

IKS-FEMISMS OR EUPHEMISMS, DYSFEMISMS, SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATIONS OF ORTHOFEMISMS DIFFERENTIATION

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a modern analysis of X-phemistic units (euphemisms, dysphemisms, and orthophemisms) within the framework of the anthropocentric paradigm, which has emerged in recent years as a dominant methodological approach in linguistics. The anthropocentric perspective, which interprets language as a reflection of human cognition, psychology, culture, and social relations, enables an in-depth exploration of the functional-semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, and linguocultural features of X-phemistic expressions.

The article also examines aspects of social censorship, political correctness, and expressiveness in speech, emphasizing how X-phemistic units serve as linguistic tools for expressing social relationships and emotional states. In conclusion, the study outlines future directions for investigating X-phemisms in the context of digital communication, neurolinguistics, and comparative linguistics.

Keywords: X-phemisms, euphemism, dysphemism, orthophemism, anthropocentric paradigm, functional semantics, stylistic features, pragmatics, linguoculture, social censorship, political correctness, expressiveness, digital communication, neurolinguistics, comparative linguistics.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the anthropocentric paradigm, which has emerged as one of the priority methodological areas in linguistics, implies the study of language as an integral part of human thinking, culture and psychological activity. Within the framework of this approach, language is not only interpreted as a means of communication, but also as an incarnation of societal values, social changes and moral and aesthetic criteria. It is from this perspective that ix-femic units (i.e., euphemism, dysfemism, and orthopedicism) have become one of the most pressing topics in the analysis of the relationship between language and society.

The development of new directions such as linguistic pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, and linguistic culturology, closely related to the anthropocentric paradigm, makes it possible to conduct a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis of iks-femic units. With the help of these approaches, the semantic, stylistic, and sociocultural functions of language units are revealed more clearly. Therefore, today, x-femic units are being studied not only as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a cultural and intellectual phenomenon.

Language development is inextricably linked with the needs, social processes and communicative situations in society. In this respect, X-femic units indicate the dynamic nature of language, its ability to adapt to socio-cultural changes, and its role in the formation of new semantic-psychological tools. Through them, topics important in society (for example, death,

illness, political criticism, sexism, etc.) are expressed by linguistic means and what stylistic assessment these tools receive.

In the process of speech, the speaker often takes a more selective approach when choosing a word, depending on the communicative situation, the content of the audience or the subtleties of the topic of conversation. In some cases, this caution leads to the choice of a milder (euphemic) form of the word, while in other cases, dysphemic units that are used as an expression of sarcasm, criticism, or hatred dominate. In this way, these units, which define stylistic functions in speech, are analyzed in linguistics within the framework of iks-femic units.

Therefore, not only linguistic, but also extralinguistic factors – that is, social context, culture, psychological condition, moral norms – play an important role in the study of iks-femic units. Taking into account these factors, the analysis lays the ground for a deeper study of this phenomenon in modern paradigms of linguistics.

In some sources, it is noted that the interest in iks-femic units, as well as information about them, is found in the works of Democritus, Plato, and Aristotle as early as antiquity [O.M. Freidenberg, 1936: 336]. Scholars of antiquity began with the study of euphemisms and divided them into different categories as a linguistic phenomenon. In particular, Aristotle interpreted euphemisms as a kind of metaphor, while the famous ancient Roman oratorical master Cicero (1st century BC) called such words *verba tecta*, i.e. 'closed/hidden words', in the eyes of the famous Roman orator, linguist Quintilian, who lived in the 1st century AD, a euphemism or words with an indirect, implicit meaning is not simply a word change, Perhaps allegory is a special kind of art of saying one thing and referring to another. Writers and speakers of the English Renaissance used euphemisms not only as a means of ornamental language, but as a means of expressing a painful truth with goodness, salvation, and spiritual relief.

