

Analysis on Linguistic Features and Cultural Connotation of English Euphemism

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Abstract: Euphemism is actually an alternative, that is, people use relatively sloppy, elegant words to express jealous, inconvenient, vulgar things. There are a large number of euphemisms in English and Chinese. By comparing and analyzing euphemisms in different fields, such as old age, death, poverty, and occupation, in these two languages, it can be seen that although euphemism is a common phenomenon in various languages, and the social customs, historical development, and culture of China and the West is different. There are obvious differences in many aspects such as traditions and values. It is reflected that the use of euphemisms and cultural connotations are not the same. Euphemism faithfully reflects the cultural characteristics of a nation.

1. Introduction

Language as a tool of communication is a social phenomenon, that is, language, society and culture are closely related. Due to the social nature of language activities, language has rich social functions. In interpersonal communication, people swear about certain things, but they can't completely avoid them in verbal communication. Therefore, the expression of embarrassing, that is, euphemism, came into being. The English word "euphemism" is derived from Greek, the prefix "eu" means "good" (good), and the stem "phemism" means "speech", the whole literal meaning is "words of goodomen" or "good speech". That is to say, euphemism is an appropriate form of linguistic expression created by people in socialugly words with vague, elegant, and eloquent expressions, which avoids hurting others' feeling interaction for ideal communicative effect. In general, euphemism replaces direct, vulgar, and s and self-esteem by speaking directly, and avoids embarrassment. It is an embarrassing situation, so euphemism can act as a lubricant in interpersonal communication. For example, people are taboo about talking about diseases. When it comes to someone who has cancer, he will euphemistically say: He has long (terminal) illness. He has got the big C. instead of saying straight forwardly: He Has got cancer. There are many new euphemisms in the education world, that isuse "positive language" to evaluate students, and to talk about students with poor grades (below average student): He is working at his level (he is learning at his own level); a lazy student is called "underachiever" (a student who fails to reach his full potential). These expressions will not hurt the students' self-esteem and will not sound harsh. In Chinese, people in the sericulture industry are most afraid of the silkworms, so the "temperature gauge" becomes the "cold and hot table"; the "inconvenient legs and feet" is used to describe people suffering from polio. It can be seen that euphemisms are common in various languages and are widely used in all aspects of life, such as politics, economy, culture, and religion. Euphemism, an important part of vocabulary, is closely related to social culture as it emerges. It is like a mirror that clearly reflects the cultural characteristics of language. That is, euphemism reflects a culture or a society's values or inspects psychology from one aspect.

2. Euphemism reflects the cultural characteristics of the nation

Although aging is a natural law, people are reluctant to face such facts. Especially in Western countries, people are afraid of being old and avoiding talking about old age. The word "old" is unacceptable. This is closely related to the relationship between family members in Western society. Becoming their children are generally self-reliant after they grow up. Families of three generations

are extremely rare, and the relationship between family members is independent. The cultivation of independent consciousness can be said to begin in childhood. From an early age, children have their own rooms, and they are responsible for their actions. Parents encourage their children to be self-reliant after they enter college. In this way, when parents are old, they can only move to the "retirement communities" or "old people's homes" to accompany other elderly people, or to be sent to nursing homes. The children have almost no contact with the elderly parents. Not to mention taking care of them. "old" means loneliness and desolateness in old age. Therefore, English euphemisms in the ages are endless. Neaman points out: "No one in America, for example, is old. The elderly is seasoned (experienced), well -preserved (well maintained), elder statesmen (political veteran) who a re praised for being longer living" (1990: 166). They are "senior citizen" (elderly) who are stepping into "golden years" (the golden age), not the coveted year. Although contemporary China adopts the one-child policy, there are still a large number of extended families in the three generations. From the perspective of cultural traditions, Confucianism advocates that people should dear to each other in order to maintain the harmony of interpersonal relationships. The relationship between Chinese family members is complementary, that is, you raise me, I will raise you. Children want to live with their parents, parents are happy to look after their children and grandchildren, and a family of three generations shares the joy of being together. Complementarity also reflects filial piety and courtesy. According to the traditional Confucian point of view, respecting the elderly and respecting the elderly, society respecting the elderly is China's fine traditions and virtues, so people are not old, and often use old mutual names to express respect, such as Wang Lao, Lao Zhang and so on. In fact, the word "old" in China is often used to euphemistically express "senior experience". Such as master, boss, etc. These words do not have a specific age connotation, but just to express the respect of the speaker. Therefore, euphemisms about "old" in Chinese are extremely rare.

