



Original article

Euphemism: A Way of Violating the Cooperative Principle in Iraqi Political Speech

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Received: 17 February 2026
Accepted: 15 April 2026
Published: 01 May 2026

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.31185/wjfh.Vol22.Iss2.1681>



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Cite:

Yahya, E. M. (2026). Euphemism: A Way of Violating the Cooperative Principle in Iraqi Political Speech. Wasit Journal for Human Sciences, 22(2).
<https://doi.org/10.31185/wjfh.Vol22.Iss2.1681>

ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to probe the relationship of Iraqi political euphemism with the cooperative principle and politeness principle. Politician use political euphemism strategically to control the flow of information, and to conceal unpleasant realities and soften hard issues. They avoid making offensive statements by substituting terms that carry offensive connotations with more acceptable language. Data of this study is taken from an interview with a high status politician and statesman. A qualitative research methodology was employed, as the focus is on the words and expressions uttered by the politician. Grice (1975) and Leech (1983) were adopted as models of analysis. The study concluded that Iraqi politicians violate the cooperative principle by resorting to euphemistic expressions to achieve certain purposes. They tend to use certain linguistic devices like overstatements, understatements, periphrasis and metaphors. Moreover, Iraqi politicians tend to violate the cooperative principle while observing the politeness principle at the same time in their interviews.

Keywords: euphemism, political discourse, cooperative principle, political interviews

الكناية: اسلوب انتهاك مبدأ التعاون في الخطاب السياسي العراقي

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المستخلص

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء العلاقة بين الكناية في الخطاب السياسي العراقي وكلّ من مبدأ التعاون ومبدأ التأدب. إذ يستخدم السياسيون الكناية بصورة استراتيجية للتحكم في تدفق المعلومات، وإخفاء الحقائق غير المرغوب فيها، ولتلطيف القضايا الشائكة. كما يتجنبون الإدلاء بتصريحات قد تُعدّ مسيئة من خلال استبدال الألفاظ ذات الدلالات السلبية أو الإيحائية المسيئة بتعابير أكثر قبولاً.

استندت بيانات هذه الدراسة إلى مقابلة أجريت مع سياسي ورجل دولة رفيع المستوى. وقد اعتمد المنهج النوعي في البحث، نظراً لتركز التحليل على الألفاظ والتعابير التي صدرت عن السياسي. وتم اعتماد نموذجي غرايس (1975) وليتش (1983) إطارين نظريين للتحليل.

وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن السياسيين العراقيين ينتهكون مبدأ التعاون من خلال لجوئهم إلى الكناية لتحقيق مقاصد معينة. كما يميلون إلى توظيف بعض الوسائل اللغوية، مثل المبالغة، والتقليل، والإطناب (الدوران)، والاستعارة. فضلاً عن ذلك، يتبين أن السياسيين العراقيين ينتهكون مبدأ التعاون في مقابلاتهم مع مراعاة مبدأ التأدب في الوقت ذاته.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكناية، الخطاب السياسي، مبدأ التعاون، المقابلات السياسية

1-Introduction

Euphemism is a common linguistic phenomenon. It is used widely in daily communication. Being an indirect and vague, euphemism is instrumental in fulfilling political speeches. In the present research, we have presented a detailed theoretical background concerning euphemism, including definitions, origin, types and features in addition to the previous studies that dealt with euphemism from different aspects. The analysis is based on Grice (1975)'s cooperative principle and Leech (1983)'s politeness principle. A qualitative research methodology is followed. The aim of the present research is to discover how and why Iraqi politicians use euphemism in political discourse when violating the cooperative principles. Also finding out the tools that Iraqi politicians use in euphemism and the functions it serves under the guidance of politeness principle. It is hypothesized that Iraqi politicians violate the cooperative maxims by resorting to euphemistic expressions and by employing certain linguistic devices to achieve certain pragmatic functions. Besides, they tend to watch the politeness principle in their talk as well.

The data devoted for this study is collected from an interview with a highly status politician and statesman. The interview was made by Rudaw Arabia Channel. Due to the fact that this research is purely for linguistic purposes, the researcher thinks that there is no need to mention the name of the politician especially that he is a highly status statesman.

The whole analysis consists of one reply of the politician. This one turn of talk lasted for some minutes; they were quite adequate to violate all the maxims of the cooperative principle and observe

most of the politeness principle. For limitation of space, the researcher could not deal with more politicians. Yet the present material is fair enough for the purpose of this study.

