use of the euphemism *Buggin's turn* in this case lessens the negative aspect of Tories interspersed with Labour in elections. People's wish for change is made less fervent and less important with the help of this euphemism.

Disinvestment is another euphemism often found in the articles on election issues. It is a euphemism for not using resources for a particular purpose, whether the benefits are obtained now, in the future or never. The following example illustrates that the use of a euphemism *disinvestment* makes the issue of withdrawal of capital investment from public services less burning and crucial which means a covering up function of a euphemism is being performed.

- *Already Londoners are paying the price of Tory obsession with **disinvestment** in public services because the price of a single bus fare has gone up by a third (guardian.co.uk, Friday 9 April).*

Lame duck is a euphemism for an elected official who is approaching the end of his or her tenure, and especially an official whose successor has already been elected. *Lame duck* officials tend to have less political power, as other elected officials are less inclined to cooperate with them. The term was often used of an outgoing president of the United States who becomes ineffectual during his last months of office, if not before, but nowadays this euphemism is used to refer to officials of different rank and to the government itself, for example:

- *But critics described the move as undemocratic and warned it could lead to a **lame-duck** government, hanging on in office after losing a no-confidence vote (guardian.co.uk, 5 July 2010).*
- *It is understood that Balls, Alexander and Mandelson argued against the proposal on the basis that it would repeat the difficulties faced by Tony Blair, who also announced before the 2005 election that he would not serve a full term. That decision dogged Blair's third term, leaving him as a **lame duck** (guardian.co.uk, 18 May 2010).*

The use of a euphemism *lame duck* in the above examples reduces the negative opinion, i.e. the inefficiency and embarrassment experienced by *lame duck* officials and governments.

The last euphemism which is common within the field of elections is *HIPC* meaning heavily indebted poor countries. During electioneering a great deal of politicians enjoy boasting about their deeds and they rely on euphemisms while doing so in order to sound more polite and non-offensive. *HIPC* helps to approach issues concerning poor countries more easily which means

that the euphemism performs a tactical function. The following example illustrates the use of a euphemism *HIPC* for the sake of showing consolidation and support for poor countries:

- The new law prevents such companies taking nations that qualify for *HIPC* initiative to court in the UK to enforce payment in excess of what has already been agreed by other creditors in *HIPC* negotiations. The *HIPC* scheme involves up to 90% of the country's debt being written off.

7. Another group of articles with five most frequent used euphemisms is articles on defence policy. This group consists of *friendly fire*, *WMD*, *anti-personnel weapons*, *regime change* and *enemy combatants*.

Friendly fire was originally adopted by the United States military. It is a euphemism for inadvertent firing towards one's own or otherwise friendly forces while attempting to engage enemy forces, particularly where this results in injury or death. The following example presents the usage of *friendly fire* in context:

- The Ministry of Defence last night admitted it was investigating whether two British servicemen killed in southern Afghanistan this week died as a result of *friendly fire* (guardian.co.uk 17 January 2009)

It is obvious from this example that *friendly fire* performs a taboo function because this event usually causes death which is a taboo in nature. Thus, the euphemism is used in order to make this issue sound less unpleasant.

One more euphemism frequently used in the articles on defence policy is *WMD* which stands for a weapon of mass destruction. It is a weapon that can kill and bring significant harm to a large number of humans (and other life forms) and/or cause great damage to man-made structures (e.g. buildings), natural structures (e.g. mountains), or the biosphere in general. By using this euphemism politicians hide the destructive power of these weapons that may imply that a covering up function is being performed. For example:

- My hope and intention was that the inspections would work, that Saddam would give full access, which he failed to do, and that having given full access, the inspectors would either find the *WMD* or they would say, as the Kay report did later, that they had been given complete access and they had not been able to (guardian.co.uk, 19 November 2010).

Anti-personnel weapons is a euphemism for nuclear weapons or, in other words, weapons which cause people's death and in which buildings are allowed to survive. Addressing these

weapons directly as 'people killers' would cause greater society's dissatisfaction and resistance due to their disastrous consequences. Thus, in order to avoid the taboo words 'nuclear weapons' or 'people killers' politicians use *anti-personnel weapons* instead. The following example illustrates how this euphemism might be used:

- Intended primarily as **anti-personnel weapons**, cluster bombs open up in mid-air to release dozens of individual devices, known as bomblets, which scatter across a wide area (guardian.co.uk 3 December 2008).

Another euphemism frequently found in articles on defence policy is *regime change*. Though alleged by politicians to be a neutral reference to 'a change in leadership', it quickly became associated with the idea of overthrowing a government or regime by external military force, and imposing a new government according to the interests and/or ideas promoted by that force. As a flagship policy of the Bush administration, regime change is a controversial expression thought of as a euphemism for extreme military force and associated with questionable justification for war. It has subsequently entered mainstream use as a highly charged reference to potential changes in leadership or strategy in a variety of spheres. Nowadays politicians instead of speaking about the overthrow of the government by external military force directly they use a much softer phrase *regime change* which implies that this euphemism serves a covering up and at the same time a taboo function. The following illustrates the usage of this euphemism:

- Saddam Hussein must let the UN weapons inspectors in unconditionally or face **regime change** (guardian.co.uk, 21 January 2011)

This sentence sounds like a threatening warning but it would have sound even more threatening and aggressive if a politician had used direct words instead of *regime change*.

The last euphemism in this group is *enemy combatants*. It is a euphemistic term historically referring to members of the armed forces of the state with which another state is at war. In the United States the use of the *enemy combatant* may also mean an alleged member of al Qaeda or the Taliban, in other words, a terrorist being held in detention by the U.S. government as part of the war on terror. Thus, this euphemism has to be read in context to determine whether it means any combatant belonging to an enemy state, or if it means an alleged member of al Qaeda or of the Taliban being detained as an unlawful combatant by the United States. The first example illustrates *enemy combatant* being any combatant belonging to an enemy state while in the second example *enemy combatants* refer to Guantanamo detainees used by Bush government.

