

Euphemisms in Today's English

Martina Jačková

Bachelor Thesis
2010



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně

Fakulta humanitních studií

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

akademický rok: 2009/2010

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Martina JAČKOVÁ**
Studijní program: **B 7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**

Téma práce: **Eufemismy v dnešní angličtině**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Teoretická část:

Eufemismy a jejich funkce v jazyce

Rozdělení eufemismů a jejich používání v jednotlivých oblastech

Vztah mezi eufemismy a dysfemismy, pejorace eufemismů

Vyjadřování eufemismů prostřednictvím figur

Praktická část:

Vytvoření souboru textů pro zkoumání eufemismů

Vyhledávání eufemismů z oblasti ekonomiky a politiky

Klasifikace zjištěných eufemismů podle zvolených oblastí

Analýza eufemismů podle figur

Shrnutí výsledků zkoumání, závěry

Rozsah práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Allan, K., 1991, *Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language used as a shield and weapon*, New York, Oxford University Press

Bedroll Linda, 2007, *Very nice ways how to say very bad things*, Naperville, Sourcebooks, Incorporated

Englight, D., 2004, *In other words*, London, Michael O'Mara Books Limited

Holder, R. W., 2008, *Dictionary of Euphemisms*, New York, Oxford University Press Incorporated

Spiegl, Fritz, 1987, *In-Words and Out-Words*, London, Elm Tree Books

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Lenka Drábková, Ph.D.

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky


Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

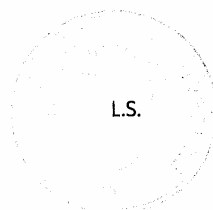
7. ledna 2010

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

7. května 2010

Ve Zlíně dne 7. ledna 2010


prof. PhDr. Vlastimil Švec, CSc.
děkan




doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

PROHLÁŠENÍ AUTORA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Beru na vědomí, že

- odevzdáním bakalářské práce souhlasím se zveřejněním své práce podle zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby ¹⁾;
- beru na vědomí, že bakalářská práce bude uložena v elektronické podobě v univerzitním informačním systému dostupná k nahlédnutí;
- na moji bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, zejm. § 35 odst. 3 ²⁾;
- podle § 60 ³⁾ odst. 1 autorského zákona má UTB ve Zlíně právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla v rozsahu § 12 odst. 4 autorského zákona;
- podle § 60 ³⁾ odst. 2 a 3 mohu užít své dílo – bakalářskou práci - nebo poskytnout licenci k jejímu využití jen s předchozím písemným souhlasem Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, která je oprávněna v takovém případě ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které byly Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně na vytvoření díla vynaloženy (až do jejich skutečné výše);
- pokud bylo k vypracování bakalářské práce využito softwaru poskytnutého Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně nebo jinými subjekty pouze ke studijním a výzkumným účelům (tj. k nekomerčnímu využití), nelze výsledky bakalářské práce využít ke komerčním účelům.

Prohlašuji, že

- elektronická a tištěná verze bakalářské práce jsou totožné;
- na bakalářské práci jsem pracoval samostatně a použitou literaturu jsem citoval. V případě publikace výsledků budu uveden jako spoluautor.

Ve Zlíně ...30.4.2010...

.....Jučková.....

1) zákon č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 47b Zveřejňování závěrečných prací:

(1) Vysoká škola nevydělečně zveřejňuje disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce, u kterých proběhla obhajoba, včetně posudků oponentů a výsledku obhajoby prostřednictvím databáze kvalifikačních prací, kterou spravuje. Způsob zveřejnění stanoví vnitřní předpis vysoké školy.

(2) Disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce odevzdané uchazečem k obhajobě musí být též nejméně pět pracovních dnů před konáním obhajoby zveřejněny k nahlázení veřejnosti v místě určeném vnitřním předpisem vysoké školy nebo není-li tak určeno, v místě pracoviště vysoké školy, kde se má konat obhajoba práce. Každý si může ze zveřejněné práce pořizovat na své náklady výpisy, opisy nebo rozmnoženiny.

(3) Platí, že odevzdáním práce autor souhlasí se zveřejněním své práce podle tohoto zákona, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby.

2) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 35 odst. 3:

(3) Do práva autorského také nezasahuje škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení, užije-li nikoli za účelem přímého nebo nepřímého hospodářského nebo obchodního prospěchu k výuce nebo k vlastní potřebě dílo vytvořené žákem nebo studentem ke splnění školních nebo studijních povinností vyplývajících z jeho právního vztahu ke škole nebo školskému či vzdělávacího zařízení (školní dílo).

3) zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 60 Školní dílo:

(1) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení mají za obvyklých podmínek právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla (§ 35 odst.

3). Odpírá-li autor takového díla udělit svolení bez vážného důvodu, mohou se tyto osoby domáhat nahrazení chybějícího projevu jeho vůle u soudu. Ustanovení § 35 odst. 3 zůstává nedotčeno.

(2) Není-li sjednáno jinak, může autor školního díla své dílo užit či poskytnout jinému licenci, není-li to v rozporu s oprávněnými zájmy školy nebo školského či vzdělávacího zařízení.

(3) Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení jsou oprávněny požadovat, aby jim autor školního díla z výdělku jim dosaženého v souvislosti s užitím díla či poskytnutím licence podle odstavce 2 přiměřeně přispěl na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložily, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše; přitom se přihlédne k výši výdělku dosaženého školou nebo školským či vzdělávacím zařízením z užití školního díla podle odstavce 1.

ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá eufemizmy, jejich definováním a použitím v oblastech, ve kterých se eufemizmy často používají. Dále také vztahem eufemizmů s dysfemizmy, vlivem pejorace na eufemizmy, stylistickými prostředky, kterými je možno eufemizmy v jazyce vyjadřovat. Analytická část této práce se zaměřuje na eufemizmy používané v ekonomice a politice. Tyto eufemizmy jsou dále zkoumány z hlediska slovních druhů, počtu slov a podobného významu. Další předmět výzkumu představují eufemizmy, vyjadřované prostřednictvím stylistických prostředků a eufemizmy jejichž význam je závislý na kontextu.

Klíčová slova: eufemizmy, dysfemizmy, asociace, konotace, společenská tabu, pejorace eufemizmů, stylistické prostředky, kontext, styl, tvoření slov, slovní druhy

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis is focused on definitions of euphemisms, areas of use, relation between euphemisms and dysphemisms, effect of pejoration on euphemisms, possibilities of expressing euphemisms through figures of speech. The analytical part of this work is aimed at euphemisms used in economy and politics. Those euphemisms are further analyzed according to the amount of words, word class and a similar meaning they share. Another subject of the research constitutes euphemisms that are expressed through figures of speech and euphemisms with a meaning dependent on a context.