The term "euphemism," a form of x-femic units, is thought to have first been introduced into a dictionary in the mid-17th century. In particular, in his 1656 dictionary *Glossographia: Or, A Dictionary Interpreting All Such Hard Words Of Whatever Language, Now Used In Our Refined English Language*, the concept was interpreted as follows: "Euphemism (euphemism) – a good or favourable interpretation of a bad word" (i.e., "a euphemism is a better or more convenient interpretation of a bad word) [Blaunt T., 1965: 677].

However, euphemisms in linguistics as an independent scientific object began to be studied relatively late in the late 19th century. The first scientist to study euphemisms within the framework of semantic analyses as one of the main forms of meaning-shifting such as metaphor and metonymy, which has a special scientific status, was the German researcher G. Paul [H. Paul, 1880].

In the 19th century, euphemisms were first studied by ethnographers mainly in relation to the phenomenon of taboo, and such scientific research is based on various religious beliefs and cultural views. From ancient times, people believed that touching certain things or doing certain actions would provoke the wrath of supernatural forces, or that these actions would cause some kind of misfortune. Similarly, saying certain words leads to a certain incompetence, and there is a ban on saying them. Cases of taboos associated with words are

common among different peoples of the world, they were studied by the famous English theologian and ethnologist James Fraser, who divided them into two main groups:

1. Honorary titles (names of living and deceased people, relatives, gods, rulers and other sacred persons);

2. Common names (event and thing names).

In Fraser's view, at the root of the taboo associated with the word also lies a fear based on the same magic or ritual. The use of euphemisms in such cases allowed people to speak about events that were considered dangerous and terrible without directly mentioning them and without provoking the forces of darkness. Another French ethnographer, Antoine Maya, interpreted the euphemism and taboo as a form of language adaptation to social censorship and moral norms, while the Russian scientist D.K. Zelenin believed that hiding **or substituting a word or name** (for example, to avoid the enemy's attention) **is a linguistic means of defense** [Zelenin D. K. 1929:151]. Dysfemisms, on the other hand, began to be studied relatively later, unlike euphemisms. The phenomenon of dysfememism was first noted in linguistics in 1927 by Albert Carnois, who described the concept as a ridiculous, vulgar form of expression [A.J. Carnoy, 1927:256]. Carnois's definition suggests that the main features of dysfemism — that is, the use of oral speech as a lexical device used to insult, sarcasm, or underestimate someone — are used. In this way, dysfememism takes shape not only as a linguistic but also as a communicative and social tool, revealing the emotional attitude and speech strategy of the speaker.

Although by the twentieth century iks-femisms had become one of the main areas of lexicographic research, it became clear that the question of the study of ix-femic units was controversial and that it was difficult to establish criteria for clearly distinguishing them from slang, jargon, and other linguistic phenomena. The scope of scientific research in the study of euphemisms, dysphemys, and orthopedicisms has expanded, and scholars have begun to separately analyze the semiotic status, semantic features, stylistic and cultural functions of iks-femic units. At the same time, in distinguishing these phenomena, the personal attitude and communicative goal of the speaker as an important criterion are of special importance.

One of the first approaches to the systematic study of euphemisms in Russian linguistics is recognized in B.A.Larin's 1961 article "On Euphemisms" [B.A.Larin, 1961:111]. In it, the author substantiates the functional-semantic features, scope of application, and typological analysis of euphemisms. In subsequent years, dozens of interpretations and various classification approaches to iks-femic units were formed, among which structural, grammatical, semantic, and functional approaches are distinguished. While I.V.Arnold and D.N.Shmelyov analyzed euphemisms in lexical-semantic paradigms [I.V.Arnold, 2002:384; D.N.Shmelev, 1997:703], scientists such as O.S.Akhmanova, A.N.Rezanova, T.V.Matveyeva, L.V.Poroxnitskaya E.A.Raycheva paid special attention to the study of the stylistic, functional-semantic features of the opposite phenomenon of euphemisms [O.S.Akhmanova, 2004:576; A.N.Rezanova, 2008; T.V.Matveeva, 2010; L.V. Порохницкая, 2010; Е. А.Райчева, 2010]. It is worth noting that, in contrast to euphemisms, the phenomenon of dysfemism, its means and criteria for its use in speech, its functions, areas of use have been poorly studied, which requires a more in-depth analysis of the nature of dysfemisms from a scientific point of view. Relying on lexicographic sources to describe the concept of dysphemism, the Merriam–Webster