- In Afghanistan difficulties separating friend from foe have been exacerbated by battles involving small formations of *enemy combatants*, often fighting at close quarters (guardian.co.uk, 17 January 2009).
- He picks up Moazzam Begg's book, *Enemy Combatants*, about the latter's experience in Guantánamo Bay, and shows a bookmark at about page 10 (guardian.co.uk, 27 July 2008)

8. The penultimate group is articles on terrorism policy containing eight most frequently used euphemisms: *extraordinary rendition*, *detainee*, *crossfire*, *humanitarian intervention*, *extrajudicial executions*, *sectarian violence*, *insurgency*, *armed struggle*, and *surgical strike*.

Extraordinary rendition is a euphemism for torture, i.e. a procedure whereby criminal suspects are sent for interrogation from one country to a second country, where less strict laws governing interrogation apply. The phrase became widely known during 2005 when newspaper articles began drawing attention to the fact the US Government was sending terrorist suspects, previously held in the USA, to countries that have less stringent laws against torture, and interrogating them there. It may have been used internally within US government circles before then, although there aren't any known hearsay reports of it prior to Sept 2001. 'Rendition', in this context, means handing over. It has the same root as surrender. 'Extraordinary' means unusual, literally 'outside the ordinary'. Put together they do not appear to add up to much, and really that is the point. The phrase is in the long and ignoble tradition of doublespeak - appearing to communicate but in fact using bland or inoffensive language to draw a veil over real meaning. The following example illustrates the usage of this euphemism clearly performing a taboo function:

- The former detainees – Mohamed, Bisher al-Rawi, Jamil el-Banna, Richard Belmar, Omar Deghayes and Martin Mubanga – deny any involvement in terrorism and allege that MI5 and MI6 aided and abetted each man's unlawful imprisonment and *extraordinary rendition* (guardian.co.uk, 6 July 2010).

Literally, *detainee* is a term used by certain governments and their military to refer to individuals held in custody. It is used to refer to "any person captured or otherwise detained by an armed force". More generally, it is "someone held in custody". However, nowadays in political texts *detainee* is a euphemistic term that differs in meaning from what it replaces, namely prisoner, for instance:

- (1) A year later, it admitted that two *detainees* captured by British forces in Iraq had been rendered to a notorious jail in Bagram in Afghanistan (guardian.co.uk, 18 April 2011).

- (2) Eleven *detainees* who claim they suffered "inhumane and degrading treatment" are suing (guardian.co.uk, 12 May 2010).

The first example (1) clearly shows that in this case detainees are not the ones who are held in custody but those who are sent to jail whereas the second example (2) even proves violent treatment towards *detainees*.

One more euphemism which is frequently found in articles on terrorism policy is *crossfire*. It is a euphemism for the act of firing weapons or artillery at an enemy or, in other words, extrajudicial killings, for instance:

- He predicted that his client's death would be announced in due course, telling the Guardian last December: "Perhaps it will be announced that Rashid was caught in *crossfire* during a police operation" (guardian.co.uk, November 28, 2008)

Humanitarian intervention is a euphemism referring to military invasion or "dropping bombs on poor people". As Alex de Waal in his articles pointed out "there is no such thing as humanitarian intervention distinct from war or counterinsurgency. Intervention and occupation should not be confused with classic peacekeeping, which is difficult enough even with a ceasefire agreement and the consent of the parties. If we want an intervention to overthrow a tyranny, protect citizens from their own government, or deliver humanitarian aid during an ongoing conflict, we should be honest with ourselves - we are arguing for a just war. And if we wish to make this case, let us be clear...that it will entail bloodshed including the killing of innocent people." The following example shows the usage of *humanitarian intervention* where the euphemism performs a covering up function as it hides the fact of killing hundreds of people during *humanitarian intervention*:

- It said the UN allowed "*humanitarian intervention*" in some circumstances, but such was not the case in Iraq, and that it would be very difficult to rely on earlier UN resolutions approving the use of force against Saddam (guardian.co.uk, November 30, 2009)

One more euphemism to be discussed in this group is *extrajudicial executions*. It is a euphemism for murder. More specifically, *extrajudicial execution* is when the state kills someone without proper due process. Extrajudicial executions are almost universally considered as a human rights violation. However, many states continue the practice, either in secret or else justifying it as necessary. The most common justification is that the state is in a state of emergency, and that the killings are necessary because the judiciary is weak, slow, or corrupt.

These excuses are disregarded by human rights organizations in almost all cases. *Extrajudicial executions* are most often practiced in countries where the leaders of the state have authoritarian leanings, but the state is not strong enough for the use of formal methods.

- The attacker may also have been motivated by revenge. Soldiers from the Punjab regiment have been implicated in a flurry of *extrajudicial executions* of suspected militants in the north-west, one of which was captured in a video that circulated on the internet last year (guardian.co.uk, 10 February 2011)

In the example above the euphemism *extrajudicial executions* makes the cases of murder sound less cruel and covers up the taboo topic of killings.

Sectarian violence and *insurgency* are euphemisms for a civil war.

- The vacuum thus created allowed *sectarian violence* – triggered by resentful, usurped and unemployed Sunnis, Saddam's own people – to flare up (guardian.co.uk, 16 February 2011).
- Evans said "a significant number of UK residents" were training in al-Shabaab camps to fight in *the insurgency* in Somalia (guardian.co.uk, 17 September 2010).

These euphemisms perform a covering up function because a civil war is a bloody event causing people's death but with the help of the usage of the euphemism civil war is reduced to something on the order of an inter-family feud.

Armed struggle is a euphemism for terrorism and slaughtering innocent men, women and children. This terrorism is a war crime and violates the most fundamental of human rights. In the following example this euphemism performs a taboo function, as terrorism is a taboo topic by nature due to its devastating consequences. For example:

- At the height of the war, I would have argued in defence of the right of people to use *armed struggle* (guardian.co.uk, 24 January 2011).