Keywords: euphemisms, dysphemisms, association, connotation, social taboo, pejoration of euphemisms, figures of speech, context, style, political correctness, word formation, word classes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mgr. Lenka Drábková for her supervision and precious advice that contributed to form this bachelor thesis. My thanks are also due to my family that supported me during my studies.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
I THEORY	11
1 EUPHEMISMS AND THEIR POSITION IN THE LANGUAGE.....	12
1.1 Definitions of Euphemisms	12
1.2 Reasons for the Use of Euphemisms	13
1.3 Negative Sides of Euphemisms	14
2 EUPHEMISMS AND STYLE	15
3 CLASSIFICATION OF EUPHEMISMS	16
3.1 Euphemisms Connected with Death.....	16
3.2 Euphemisms Connected with Religion.....	17
3.3 Euphemisms Connected with Politics	17
3.3.1 Political Correctness	18
3.4 Euphemisms Connected with Business	19
3.5 Euphemisms Connected with Diseases and Medicine.....	20
3.6 Euphemisms Connected with Human Body and Sex	21
3.7 Euphemisms Connected with Addictions.....	23
4 RELATION BETWEEN EUPHEMISMS AND DYSPEHMISMS	25
4.1 Taboo Language	25
4.2 Swearing	26
4.3 Profanity and Blasphemy.....	27
4.4 Pejoration of Euphemisms.....	27
5 POSSIBILITIES OF EXPRESSING EUPEHMISMS.....	29
5.1 Figures of Speech	29
5.2 Euphemisms in Word Formation Processes	30
II ANALYSIS	31
INTRODUCTION	32
6 EUPHEMISMS USED IN ECONOMY.....	33
6.1 One-word Euphemisms	33
6.1.1 Nouns.....	33
6.1.2 Adjectives	34
6.2 Two-word Euphemisms.....	34
6.2.1 Euphemisms Consisting of an Adjective and a Noun	34
6.2.2 Euphemisms Consisting of Two Nouns	36

6.3	Euphemisms Consisting of More Than two Words.....	36
7	EUPHEMISMS USED IN POLITICS.....	38
7.1	One-word Euphemisms	38
7.1.1	Nouns.....	38
7.1.2	Adjectives	39
7.2	Two-word Euphemisms.....	39
7.2.1	Euphemisms Consisting of an Adjective and a Noun	39
7.2.2	Euphemisms Consisting of Two Nouns	40
7.2.3	Euphemisms Consisting of a Noun and a Verb.....	41
7.3	Euphemistic Expressions Consisting of More Than Two Words.....	41
8	EUPHEMISMS IN CONTEXT	43
8.1	Figurative Euphemisms	43
8.2	Universal Euphemisms with Apprehension Based on a Context	44
8.2.1	The Euphemism <i>Issue</i>	44
8.2.2	The Euphemism <i>Impact</i>	45
	CONCLUSION	46
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	48
	APPENDICES	50

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this bachelor thesis are euphemisms and their usage in today's English. Euphemisms are indirect expressions that are used instead of harsher ones to avoid unpleasant moments, embarrassment, or offence. They are used in sensitive social areas where direct speaking is unsuitable, like death, diseases or sex. The concern of indirect speaking can be either on the side of a speaker, on the side of an audience or on the side of a third side.

Euphemisms are used to replace social taboos, swearing, blasphemy, profanity and other offensive language, but they can be used just to make a common word sound more sophisticated.

Since euphemisms are indirect expressions, the apprehension of a meaning can be difficult. Once a euphemism becomes known and starts to be used frequently in association with a sensitive or an unsuitable subject, negative connotations cause pejoration of a euphemism, which means the loss of indirect and therefore polite value of the euphemism.

For indirect expressing, stylistic means like figures of speech can be used for expressing euphemisms.

I. THEORY

1 EUPHEMISMS AND THEIR POSITION IN THE LANGUAGE

It is more comfortable for people not to talk about unpleasant or embarrassing topics directly. The effort to be polite makes them replace offensive words by more acceptable ones. The purpose of the use of euphemisms is to avoid unsuitable words in order not to offend hearer.

According to Enright, the word euphemism originates from Greek, where it means *to speak in a good way* (Enright, 2004). Primarily, euphemism was a milder term used as a substitution for taboo expressions only. Later, the use of euphemisms was enlarged for any vulgar, offensive, harsh, embarrassing, blunt or other indelicate term. The oldest social taboos that made people use euphemisms, occurred in areas exuding fear and respect such as religion or death.

Unlike Enright, Alkire (Alkire, 2002) claims that euphemisms have Latin roots. There are many euphemistic phrases derived from Latin, which appeared especially after Norman Conquest in 1066, when Latin presented the language of the upper-class.

1.1 Definitions of Euphemisms

Definitions considering euphemisms do not differ very much. Euphemisms are described as milder or soft expressions used as a substitution to dispreferred terms. According to Holder (Holder, 2008) euphemism is a milder or uncertain term, which is used to replace an unsuitable or impertinent expression.

Horny (Horny, 2005) defines euphemisms as word or expressions that refer indirectly to some unsuitable, unpleasant or embarrassing issue in order to make it seem more acceptable.

Longman's (Longman, 2009) definition of euphemisms considers the presence of a hearer. According to the dictionary, euphemism is an indirect term that is used by a speaker to save a hearer from being shocked or feeling embarrassed or upset.

According to Glone (Glone, 2003), a speaker using euphemisms is motivated not only by a hearer. Glone claims that here exists a term "face". "Face" means how a speaker represents himself/herself and signifies his/her social image. In situations, when mentioning a subject

with negative connotations is necessary, a speaker saves his/her face by the use of a euphemism. Also Allan (Allan, 1991) involves possible loss of a face into his definition of euphemisms. He claims that a euphemism is a substitution for an inappropriate term, which is used to save the face of a speaker, hearer or the face of some third party.

1.2 Reasons for the Use of Euphemisms

The reason for a euphemistic substitution is not only to soften a vulgar expression. Alkire (Alkire, 2002) argues that euphemisms can be used to make speech or text more sophisticated. He provides an example of the euphemism *attorney*, which sounds more refined than the word *lawyer*. Katamba (Katamba, 2005) agrees that avoidance of hurting someone is not the major reason for the use of euphemisms. In his opinion, people use euphemisms to deal with social taboos that are individual of every culture. Social taboos constitute topics respected by people. Most significant are terms related to religion, where e. g. the name of *God* is substituted by expressions *Lord, the King of Glory, The All-Powerful*. According to Holder (Holder, 2008), fear of the devil made people replace his name by attributes like *Black Lad, Prince of the Darkness or Bad Man*.

Holder also characterizes euphemisms from a semantic point of view. He claims that euphemisms have their former, derived meaning, which has become a euphemism on the basis of association (e. g. *metaphors used for dying – to sleep, to go under, to leave the land*).

Euphemisms can be used either in spoken or written language. According to Crystal (Crystal, 2005), there are more euphemisms typical for spoken language in English because written language does not deal with slang or obscene vocabulary. Obscene words appear in a text only in the form of graphic euphemisms.

Euphemisms cover important events of human existence. Alego (Alego, 2005) points out that they often appear in contexts referring to unhappiness of human life, like death or diseases, but they also refer to very emotive events such as birth.

1.3 Negative Sides of Euphemisms

Enright (Enright, 2004) defines euphemisms as dishonest expressions. In his opinion, the purpose of euphemisms is to conceal true essence of speech. Speaker refers to a subject using circuits and real subject is hidden. There might be doubts on the side of the audience, because there is a chance that they do not understand the meaning properly.