2-The Problem

Based on the existing literature, the researcher has found that euphemisms have been studied in a variety of fields, however, seldom in-depth analysis is conducted. Most of the research has focused on semantics and pragmatics, whereas, political euphemism is less well researched. Therefore, this study is significant because the analysis on Iraqi political euphemism contributes to exploring the real intentions of Iraqi politicians. In addition, a few political euphemisms have been studied and analyzed on the basis of the cooperative principle and politeness principle in English. Concerning Arabic, this is the first study that explores violating the cooperative principles by resorting to euphemism in Iraqi political discourse.

3-Definition of euphemism

Euphemism is defined differently in different books, dictionaries and by different linguists. Before we examine the most related definitions, let's have a look at the origin of "euphemism". The origin of this term discloses the aim of the device very clearly. Etymologically, the prefix "eu" means "good" or "well" and the stem "phemism" refers to "speech", or "speaking", thus the literal meaning of the word "euphemism" is "word of good omen" or "say something good in a pleasant way" (Yang, 2023, p.1).

Moreover, euphemism is defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (2003) as "substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant" (p.348). Wilson (1993) on the other hand, defines euphemism as words or expressions that carry interpretations believed to be smoother, fresher used as alternatives for comments that are considered hurtful, unrefined. Also, it is defined as "mild, agreeable, or roundabout words which are used to replace coarse, painful, or offensive ones" (Rawson, 1981, p. 11).

Allan and Burridge (1991), on the other hand, offers this definition: "euphemism are alternatives to dispreferred expressions, and are used to avoid possible loss of face. The dispreferred expression may be taboo, fearsome, distasteful, or for some other reason has too many negative connotations to felicitously execute speakers' communicative intention on a given occasion" (p. 14).

Generally speaking, euphemism can be considered "a white washing device", in which a polite word or expression is used instead of a more direct one to avoid shocking or upsetting someone (Yang, 2017, p. 143).

Although there is no unified definition of euphemism at present, some commonalities from different definitions can be concluded namely that euphemism is the replacement of horrible or offensive language with mild polite words. In fact, it has been noticed that the use of euphemism varies in different cultural and social background, in addition to the change of their connotations.

4-Previous Studies

Euphemism as a universal phenomenon has attracted the attention of many linguists during the last decades. We have noted that there is a remarkable effort by many researchers, in that they methodically examine the factors influencing its formation, techniques of composition, functions, categorization, in addition to the principles that govern its creation. Scholars have dealt with euphemism from diverse angles. Some studies focus on the euphemistic words that are used in everyday language specifically, these terms that refer to death, sex or disease, such as Meng (2016), Cao (2020), He (2022), and Yang (2023).

Some other linguists are concerned with investigating euphemism in literal works like Li and Cao (2023) in their research “A pragmatic analysis of English euphemism in Downton Abbey”.

The fact that euphemism is mostly found in diplomatic and political framework, motivated researchers to investigate this area. One of these scholars is Bahaa-Eddin, (2004) in which he explores the use of euphemism and dysphemism in the war on Iraq discourse in a number of relevant documents and news reports.

Another related study is done by Ryabova in (2013) entitled “euphemism and media framing”. The researcher examines euphemisms used in media discourses concerning politics and world diplomacy. One more study that attracted our attention is the study made to examine political speeches by Hong (2019) in which he focuses on the pragmatic analysis of English euphemism and its usages in the mainstream political news. Another study conducted in 2019 by Mahdi and Eesa in their paper “way of manipulating the public by using euphemistic expressions within Iraqi political context”. The researchers attempt in their paper to find how different leaders in the world of politics use this technique to manipulate people minds and achieve certain goals regarding Iraqi situations.

The last research worth to be mentioned is the one by Yao and Hu (2023) entitled: “the analysis of political euphemism speech by Obama to announce the end of war in Iraq”, in which they analyze the use of political euphemism in Obama 2010 speech announcing the end of war in Iraq.

It is worth to mention that none of the researches that deal with Iraqi data has analyzed the data according to the models that we have adopted in our analysis, namely Grice (1975) and Leech (1983). As such, most of the researches are concerned with investigating the linguistic and rhetorical devices used in euphemism, in general, and sometimes in political discourse (Al-Shaibawi, 2026).

5-Functions of euphemism

According to the available literature, there are many functions that lie behind the use of euphemisms. These functions include:

a. The functions of avoiding taboo

In every language there are certain words that carry bad or offensive meanings in that it is embarrassing to use them in public debates. So these unfriendly words or taboos are substituted by more acceptable words (Hong, 2019).

b. The function of concealment

Joanna Channell (2000, p. 147) has described “covering -up function” as “deliberately withholding information” which virtually means “not giving information that the speaker possesses and that could

be appropriate in the situation. Many politicians make use of this function to achieve unspeakable political goals. They try to conceal the truth in order to soften the tense relations.

c. The function of refinement

Euphemisms are necessities in dealing with sensitive and repulsive issues. In order to avoid hurting other people's feelings, journalists, for example, use certain euphemisms in their news items to refine displeased facts or any inappropriate issue to the public (Hong, 2019, p. 1186).

d. The function of politeness

Euphemism has a significant role in achieving politeness (Leech, 1983, p. 39). Being a universal phenomenon, politeness restrains action and speech of human beings, in addition to coordinating the relationship between people.

e. The function of compliments

The last significant function of euphemism is its praise function. People sometimes use neutral or commendatory words or phrases to achieve certain goals (Leech, 1983).