Dictionary states that dysphemism is the use of a negative, offensive, or offensive expression instead of a favorable or neutral word" (dysphemism: the substitution of a disagreeable, offensive, or disparaging expression for an agreeable or inoffensive one) [Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary. 2024, Dysphemism]. And Keith Allan and Kate Burridge assess dysfemism as a stylistic tool, a social phenomenon with pragmatic intentions. They analyze euphemism and dysfemism as two opposite poles of one system: "Dysfemism is not just a vulgar word, but a means of expressing social criticism, insult, or social distancing" [Allan, K., & Burridge, K., 2006]. Based on the above points, the Russian linguist A.N.Ryazanova in her Ph.D. thesis in philosophy entitled "Dysfemia v angliang'em yaz: semanticheskie mekhani i pragmaticske funktsii" studies dysphemisms not only from a semantic, but also from a pragmatic point of view, that is, it determines in what situation and for what social purposes words are used, and accordingly divides them into certain types (for example, illness, crime, moral deficiencies, words in religious categories, etc.) [A.N.Rezanova, 2008: 19.] Later, T.V. Matveyeva gives a broader definition of the term dysphemerism on the basis of a linguopragmatic approach. In her view, dysphemerism is "a form of expressing an emotional assessment that is demonstratively sharply expressed, replacing a stylistically neutral word or phrase with a coarse, low-stylistically level synonym" [T.V.Matveeva, 2010: 95]. This phenomenon is usually used in situations where certain social or cultural norms are expected to be followed in communication. At the same time, the main purpose of dysfemism is to discredit the interlocutor, humiliate him or express disrespect towards him. Matveyeva argues that the use of such a word violates important pragmatic principles in dialogue, namely Grays' postulates [Matveeva, 2010:96]. As a result, instead of sincerity in communication, a sarcastic and unassuming attitude is formed. This reaffirms that language is not just a means of information transmission, but a means of reflecting social and cultural norms.

Matveeva's definition shows the effect of dysfemism not only on the lexical level, but also on the social function and speech ethics in the communicative situation. This approach implies the need for an in-depth analysis of dysfemism, not only linguistically, but also pragmatically and psychologically. Some scholars analyze dysfemisms from a sociological point of view, describing them as a means of reflecting differences between social strata, groups, and even speech cultures [L.L. Nelyubin, 2003:48, E.V.Shishova, 2014: 76].

In general, x-femic units are studied as complex and multifaceted linguistic units. This is because the lack of a clear boundary between euphemic and dysphemic language units presents particular difficulties for scholars in studying them. For this reason, x-femic units are scientifically interpreted on the basis of different approaches that are interrelated.

Some scholars analyze iks-femic units by dividing them into three groups [K. Allan & K. Burridge, 2006; Husayn Abdo Raboboh, 2014; А.С.Дружинин, Т.А.Фомина, О.Г.Поляков, 2023; Л. В. Порохницкая, 2013]:

Euphemisms (euphemisms) – used to soften expressions that may sound awkward, unpleasant, rude or overly plain.

Dysfemisms (vulgar means) – usually used with the aim of reacting negatively, criticizing or causing a strong emotional impact.

Orthopedicisms (neutral units) – these units denote a neutral attitude towards a situation, do not have an emotional load, but through their use the speaker tries to construct a speech in a calm, non-judgmental tone [K. Allan & K. Burridge, 2006].