Surgical strike is a euphemism for a precision bombing. In other words, it is a military attack which results in, was intended to result in, or is claimed to have resulted in only damage to the intended legitimate military target. This euphemism makes a precision bombing sound like a beneficial medical procedure, thus, performing a covering up function. For instance:

- He said he agreed with the Foreign Office Minister Kim Howells that it was 'very difficult to understand the kind of military tactics used by Israel', adding: 'These are not *surgical strikes* but have instead caused death and misery amongst innocent civilians' (guardian.co.uk, 30 July 2008)

9. The last group is articles on political parties issues and politicians which contain the largest number of most often used political euphemisms such as *anti-fascist*, *anti-islamic*, *a fact-finding mission*, *collateral damage*, *a lightning rod*, *blow-in*, *undocumented workers*, *pro-choice*, *ethnic cleansing*, *counter revolution*, *to deselect*, *special relationship*, *to doorstep*, *fellow traveller*, *gaffe*, *go native*, *hang out to dry*, *a loose cannon*, *redistribution of wealth*, *U-turn*, *law and order*, *faith-based initiative*, *economical with the truth*, *blame game*, *conspiracy theory*, *to close loopholes*, *spin doctor*, *axis of evil*, *protective custody*, *correctional facility*, *secure facility*, and *to leak*.

Anti-fascist and anti-islamic are euphemisms for avoiding a statement of your own allegiance. The prefix anti- performs a tactical function because a person's opinion against something becomes less strong and less categorical with the help of this euphemising prefix. The examples illustrate the usage of these euphemisms:

- Muslim and *anti-fascist* groups questioned the prime minister's judgment and sensitivity to the issues, saying he had handed a propaganda coup to the hard-right English Defence League as 3,000 of its supporters marched through Luton chanting *anti-Islamic* slogans.

One of many euphemisms in this group is a *fact-finding mission* which refers to a holiday with all expenses paid. This euphemism performs a taboo function due to the fact that is always embarrassing for politicians to speak about holidays where all the expenses are paid by some public governing bodies or a private company. In the following example health spokesman Mark Simmonds had a *fact-finding mission* on healthcare which was paid by a private healthcare company. This action was illegal because it is not allowed to work in private sector if you are a Member of Parliament. For example:

- Another shadow health minister, Mark Simmonds, accepted flights and accommodation paid for by Bupa, Britain's biggest private healthcare provider, for a *fact-finding mission* on healthcare in the US (guardian.co.uk, 19 August 2009)

Collateral damage is a euphemism for civilian casualties in war or, in other words, a mass murder of innocent people. It is perfectly moral to protect innocents against aggressors. It is not moral, nor has it ever been necessary, to blow up cities filled with innocent people, for instance:

Given the wide distribution of potential nuclear sites, far beyond the well-known ones at Isfahan and Natanz, it's almost certain there would be *collateral damage*. (guardian.co.uk, 2 February 2008)

Speaking about the death of innocent people makes politicians feel awkward and confused so by using *collateral damage* they successfully avoid this taboo topic and cover up the most serious of political crimes.

Literally, a *lightning rod* is a metal rod or conductor mounted on top of a building and electrically connected to the ground through a wire, to protect the building in the event of lightning. In modern political usage, the term has been adapted to euphemistically mean a person who espouses a particularly strong version of some idea in order to attract the energies and efforts of the opposition:

- Hughes, who has become *a lightning rod* for disaffected Lib Dems and has spoken out against several coalition policies, used his first major address to the party since taking over the reins from Vincent Cable, the business secretary, to pledge to keep up the pressure on key issues such as scrapping the Trident nuclear programme and tuition fees (guardian.co.uk, 21 September 2010)

From the example it is understood that Hughes is an opponent to Lib Dems but he is referred to as a *lightning rod* which makes his position more neutral and more acceptable by Lib Dems.

Blow-in is a euphemism for a foreigner who meddles in domestic affairs. For example:

- Her appointment is a surprise, given that to many in the DUP – especially those in the party's evangelical wing – she is perceived as a "*blow in*" from another rival unionist party (guardian.co.uk, 11 January 2010)

It is a euphemism of Irish usage often found in various discussions of Irish political parties. In the example provided above 'she' is Arlene Foster, the new caretaker first minister of Northern Ireland, who is referred to as a *blow-in*. In this case she is not a foreigner meddling in domestic affairs but rather a politician from a rival party. The usage of this euphemism performs a politeness function because *blow-in* seems to be a more pleasant term than a rival.

Undocumented worker is one of a host of euphemisms for people in the U.S. who do not fit the definition of a resident alien or a citizen. In other words, it is a euphemism for an illegal alien. For instance:

- The failed policy of the Labour and Conservative parties of trying to deport more than 700,000 *undocumented workers* at a cost of £11,000 per person will cost billions, while a regularisation would net the exchequer more than £1bn in taxes, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research.

The usage of this euphemism performs a taboo function because it is forbidden to live and work illegally in another country and all *undocumented workers* have to submit to a rigorous process to convert to legal status or face immediate deportation. The euphemism in this case helps to avoid a taboo topic of working illegally.

Pro-choice is a euphemism for supporting abortion, for instance:

- The Liberal Democrat science spokesman is strongly *pro-choice* and was supported by Ben Goldacre for his staunchly scientific views (guardian.co.uk, 7 May 2010).

Abortion is the termination of the life of the unborn child in the womb. Pro-choicers would say that the child is not a child but a fetus or a blastocyst which are descriptions of children in the early stages of development. In order to avoid this controversial issue of a very grave sin and disfavour of those having the opposite views, politicians choose the euphemism *pro-choice*. This euphemism serves a taboo function because an abortion itself is a taboo topic by nature and expressing your views in favour of this issue is even a greater taboo.

Ethnic cleansing is a euphemism for the ruthless removal or killing of an ethnic or religious group from areas that have been taken over by opposing forces. The curious euphemism *ethnic cleansing* was first popularized by accused Serbian genocide mastermind Slobodan Milosevic and this euphemism is now applied to all sorts of massacres, for instance:

- Contrary to the received wisdom, Mr Blair's cheerleading of the Nato bombing failed to stop *ethnic cleansing* in Kosovo (guardian.co.uk, 25 February 2011).

Ethnic cleansing performs a taboo function because mass-murder is a taboo issue and politicians would be highly confused if they referred to it directly.

Counter-revolution is a euphemism for any internal opposition to a totalitarian regime.

- I sat through the last minority government, that of Jim Callaghan, from 1977 to 1979, when the Thatcher *counter-revolution* began (guardian.co.uk, 14 April 2010).