Euphemisms are often used in reference to negatively perceived social actions, which speaker is ashamed to mention directly. Burrige (Burrige, 2004) claims that by referring to topics like war or killing euphemistically, those topics might appear tolerable. Euphemisms in this case create an excuse for such social actions and lead humans to perceive them with a respect. Katamba (Katamba, 2005) uses term doublespeak for this kind of euphemisms. He is convinced that euphemistic substitutions for brutal and inhuman acts make them look tolerable and civilised. Totalitarian regimes and militaristic regime use doublespeak to conceal shocking reality. The word *preventive* is used to refer to unprovoked military actions (*preventive war*) and the collocation *preventive detention* signifies the retention of political detractors.

Although euphemisms have their negative sides they can make life much easier as well. Enright (Enright, 2005) claims that euphemisms make truths less painful because people can avoid direct speaking. They also encourage a speaker to talk about things which he would be ashamed to mention directly. Both interlocutors are saved from losing their faces or embarrassing moments and hurting feelings. Audience can learn something more about a speaker's attitude towards the topic and help a speaker to persuade his listeners by pointing out different perspectives. According to Burrige (Burrige, 2004), euphemisms contribute to the development and enriching of English language by a new expressions, because they are based on associations and associations still change.

2 EUPHEMISMS AND STYLE

Allan (Allan, 1991) found out that euphemisms are not represented only by lexemes. He claims that euphemisms, like synonyms, are chosen according to the context. Style and euphemisms are in a relation, in which euphemisms support the intended style and style supports euphemisms. According to him, each expression should be assessed according to a context. It is essential to see the links between the word and its context to talk about euphemisms. Context provides extra information, apart from dictionaries of euphemisms. The effort to maintain a face is involved in every social interaction where context is crucial. There exist rules, which should be observed by a speaker to save his/her own face and to be considerate of the face of his interlocutor. Allan renders four conventions that should be adhered by a speaker to stay euphemistic:

- 1) Speaker should state his argument clearly. He should omit any extra data that are not necessary for hearer to understand.
- 2) Speaker should act frankly and not give any information he is not sure to be truth.
- 3) Speaker should keep within the context, not digress or be irrelevant. Giving misleading information may cause incomprehension.
- 4) Speaker should avoid ambiguity, compose his message stylistically suitable and omit unnecessarily long sentences.

Allan adds that effect of speaker's words on his own face and on the face of an audience should be considered. In spoken language, both interlocutors are responsible for degree of politeness of the discussion. Means used in order to keep a particular style of discussion are individual of each participant. The policy of saving face is close to the art of diplomacy. It is fundamental to be considerate, tactful and tolerable to others. Degree of sensibility should not be exaggerated, because excessive politeness could be seen as ironic and therefore dysphemistic.

3 CLASSIFICATION OF EUPHEMISMS

There are many areas in today's English, where euphemisms are used frequently. These areas deal with socially unaccepted or feared issues, which people are ashamed to talk about directly. Among the most common and oldest belong euphemisms connected with death, religion and sex. On the other hand there are areas of euphemisms which are connected to recent society, like euphemisms for business, politics or addictions. This section covers the most common fields where euphemisms are used, focuses on the reasons which lead humans to use euphemistic substitutions and gives examples of euphemisms in a particular field.

3.1 Euphemisms Connected with Death

According to Enright (Enright, 2005), the word death is one of the oldest taboos. For centuries people have been determined not to use the term "death" directly and nowadays they still search for substitutions. That is why there exist many euphemisms for the topic. He claims that consideration of feelings of family members and fear of unknown constitutes the motivations for euphemistic substitutions.

Allan (Allan, 1991) agrees that the theme of death is taboo because people have always been scared of dying. In his opinion, the fear is motivated by worries of losing relatives or close friends, people are feared of what will follow after death, frustrated of disgust of the dead body and scared of evil spirits.

Holder (Holder, 2008) sets examples of euphemistic expressions for death commonly used in today's English. He declares that words that are often used denote leaving for unknown places or sleeping: *to pass away, pass on the other side, pass over, pass into the next world, leave the land of the living, go to heaven, go to our rest, go to a better place, go to our long home, go west, go under, sleep away, return to ashes.*

Holder claims that euphemisms standing for killing someone are often idioms of the verb *to put*: *put (a person's) lights out, put against a wall, put away, put daylight through, put down, put on the spot, put out of your troubles, put to sleep or put to the sword.*

According to him, euphemisms for suicide are denoted by the word *self*: *self deliverance, self-execution or self-violence.*

3.2 Euphemisms Connected with Religion

Euphemisms used in religion are motivated by human prejudices, respect for God, fear of devil and evil forces. According to Enright (Enright, 2004) the word God is a euphemism because it is a universal term, not a name. But people cautiously replace the word God by euphemisms. Euphemisms for God or Jesus often take the form of remodelings of the names: *Gosh, Gee, George, Gum, Cheesus, Bejaysus, Chrissakes*. The euphemistic substitutions for God or names of saints are often used to soften the swearing.

Enright (Enright, 2004) points out that the expression *bloody* is a remodeling of the expression “by our lady” referring to God’s mother. *Bloody* is dysphemistic in today’s English and substituted by words *bleeding* or *blinking*.

Holder (Holder, 2008) claims that people feared of evil give flattering euphemistic names to malevolent spirits: *black gentleman, black prince* for Devil, evil fairies are called *good folk* or *neighbours*.

English language contains many euphemisms for devil. Many of them could be recognized by words *black* or *old* : *black man, black lad, black Sam, black spy, black gentleman, old Nick, old dad, old chap, old Roger, old smoker* or *old sooty*.

3.3 Euphemisms Connected with Politics

Burridge (Burridge, 2004) noticed the similarity between euphemisms used as substitutions for religion and supernatural powers and euphemisms used in politics. According to her, human interest not to antagonize Gods and supernatural powers is comparable with interest of politicians to insinuate into the favour of their electorate.

According to Ostermeier (Ostermeier, 2009), using euphemisms connected with raising taxes is common in today’s politics. There is increasing number of euphemisms for the issue. Most widely used are expressions like *revenue raise, progressive revenue* or *progressive taxation*.

There are words, which denote particular activity or field used in politics. Holder (Holder, 2008) gives examples of the word *special*, which refers to illegal or inhuman activities.

The expression *special treatment* means to torture or kill political opponents, nuclear weapons are referred to by the term *special weapons*. The expression *special operations* signifies secret and illegal operations. The word *strategic*, is used by politicians in reference to unsuccessful actions. Expressions *strategic movement to the rear* and *strategic withdrawal* refer to military failure. Another semantically marked word is the word *people's*, often used to conceal the idea of autocracy. The terms *people's democracy*, or *people's republic*, *people's party* are connected with the autocratic regime.

Holder claims that political vocabulary contains many euphemistic expressions denoting war e. g. *armed struggle*, *conflict*, *confrontation*, *counter-attack*, *incident*, *intervention*, *limited action*, *operation*.

3.3.1 Political Correctness

Enright (Enright, 2004) defines political correctness as an intended selection of terms without offending associations towards minorities or substitutions for terms arousing discrimination. It is evident that expressions politically correct are more formal and stable than euphemisms and are related to issues of discrimination and other subjects that are offensive for races or minorities.