6-Types of Euphemism

Rawson in his book "a dictionary of euphemism and other double talk" introduces two types of euphemism: positive and negative. The positive euphemism blows up and magnifies, making the euphemized items appear greater or more important than they really are. They include many occupational titles, which can be used to keep from harm or save worker's egos by raising their job status such as "access controller" instead of "doorman". Rawson also mentions that there are other kinds of positive euphemisms that include job titles adopted to support and fortify one's self-image or impress one's friends and acquaintances. Examples are "council" in place of "lawyer," "healthcare professional" for "nurse" or "doctor". Negative euphemisms on the other hand collapse and diminish. It is mostly defensive in nature, balancing the power of tabooed terms and otherwise eliminating from the language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly. In brief, negative euphemism compensates what people prefer not to use. Examples include "harvesting" instead of "killing" or "relationship" for "sexual relationship" also "collateral damage" instead of "civilian casualties" (Rawson, 1981, p. 3).

It is worth mentioning here that euphemisms whether positive or negative can be used consciously or unconsciously. Euphemisms are being used in different social circumstances to avoid embarrassment or to protect another's ego, for example, at a formal dinner party, a guest may ask the way to the "little girls room" to avoid the embarrassment of using the word toilets. Such a use of language considered "unconscious use of euphemism". On the other hand, some euphemisms are described as conscious because they are intentionally formed to make what is unreal or bad seem real or respectful, in particular in the language of advertising and politics such as "redeployment of troops" for "withdrawal" (Al-Qadi, 2009, p.).

7-Features of political euphemism

It is widely known that politicians use euphemism to hide the truth and to protect themselves from any responsibility. In the words of George Orwell (2013, p. 30), "words or phrases, mainly designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidarity to pure wind". As such, euphemism is an indispensable tool for political participants to hide scandals, disguise the truth, guide public thoughts when discussing social issues.

Features of political euphemism can be summarized in the following:

1- Greater Degree of Deviation from its signified

According to the Swiss linguist Saussure, language signs are a combination of the signifier (the phonic form) and the signified (objects in the real world). Because of a lack of relationship between the signifier and the signified either directly or logically, they have a relative relationship which may create euphemism by substituting their signifier. “Euphemism meanings stay to their former zero degree, i.e. literal meaning, since euphemism is just created through transforming the signifier to increase the connection distance between the signifier and the signified” (Zhao & Dong, 2010, p. 118).

As such, euphemized expressions could not be as literal as thinking; however, they should have the intended meaning which is not the zero degree. According to Zhao and Dong (Zhao & Dong, 2010), it is quite obvious that these expressions are not a simple replacement of the former zero-degree signifier, but are quite opposite meanings to their meanings. Just like replacing “black” with “white”. For instance, at “10 warhead intermediate range missile” was euphemized as a “peacekeeper”.

2- More vague meanings

According to George Orwell (1990, p. 40), two properties of political discourse are significant, namely “obsolescence” and “vagueness” of figure of speech. Euphemism uses direct expressions instead of implicative ones to demystify the connection of political discourse as providing political justifications. This can be clearly explained through using the expression “rescue mission” instead of “invasion” and “air operation” instead of “air attack”.

3-Characteristic of times

Euphemism reflects the language of the social culture, thus changings in social development will propel those in language (Zhao & Dong, 2010). As such, characteristic of time can be proposed or offered upon the variety of the signifier of the same object. For instance, in 1950s Truman described Korean war as “police action”; in 1960s and 1970s Vietnam war was called “Vietnam conflict” by US. In 1983, US invasion into Grenada was called “a rescue mission” instead of “incursion” while the war against Iraq in 2003 was called by Bush government “operation Iraqi freedom” (Zhao & Dong, 2010, p. 119).

8-Conventional devices for euphemism formation

Generally speaking, euphemism may appear in different forms: words, phrases, and sentences. It is usually categorized according to the three devices: lexical devices, grammatical devices and rhetorical devices. This categorization for the formation of euphemism is adopted by Li and Cao (2023). We think that it is perhaps one of the best categorizations that figures out the working mechanism of euphemism in English.

