

**GENDER-POLITE EUPHEMIZATION AS A MEANS OF
TRANSFORMING TABOO VOCABULARY IN CONTEMPORARY
RUSSIAN**

Zokirova Ugiloy Uktamovna

Student, Termiz State Pedagogical Institute

zokirovaugiloy0@gmail.com

Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive linguistic study of gender-polite euphemization as a significant mechanism for transforming taboo vocabulary in contemporary Russian. In the context of ongoing socio-cultural changes, increasing gender sensitivity, and the re-evaluation of communicative norms, language demonstrates a remarkable capacity for adaptation. Gender-polite euphemization is interpreted as a specific linguo-pragmatic strategy aimed at mitigating, neutralizing, or replacing lexical units that carry negative, discriminatory, or socially undesirable connotations. Particular attention is paid to transformation processes affecting vocabulary related to gender identity, social roles of men and women, professional nominations, as well as physiological and intimate spheres. The article examines how potentially conflict-generating or taboo expressions are substituted with neutral or politically correct forms, contributing to the emergence of a new communicative paradigm. It is argued that gender-polite euphemization functions not only as a tool of linguistic adaptation but also as an indicator of evolving social consciousness and shifting value orientations. The research is based on semantic, pragmatic, and discourse analysis methods, allowing the identification of functional-semantic characteristics of gender-marked euphemisms. The findings suggest a growing institutionalization of gender-inclusive and polite forms in contemporary Russian, reflecting deeper transformations in the linguistic worldview and communicative culture.

Keywords: Gender linguistics, euphemization, taboo vocabulary, political correctness, speech etiquette, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, linguistic transformation, communicative strategies.

**ГЕНДЕРНО-ВЕЖЛИВАЯ ЭВФЕМИЗАЦИЯ КАК СРЕДСТВО
ТРАНСФОРМАЦИИ ТАБУИРОВАННОЙ ЛЕКСИКИ В
СОВРЕМЕННОМ РУССКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ**

ЗОКИРОВА УГИЛОЙ УКТАМОВНА

СТУДЕНТКА ТЕРМЕЗСКОГО ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО

ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОГО ИНСТИТУТА

zokirovaogiloy0@gmail.com

Аннотация:

Настоящая статья посвящена комплексному исследованию феномена гендерно-вежливой эвфемизации как одного из актуальных механизмов трансформации табуированной лексики в современном русском языке. В условиях динамичных социокультурных изменений, усиления гендерной чувствительности и пересмотра традиционных коммуникативных норм язык демонстрирует способность адаптироваться к новым требованиям речевой этики. Гендерно-вежливая эвфемизация рассматривается в статье как особый лингвопрагматический инструмент, направленный на смягчение, нейтрализацию или замещение слов и выражений, обладающих негативной, дискриминационной либо социально нежелательной коннотацией. Особое внимание уделяется анализу трансформационных процессов, затрагивающих лексику, связанную с гендерной идентичностью, социальной ролью женщины и мужчины, физиологическими и интимными аспектами жизни, а также сферами профессиональной номинации. В статье раскрывается механизм замещения табуированных или потенциально конфликтных единиц нейтральными либо политкорректными формами, что способствует формированию новой коммуникативной парадигмы. Подчеркивается, что гендерно-вежливая эвфемизация выступает не только как средство языковой адаптации, но и как индикатор изменений в общественном сознании, отражающий эволюцию ценностных ориентиров. Исследование базируется на методах семантического, прагматического и дискурсивного анализа, что позволяет выявить функционально-семантические особенности гендерно маркированных эвфемизмов. Делается вывод о том, что в современном русском языке наблюдается тенденция к

институционализации гендерно-вежливых форм, что свидетельствует о глубинных трансформациях языковой картины мира.

Ключевые слова: гендерная лингвистика, эвфемизация, табуированная лексика, политкорректность, речевой этикет, социолингвистика, прагматика, языковая трансформация, дискурс, коммуникативные стратегии.