Crystal (Crystal, 2002) claims that in 1980s many people promoted an idea of non-discriminatory terms concerning minorities. Vocabulary causing prejudices in gender, race, sexuality, personal development or ecology should have been omitted and substituted by more acceptable terms. In 1990s this effort was called political correctness. E. g. *mentally handicapped people* were referred to as *people with learning difficulties* or the expression *disabled people* was substituted by *differently able*.

In 1990s people showed strong disagreement with political correctness, they felt oppression in expressing their ideas and political correctness was compared to “McCarthyism”. Uncomfortable ideas were suppressed by the means of politically correct terminology. Political correctness met with general criticism on its inefficiency, because it was evident that more appropriate terms will not change the problematic and changing terminology will make the issues more visible.

Responses on terminological reformations are various. Crystal claims that it was difficult for humans to decide on one term as an overall and acceptable one. He gives an instance of

the vast majority of blacks, who are more comfortable with the term *black* rather than with politically correct *Afro-Americans*.

But according to Burrige (Burrige, 2004), the aim of political correctness is no longer only intention not to offend some minorities. She offers some examples of politically correct terms that have nothing to do with racism or sexism, such as politically correct expression “*background actors*” which is more likely a euphemism. Political correctness is connected with proper behaviour and with social etiquette. According to her it has become unclear what political correctness actually is and nowadays there is practically no difference between political correctness and euphemisms.

3.4 Euphemisms Connected with Business

Business euphemisms deal with many areas like employment, advertisement, financing, banking and bankruptcy.

Holder (Holder, 2008) renders many euphemisms in today’s English referring to jobs. The reason for that is to avoid offending people working in low positions or people whose jobs are apprehended as inferior. E. g. the word *agent* is commonly used for elevating the title of a job (*press agent* which means publicist), or the euphemistic expression *exterminating engineer*, which refers to a rat catcher. He claims that today’s English is rich in terms suggesting loss of a job or unemployment, eg. *reduction in force*, *relieve*, *redundant*, *to reduce the headcount*, *to be selected out*, *to seek fresh challenges*.

Language of Estate agents contains expressions concealing the negative sides of the house and supporting only the good points. Holder points out that the age of a house is commonly referred to without mentioning the actual year or period. *Georgian house*, *ante-bellum*, *ideal of modernization*, *period property* are often used in evasion of the proper data.

Another field dealing with euphemisms is according to Holder related to financial problems. In company records could be referred to as *financial difficulties*, *cash flow problem* or *in the red*. Situations when competition threatens market shares of a company could be called *challenging*.

Typical example of euphemisms is the language used in advertising. Advertising language provides information which only emphasize positive qualities of a product and conceals the unsuitable facts. According to Burrige (Burrige, 2004), the aim of the language used in

advertisements is to influence potential customers. The message is composed in a way that apprehensions can vary and misleading effect is common. Burrige focused on food advertisements and assembled adjectives that are often used in the field. The most frequent are adjectives *new, good, healthy, creamy, perfect, fresh, natural* and others. Burrige renders the term *Handy package*, which is euphemistic expression for package of the product, which was reduced in size, but the price remains the same. She claims that comparatives like *softer* or *bigger* are often used in advertising without introducing the article which is being compared with the product. According to her, reliability of many advertisements is speculated, because advertisement can be ambiguous. Advertisers could claim that sportsmen use their deodorants, but which sportsmen they mean is unclear.

Holder (Holder, 2008) claims that bankruptcy today is not such a taboo as it was in the past. In Victorian era, money shortage was seen as a big disgrace and euphemisms for it were comparable to euphemisms standing for death. The arrest for debt was a strongly feared issue in 18th century. Holder adds that euphemisms for bankruptcy and debts are used more today, but the degree of negative connotations has become lower. He provides examples of substitutions for bankruptcy and debts: *negative cash situation* or *cash flow problem*.

3.5 Euphemisms Connected with Diseases and Medicine

Euphemisms in this field deal with the most serious diseases. Holder (Holder, 2008) claims that medical jargon is often used by doctors instead of generally understandable reference to the illness. Scientific terms are not clearly euphemisms, but the message is indirect and understanding might be doubtful (e. g. *coronary inefficiency*).

Holder (Holder, 2008) claims there are many negatively associated terms in English containing *French*, which is caused by mutual disfavour of the countries. French used with diseases has obvious negative connotations but it is unclear which disease is being discussed, e. g. *French ache*, or *French disease* refers to syphilis.

Heart conditions are according to Holder another issue which is covered by euphemistic substitutions. He points out that a bad heart condition or heart attack could be replaced by *cardiac incident, cardiac arrest, heart problem*.

Holder argues that meaning of mental diseases could be obfuscated by unmentioned extent of illness. The words referring to mental diseases are not graded. The word mad could mean slight mental disorder but also can be used for more serious mental illness. The hidden degree of seriousness is euphemistic feature of words like: *off the wall*, *off your gourd*, *off your head*, *off your napper*, *off your rocker*, *off your tree*, *off your trolley*, etc.

Parker (Parker, 2007) points out that euphemism treadmill is clearly seen on the words denoting mental diseases. In the beginning of 19th century, words like *idiot*, *imbecile*, *moron*, were euphemisms. The reality denoted by the words brings negative connotations along. Less offensive terms are recreated to show a respect and to give a hope to family members.

Allan (Allan, 1991) renders euphemisms connected with healing of diseases. Often used is the verb *to fight* against a disease or in the case of cancer *crusade* is used. He claims that words denoting diseases are intrinsically bad. That is why names of diseases are used dysphemistically. Maledictions are made by the use of disease name in every language. Allan gives an example of malediction *A pox on you* which is used in modern English.

3.6 Euphemisms Connected with Human Body and Sex

Most of euphemistic expressions are connected with sex and bodily effluvia. According to Enright (Enright, 2004), words with sexual connotations are intrinsically dysphemistic and therefore there are still being coined new euphemisms. Taboo words concerning sex are often used for swearing or abusing because of their dysphemistic nature. Euphemisms dealing with sex and bodily effluvia are conditioned by distaste and embarrassment. Holder (Holder, 2008) sets examples of euphemisms for sweat or bad breath. Both could evoke an embarrassment to a person by a straight or a dysphemistic allusion of a smell. The smell is referred to as *an odor* or *a smell*, the person is *odorously challenged*. Euphemisms are used for expressions denoting socially unsuitable behavior, like belching, which is substituted by *break wind*.

Attitudes of the society towards human body change. Bedroll (Bedroll, 2007) claims that during the Queen Victoria reign it was inconceivable to mention any bodily part in society. Dysphemistic associations were attributed even in reference to a leg of a chicken. Holder (Holder, 2008) argues that today's English has a few expressions of bodily functions that

cannot be referred to directly. Most common are euphemistic substitutions used in reference to a sexual partner e. g. *mistress, mate, boy/girlfriend, miss, good friend*. In referring to sexual act, expressions with *get* e. g. *get busy with, get into bed with, get your share, get your green* and other evasive terms are common e. g. *contact with, conversation, the main thing, to make happy, to mate, conquer a bed*.

According to Holder, today's English deals with euphemisms connected with lavatory and excretion in a large number. He claims that the lavatory room is substituted by e. g. *powder room, private office, rest room, plumbing, smallest room, hygiene facilities or toilet*. The act of urinating is referred to as: *to empty a bladder, to wash your hands, to freshen up*. The letter P is often the initiative letter in expressions referring to the act of urinating, e. g. *to pass the water, pee-pee, to perform a natural function, to pick, pluck, pull a pea*.