1- Lexical devices

Euphemism can be formed by using certain lexical terms such as, blending, vague words, abbreviation, spelling devices, synonym, antonym, back- formation, and the like. Vague words or expressions are used to make things less unpleasant. The use of vague words or expressions can

expand the meaning of words to conceal the cruel reality. For instance, the word “accident” is used to describe a person who has been in trouble and has died (Li & Cao, 2023, p. 2).

2- Grammatical devices

Euphemism is not restricted to the use of lexicons; it can also be achieved by applying grammatical devices without actually changing the content of the message. Sometimes the speaker intentionally uses certain grammatical devices to create euphemism and the effect is that an extra meaning is conveyed.

One of the grammatical devices used mostly in euphemism is the syntactic negation, such as the sentence pattern “not suppose”, “not think” and even “not sure”. In fact, syntactic negation, maybe used to weaken the negation degree and achieve euphemism. While subjective mood is used to blame or request others. For example, “I wish that you have told me earlier” is politer and more acceptable than being too much direct “why didn’t you tell me earlier?”

3- Rhetorical devices

Rhetoric which is a very common skill used mainly by politicians either in speech or writing in a special way that influences or entertains people. Euphemism can also be achieved by the aid of figures of speech like periphrases, Irony and aposiopesis. Periphrases is a roundabout way of expressing something in an indirect way. Also when people have to say something offensive, unpleasant or embarrassing, people would rather be expressing it in a euphemistic way. Irony is another rhetorical device by which people mean usually the opposite of what they say. It is used to accomplish the effect of a humor or sarcasm. Finally, aposiopesis is the device of suddenly breaking off in the middle of an utterance as if the speaker is unwilling to continue to talk about certain taboo or unpleasant things (Li & Cao, 2023, p. 2).

In the sphere of political discourse, euphemism can be used to convey good or bad intentions. Politically euphemism is a vague expression that is used to hide the cruel reality and reduces precision of thought in the mind of the audience. The main aim for a politician is to look polite and sensitive to people’s concerns and needs, so that he can win in favor of his opponent. Politicians usually avoid vocabularies that have unpleasant reaction on behalf of the hearers. In brief, euphemism is an essential part in political discourse as Lutz (1989) puts it “politicians are considered masters of euphemism” (p. 159).

9-Gricean Cooperative Principle and Euphemism

The cooperative principle was introduced for the first time by the American linguist Paul Grice in 1967. According to this theory, our talk exchanges are oriented towards a common purpose or a set of common purposes, and in order to achieve these goals, the participants should cooperate with each other.

To make his theory applicable, Grice distinguishes four major categories: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. As such dialogues between people can be carried out effectively and smoothly. However, in our daily communication, Grice noticed that people do not always speak directly, but they tend to be indirect so as to imply things rather than stating them (Yule, 1996).

Hence, by analyzing the conversational implicature caused by the deviation of euphemism from the perspective of cooperative principle, the pragmatic functions and communicative effects of

euphemism in political discourse can be highlighted. In brief, we will present the maxims formulated by Grice and the rules of behavior that participants in social communication expected to follow:

1- The Maxim of Quality

“Try to make your contribution one that is true specifically

- a. do not say what you believe to be false.
- b. do not say that for which you like adequate evidence”
which means that people should be genuine and sincere in their talk.

2- The Maxim of Quantity

- a. “make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange.
- b. do not make your contribution more informative than is required”. This can be explained by assuming that people should make the strongest claim consistent with their perception of the facts, while giving no more no less information than is required to make their messages clear.

3- The Maxim of Relevance

“make your contribution relevant”

which means that an expression should not be irrelevant to the context in which it occurs.

4- the maxim of manner

“ be perspicuous and specifically:

- a. avoid obscurity
- b. avoid ambiguity
- c. be brief
- d. be orderly”

This means that expressions should be presented in a clear, concise manner that avoid ambiguity, and avoid misleading or confusing the hearer.

10-The relation between cooperative principle and politeness principle in political discourse

Politicians have recourse to the cooperative principle to reason out the conversational implicature from the utterances. Yet the cooperative principle cannot always explain why politicians and people in general tend to violate the maxims to make the utterances vague and indirect. Leech (1983) suggested that politeness goes hand in hand with indirectness. This means indirect expressions are associated with greater politeness. As a result, Leech proposed the politeness principle. According to him, the politeness principle would make up the limitations of the cooperative principle and explain something that the cooperative principle cannot solve. That is to say, the politeness principle is complementary to the cooperative principle. As such politicians violate the cooperative principle in an aim to express themselves with great politeness to others while committing with the politeness principle. Tian (2016, p.102) suggested that “euphemisms violate the cooperative principle so that the politeness principle can be better followed. The two complementary principles are combined to achieve euphemism with the maximum effect, thereby helping the conversations and promote harmonious interpersonal relationship”.