This euphemism performs a covering up function as it helps politicians to hide their views, i.e. whether they are in favour of or oppose to a totalitarian regime. By using *counter-revolution* politicians' opinion on a totalitarian regime is less biased.

To deselect is a euphemism for dismissing a political incumbent. The usage of it performs a politeness function as politicians find it unpleasant to speak about a dismissal of officials which is usually followed by psychological and financial problems. Thus, the usage of the euphemism *to deselect* makes this topic more pleasant and hides the desperate situation of being unemployed. The following example illustrates the usage of this euphemism:

- Separately, proposals were being put forward by some activists to make it easier for local parties *to deselect* Lib Dem MPs (guardian.co.uk, 6 December 2010).

Special relationship was a term used to describe post-Second World War Anglo-American relations, characterized by amiable diplomatic, military, economic, and cultural ties. The existence of shared history, language, cultural heritage, and close commercial relations in the pre-twentieth century significantly facilitated the formation of this relationship. For Britain, friendly relations with the United States were essential to counter aggressive Soviet policies in East Europe. For the United States, the relationship was important for the implementation of its policy of containment throughout the Cold War. Nowadays the *special relationship* between Britain and the US is a political euphemism because the dynamics of the relationship has changed and Britain would never be anything more than a junior partner of America. British politicians and the military chiefs are beginning to realise that the UK needs to be more a part of Europe than a distant friend of the USA because the *special relationship* between the two Western powers is now “strained”, for instance:

- Let's all cheer ourselves up on a wet and miserable January day by laughing at one of my favourite anxieties: the deep-rooted British fear that we may no longer have that "*special relationship*" with the United States (guardian.co.uk, 12 January 2011).

To doorstep is a euphemism for aggressively to interview an unwilling person.

- The BBC *is doorstepping* Vince Cable's house in Twickenham. His wife, Rachel, has just been out to tell a rather chilly-looking Gary O'Donoghue that Cable has already made a comment about his Murdoch remarks and that he's not saying any more. She was very polite about it (guardian.co.uk, 22 December 2010).

This euphemism is used in order to cover up the aggressive aspect of *doorstepping* and make this issue sound more acceptable. Politicians usually try hard to avoid doorstepping by journalists and treat it as a rude action violating a person's freedom. Thus, a euphemism is used to get rid of the derogatory aspect concerning this problem.

In its literal meaning *fellow traveller* just means someone who travels with you. It was first applied to non-communists who were inclined toward the views of the Communist Party by Leon Trotsky. Nowadays *fellow traveler* is a euphemism for someone who does not accept all your aims but has enough in common with you to accompany you in a comradely fashion part of the way. This euphemism covers up the fact that a fellow *traveler* does not accept all your aims which might be an unpalatable fact to accept for most politicians as they are inclined to think that

their truth is the only one. In the following example the partial supporters of violent extremists are referred to as *fellow travellers* which makes supporters' position causing less commotion, for example:

- Critics say it is based on flawed neo-Conservative thinking and risks backfiring, while supporters say it is necessary to tackle those who are *fellow travellers* with violent extremists (guardian.co.uk, 5 February 2011).

Gaffe is a euphemism for the embarrassing statement of an unpalatable truth performing a covering up function in various political parties' issues. In the following example the usage of the euphemism *gaffe* softens Lib Dems' terrible situation. For instance:

- Plummeting support, appalling *gaffes*, shattered public trust and the increasingly toxic reputation of Nick Clegg suggest the Lib Dems are in a terrible state (guardian.co.uk, 12 January 2011).

To go native is a euphemism for adopting the prevalent attitudes of an institution. The euphemism is used of politicians whose enthusiasm and fresh ideas are thwarted by bureaucrats, for example:

- Isn't there a danger that without targets breathing down your neck, Ministers will *go native*, the machine will slow down and nothing will actually happen? (guardian.co.uk, 8 November 2010)

This euphemism performs a politeness function because admitting that your enthusiasm and fresh ideas are restricted by bureaucracy is an embarrassing situation showing the lack of power to introduce some changes. Thus, the euphemism *to go native* helps to soften this disgraceful situation.

Hang somebody out to dry is a euphemism for not supporting or helping someone performing a covering up function because it is always unpleasant to tell someone that you are not going to support someone. For example:

- Many Labour MPs have rallied round Woolas and contributed to a fighting fund amid open revolt over the leadership's decision to "*hang him out to dry*" (guardian.co.uk, 16 November 2010).

Loose cannon is a euphemism for an unpredictable person, liable to cause damage, difficulties or embarrassment if not kept in check by others. Literally, cannons are related to ships. On sailing ships that had cannons, it was important that they be secured. Cannons are very heavy, and a loose cannon on a ship's deck in a rough sea could be thrown about in an

unpredictable fashion, causing a lot of damage. More than just needing to be lashed down during normal travel, cannons needed to be secured during use, or else the recoil would send the cannon on its way causing injury or damage. In the following example, the euphemism *loose cannon* performs a tactful function because referring to an unreliable and unpredictable person directly would be tactless, for instance:

- Clement told the Sunday Mirror that the Tory leader had confided to him that Johnson was a "***loose cannon***" and said that Clement would have to "keep him in check" (guardian.co.uk 22 February 2010).

Redistribution of wealth is a euphemism for punitive taxation. In other words, it is a euphemism for the transfer of income, wealth or property from some individuals to others caused by a social mechanism such as taxation, monetary policies, welfare, nationalization, charity or tort law. Most often it refers to progressive redistribution, from the rich to the poor, although it may also refer to regressive redistribution, from the poor to the rich. The euphemism in the following example performs a covering up function, as it is unpleasant to speak about taking money from the rich and giving to the poor directly. Thus, a euphemism is very helpful in this case:

- They have fought privilege and corruption; they have argued for a ***redistribution of wealth*** and opportunity from the rich to the poor; they have regarded the market as a (limited) means and not an (un-checked) end (guardian.co.uk, 16 August 2010).

U-turn is a euphemism for a fundamental change in policy. The euphemism in the following situation softens the unwelcome change introduced by the Conservatives and makes it less apparent:

- She also claims that the ***u-turn*** on the sell-off of the country's woodland shows that the Conservatives are losing touch with the public on environmental issues (guardian.co.uk, 3 March 2011).