Negative connotations of prostitution have lasted for centuries and according to Holder there is still a number of euphemisms used in today's English (e. g. *night job, the oldest profession*), words *girl* and *lady* often denote a prostitute e. g. *working girl, lady of the night, call girl, lady of pleasure, street girl, crib girl, cross girl, currency girl*. Expressions referring to a brothel are usually idiomatic with the word *house* e. g. *house of sin, house of pleasure, house of evil repute, house of ill fame, house of profession, house of sale, house of tolerance, house in the suburbs*.

Another issue, which Holder deals with is childbirth. He claims that there are many euphemisms referring to pregnancy, eg: *to be in the family way, joining the club, anticipating, on her way in trouble, or to have a full belly*. Except of its relation to sex, there are many other taboos that are rather avoided, for example illegitimacy, unknown father, unwanted pregnancy, interruption, or use of contraception.

Words *chance* and *love* are frequently used in reference to illegitimate child. Holder renders e. g. *chance born, chance child, come by chance, chance begot, love child, love-born, love-begotten, or a love bird*. Unwanted child could be called eg. *arranged by circumstances, an accident, mistake or misfortune*.

Interruption is a very sensitive issue in today's English, therefore Holder introduces many euphemisms dealing with the topic, e. g. *pro-choice, pregnancy interruption, planed termination, to bring off, reproductive freedom*. There are similar reasons for euphemistic substitutions of the issue of contraception. Commonly used euphemisms for contraception pills are e. g. *female pills, on the pill, at the pill*. Condom is referred to e. g. as *a rubber cookie, or rubber johnny*.

3.7 Euphemisms Connected with Addictions

Today's English has to deal with socially unaccepted issues like alcohol, drugs and gambling. Holder (Holder, 2008) claims that people choose to prefer evasive language, because the topic deals with many personal destructions. Not only physical and psychical health is damaged, but the person might have to face up to debts, destroyed family and a social shame. According to Holder, addictions could be called weaknesses, e. g. *weakness for the drink* meaning alcoholism or *weakness for the horses* represents gambling addiction.

Holder points out that euphemisms concerning addictions in gambling are usually replaced by terms like *to play* or *a game*. The players could be referred to as e. g. *bookmakers*, *commission agents* or *turf accountants* and the gambling machines could be called e. g. *fruit machines*.

Holder renders many euphemisms connected with alcohol. Most common is the word *drink*, which might be used as a verb or a noun in phrases e. g. *have a drink*, *drink a lot*, *drink some* or *drink too much*. Other expressions referring to alcohol are e. g. *bottle*, *cocktail*, *shot*, *snort*, *snifter*, *sip*, *tip*, *spot*, *plasma* or *transfusion*.

Other common substitutions are concerning the conditions after usage of intoxicants, e. g. *legless*, *racked*, *rattled*, *under the table*, *under the influence*, *spaced out*, *overtired*, *tipped*, *stewed*, *whistled*, *slewed*, *pickled*, *potted*, *stewed*, *screwed*, *junked up*, *scorched*, *in liquor*, *in the bag*, *illuminated*.

The common feature in this category is conversion, nouns and verbs could be converted into adjectives, signifying drunkenness e. g. *a bottle* – *bottled*, *drink* – *drunk*, *liquor* – *liquored*, *refresher* – *refreshed*, *juice* – *juiced*, *sozzle* – *sozzled*, *souse* – *soused* or *to load* – *loaded*.

Smoking as another addiction contains euphemistic expressions for smoking marihuana. Holder claims that marihuana could be substituted by the expressions e. g. *marijuana*, *weed*, *pot*, *hemp*, *Mexican brown*, *hash*, *mary jane* or *green grass* and for the consequences of smoking marihuana are used expressions like *to turn into a hash-head*, or *to become hooked*.

Euphemisms for hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin are frequently referring to its white color e. g. *sugar*. Holder also renders words like *white* and *snow*, which are used to form collocations, e. g. *white girl*, *white lady*, *white line*, *white powder*, *China white*, *white stuff*.

He claims that the word snow refers to the addicted person who is under the influence of the cocaine, e. g. *snowed in, snowed under, snowed up, snowman* or *snow-blind*. Another expressions referring to drugs are e. g. *happy dust, substance, powder* or *pharmaceuticals*.

4 RELATION BETWEEN EUPHEMISMS AND DYSPEHMISMS

Euphemisms are often associated with dysphemisms, because existence of some euphemisms is based on existence of dysphemisms. Euphemisms represent milder terms used instead of inappropriate expressions. The relation between euphemisms and dysphemisms is contradictory. Allan (Allan, 1991) defines dysphemism as an expression, which could cause an offence to the listeners or denoted subject and for that reason, dysphemisms are substituted by milder euphemistic expressions. Essential function of euphemisms is to eliminate improper dysphemistic associations and thus dysphemisms and euphemisms are interconnected.

Allan also claims that it is speaker's intention to choose either straight dysphemistic locution or euphemistic substitution. He uses the term euphemistic dysphemisms to introduce expressions which are euphemistic remodellings of dysphemisms. For example the word God is dysphemistic to mention his name directly. Speaker can avoid being dysphemistic and use euphemistic remodellings like *Gosh*, *Gum* or *George*.

According to Burridge (Burridge, 2004) there are many dysphemisms in the English language, but they are not used as much as euphemisms. Dysphemisms are evaluated according to a context as euphemisms, for example, the expression *you old bastard* might be used between two friends as a joke, but *you are such a bastard!* is swearing.

Dysphemistic language covers taboo, swearing, offensive language, blasphemy or profanity, which will be specified in the following subchapters.

4.1 Taboo Language

Allan (Allan, 1991) claims that the word taboo originates from Austronesian language, Tongan. Earlier meaning of a taboo was a banned behavior. According to him, people believed that such behavior could endanger all society. Crystal (Crystal, 2005) argues that taboo language is avoided in society because it is offensive, hurts feelings and evokes embarrassment. It is because taboo deals with sensitive subjects, such as mental or physical illness, death, sexual activities or bodily effluvia.

A taboo is what a particular culture feels sensitive about. Burrige (Burrige, 2004) points out that problems of a taboo is more considered in languages of older societies than in the English language. Issues that are taboos for a culture change in time. Burrige gives an example of how English dictionaries are dealing with taboo words. She claims that words denoting religious taboos are included in Oxford English Dictionary, but the amount of taboo words there connected with sexual activity is rare.

Allan (Allan 1991) argues that strong connotations of taboo words cause that people avoid using words which are either homonymous with taboos or sound similarly. For example the word *ass* used to mean *a donkey*. But after it had started to be associated with the part of the body, people ceased using it in its former sense. Speakers do not use the words apprehensively, because they are worried of misunderstanding. This might lead to disappearance of the former meaning of the words.

Allan claims that most cultures have similar taboos, which are mostly those of bodily effluvia, death, disease and supernatural powers. The distinctions among taboos of particular cultures are mostly given by the degree of ineptitude of a particular term.