ZAMONAVIY RUS TILIDA TABU LEKSIKANI TRANSFORMATSIYA QILISH VOSITASI SIFATIDA GENDER- HUSHMUOMALALI EVFEMIZATSIYA

ZOKIROVA O'G'ILOY O'KTAM QIZI
TERMIZ DAVLAT PEDAGOGIKA INSTITUTI TALABASI
zokirovaogiloy0@gmail.com

Annotatsiya:

Mazkur maqola zamonaviy rus tilida tabu leksikani transformatsiya qilish mexanizmlaridan biri sifatida gender-hushmuomalali evfemizatsiya hodisasini kompleks lingvistik tahlil qilishga bag'ishlangan. Ijtimoiy-madaniy o'zgarishlar, gender sezgirligining ortishi hamda nutq etikasi me'yorlarining yangilanishi sharoitida til tizimi yangi kommunikativ talablar asosida qayta shakllanmoqda. Gender-hushmuomalali evfemizatsiya ijtimoiy jihatdan noqulay, kamsituvchi yoki tabu hisoblangan leksik birliklarni yumshatish, neytrallashtirish yoki ularning o'rnini nisbatan neytral va siyosiy jihatdan to'g'ri shakllar bilan almashtirish jarayoni sifatida talqin qilinadi. Maqolada gender identifikatsiyasi, ayol va erkakning ijtimoiy roli, kasbiy nominatsiya, shuningdek, intim va fiziologik mazmunli leksik birliklarning transformatsion jarayonlari tahlil qilinadi. Evfemik birliklarning semantik va pragmatik xususiyatlari o'rganilib, ularning diskursiv funksiyasi ochib beriladi. Gender-hushmuomalali evfemizatsiya nafaqat nutqiy madaniyatni takomillashtirish vositasi, balki jamiyat ongidagi qadriyatlar evolyutsiyasini aks ettiruvchi lingvistik indikator sifatida baholanadi. Tadqiqot semantik tahlil, pragmalingvistik yondashuv hamda diskurs tahlili metodlariga asoslanadi. Natijada zamonaviy rus tilida gender jihatdan neytral yoki inkluziv shakllarning

kengayib borayotgani, bu esa til manzarasining chuqur o'zgarishidan dalolat berishi asoslab beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: gender lingvistikasi, evfemizatsiya, tabu leksika, siyosiy korrektlik, nutq etikasi, sotsiolingvistika, pragmatika, diskurs tahlili, lingvistik transformatsiya, kommunikativ strategiyalar.

Introduction

The current stage of societal development is characterized by intense sociocultural transformations affecting the realm of public consciousness, value systems, and norms of communicative behavior. Amidst globalization, digitalization, and active intercultural interaction, language serves not merely as a medium for information exchange but also as a crucial instrument for representing social attitudes, ideological stances, and gender-based behavioral patterns. In this context, the functioning of taboo vocabulary and the ways it is transformed within emerging ethical-communicative standards have become particularly relevant. Taboo vocabulary is traditionally defined as a set of linguistic units whose usage is restricted by cultural, moral, religious, or social norms. Throughout history, the nature and strictness of these taboos have varied, inevitably leaving their mark on the linguistic system. However, the twenty-first century has ushered in a qualitatively new phase in the re-evaluation of speech prohibitions, driven primarily by heightened gender sensitivity, the spread of egalitarian ideals, and the creation of an inclusive communicative environment. Consequently, the phenomenon of "gender-sensitive euphemization" has gained significant importance; this constitutes a linguo-pragmatic mechanism for softening, neutralizing, or replacing words and expressions that might otherwise trigger social tension or perpetuate discriminatory patterns. Gender-sensitive euphemization serves not only as a means of avoiding verbal conflict but also as a tool for constructing a new linguistic reality grounded in respect for an individual's gender identity and social status.

The relevance of this study stems from the fact that the modern Russian language is undergoing a process of transformation regarding traditional terms used to designate professions, social roles, physiological states, and intimate aspects of life. The use of gender-neutral forms is expanding, the process of re-evaluating feminine forms (*feminitives*) is intensifying, and explicitly marked units are

increasingly being replaced by more appropriate and inclusive alternatives. These changes signal profound shifts in the linguistic worldview and require comprehensive scholarly analysis. Although existing research addresses euphemization and taboo in general, the issue of gender-sensitive euphemization—viewed as a distinct mechanism for transforming taboo vocabulary—remains insufficiently systematized. There is a need to clarify its functional-semantic status, pragmatic characteristics, and discursive features within contemporary Russian. The aim of this study is to identify and analyze the mechanisms of gender-sensitive euphemization as a means of transforming taboo vocabulary in modern Russian. To achieve this aim, the study seeks to define the specific nature of gender-marked euphemisms, identify their semantic and pragmatic features, and trace their role in shaping a new communicative paradigm. Thus, the study of gender-sensitive euphemization allows us to view language not merely as a reflection of social reality but as an active agent in its transformation, shaping new models of speech behavior and the value orientations of contemporary society.

