EUPHEMISMS IN MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION

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Annotation. This article investigates the role of euphemisms in media representations of diplomatic communication, focusing on how journalistic discourse reframes sensitive political issues. Euphemisms are frequently employed by the media when reporting on diplomatic negotiations, conflicts, or international crises to soften negative connotations and preserve neutrality. By analyzing newspaper articles, online reports, and televised broadcasts, the study demonstrates how euphemistic choices influence public perception of diplomatic events. Expressions such as "peacekeeping mission," "humanitarian intervention," and "collateral damage" are shown to reshape controversial actions into more acceptable narratives. From a linguopragmatic perspective, euphemisms function not only as stylistic devices but also as strategic communicative tools aligning with media ideology and political agendas. The findings emphasize the importance of euphemistic framing in shaping collective understanding of diplomacy and highlight the subtle power of language in international media discourse.

Keywords: euphemism, diplomacy, media discourse, pragmatics, ideology, communication, framing, negotiation.

Introduction. In contemporary global politics, media plays a central role in shaping public perception of diplomatic events and international relations. News outlets, whether traditional or digital, are not neutral conveyors of information but active participants in framing political realities. One of the most effective strategies they employ is the use of euphemisms—lexical substitutions that soften potentially negative or controversial meanings. In the context of diplomacy, euphemisms help journalists and commentators report on sensitive issues such as armed interventions, sanctions, or failed negotiations in ways that maintain neutrality and avoid inflaming public opinion. Euphemistic expressions such as "peacekeeping mission," "collateral damage," or "humanitarian intervention" illustrate how language transforms politically charged events into narratives that appear more acceptable to audiences. From a linguopragmatic perspective, euphemisms serve not only to mitigate face-threatening acts but also to align reporting with broader ideological agendas.

By embedding such lexical choices into media discourse, journalists indirectly influence how citizens interpret the legitimacy of diplomatic actions and the credibility of political actors[1]. Therefore, analyzing euphemisms in media representations of diplomatic communication is crucial for understanding how language operates as a subtle yet powerful tool of persuasion. This study seeks to uncover the mechanisms by which euphemistic framing shapes international discourse and public consciousness. The central role of euphemisms in media representations of diplomatic communication lies in their ability to reshape political realities through language. Media institutions, whether state-controlled or independent, are

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[1] Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (2006). Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language Used as Shield and Weapon. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 11–42, 96–118.

[2]tasked with reporting on events that are often controversial or politically sensitive, such as armed conflicts, economic sanctions, territorial disputes, and international negotiations.

Direct reporting of such issues can provoke negative reactions, threaten diplomatic relations, or undermine political authority. Consequently, euphemisms emerge as essential linguistic strategies that mediate between the need for truthful reporting and the obligation to maintain neutrality and respect diplomatic decorum. One of the most significant functions of euphemisms in media discourse is mitigation of conflict. When journalists use terms like "collateral damage" instead of "civilian casualties," or "military operation" instead of "invasion," they reduce the emotional impact of the message. Such linguistic substitutions diminish the severity of political actions and create space for audiences to accept controversial policies without outright rejection. This aligns with Allan and Burridge's (2006) argument that euphemisms serve as shields, protecting both speaker and hearer from potential discomfort. In diplomatic contexts, this shielding effect is crucial, as international relations often depend on avoiding face-threatening acts. A second dimension is the ideological framing of political events.

Euphemisms do not simply soften meanings but actively construct narratives that favor certain political agendas[3]. For instance, when the media adopts phrases such as "humanitarian intervention" or "peace enforcement," it transforms military aggression into an act of moral responsibility. In this way, euphemisms support ideological positioning, legitimizing actions that might otherwise be contested. As Wodak (2015) highlights, political discourse is never neutral but embedded in systems of power and ideology[4]. The media, by echoing euphemistic language, reinforces dominant narratives and guides public interpretation of diplomatic actions.