In the linguistic literature, the terms euphemism, dysfemism and orthopedicism are often used to distinguish stylistic categories, but there are different views on their relationship and limitations. Paying special attention to this issue, L.V. Porokhnitskaya considers these three units **as correferential concepts** — that is, synonyms that have the same meaning and manifest in different contexts as euphemisms, dysphemisms or orthopedics. As Porokhnitskaya points out, separating these units by clear and rigorous boundaries is often difficult or impossible, since their stylistic and pragmatic differences are more dependent on a variety of extralinguistic factors [Porokhnitskaya, 2010: 143]. Thus, they are not understood as independent categories, but in the form of a stylistic range adjacent to each other. The same approach was put forward by P.J. Chamizo Domínguez and F. Sánchez Benedito. Their research emphasizes that the boundary between euphemism and dysfemism is not clear, but that these units are interchangeable and contextual [Chamizo Domínguez, Sánchez Benedito, 1994]. These two scholars analyzed the expressive and pragmatic functions of words, showing that their meaning and stylistic loading can change constantly. For this reason, they feel it is better to treat them in the same stylistic circle, rather than distinguishing between euphemism and dysfemism by strict boundaries. These approaches help linguists to more clearly understand how language units function in a semantic and pragmatic context, and show the blurred boundaries between euphemism, dysphemism, and orthopedicism.

In contrast to the above considerations, another group of linguists prefer to study these units into two main groups [X. Kadyrova, 2024:77; I.R. Galperin, 1977; S. Ullman, 1962:208]. On the basis of such an approach, it is important that orthofemisms do not have a connotative coloring and do not reflect any stylistic attitude, and therefore it is considered inappropriate to include them in the list of units expressing an indefinite or negative or positive attitude. This approach encourages us to consider iks-femism not within the framework of stylistic continuity, but as a bipolar system separated on the basis of connotative property.

In one of the studies carried out in this regard in recent years, according to A.S. Druzhinin, T.A. Fomina and O.G. Polyakov, ix-femism (euphemism, dysfemism and orthofemism) makes it possible to understand units in linguistics not as a traditional semantic or stylistic category, but as a dynamic and contextual activity that expresses a person's feelings, social relations and personal experience through language [A.S. Druzhinin, Т.А.Фомина, О.Г.Поляков. 2023: 36-37]. The authors argue that the distinction between euphemism and dysfemism is not rigid and permanent, but varies depending on the context, as well as the state of the speaker, social and cultural circumstances.

In this context, politicization can be seen in the context of the **social-interactive function** of language. That is, speakers strive not to discriminate, not to discriminate against others, not to embarrass them by adapting their speech to the social norms and values that exist in society. According to the anthropocentric paradigm, the use of such language units is seen as a necessary tool not only for the effectiveness of communication, but also for ensuring social solidarity, cultural tolerance and mutual respect among people.

From the above studies it is clear that iks-femic units are:

- There are no clear boundaries between euphemisms, dysfemisms, and orthopedics, which are often seen as contiguous stylistic ranges;
- In linguistics, they are studied based on functional-semantic, stylistic, pragmatic, linguistic and anthropocentric approaches;
- modern areas of linguistics, such as linguistic pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, linguistics, etc., contribute to the comprehensive analysis of iks-femic units;
- plays an important role in the dynamics of language, adaptation to changes in society and the formation of new means of expression.

The study of X-femic units is expected to continue in the future in broader and more complex directions. In addition to traditional forms of verbal and written communication, the rapid development of digital communication creates the need to study iks-femas in a new environment. Therefore, future research will focus on the harmonization of linguistic and extralinguistic factors with a multidisciplinary and integrative character. In addition, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, neurolinguistic research, and scholarly research on the automatic identification, identification, and interpretation of ICS-FEMA in large volume of texts, particularly news feeds, are expected to increase. This serves to advance practical directions in the study of iks-femisms.

It is also likely that there will be an increase in theoretical research aimed at comparing ix-femisms in different languages through a comparative approach. Previous scientific results in the study of x-feminine units serve as a solid foundation for future research. As a result, the possibilities for a deeper understanding of the nature of iks-femism and to clearly distinguish it from other linguistic phenomena are expanded.

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