3. Cultural Connotation of English Euphemism

Euphemism is a mirror that reflects social psychology. In daily life, people are afraid of talking about the words "old", "dead", "illness" and "fat", which reflects people's fear of "old", "dead", "illness" and "fat". Avoiding mentioning them is just because of fear. Therefore, euphemistic words can be used to avoid displeasure to others or yourself. For example, Americans like to use the term "adult" to refer to the old, and the elderly can also be called senior citizen or elderly people, the elderly, etc. In addition, the expression related to the elderly is home for adults (an elderly home), an adult community. These reflect the mentality of the elderly in the United States who are afraid of aging. Similarly, for "death," people always use devious words to express. Many euphemisms expressing "death" have arisen. Common sayings are "pass away (death)", to fall asleep, go to heaven, be gone to a better world, to be with God (with God) Wait. Certain diseases are also often expressed in euphemism. For cancer, people don't say cancer directly, they use big C instead. Using mental home instead of mental hospital, home sounds warmer and more intimate than hospital. Stroke (stroke) can be said to be accident. In addition, because one of the thorny problems in Western society is the current widespread AIDS, people describe sexually transmitted diseases as social diseases. It sounds less serious. Today, obesity has become a major worry for Western civilization because of overnutrition. Obesity not only affects health, but also affects beauty. To avoid swearing, the fat man is called weight-watcher. Some people are obese, not fat, but overweight (overweight) plump or stout, which are more pleasant. In contemporary American society, people's ideas are reflected in people's words and deeds. Taking the profession as an example, people have decentralized the "lower" occupations in the traditional sense because of various prejudices and other prejudices, so there have been many euphemisms that express occupations. The euphemistic way of expressing a profession is to beautify the ugly and harsh profession, making it sound comfortable and pleasing to the ear. This is also the main reason for the emergence of many professional euphemisms. If the dust man sounds uncomfortable, it is replaced by a sanitary engineer. Maid (maid) was beautified as a domestic help, and even a housewife without any occupation was also known as the house executive. This way of expressing occupation is to use analogy to compare analogy and raise people's status. Even butter (butcher) also raises his

worth by the name of meat technologist (meat technologist).

The emergence and use of euphemism is inextricably linked to the code of conduct of a particular society, and each society has its own code of conduct. Which of them are reasonable are sensible, and clearly stated, but most of them are customary. In communication, people try to use euphemism to express things related to reproduction, excretion, privacy, etc., and avoid using vulgar words. In the Victorian era, women could not call the names of certain parts of the body. If a woman accidentally uses the words like breast and thigh, people will be stunned. In order to avoid swearing, the human breast is called bosom and the thigh is leg. For the same reason, the muscles of the chest and legs of animals must also be expressed in euphemism. If you are a guest at an Anglo-American home, the hostess may ask you if you cut the roast chicken: "Would you like dark meat or white meat?" Maybe you will know what it is, and it is difficult to answer. It turned out that the hostess was asking if you want chicken or chicken breast. Here dark meat refers to chicken legs, while white meat refers to chicken breast, without words such as breast or leg. Westerners regard "convenience" as the privacy of secret people, and use concealed words to express them. The most typical example of this is the various expressions of the toilet. The United Kingdom and the United States also have different expressions. The names of the toilets commonly used by the British are ladies' (originally a woman, referred to as a women's toilet, considered to be the most common and elegant euphemism, and no distinction of honor); corresponding to the gentlemen (original is Mr., referred to the male toilet). The name of the toilet commonly used by Americans is the Jane (originally the female name Jenny, referred to as the female toilet); and the John (originally refers to the man named John, refers to the male toilet. The most frequently used in the United States is the washroom (originally meant the restroom), refers to the toilet.) The most common euphemism used to express toilets in European countries is WC (water closet). Similarly, there are many ways to express the toilet, such as wait a minute, do one's business, visit the necessary, I'm going to spend a penny, etc. In American spoken language, people often say visit john to do No .1 job (stool), visit john to do No .2 job (stool), etc. Excreta is usually expressed in euphemisms such as body refuse and human products.

English euphemism is inseparable from Western political life. There are many inconsistencies in the political life of Western society, which reverses the phenomenon of black and white. Euphemism has the function of avoiding, concealing and beautifying. Therefore, some politicians use euphemism to cover up some social crimes and political ugliness. Under this role, euphemism becomes the disguise of Western politics. As a result, the political life of Western society has become a party that breeds political euphemism. Euphemisms in the social and political spheres of Britain and the United States are everywhere today, and they are endless. It is clearly poor (poor), but called needy, and renamed culturally deprived, then changed to underprivileged, and finally becomes disadvantaged. After this series of changes, we can't see the shadow of poverty in this society, as if even a poor person is gone. The recession is said to be an adjustment downward.

4. Conclusion

In daily communication, people inevitably talk about some embarrassing, hard-to-talk taboo, and it will hurt others' self-esteem. In order to achieve better expression, people use implicit and polite euphemisms. As a common linguistic phenomenon, euphemism is closely related to specific historical and cultural traditions. In the intercultural communication, the use of euphemism exists objectively. Because of the obvious differences between Chinese and Western social customs, historical development, cultural traditions, values, etc., the usage of euphemism are not the same. To understand euphemism, you must understand the culture of the corresponding nation. Only through culture can you grasp the meaning of euphemism more clearly and accurately. In addition, with the development of society, euphemisms will continue to be innovated and new euphemisms reflecting the changes in the values of various ethnic groups will be generated. It can be seen that the cultural information carried by euphemism embodies the cultural characteristics of the nation. Only by mastering the true meaning of euphemism and its purpose of use can it promote the smooth progress of communicative activities.

References

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