11-Politeness principle

Politeness principle was first introduced by the British linguist Leech in “principles of pragmatics”. As we have mentioned before, Leech considers the politeness principle as complementary to the

cooperative principle. This is why we think that it is necessary to include them in our analysis. In certain cases, euphemism is used in order to avoid the harm caused by inappropriate language to others, which indicates politeness of the speaker. The six politeness principles are as follows:

- 1- Tact maxim
 - a. minimize cost to other
 - b. maximize benefit to other
- 2- Generosity maxim
 - a. minimize benefit to self
 - b. maximize cost to other
- 3- Approbation maxim
 - a. minimize dispraise of other
 - b. maximize praise to other
- 4- modesty maxim
 - a. minimize praise of self
 - b. maximize dispraise of self
- 5- Agreement maxim
 - a. minimize disagreement between self and other
 - b. maximize agreement between self and other
- 6- sympathy maxim
 - a. minimize antipathy between self and other
 - b. maximize sympathy between self and other (Leech, 1983, p. 133)

12-Data Collection & Procedure of Analysis

The interview chosen for the present analysis is an interview with a high-status politician and statesman by Rudaw Channel.

Certain steps are followed in analyzing the data:

First, examining many political Iraqi interviews for different politicians.

Second, choosing a particular one that satisfy the aims of this research.

Third, downloading the interview, writing the exact words and paying attention to the pauses during speech.

Fourth, picking the euphemistic expressions, and analyzing them according to Grice (1975)'s cooperative principle and Leech (1983)'s politeness principle.

At the very beginning of this research, we were after investigating selected speeches of Iraqi politicians. Then we realized that it is impossible to do this for the limitation of space. The part of the interview analyzed in this study is just one reply of the politician to one question. This is why we deal with the data as one piece and consider this work as a sample of analysis for most Iraqi politicians' speeches.

The following is the analyzed script which is in Arabic followed by the English translation:

المذيع : آخر ما تحدثتم به هو إعمار مدينة الصدر وتحدثون عن حكومة الخدمات واسميت الحكومة "حكومة الخدمات" هنا نتساءل ونتوقف.. المواطن يقول هذا الحديث تكرر لعشرين سنة سابقة وحتى قبلها شوكت راح يثبت لنا بأن الحكومة تعمل بشكل صحيح ودقيق على الأرض ونشاهد ونلمس الخدمات لمس اليد.

رئيس الوزراء: بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم تحية لكم ولمشاهدي قناتكم الكريمة وأهلا وسهلا بكم تقبل الله طاعاتكم في هذا الشهر الفضيل... هو بالتأكيد كل العمل سواء كان ما يتعلق بهذا المشروع أو ذلك يعتمد على مبدأ الثقة وجدية الحكومة في تنفيذ برامجها وأهدافها المعلنة.. عندما نأتي إلى هذا المشروع مثلما تفضلت ننذكر المشروع الذي بدأ في 2006 – 2007 10*10 تطوير مدينة الصدر.. مرة تشكل لجنة إعمار.. كذا.. لكن المشكلة قائمة.. مدينة الصدر اللي عادة الوحدات السكنية فيها تتراوح من 100-140 م الآن القطعة الواحدة صارت ثلاث قطع ثلاث وحدات سكنية ! تخيل حجم المشكلة وهذا ينعكس على الخدمات الأخرى المدارس على المستشفيات يعني أنت ما عندك أرض حتى تبني مدرسة والمستشفى هو نفسه سوينا له توسع إذن لازم نفكر بحل جذري حتى تستوعب هذه الزيادة السكانية.. في قرارات سابقة لتشكيل هذا المشروع تمت مراجعتها وبدينا بإجراءات عملية منها نحن بدأنا في مشروع السكن بشكل عام... كيف نوائم بين هذا المشروع المخصص لمدينة الصدر للتوسع في هذه المدينة مع أصل المشروع مشروع السكن اللي قدمنا الحكومة وإن شاء الله سينفذ قريبا.. فوضعنا الأسس الصحيحة بدأ من الأرض والسيطرة عليها... مشكلة التجاوزات ومرورا بتصفية العلاقة مع الشركة المصممة وانتهاء بالوصول إلى قناعة يجب حسم الأمر باجتماع قريب إن شاء الله في اللجنة الخاصة بهذا المشروع... نحن جادون في تنفيذ هذا المشروع لأنه ضروري وحل لكثير من الإشكاليات. واقع الحال يعني موقفاً للمشكلة في مدينة الصدر مابعد مدينة الصدر أنت من بالطائرة وتتفرج.. طبعا في الطائرة غير أنه في الميدان تشوف حجم الإهمال.. الوحدات السكنية متناثرة... العشوائية نوعية شبكة الطرق قطعاً ما بيها بها أي خدمات بنى تحتية فهذا مكان ومواقع غير لائقة لمواطن عراقي يعيش في العاصمة بغداد في بلد مثل العراق.. إن شاء الله يلبس المواطن الجديدة مع مرور الوقت مع خطواتنا العملية اللي راح تتسارع في الأشهر القادمة.