4.2 Swearing

There are distinctions in the usage between taboo language and swearing, but those two dysphemistic components are interconnected. According to Crystal (Crystal, 2005) Taboo words could be used for swearing or offending someone, e. g. *shit*, denoting its original sense, is a taboo word. If speaker uses the word to offend or abuse someone (*you are a shit*), it becomes a swear word. The function of swearing is to express emotions such as anger through vulgar marked lexis. Typical feature of swear words is their short forms (*fuck, hell, shit*) with explosive sounding. Expressions of swearing are usually semantically empty because their purpose is only to express annoyance.

Burrige (Burrige, 2004) and Crystal (Crystal, 2005) agree that swearing has positive aspects, because releasing of anguish helps to restore the peace of mind. According to them another positive factor is evident in social groups where swearing is common. Crystal aimed at social groups where swearing is frequent and found out that people in such groups are less stressed. He adds that another social function of swearing is that people of a group could create swear words typical just for the one group, which contributes to better

relationships within the group. Crystal provides a group of people interested in graffiti as an example.

Allan (Allan, 1991) claims that speaker using swear words has an option to choose between dysphemistic swearing (*fuck*) or he could use euphemistic dysphemisms (*Oh dear*) to release anger. According to him, men use dysphemistic expressions more often than women, who rather choose euphemistic remodelings.

4.3 Profanity and Blasphemy

Profanity and blasphemy belong to the category of swearing. Crystal (Crystal, 2005) claims that profanity violates all sacred things or names of saints. Blasphemy is swearing by using the name of God only. Profanity and blasphemy are according to Crystal dysphemistic because they deal with religious taboo words. Both could be expressed straight or by euphemistic substitutions like e. g. *Gosh, For heaven's sake*.

4.4 Pejoration of Euphemisms

Pejoration of euphemisms is a linguistic process in which euphemisms evolve overtime to become dysphemisms. According to Parker (Parker, 2007), there is a term for this process, called the euphemism treadmill, invented by psychologist, Steven Pinker, professor from Harvard University. Parker provides examples of pejoration on words connected with mental development e. g. words like *idiot* or *imbecile* were considered euphemistic in the beginning of 20th century. Later they soaked the negative associations and were replaced by new euphemisms like *retarded* or *disabled*.

Allan (Allan, 1991) argues that there exists the term natural hypothesis which sets that except of onomatopoeic words, every word in a language is arbitrary. In his opinion, there is no line between the lexical unit and the denotative subject, which means that positive or negative associations are based on our perception of the subject. The subject that is taboo or takes any other form of dysphemism is substituted by euphemisms to cover negative associations. By usage, euphemisms are contaminated with connotations of the subject that they refer to. For instance the word *undertaker* was used in the expression *funeral*

undertaker. Therefore the word lost its euphemistic value and even if it is used separately it is sensed as dysphemistic.

Burridge (Burridge, 2004) sets an example of euphemisms and taboo words changing in time. She claims that worse associations the word has the more euphemistic substitutions it gets overtime. In those cases persistence of a euphemism is short. E. g. expressions for promiscuous woman were replaced by many euphemisms. Holder (Holder, 2008) renders many of them, like *hussy bitch*, *nymph*, *prima donna*, *hooker* or *goose*, but dysphemistic associations caused pejoration.

Allan (Allan, 1991) claims that reason for pejoration is that dysphemistic words are outstanding and distinctive in a language. He explains that a word which is homonymous with a taboo term will convert into a taboo meaning only. Mainly profane language and sexually marked vocabulary cause pejoration of its homonyms. The distinctiveness of indecent vocabulary causes a speaker to omit usage of the words even in the second non-taboo sense to avoid misunderstanding. He adds that obscure words are special because they have a special location in the brain. The words are approached differently, which is evident in the cases of people suffering from the Tourette's syndrome, who utter obscene vocabulary only when they have an attack. That leads to an assumption that foul vocabulary might be separated from the other one in the brain.

5 POSSIBILITIES OF EXPRESSING EUPEHMISMS

Euphemisms can be expressed by many ways. They are figurative and very often are expressed through metaphors (*to go* for *to die*), they also could be achieved by various processes of word formation. The possibilities of expressing euphemisms will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.1 Figures of Speech

- **Metaphor** - Metaphor is a very common figurative means used for euphemistic substitutions which are achieved through analogy. Allan (Allan, 1991) provides examples of metaphor used for euphemisms connected with death, eg. *to pass into the next world*.
- **Metonymy** – Another case of euphemistic substitution is the form of metonymy. According to Allan, metonymy suggests a similar feature of two things. In case of euphemisms, the expression with negative connotation is denoted by association with the euphemistic term, eg *battle* for *alcoholic drink*.
- **Remodelling** – Remodelling is usually used as a substitution for taboo words. Allan provides an example of remodellings for *damn*, which are eg. *darn*, *dang*, or *drat*. Enright (Enright, 2004) renders euphemistic remodellings for God (*Gosh*) and Christ (*cripes*).
- **Hyperbole** – Allan claims that hyperbole represents another type of euphemistic substitution. Hyperbole is figure of speech, which exaggerates the issue, therefore it is more used for dysphemisms which overstate the offense (*He is the rottenest bastard I ever come across*) because euphemisms rather reduce the sense, but e. g. *flight to glory* for *death*.
- **Understatement** – Allan claims that understatement is figure of speech used to express euphemisms by expressing only part of the true, e. g. expressions like *companion* or *friend* are used in reference to a sexual partner.
- **Synecdoche** – According to Allan synecdoche is a figure of speech that signifies an issue by pointing out only part of a problem, e. g. *I've got a cough* without mentioning other symptoms.

- **Periphrasis** - Enright (Enright, 2004) defines periphrasis, also known as circumlocution, as an effort to express some sensitive or offensive issue without mentioning it directly, but through circuits and indirect phrases, which take a form of a little story.

5.2 Euphemisms in Word Formation Processes

- **Omissions** – A dysphemistic word could be avoided by omission. Allan claims that in written language the lexis is substituted by a graphic mark, e. g. dots. In spoken language person could use non-verbal language, or semantically empty words, e. g. *hm*. He claims that except of full-omissions there appear quasi-omissions which are more common, e. g. *I need to go*, which means *to go to lavatory*.
- **Clippings** – Another way of creating euphemisms is by shortening dysphemistic counterparts. According to Allan (Allan, 1991), Clipping means shortening of a dysphemistic word to make the negative associations less obvious, e. g. *jeeze* for *Jesus*, or *nation* for *damnation*.

II. ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

For the analysis of euphemisms I have focused on euphemisms occurring in business and political articles published in online magazines. To get a larger picture I am going to look for euphemisms from many sources: news.bbc.co.uk, politics.co.uk, news.yahoo.com, money.cnn.com, businessweek.com, guardian.co.uk, marketwatch.com, politico.com, reuters.com, aviationweek.com, veteranstoday.com, voices.washingtonpost.com.

I have divided euphemisms into two areas: economy and politics. Euphemisms in each area are classified according to an amount of words in an expression. Further division is based on a word class and then classified according to an issue they refer to (e. g. euphemisms for dismissals from employment, taxes, financial problems, war, nuclear weapons, politically correct terms).

I am going to analyze the amount of euphemistic expressions found in each area (of business and economy) and to find out which word class is the most represented by euphemisms and which euphemisms are the most common. Another point of my analysis concerns the structure of euphemistic expressions and processes of word formation. I am going to find out if there are figurative euphemisms used in today's English articles and which figures of speech are the most common. The last chapter is aimed at the meaning of euphemisms in a context and how the context is important for the apprehension of euphemisms.