Law and order is a euphemism for social and political repression.

- Agriculture and food production generally are things that get his juices flowing: ***law and order***, the curse of wind farms, etc. Harmless stuff perhaps; but what to make of the claim that in the not-so-distant past he has been formally approached to stand as a political candidate by two, perhaps three, major parties? (guardian.co.uk, 3 March 2011).

The usage of this euphemism covers up a difficult situation of agriculture and food production caused by social and political repression and it would have sounded even more difficult if it had been referred to directly.

Faith-based initiative is a euphemism for taxpayer-supported religion. The initiative funnels taxpayer dollars to religious social service providers without adequate safeguards to prevent proselytism. In addition, these groups seek to discriminate in hiring based on religion even though their programs are publicly funded. The following example illustrates the usage of this euphemism:

- Other North American *faith-based initiatives* endorsed by the foundation include the New York-based Global Nomads Group, which brings together young people through video conferences "to discuss the global issues that affect their lives" (guardian.co.uk, 14 March 2010)

Economical with the truth is a euphemism for a liar. In the example provided below the euphemism performs a covering up function because to refer to David Cameron as a liar directly would be very brave and this could cause his supporters' discontent. For instance:

- The business secretary, Lord Mandelson, said the documents showed Hague and the Tory leader, David Cameron, had been "*economical with the truth*" and had not had "the courage to stand up to Lord Ashcroft" over his tax status (guardian.co.uk, 18 March 2010).

The *conspiracy theory* and *blame game* are euphemisms for shifting responsibility on others of the failings we are suffering that has almost become a norm of our society.

- Gordon Brown, the former prime minister, pledged his "unequivocal" support to the new Labour leader and urged his party to get out of the *blame game* (guardian.co.uk, 25 September 2010).
- Some of his Labour colleagues dubbed him "the grouchy Marxist" because, in his humourless way, he had carried over from his previous membership of the Communist party an overdeveloped *conspiracy theory* attitude (guardian.co.uk, 28 November 2008).

The euphemisms in the examples given above hide a bad politicians' habit of shifting responsibility on others of failings they are suffering. Politicians tend to avoid responsibility and when something goes wrong they do not assume guilt even though they were to blame. Thus, euphemisms such as *blame game* or *conspiracy theory* are favorable in such case.

To close loopholes is a euphemism for increasing taxes. In the example the euphemism performs a covering up function as politicians find it very difficult and inconvenient to speak about tax increases because it usually causes people's dissatisfaction and anger. That is the reason why they prefer the euphemism to close loopholes instead:

- The government *is closing a loophole* that allows private providers to be paid more than NHS providers for the same work (guardian.co.uk, 12 March 2011).

Spin doctor is a euphemism for a person who favorably interprets the words and actions of prominent public figures such as politicians. The term *spin doctor* was first used during the 1984 presidential election in the US. A *spin doctor* is one who cleverly manipulates news. Politicians are often accused of using 'spin' or manipulative strategies to persuade the public opinion in their favour. This euphemism is used to hide the negative activities of favorably interpreting politicians' words performed by *spin doctors*:

- And as the government considers selling off ancient forests, is the backlash from green-fingered Tories going to prompt a u-turn and a headache for David Cameron's new *spin doctor*? (guardian.co.uk, 3 February 2011)

Axis of evil is a euphemism for governments that George Bush accused of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction. Bush labeled Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the *axis of evil*.

- Following 9/11 there were those who looked at the world and saw an '*axis of evil*'. George Bush himself said faced with this axis indifference would be catastrophic (guardian.co.uk, 29 March 2011)

This euphemism performs a taboo function because to speak about countries helping terrorism was and still is a taboo. Politicians are afraid to refer to these countries directly and that is why Bush referred to the countries helping terrorism as 'axis of evil'.

Protective custody, *secure facility*, and *correctional facility* are euphemisms for a prison. The negative associations related to a prison are covered up with the help of the usage of these euphemisms. The examples below show the usage of the euphemisms:

- MI5 took one of Gerry Adams' personal drivers into *protective custody* yesterday after the man, Roy McShane, was unmasked as a British agent (guardian.co.uk, 9 February 2008).
- Well, if that's true, then the entire House of Commons should be moved to a *secure facility*, forthwith (guardian.co.uk, 19 November 2010).

- An independent University of Pennsylvania study shows that over the last eight years, prisoners released from the InnerChange *correctional facility* at Sugarland, Texas, have been reoffending at the rate of 8%, whereas the average reoffending rate among all US prisoners is 67% - very similar to the British figure (guardian.co.uk, 21 June 2008).

Finally, the last euphemism in this large group is *to leak*. It is a euphemism for to release (information) furtively. It can be done by a politician who wishes to sound out public opinion about future policy or release information which cannot be attributed to him; or by an employee who improperly passes on confidential information for private gain or political advantage; or by a traitor:

- Senior Lib Dems are furious about the severity of the penalty, and that details *have leaked*.

2.2 Application of B. Warren's Model to Political Euphemisms

It is a common misconception that word meanings are consistent and static. Researchers from many different fields, however, are beginning to appreciate the complexity behind word choice, and the changeable nature of meaning: "Word meanings, it is suggested, are dynamic and negotiable" (Warren, 1992, 128). Nowhere is this more obvious than in the area of figurative language that, by definition, allocates referents not found in a word's dictionary description. This type of language comes in a variety of forms and one of them is the language of 'political correctness' that strives to avoid offence, uphold civility and avoid impertinence. It might be noted that interpretation varies according to context, i.e. whether the speaker means the term to be euphemistic, and the hearer interprets it in that light (Warren, 1992). With euphemism being so entwined with context, however, classification of a term as 'euphemistic' becomes difficult. It should be remembered, however, that even within the 'context' objective euphemism classification is a grey area, and judgments may differ from person to person. The main aim of this part of a research is to study the structural and semantic features of political euphemisms applying B. Warren's model. The model will be examined and the categories suggested by this model will be tested against political euphemisms collected from the last three years' *The Guardian* newspaper. This model had been applied only to fiction, i.e. to sexual euphemisms found in some literary works. Thus, the current work is the first attempt to apply it to political euphemisms. Since the meanings of the euphemisms under analysis in the MA paper have already been examined, we will not go deep into the meanings but will classify the euphemisms according to the word building strategies and semantic origin.