Interviewer: what you have lately talked about is the reconstruction of Sadr City, and you have been talking about the "Government of Services" and you've named the government "the Government of Services". we stop at this point and inquire... citizens say that this talk has been repeated for the past 20 years and even before that. When it will be proved that the government is working correctly? and we can thereupon see real services on the ground.

The politician: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Greetings to you and to the viewers of your esteemed channel, and welcome. May Allah accept your good deeds in this blessed month... Certainly, all the work, whether related to this project or that, depends on the principle of trust and the seriousness of the government in implementing its announced programs and objectives. When we come to this project, as you mentioned, we remember the project that started in 2006-2007, i.e. the development of Sadr City. A reconstruction committee was once formed, and so on. But the problem still exists. The residential units in Sadr City, which usually range from 100-140 square meters, have now become three plots, i.e. three residential units! Imagine how big the problem is!, and this is reflected on other services, on schools, on hospitals. This means that you don't have a land to build a school on, and the hospital is nearly the same hospital, we have just expanded it. So, we need to think of a fundamental solution to accommodate this increase in population. Previous decisions to form this project were reviewed, and we started taking practical measures, including what we started in the housing project in general. How do we make a balance between this project dedicated to the expansion of Sadr City and with the original housing project that the government has presented which, God willing, will be implemented soon.. We have laid the right foundations, starting from the land and controlling it. The problem of trespassing, going through the hope so settlement of the relationship with the design company, and ending with the conviction that the matter must be resolved in a meeting soon, God willing, in the special committee for this project.

We are determined to implement this project because it is necessary and is a solution to many problems. In fact, the problem doesn't only concern Sadr City, but also concern what is beyond Sadr City. Looking from the plane, of course, differs from looking from the ground, where you can clearly see the extent of neglect. The residential units are scattered. The randomness, the quality of the road network, of course, has no infrastructure services. These are unsuitable places for an Iraqi citizen living in the capital, Baghdad, in a country like Iraq. Hopefully, over time, with our practical steps that will accelerate in the coming months, the citizens will see our seriousness.

13-Data Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the data (the script above) is analyzed to explore how can euphemism violate the four maxims of the cooperative principles by resorting to some lexical and rhetorical devices. In this interview, the interviewer asks the politician about the time of solving the problem of services that the government has promised to achieve in Al-Sadr City. We put down the exact wording of the both interviewer and interviewee.

It should be mentioned here that such an attempt neither criticize, nor support any political orientation, it is merely a pragmatic point of view that tries to identify euphemism within violating the cooperative principles in Iraqi political discourse.

1- Violation of the Quantity maxim

It is quite common to use euphemism in the political genre that violate the Quantity maxim with the aim of protecting self and glorifying the image. Quantity maxim involves that the contribution of the speaker should be informative enough, in that no more no less information given. But what happens with most politicians is that they use vague language to extend the scope of information. They deliberately violate the Quantity maxim and successfully hide what others wants to know.

In fact, certain political and governmental issues are not allowed to be disclosed to the public. They should be kept as a secret. Yet citizens in so many occasions should be informed about the exact plans of the governments because any delay in the expected results would mean shortening in the government actions and consequently affect the politician's future.

In the present analysis, in order to achieve the purpose of obscuring confidential topics and in order not to put much responsibility upon his government, the politician, uses vague words and expressions to expand the scope of information covered and in order not to commit himself with any real commitment. He used euphemistic expressions like:

حل جذري fundamental solution, جدية الحكومة seriousness of the government, مبدأ الثقة principle of trust, إجراءات عملية practical procedures, حسم الأمر resolving the matter, أهدافها المعلنة the announced objectives; to downplay the seriousness of the matter by providing insufficient information which violate the maxim of Quantity. So, instead of answering the question (when) his excellency answered with a very long answer including many euphemistic expressions which include more information than is required and at the same time neglect the needed information.