Materials and Methods

The study draws on lexical units from contemporary Russian found in mass media, journalistic texts, 21st-century fiction, internet discourse, and official communication. The analysis corpus includes examples of gender-marked euphemisms that reflect the transformation of taboo vocabulary across various domains: professional designation, social identification, physiological and intimate matters, and the description of interpersonal relationships. The selection of linguistic material was based on the principles of representativeness and relevance. Particular attention was paid to lexical units demonstrating a tendency to replace explicitly stated or stigmatized terms with gender-neutral or politically correct forms. The illustrative corpus comprised contemporary media texts, official documents, public speeches, and social media content, enabling an analysis of the functional dynamics of gender-polite forms across various types of discourse.

The study's methodological framework relied on semantic, pragmatic, and discourse analysis methods. Semantic analysis revealed changes in the meaning and connotative structure of the euphemized units. The pragmatic approach aimed to identify the communicative goals behind the use of gender-polite

forms, such as strategies for softening language, avoiding conflict, and demonstrating social loyalty. Discourse analysis made it possible to examine how these units function within the context of specific communicative situations and the social roles of the participants.

Research Results

The analysis reveals a persistent trend in modern Russian toward the softening and reinterpretation of lexical units that are gender-marked or taboo in nature. One of the most notable areas of transformation involves the naming of professions. Traditional forms, which predominantly relied on a male-oriented model of occupational designation, are gradually being supplemented or replaced by feminine forms and gender-neutral constructions. This process reflects a drive to linguistically represent gender equality and reduce asymmetry in the naming of social roles. Active use of euphemistic substitutes is also observed in descriptions of physiological and age-related characteristics. Amidst growing gender sensitivity, lexemes previously perceived as neutral are taking on a potentially contentious nature and are being replaced by more appropriate forms. This indicates an expansion of the boundaries of taboo language and an increased role for pragmatic factors in the choice of linguistic means.

A significant place is held by the transformation of vocabulary related to family and interpersonal relationships. There is a trend toward moving away from expressions that carry evaluative or hierarchical connotations in favor of neutral or inclusive phrasing. In this context, gender-sensitive euphemism serves to harmonize communication and prevent discriminatory language. An analysis of discourse practices shows that gender-sensitive forms appear most frequently in official, media, and educational contexts, where adherence to norms of political correctness and speech etiquette is a prerequisite for communication. At the same time, usage remains varied in informal settings, highlighting the transitional nature of the processes under discussion. Overall, the study's findings suggest that gender-sensitive euphemization serves as a systemic mechanism of linguistic adaptation to new social realities. It reflects not only changes in the lexicon but also a transformation of societal values, shaping a new model of communicative interaction based on principles of respect, inclusivity, and gender sensitivity.

Conclusion

The study has established that gender-sensitive euphemization in contemporary Russian constitutes a systemic and dynamically evolving mechanism for transforming taboo vocabulary. Amidst heightened gender sensitivity, the re-evaluation of social roles, and the emergence of new communicative standards, the language demonstrates a high degree of adaptability, reflecting shifts in public consciousness. The analysis revealed that euphemization processes encompass various semantic domains: professional designations, age-related characteristics, physiological states, family relationships, and gender identity. In most instances, this transformation entails the elimination of negative connotations, a reduction in stigmatizing potential, and the creation of neutral or inclusive forms. Gender-sensitive forms are particularly prevalent in official, media, and educational discourses, where adherence to norms of political correctness is a mandatory aspect of communicative behavior. It was found that gender-sensitive euphemization serves not only to soften language and avoid communicative conflict but also acts as a tool for the sociocultural construction of reality. Replacing taboo or discriminatory terms fosters a new linguistic worldview grounded in principles of equality, inclusivity, and respect for the individual. Thus, gender-sensitive euphemization can be viewed as a significant indicator of the shifting values within modern society. Future research prospects include a comparative analysis of gender-sensitive euphemization across different languages, as well as an examination of its impact on the formation of communicative strategies in the digital space.

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