



EUPHEMIZATION IN LEGAL TEXTS: LINGUISTIC AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES

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Abstract. The present article examines the linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of euphemistic expressions in legal texts. Euphemization is regarded as an important linguistic strategy that contributes to maintaining neutrality, protecting human dignity, and ensuring ethical communication within legal discourse. The study analyzes the functions of euphemisms in legislative documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan and compares them with internationally accepted legal terminology. The findings indicate that euphemistic expressions in legal language are not merely stylistic devices but also reflect the principles of human rights, political correctness, and legal precision. The research employs descriptive, comparative, and discourse analysis methods to identify the communicative functions of euphemization in legal documents.

Keywords: euphemism, legal discourse, legal language, legislation, pragmatics, semantics, legal linguistics, political correctness.

Introduction

Language serves as one of the fundamental instruments for regulating social relations. Legal language, in particular, is characterized by precision, objectivity, and consistency. Every lexical item used in legal documents carries legal significance; therefore, the selection of linguistic forms is of paramount importance. Despite the requirement for accuracy, legal texts frequently employ euphemistic expressions to avoid offensive, discriminatory, or emotionally charged language while preserving legal certainty.

Euphemism has been defined as the substitution of an unpleasant or socially unacceptable expression with a more acceptable or neutral one (Allan & Burridge, 1991). In legal discourse, euphemization performs not only a stylistic function but also an ethical and pragmatic one by promoting respect for individuals and protecting their dignity. Contemporary legislation increasingly adopts person-first language and politically neutral terminology in accordance with international human rights standards.

The Concept of Euphemization in Legal Discourse

Legal discourse represents one of the most formal varieties of language. Unlike literary or conversational language, legal texts require terminological precision while simultaneously addressing socially sensitive issues. Consequently, euphemistic expressions are carefully selected to avoid stigmatization without compromising legal clarity.



For instance, the expression **"person with a disability"** has replaced the earlier term **"disabled person"** in many legal systems following the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This linguistic shift emphasizes the individual before the disability and reflects the principle of respect for human dignity. Similarly, legal documents often prefer expressions such as **"deprivation of liberty"** instead of **"imprisonment,"** or **"termination of employment"** instead of **"dismissal"**, because these expressions are considered more neutral and legally precise.

Functions of Euphemisms in Legal Language

The analysis demonstrates that euphemisms perform several communicative functions within legal discourse:

- protecting human dignity;
- ensuring politically neutral language;
- reducing discriminatory implications;
- increasing legal precision;
- harmonizing domestic legislation with international legal standards.

From a pragmatic perspective, euphemization contributes to effective communication between lawmakers and society by minimizing emotional connotations while maintaining legal authority.

Examples of Euphemization in Legal Texts

Traditional Expression	Euphemistic Expression	Communicative Function
Disabled person	Person with a disability	Person-first language
Prison	Deprivation of liberty	Legal precision
Mental patient	Person with a mental health condition	Respectful terminology
Fired	Termination of employment	Administrative neutrality

The table illustrates that euphemistic expressions in legal language are motivated not only by politeness but also by the necessity to ensure legal objectivity and conformity with international legal standards.

Pragmatic Analysis

The pragmatic function of euphemization lies in shaping the recipient's perception of legal norms. Modern legislation avoids lexical items that may contain negative emotional or discriminatory connotations. Instead, legislators employ neutral terminology that supports equality and non-discrimination.





For example, Uzbek legislation regulating the rights of persons with disabilities consistently uses the expression **"person with a disability,"** reflecting the principles established by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Such terminology demonstrates that legal language evolves alongside social values and international legal norms.

Furthermore, euphemistic expressions facilitate legal communication by balancing precision with ethical responsibility. They reduce potential social stigmatization while preserving the normative force of legislative provisions.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that euphemization constitutes an essential linguistic feature of contemporary legal discourse. Rather than functioning solely as a stylistic device, euphemistic language contributes to protecting human dignity, ensuring neutrality, and promoting inclusive legal communication. Modern legal systems increasingly replace stigmatizing or emotionally loaded expressions with person-centered terminology consistent with international human rights standards.

The findings suggest that euphemization reflects broader social and legal transformations aimed at strengthening equality, non-discrimination, and respect for individual rights. Therefore, further interdisciplinary research combining linguistics, pragmatics, and legal studies is necessary to explore the evolving role of euphemistic language in legislative drafting.

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