Moreover, by resorting to an aposiopesis, the politician violates the quantity maxim to achieve his aim. According to Li& Cao (2023 :4) Aposiopesis is used as a technique to violate the quantity maxim. The politician suddenly breaks off in the middle of the sentence and as such the information conveyed is incomplete:

"تطوير مدينة الصدر... مرة تشكل لجنة اعمار... كذا... لكن المشكلة.....".

"The development of Sadr City.... Once a reconstruction committee was formed and.... so on but the problem..."

2- Violation of the Quality maxim

According to quality maxim, speakers should always tell the truth and show what they truly think or feel. However, politicians used to space in indirect way and what they talk is generally far from the truth. Our analysis has revealed that Iraqi politicians violate the quality maxim by using euphemism in two ways, either by using understatements to cover the flaws and deficiencies of their governments like:

"we remember the project that started 2006- 2007", "نتذكر المشروع الذي بدأ 2007-2006". Here the interviewee throwing the responsibility on the previous governments and defending the present government, since the problem is not new, also he mentions:

"a reconstruction committee was once formed... And so on..." "مرة تشكل لجنة اعمار... كذا..."

"the residential unit has become three plots, i.e., three residential units!" "الآن القطعة الواحدة صارت 3 قطع 3 وحدات سكنية !"

What the politician wants to say is that the problem is too big to be solved by his government and it is not his government's fault, that is to say, there is no shortening on behalf of the government.

Another example when he says:

"واقع الحال يعني مو فقط المشكلة في مدينة الصدر.. ما بعد مدينة الصدر انت من بالطائرة وتنفرج... طبعا في الطائرة غير انه في الميدان تشوف حجم الالهال... الوحدات السكنية متناثرة... العشوائية... نوعية شبكة الطرق قطعاً مايبها اي خدمات بنى تحتية"

"In fact, the problem doesn't only concern Al-Sadr City, but also concerns what is beyond Sadr City. Looking from the plane, of course, differs from having a look from the ground, where you can clearly see the extent of neglect. The residential units are scattered. The randomness, the quality of the road network, of course, has no infrastructure services"

As such he is understating the current situation not only in Al-Sadr City but the whole capital.

Or that the politician attempts to overstate the role of his government by exaggerating its role and effect in improving the situation in Al-Sadar city like saying :

"we need to think of a fundamental solution" "لازم نفكر بحل جذري"

"we started taking practical procedures" "بدينا باجراءات عملية"

"We are determined to implement this project" "نحن جادون في تنفيذ هذا المشروع"

"that the matter must be resolved in a meeting soon" "يجب حسم الامر باجتماع قريب"

"We have laid the proper foundations" "وضعنا الاسس الصحيحة"

All these euphemistic expressions are used to overstate the government so as to make it in a good position magnifying its role. However, nothing is tangible for the Iraqi citizen at least until there would be real actions and procedures on the ground, which make it untrue for the present time or at least reveal the lack the adequate evidence.

The politician uses the same strategy again (overstatement) by glorifying and understating the Iraqi citizen in saying:

" فهذا مكان ومواقع غير لائقة لمواطن عراقي يعيش في العاصمة بغداد في بلد مثل العراق "

“These are unsuitable places for an Iraqi citizen living in the capital, Baghdad, in a country like Iraq.”

He is glorifying and dignifying the Iraqi citizens in general to make the audience feel proud and good for being Iraqis.

Rawson (1981) mentioned that euphemism can also be of stylistic type, like inflating or magnifying the grander meaning of the euphemized phrase which will become more significant than they actually are (Ibid). This usage which is related to what we are discussing above (overstatements) provides honorific personal attribute. This can be noted in the extensive use of plural addressee pronoun in the P.M speech like: "we" "نحننا" "we started" "بدينا" "we think" "نفكر" , "we come" "ناتي" "we balance" "نوائم" "we started it" "بداناها".

Such usages that give a sense of inclusion substitutes the singular addressee pronoun that give a sense of exclusiveness. It is a smart way from the P.M to make the public accept what the he says since he is sharing them his decisions and plans. Besides, that using the plural pronoun is a way to escape personal responsibility.

3- Violation of the Manner Maxim

According to the requirement of the manner maxim, the speaker is supposed to be perspicuous and express himself clearly and consciously to avoid obscurity (Yang, 20223:3). Actually, most euphemisms violate the maxim of manner by expressing things ambiguously so as to avoid talking about unpleasant or embarrassing things.

Back to our analysis and in order to avoid embarrassment and blame, the politician uses many vague and obscure words and expressions in order to be not too specific in expressing his government's effort in securing the situational conditions. Most of the euphemisms are metaphors:

مبدأ الثقة principle of trust , جدية الحكومة seriousness of the government

اهدافها المعلنة the announced objectives, حسم الامر resolving the matter

"وضعنا الاسس الصحيحة" "We have laid the right foundations",

"السيطرة على الارض" "controlling the land" ,

"يلبس المواطن الجدية" "literally : the citizen wears seriousness (Iraqi citizen would be more serious)"

"تصفية العلاقات" "settlement of relationships" ,, and many others .In fact the script is full of such euphemisms.