Below is the application of Warren's model to the political euphemisms, which had come into the focus in the previous chapter, in order to analyse their structural features.

i) Word formation devices.

1) Compounding: *spin doctor; extrajudicial execution; inflammatory language; undocumented worker; collateral damage; ethnic cleansing; armed struggle; humanitarian intervention; extraordinary rendition; protective custody; fellow traveller; redistribution of wealth; urban renewal; faith-based initiative; surgical strike; tax relief; regime change; blame game; conspiracy theory; secure facility; correctional facility; enemy combatant; sectarian violence; U-turn; lightning rod; banana skin; Buggin's turn; fact-finding mission; to go native; crossfire;*

lame duck; loose cannon; pork-barrel; special relationship; fat cat; friendly fire; full and frank discussions; anti-personnel weapons; tiny minority.

2) Derivation: *anti-fascist; anti-Islamic; blow-in; counter-revolution; deselect; disinvestment; disadvantaged; pro-choice; reprioritisation;*

3) Blends: *agitprop;*

4) Acronyms: *WMD; HIPC;*

5) Onomatopoeia: -----

The sub-category with the largest number of political euphemisms is compounding. According to Warren, compounding is a combination of two individually innocuous words which form a euphemism for an otherwise unacceptable term. In this case compounds are treated not as solid written words but collocations which usually consist of an adjective and a noun.

The sub-category of derivation contains a larger number of euphemisms which signals it to be a relatively frequent way of building political euphemisms. What Warren means by derivation is the modification of a foreign term to form a printable modern English word. The following presents a list of euphemisms which were formed on the basis of derivation:

- ***Anti-fascist*** (Prefixal derivation; Greek prefix 'anti-' meaning against, opposing; Italian 'fascista' meaning a person who believes in or sympathizes with fascism).
- ***Anti-islamic*** (Prefixal derivation; Greek prefix 'anti-' meaning against, opposing; Arabic 'islam' meaning submission to God);
- ***Blow – in*** (Postfixal derivation; a derivative consisting of a word form 'blow' and the adverb '-in');
- ***Counter-revolution*** (Prefixal derivation; a translation of French, 'contre revolution ');
- ***Deselect*** (Prefical derivation; Latin prefix 'de' occurring in loanwords from Latin used to indicate removal and Latin *sēlēctus* meaning to gather, to choose.)
- ***Disinvestment*** (Prefixal derivation; Latin prefix 'dis' meaning having a negative or reversing force; Latin 'investire' meaning to install, invest money; '-ment' is a suffix of nouns);
- ***Disadvantaged*** (Suffixal derivation; French 'desavantage'; 'ed' is a suffix forming participial adjectives indicating a condition or quality);
- ***Pro- choice*** (Prefixal derivation; Latin prefix 'prō' meaning 'in favour of' and a word 'choice');

- **Reprioritization** (Prefixal derivation; Latin prefix 're-' meaning again; French 'priorite' ; '-ation' is a suffix forming nouns of action);

It can be noted that not all the above listed political euphemisms fit Warren's understanding of derivation. As it has already been mentioned, derivation is the modification of foreign term according to Warren. However, the euphemism *blow-in* does not contain any foreign affix or stem but it can still be assigned to the sub-category of derivation, because derivation involves adding affixes (non-independent) to existing lexemes, whereby the addition of the affix derives a new lexeme. The prevailing type of derivation of political euphemisms is prefixal derivation.

Warren gives no examples nor does she relate how 'blend' euphemisms may be formed. In psycholinguistics, the term 'blend' is used when "two words are amalgamated into one," (Aitchison 1994), for example, 'not in the sleast' where 'sleat' is a blend of 'slightest' and 'least' (Aitchison, 1989). In this field, such phenomena are examples of selection errors, i.e. when a speaker fails to choose between two candidate words and blends them into one, but blends may occur intentionally, such as 'brunch' (breakfast/lunch). However, these examples are not euphemistic in nature. It is evident how 'blends' may arise, but there was only one political euphemism found which could go under the sub-category of 'blends'. A candidate blend may be a euphemism agitprop which is a blend of the words 'agitation' and 'propaganda'.

A sub-category with only two constituents is acronyms. According to the strictest definition of an acronym, only abbreviations that are pronounced as words qualify as such. However, opinions differ on what constitutes an acronym: Merriam-Webster says that an acronym is just "a word formed from the initial letters of a multi-word name"(www.merriam-webster.com). Thus, *WMD* (weapons of mass destruction) and *HIPC* (heavily indebted poor countries) could be attributed to the sub-category of 'acronyms'. Only two examples of acronyms prove this way of building political euphemisms to be not very common.

Speaking about structural features and word-formation devices of political euphemisms, the noticeable quality is that the sub-category of onomatopoeia is empty which may be due to the fact that onomatopoeia is more specific to informal style texts and is the result of some kind of frivolity with words resulting in unusual sound combinations. The rejection of onomatopoeia as a means of forming political euphemisms, forces us to think that political texts tend to be serious, i.e. without any signs of playfulness.

The second category in Warren's structural classification is phonemic modification.

ii) Phonemic modification.

- 1) Back slang: -----
- 2) Rhyming slang: -----
- 3) Phonemic replacement: -----
- 4) Abbreviation: -----

The second category of 'phonemic modification' is empty which may mean that it is not typical of political euphemisms to be formed by means of back slang, rhyming slang, phonetic replacement or abbreviation. The rejection of 'phonemic modification' as means of creating political euphemisms may mean that political texts are still very serious and formal texts which do not welcome any slang, phonemic replacement or abbreviations. Although B. Warren treats abbreviation as one of the means of creating euphemisms, it raises a lot of doubts whether an abbreviation could serve as a euphemism, because, for instance, the use of the word 'demo' instead of 'demonstration' does not make this issue less painful.

The third category is that of 'loan words'.

iii) Loan words.