For the interpretation of euphemistic expressions found, I have decided to use The Oxford Dictionary of Euphemisms and the online business dictionary: businessdictionary.com.

6 EUPHEMISMS USED IN ECONOMY

Euphemisms in this section are divided according to the amount of words contained and their word class. Euphemisms are also divided according to an agreement in a meaning they share.

6.1 One-word Euphemisms

One-word euphemisms from analyzed articles are divided into nouns and adjectives.

6.1.1 Nouns

Giveaways – money donated by a state to a particular area at the times of economical crisis, because state needs to make savings (e. g. *No giveaways in 2010 budget, the mood of the times is not for giveaways*).

Layoff – The act of staff reduction. People are reduced temporarily as a consequence of financial crisis.

- The noun *layoff* is an example of the word formation process, called conversion and therefore it appears in a text as a phrasal verb, consisting of two nouns or an adjective.
- As a noun, the expression takes the form of a one-word euphemism:

Not all the threatened layoffs will be carried out.

Layoff is the most common euphemism referring to a dismissal from an employment. Using the process of conversion, *layoff* is also used as a verb.

- The spelling of the noun changes to become the phrasal verb consisting of two words :

CSU may lay off up to 50 additional workers.

- The most frequent form is the form of a verbal noun:

Laying off regular fulltime employees.

- The word layoff can appear in the text as an adjective as well:

Laid off employees should not be replaced.

6.1.2 Adjectives

Dismissed – used as a substitution for being displaced from a job. The adjective is used either separately or with a noun e. g. *dismissed from a job*.

Redundant – an employee who was dismissed from a job because he was found unnecessary for a company.

6.2 Two-word Euphemisms

Euphemisms composed of two words are divided into groups of euphemisms consisting of an adjective and a noun and euphemisms consisting of two nouns.

6.2.1 Euphemisms Consisting of an Adjective and a Noun

- There appear many euphemistic expressions in today's English economic articles that deal with financial crisis itself. They are usually two-word expressions consisting of the noun *economy* or the adjective *economic* and another word which modifies the meaning of the negative situation:

Challenging economy – the economic environment that is effected by financial crisis, where carrying a business is difficult.

Churning economy – an unstable economy or economy at the times of financial crisis.

Economic pressures – impacts of the financial crisis on the areas of economy, like unemployment or rise in prices.

Economic slowdown – the economic recession.

Financialized economy – economy in a debt caused by the financial crisis has to be paid by the government.

- Very common euphemisms in today's English are those dealing with financial problems:

Downward pressure – consequences of the unstable economy on prices of products and services.

Financial difficulties – negative financial situation in companies caused by the financial crisis.

Red ink – the negative budget of an unprofitable company, because the red color is used for writing negative figures.

- Euphemisms that refer to various financial problems commonly include the adjective *negative*:

Negative cash – a loss that is caused by investing more money into assets of a company than it is able to earn.

Negative contribution – a business transaction that was unprofitable or cost more money than it finally made.

Negative equity – financial problems of a company, which is in a debt and unable to payoff its assets at the moment.

Negative pricing – an unprofitable transaction leading to a loss.

- Euphemisms referring to dismissals from employment:

Mass layoff – dismissals from employment, when a larger amount of employees is released.

Pink slip – the idiom referring to a dismissal from employment.

6.2.2 Euphemisms Consisting of Two Nouns

Job cuts – reductions of company's staff to save money on wages.

Job loss – losses of working stations as a consequence of the financial crisis.

Workforce reductions – the effort of a company to save finances spent on wages by releasing its employees.

6.3 Euphemisms Consisting of More Than two Words

- Euphemisms considering financial crisis and its impacts:

Challenging microeconomic environment – is an indirect term that refers to unprofitable environment of a company.

Weak income conditions – the financial weaknesses of a company that is visible in the area of salaries.

To face higher costs – to pay more money

- Euphemisms related to unemployment:

Weak employment conditions – impacts of financial crisis on area of unemployment.

Layoff selection process – the process in which a company chooses its employees that will be contemporarily dismissed from their work.

- There are also examples of two words and a preposition:

Reduction in force – an amount of employees is reduced by a company for the purpose of making savings.

Reduction on payrolls – represents reduction of employees at the times of the financial crisis.

Slide of (home) prices – impacts of financial crisis on the prices of real estate.

7 EUPHEMISMS USED IN POLITICS

Like euphemisms in business, political euphemisms from the analyzed articles are divided into groups according to the amount of words, which they consist of and further division is based on the word classes and the similar meaning that euphemisms share.

7.1 One-word Euphemisms

Euphemisms that are nouns and adjectives are found in this section.

7.1.1 Nouns

Detainee – an illegal immigrant who has been arrested.

- Euphemisms dealing with war:

Confrontation – armed conflict between two states.

Incidents – shooting at state's own soldiers by a mistake.

Outliers – the states whose nuclear intentions constitute a threat to others.

Peacekeepers – soldiers that were sent to restore a battlefield in an opposite country to save a peace in their own country.

The tools – all the components that serve to production of nuclear weapons.

- Euphemisms dealing with tax:

Inflows – the indirect term for taxes.

Revenue – the indirect term for taxes.

7.1.2 Adjectives

Disabled – the politically correct term referring to people with a physical or a mental handicap.

Nationalized – private ownership that was confiscated by government.

7.2 Two-word Euphemisms

Euphemisms in this section composed of an adjective and a noun, two nouns and or a noun and a verb.

7.2.1 Euphemisms Consisting of an Adjective and a Noun

- Euphemisms dealing with war and nuclear weapons:

Collateral damage – an action when armed forces kill civilians by a mistake.

Friendly fire – the indirect term used by armed forces in cases when soldiers shoot into their own rows by a mistake.

Nuclear intention – the policy dealing with nuclear weapons.

Nuke issue – the issue considering the danger of potential use of the nuclear weapons.

- Euphemisms dealing with taxes:

Progressive revenue – the increase of taxes.

Progressive taxation – the increase of taxes.

Tax hikes – the increase of taxes.

- Euphemisms dealing with illegal activities:

Protective custody – the prison.

The adjective *black* is frequently used in reference to unlawful actions:

Black money – money that is earned as a result of some illegal activity, like prostitution or distribution of drugs.

Black market – a market which deals with stolen or illegal articles.

- Euphemisms for political regimes:

Hard line – the authoritarian regime.

People's government – the totalitarian regime.

7.2.2 Euphemisms Consisting of Two Nouns

Enrichment activity – the process in which the uranium is manufactured for purposes of the production of nuclear weapons.

Impact fees – taxes.

Non-combatant casualties – civilian victims that are killed by actions of armed forces mistakenly.

Taxes hit – the negative effect of raised taxes that public sector and economy will experience.

- The noun revenue can be used euphemistically as a substitution for taxes:

Revenue enhancements – increase of taxes.

Revenue increase – increase of taxes.

7.2.3 Euphemisms Consisting of a Noun and a Verb

Claim responsibility (for) – responsibility that is admitted by e. g. terrorists for an action which caused death of civilians.