Table. Functions of euphemisms in media representations of diplomatic communication.

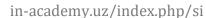| *Function*	Example Expression	Communicative Effect
Mitigation of conflict	"Collateral damage"	Reduces severity of civilian casualties
Ideological framing	"Humanitarian intervention"	Legitimizes military action as moral duty
Diplomatic courtesy	"Expressed reservations"	Maintains politeness in sensitive negotiations
Strategic ambiguity	"Constructive talks"	Leaves interpretation open for both sides

Euphemisms also play a role in maintaining diplomatic courtesy. Diplomatic communication values politeness, face-saving, and ambiguity. When reporting on conflicts between states, journalists frequently use softened terms to avoid exacerbating tensions. For

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[2] Beard, A. (2000). The Language of Politics. London: Routledge. pp. 35–62, 101–122.
[3] Charteris-Black, J. (2011). Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 56–78, 141–168.
[4] Kopytowska, M. (2015). Euphemisms in Political Discourse: A Pragmatic Perspctive. Journal of Language and Politics, 14(3), pp. 411–432.

example, instead of stating that a country "rejected" a peace proposal, media reports may claim that it "expressed reservations." This shift in wording not only reduces potential hostility but also allows diplomatic actors to continue negotiations without losing face[5]. Such practices demonstrate how euphemisms contribute pragmatically to sustaining dialogue and cooperation. Cross-cultural perspectives further illustrate the complexity of euphemistic usage. While an expression may appear neutral in one cultural context, it can be interpreted differently in another. For example, the euphemism "regime change" may be perceived in Western media as a politically technical term, but in other contexts it may carry stronger connotations of aggression or imperialism. This variation highlights the need for linguopragmatic analysis, which considers the cultural values and historical experiences of target audiences. Finally, euphemisms are not always tools of concealment; they can also function as strategic ambiguity that enables multiple interpretations.

In cases where diplomatic negotiations are ongoing, vague media phrasing such as "constructive talks" or "significant progress" allows both sides to claim partial success while leaving details unspecified. This ambiguity, while frustrating for audiences seeking clarity, serves the pragmatic goal of maintaining diplomatic balance[6]. Moreover, euphemisms in media representations of diplomatic communication operate at the intersection of language, ideology, and international relations. They mitigate conflict, frame political events ideologically, maintain diplomatic courtesy, and enable strategic ambiguity. By analyzing these functions, the study underscores the subtle power of euphemistic discourse in shaping not only how events are reported but also how they are perceived, interpreted, and remembered by global audiences.

Conclusion. The analysis of euphemisms in media representations of diplomatic communication confirms that language plays a pivotal role in framing international events and shaping public perception. Euphemisms are not merely stylistic alternatives; they serve as strategic communicative tools that soften sensitive issues, maintain diplomatic decorum, and reinforce ideological narratives. By replacing direct or potentially offensive terms with more neutral expressions, media outlets create reports that align with the principles of neutrality and politeness while simultaneously advancing political agendas.

The study has shown that euphemisms fulfill four main functions: mitigating conflict, legitimizing actions through ideological framing, preserving courtesy in reporting sensitive negotiations, and introducing strategic ambiguity when clarity might jeopardize diplomatic balance. Examples such as "peacekeeping mission," "collateral damage," and "constructive talks" illustrate how euphemisms reshape reality into more acceptable forms for both domestic and international audiences. Furthermore, the cross-cultural variation of euphemistic interpretation demonstrates their context-dependent nature. What is perceived as neutral in one society may be controversial in another, underlining the need for linguopragmatic analysis.

In conclusion, euphemisms remain indispensable in media coverage of diplomacy. They highlight the delicate intersection of language, politics, and ideology, and their careful application contributes to sustaining cooperation and stability in international communication.

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[5] Wodak, R. (2015). The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean. London: Sage. pp. 31–64, 201–226.

[6] Chilton, P. (2004). Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice. London: Routledge. pp. 97–120, 141–166.

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