- 1) French: *detainee; gaffe; demonstration; restraint.*
- 2) Latin: -----
- 3) Other languages: -----

In the category of 'loan words' the sub-categories of 'the Latin language' and 'the other languages' is empty which implies that there are not any political euphemisms borrowed from these languages. However, the sub-category of 'the French language' contains four euphemisms *detainee, gaffe, demonstration, and restraint* which proves that there are a lot of French words in the English language and political euphemisms are not an exception. At the same time a very limited number of political euphemisms which are borrowed from the French language show that it is not a frequent way of forming new political euphemisms in the English language.

The last category is the category of 'semantic innovation', which deals with semantic base of the origin of euphemisms. Below is the application of Warren's model to political euphemisms in order to analyse this feature (the same euphemisms are subjected to the analysis):

iv) Semantic innovation.

- 1) Particularisation and 2) Implication: *demonstration; cut; restraint; U-turn; disadvantaged.*
- 3) Metaphor: *spin doctor; ethnic cleansing; extraordinary rendition; surgical strike; leak; lightning rod; banana skin; blow-in; Buggin's turn; to doorstep; fact-finding mission; freeze; go*

native; crossfire; hang sb.out to dry; lame duck; loose cannon; pork-barrel; axis of evil; special relationship; fat cat; extrajudicial execution; collateral damage; tax relief, blame game.

4) Metonymy: -----

5) Reversal: *friendly fire; full and frank discussion; anti-personnel weapons; law and order; economical with the truth; to close loopholes;*

6) Understatement: or 'litotes': *tiny minority;*

7) Overstatement: or 'hyperbole': -----

The category of semantic innovation is the largest one as it consists of seven sub-categories. The sub-categories of 'particularisation' and 'implication' can be easily confused because Warren does not provide a clear distinction between these sub-categories and that is why we tend to treat it as one sub-category. In the case of 'particularisation' Warren points out that a general term is used, which is required to be 'particularised' within the context to make sense, whereas in the case of 'implication' several steps are required to reach the intended meaning. Warren warns against possible misinterpretation of this type of euphemism, though it seems this could occur with many examples of 'semantic innovation'. Under the sub-category of 'particularisation' and 'implication' five euphemisms can be attributed, namely *demonstration, cut, restraint, U-turn, and disadvantaged* because the general words are used whose meanings can be found out only in the context. For example:

- At the end of last year there were lively street **demonstrations** and occupations of student union buildings in Bristol (guardian.co.uk, 1 May 2011).

From this situation we understand that *a demonstration* here is not a conclusive mathematical proof or a method of teaching by example rather than simple explanation but it is a protest.

- The changes, which the foreign secretary will present to the Commons, are a response to the 10% **cut** in the Foreign Office's resources imposed in last year's comprehensive spending review, and to changes in the global power (guardian.co.uk, 11 May 2011).

This example shows that *a cut* is not passage made by digging or probing, a haircut or an insult but it is a reduction in the size of the increase desired or expected by the recipient, which is obvious only from the context.

In the following examples the meanings of the words are only clear when they are particularized in the context. *Restraint* in this case refers to an attempt to limit wage increases but it is not a recession or loss of freedom which are also possible meanings. In the case of *U-turn*, it is not a turn made by a vehicle in the shape of a U, resulting in a reversal of direction but it is rather a complete change in direction of political or other policy. For example:

- MPs were a special case because successive governments of both parties rarely found the courage to brave public wrath by raising backbench salaries at a time of wage *restraint* (guardian.co.uk, 7 January 2011).
- People that accuse me of doing a *U-turn* think I can behave as if I had won a landslide (guardian.co.uk, 2 May 2011).

Finally, the meaning of *disadvantaged* is understood only in the context. The *disadvantaged* is a generic term for individuals or groups of people who: face special problems such as physical or mental disability, lack money or economic support, are without power or other means of influence. In the following example we can clearly observe that *disadvantaged* is a euphemism for poor people:

- I think you need to think about how you say to local councils [that] the cuts they are making are disproportionate, they are hurting *disadvantaged* communities (guardian.co.uk, 14 February 2011).

The largest group is that of 'metaphor' with the largest number of political euphemisms which implies that most political euphemisms are based on metaphorical transfer. Metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them, whereas a metaphorical transfer is a process that transfers meaning from one word or phrase to another or is made up of the other.

It can be clearly seen that the subcategories of 'metonymy' and 'overstatement' are empty which implies that these are not typical semantic features of political euphemisms. Under the subcategory of 'overstatement' or 'litotes' there is only one euphemism *tiny minority*. Understatement is "a figure of speech in which a writer or speaker deliberately makes a situation seem less important or serious than it is"(about.com). It is also important to note that "it can be used to entertain or reduce the importance of the truth" (usingenglish.com). Having this in mind, it can be claimed that the usage of the euphemism *tiny minority* makes the situation less important as in the example presented below where the importance of the independent Liberals in the new House of Commons is diminished due to the emergence of the euphemism:

- The independent Liberals were reduced to a *tiny minority* in the new House of Commons (guardian.co.uk, 11 Aug 2010).

The sub-category of 'reversal' or 'irony' is relatively large as it contains six political euphemisms. Irony is "a figure of speech in which an expression means something the opposite of or very contrary to its literal meaning" (about.com). Warren claims that in the case of a

'reversal' or 'irony', a euphemism enables reference to something bad by using opposites. Thus, the political euphemisms such as *friendly fire*, *full and frank discussion*, *anti-personnel weapons*, *law and order*, *economical with the truth* and *to close loopholes* fit under this category because these euphemisms refer to something bad by using the opposites. Having a look at each euphemism separately would be helpful:

- ***Friendly fire*** (a fire cannot be friendly because it results in death or injury which proves that this is 'irony' because the opposites 'friendly' and 'fire' are used to refer to inadvertent firing towards one's own or otherwise friendly forces while attempting to engage enemy forces, particularly where this results in injury or death.)
- ***Full and frank discussion*** (this euphemism means *an argument*, i.e. the opposites 'discussion' and 'argument' are used which proves it to be an 'irony'.)
- ***Anti-personnel weapons*** (literally, it seems that these are weapons which are meant not to cause people's death as they are 'anti-personnel.' On the contrary, it is a euphemism for weapons which cause people's death and in which buildings are allowed to survive.)
- ***Law and order*** (literally, law and order refer to good features of a society. However, it is a euphemism for social and political repression which means it is a 'reversal' because the euphemism means the opposite of its literal meaning.)
- ***Economical with the truth*** (it is a euphemism for a liar which is obvious that it is an 'irony' because the literal meaning implies the opposite meaning.)
- ***To close loopholes*** (it is a euphemism for increasing taxes which is a reversal for a literal meaning of closing loopholes.)