To freeze the wages – an effort of a government used to keep wages at the same level during the financial crisis to fight against inflation.

Money laundering – a process in which money earned by an illegal activity is converted into a legal system.

Suppress the votes – the effort of a political party to exclude some minorities from elections.

7.3 Euphemistic Expressions Consisting of More Than Two Words

Anti-money laundering effort – the effort of a government to reduce cases where money is produced illegally and then converted into the legal system.

Peace-keeping force – armed forces sent to another country to ensure peace in their own country.

Public sector borrowing – an action when the government is overspending the finances gained from taxes and other public payments.

- The adjective *special* is used in reference to secret or illegal actions:

Department of special investigation – the department which secretly monitors actions of suspicious citizens.

Special operation group – the group, which is charged with an illegal or a secret task.

8 EUPHEMISMS IN CONTEXT

Euphemisms can be difficult to understand without a given context. Mainly figurative expressions are problematic because they are expressed indirectly. There are also words that sound very universal, their usage is usually very indirect and they are hard to be comprehended unless the context is clear.

8.1 Figurative Euphemisms

Some euphemisms are expressed indirectly through figures of speech. The apprehension of figurative euphemisms is difficult unless there is the context given. Figurative euphemisms consist of more than one word and are mostly expressed through metaphors.

Blue-on-blue incidents – a metaphorical euphemism that refers to mistaken shooting at a state's own rows.

Cloudy outlook – a metaphorical euphemism that refers to a bad situation in the area of unemployment.

Hurt home prices – a personification concerning effects of the financial crisis on prices of a real estate.

Long road to recovery – a metonymy referring to the duration of the financial crisis.

Mood of the times – a metaphorical euphemism that indirectly points at the financial crisis and its impacts on economy.

Putting pressure on wages – a metaphorical expression that hides the meaning of cutting the wages.

8.2 Universal Euphemisms with Apprehension Based on a Context

Some euphemistic expressions might have more meanings when they appear alone. Only given context contributes to the apprehension of a particular meaning.

8.2.1 The Euphemism *Issue*

Issue is very common euphemistic expression, universally used as a substitution for various sensitive topics commonly used in political articles. The word itself is often used as a substitution for armed confrontations (e. g. *the nuke issue*).

Because the noun *issue* is very indirect, it can be used in reference to sensitive topics, mentioned in a text for the second time:

- *Issue*, or *the issue* is used in reference to nuclear plants and extracting oil resources.
- *Issue* could refer to political or economic problems of a state or the relationship of two countries:

*It's not just **an issue** between China and US but the word economy as whole.*

- The word *issue* can be used as just a one-word expression, or it can be combined with terms that make it more direct:

The nuke issue - the issue considering the danger of potential use of the nuclear weapons.

Detainee issue – problems of illegal immigrants that were arrested. (e. g. *Kuwait try to resolve Guantanamo **detainee issue**.*)

*The charged **issue** of race* – an effort to exclusion of some minorities from their right to elect.

8.2.2 The Euphemism *Impact*

Another euphemism, the noun *impact* appears mostly in today's economical articles dealing not only with financial crisis. The word might stay on its own, so a reader is not able to think of a concrete sense, which is generally negative:

Other impacts will reduce the revenue.

- The word *impact* might appear with words that clarify that there are negative financial impacts:

*Transocean feels the **financial impact** from the loss of the nine-year-old floating rig.*

CONCLUSION

The analytical part of the bachelor thesis is aimed at euphemisms occurring in business and political articles from online magazines that I mentioned in the introduction. I have found 80 euphemisms in 45 analyzed articles.

Out of 22 economical articles, 90% deal with the financial crisis, either from the economic perspective or from the perspective of politicians. The reason why there appear so many euphemisms around the financial crisis might be that it is a very sensitive topic nowadays and euphemisms undergo the pejoration quickly. This sensitive issue of the financial crisis gives a birth to many euphemisms, concerning areas like unemployment and job losses, rise in prices or financial difficulties of companies. Euphemisms referring to unemployment represent about a half of euphemisms in the section of economy.

In 23 political articles there are euphemisms that deal with social taboos, such as problems of nuclear weapons, armed conflicts and illegal activities. Euphemisms dealing with raise in taxes are taken from the perspective of politicians and government, because those euphemisms are coined to save their face in front of their electorate. About 70% of political euphemisms refer to armed conflicts or to the use of nuclear weapons. Euphemisms connected with the raise in taxes and euphemisms dealing with illegal activities comprise about 30% of 43 found political euphemisms.

Out of 80 euphemisms found in today's English economic and political articles are of 70% represented by two-word expressions. One-word and more than two-word euphemisms are not so plentiful. In cases of euphemisms consisting of more than two words there also appear two-word expressions with a preposition. Considering the word classes, nouns prevail and in cases of two-word expressions they are complemented with adjectives in 70% of cases, in 20% of cases there appear expressions consisting of two nouns and the least represented group of two-word expression is combination of a noun and a verb, which occurs in 10% of cases.

From chapter concerning the context follows that the context is essential for the apprehension of some euphemisms. Those euphemisms consist of one word, but they can appear with a second word that modifies the meaning of the expression. Euphemisms can be also expressed through figures of speech. There are only 6 euphemisms found that are expressed through figures. The reason why they are not used so often in political and economic articles can be that those expressions are difficult to understand and they are very

informal. In those cases context is essential to understand the meaning of the expression. Out of 6 figurative euphemisms 4 are metaphors, and in the last two cases they take form of metonymy and personification.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Printed Sources:

Allan, Keith. 1991. *Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language Used as a Shield and Weapon*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Alego, John. 2005. *The Origins and Development of the English Language*. Boston: Wadsworth.

Bedroll, Linda. 2007. *A Very Nice Ways, How to Say Very Bad Things*. Naperville: Sourcebooks.

Burridge, Kate. 2004. *Blooming English*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Crystal, David. 2002. *The English Language*. London: Penguin Books.

Enright, Dominique. 2004. *In Other Words*. London: Michael O'Mara Books Limited.

Holder, Bob. 2008. *Dictionary of Euphemisms*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hornby, Albert, Sydney. 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Katamba, Francis. 2005. *English words: structure, history, usage*. New York: Routledge.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. 2009. Harlow: Pearson/Longman.

Spiegl, Fritz. 1987. *In-Words and Out-Words*. London: Elm Tree Books.

On-line Sources:

Alkire, Scott. 2002. "Introducing Euphemisms to Language Learners". *The Internet TESL Journal*.

<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Alkire-Euphemisms.html>

McGlone, Matthew. Batchelor, Jennifer. 2003. „Looking Out for Number One: Euphemisms and Face“. *Journal of Communication*.

<https://webpace.utexas.edu/mm4994/www/looking%20out%20for%20number%20one.pdf>

Ostermeier, Eric. 2009. "What Euphemism for Tax Increase Do You Prefer?". Smart Politics.

http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cspg/smartpolitics/2009/03/what_euphemism_for_tax_increas.php

Parker. 2007. "Developmental Delay" or "Mentally Retarded"? Getting off the euphemism treadmill. Web MD.

<http://blogs.webmd.com/healthy-children/2007/07/developmental-delay-or-mentally.html>

APPENDICES

The list of appendices is available on the CD attached to the bachelor thesis.

APPENDIX P I: APPENDIX TITLE