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the political euphemisms that are used in the English newspapers and analyse their semantic and structural features. The research question, which was to be answered in the present study, was: what political euphemisms are used in the current English newspapers and what are their underlying semantic and structural features? The research question was based and illustrated while analysing 70 political euphemisms found in the last three years' *The Guardian* newspaper.

The results of the research have shown that the usage of euphemisms was characteristic of political texts which implies that politicians cover up the true nature of political events, deceiving the public with nice-sounding words. However, a number of euphemisms was relatively limited.

Nine fields of political articles in which euphemisms are found were distinguished:

1. Articles on civil and public services policy;
2. Articles on welfare;
3. Articles of trade union issues;
4. Articles on tax and spending issues;
5. Articles on economic policy;
6. Articles on election issues
7. Articles on defence policy;
8. Articles of terrorism policy;
9. Articles on political parties issues.

The analysis showed that the articles on political party issues and politicians contain the vast majority of political euphemisms which may imply that politicians are strongly inclined to use euphemistic language when discussing various issues within the political parties or giving speeches. On the contrary, articles on civil and public services policy showed the lowest number of political euphemisms which may imply that politicians tend to speak quite explicitly on these subjects.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed that political euphemisms perform five pragmatic functions: politeness, taboo, covering up, inducing, and tactical. The most frequent pragmatic function performed by political euphemisms was a covering up function which proves that the main aim of euphemisms is to hide the unpleasant reality by using more positive and acceptable words. The least frequent pragmatic function performed by political euphemisms was an inducing

function which is probably more typical to advertisement and sales promotion activities not to political ones.

Regarding structural features, the most frequent structural feature of political euphemisms in terms of formation was compounding which means it is the most frequent way of building political euphemisms in terms of their structure. The second most frequent structural feature was derivation and the most frequent type of derivation of political euphemisms was prefixal derivation. It turned out that no political euphemism fit under the category of phonemic modification and sub-category of onomatopoeia which signals that these are not typical means of forming political euphemisms. Thus, the rejection of onomatopoeia and different types of phonemic modification as a means of building political euphemisms may mean that contemporary political texts tend to be serious, i.e. without any signs of playfulness. Moreover, the sub-category of blends was represented by only one euphemism *agitprop* and the sub-category of abbreviations consisted of two euphemisms, namely *WMD* (weapons of mass destruction) and *HIPC* (heavily indebted poor countries). In addition, the category of loan words was also poorly represented having only four French borrowings *detainee*, *gaffe*, *demonstration*, and *restraint*.

In terms of semantic innovation most euphemisms were based on metaphorical transfer which means it is the most frequent semantic feature of political euphemisms, whereas the sub-categories of metonymy and hyperbole remained empty which signals them to be not common ways of forming political euphemisms. The sub-categories of particularization, reversal, and understatement were poorly represented which implies that these are not typical structural features of political euphemisms. The sub-categories of particularization and implication overlapped and that is why they cannot be treated as two separate sub-categories of structural features.

SANTRAUKA

Šio darbo tikslas yra ištirti politinius eufemizmus, kurie yra naudojami 21-ojo amžiaus angliškuose laikraščiuose ir išanalizuoti jų semantinius bei struktūrinius bruožus. Tikslui pasiekti išskelti šie uždaviniai: ištirti teorijas ir mokslinius darbus, aprašančius eufemizmo sąvoką ir bruožus, identifikuoti politinius eufemizmus naudojamus šiandienos angliškuose laikraščiuose, sugrupuoti juos į klases pagal semantines temas bei išanalizuoti politinių eufemizmų struktūrinius ir semantinius bruožus. Atliekant tyrimą buvo naudojami aprašomasis metodas bei turinio analizė. Tyrimo metu nagrinėti 70 politinių eufemizmų, kurie buvo rasti paskutinių trijų metų internetiniame laikraštyje *The Guardian*. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad:

- politinių eufemizmų naudojimas yra būdingas politiniams tekstams, o tai reiškia, kad politikai slepia tikrąją politinių įvykių esmę ir klaidina visuomenę vartodami gražiai skambančius žodžius. Visgi eufemizmų skaičius buvo santykinai mažas. Vienas ir tas pats eufemizmas buvo rastas skirtingų semantinių temų straipsniuose.
- Daugiausia politinių eufemizmų buvo rasta straipsniuose apie politines partijas, o mažiausiai- straipsniuose apie civilinių ir viešųjų paslaugų politiką. Tai rodo, kad politikai yra linkę vartoti eufemistinę kalbą diskutuodami įvairiomis temomis politinėse partijose ir sakydami kalbas, o kalbėdami apie civilines ir viešąsias paslaugas politikai eufemizuoja rečiau.
- Eufemizmai atlieka penkias pragmatines funkcijas: mandagumo, tabu, paslėpimo, įtikinimo ir taktinę. Politiniai eufemizmai dažniausiai atlieka paslėpimo funkciją, o tai patvirtina, kad pagrindinis eufemizmų tikslas yra paslėpti nemalonią realybę naudojant pozityvesnius ir labiau priimtinius žodžius. Eufemizmai rečiausiai atlieka įtikinimo funkciją, kuri turbūt yra dažnesnė reklamose.
- Dažniausias politinių eufemizmų struktūrinis bruožas yra 'sudurtiniai žodžiai'. Antras pagal dažnumą politinių eufemizmų struktūrinis bruožas yra derivacija, o dažniausias derivacijos tipas yra priešdėlinė derivacija, tačiau nei vienam politiniam eufemizmui nėra būdinga foneminė modifikacija ir onomatopėja.
- Dažniausias politinių eufemizmų semantinis bruožas yra metaforinis perkėlimas, o metonimija ir hiperbolė nėra dažni būdai sudarant politinius eufemizmus.

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