All these euphemistic expressions are considered ambiguous for they do not specify things or times; merely broad terms used to cover and save the politicians from embarrassment and any possible accusations. In our opinion, politicians need to be hedgy and unspecific using vague and indirect expressions in most of their speeches. Indirectness is an essential element in their work. As such it is very normal that politicians usually violate the manner maxim.

4- Violation of the Maxim of Relation

According to this maxim, the speaker should say something relevant to the context, including the linguistic context and the situational one (Yang, 2023). By resorting to periphrases, the use of euphemism in the speech of Iraqi politician violates the relation maxim. Periphrasis is a roundabout way of expressing something indirectly (Li & Cao, 2023, p. 5). Basically, it is used when politicians have to say something offensive, unpleasant or simply for being unwilling to give information.

The interviewee asks the politician a specific question concerning the time at which the government would start working fruitfully with tangible results. Yet, he doesn't give any timing or any definite answer but says something which is irrelevant to the posed question and violates the relation maxim. He starts talking about the tasks of governments in general then he shifts to talk about experiences of other governments in the past, then the big problem of Al-Sadr City in general and to the end without answering the original question. Actually, the whole answer can be considered irrelevant to the question specially when he says:

"... هو بالتأكيد كل العمل سواء كان ما يتعلق بهذا المشروع أو ذاك يعتمد على مبدأ الثقة وجدية الحكومة في تنفيذ برامجها وأهدافها المعلنة ... عندما نأتي إلى هذا المشروع مثلما تفضلت نتذكر المشروع الذي بدأ في 2006 - 2007"

"... Certainly, all the work, whether related to this project or that, depends on the principle of trust and the seriousness of the government in implementing its announced programs and objectives. When we come to this project, as you mentioned, we remember the project that started in 2006-2007,".

To the end of his reply. By doing this and by using many euphemistic expressions, the politician conceals that he is unwilling to specify exact time or reveal the deadline of the projects and plans the government intend to implement. As such, he violates the maxim of relation undoubtedly.

In the light of the preceding analysis, it has been shown clearly that the politician has violated the four maxims by resorting to many euphemistic expressions including both lexical and rhetorical devices to achieve certain ends. Now in addition to the cooperative principle, there is an immense need to examine the effect of a complementary principle operating simultaneously in communication which is the politeness principle proposed by Leech (1983).

14-Euphemism and politeness principle

Leech has proposed politeness principle as a complement to the cooperative principle. In the words of Hong "The maxims of politeness principle encourage people to minimize personal judgments and arguments harmful to others and praise of themselves, disagreement with others in opinion and opposition to others in emotions" (Hong, 2019, p. 1188). On many occasions, politicians tend to utilize euphemism in order not to offend the audience and to take their emotions and personal feelings into account.

In fact, we have noticed that cooperative principle is violated by politicians for certain purposes and at the same time politicians try to observe the politeness principle to appear in a good image to the public and to soften issues and prepare the listeners to receive bad news or at least make public accept the inconvenient justifications.

Turning to our analysis, the politician is trying to show his good manner which is reflected in his calmness and the euphemistic expressions he is using. He begins his speech by saying:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful" , "بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم"

Then he congratulates the audience for the coming of the holy month. Politicians usually use this technique and exploit such occasions to win the favor of their audience and to make themselves modest and friendly.

Concerning the tact maxim which is the most fundamental principle in the politeness principle that refers to not to talk about harmful views to others (Leech, 1983), we think that the politician in his speech tries not to harm feelings of Iraqi people, for example he mentions:

"starting from the land and controlling it. The problem of trespassing", he does not condemn the misbehavior of some people who have overtaken lands illegally that belong to the government, building houses on them, even he wasn't clear enough until he added "مشكلة التجاوزات" "the problem of trespassing".

On the other hand, a good example for the approbation maxim which involves to talk less about other party's shortcomings, is when the politician says:

"settlement of the relationship with the design company", he did not mention the shortcomings of this company or reasons behind this settlement.

While the modesty maxim is emphasized by the politician's simplicity throughout the whole speech and his use of the honorific plural pronouns to show respect to the audience especially when he welcomes them at the beginning of his speech:

"Greetings to you and to the viewers of your esteemed channel, and welcome. May Allah accept your good deeds in this blessed month".

Examples of the extensive use of honorifics in the politician speech are: "ناتي" "we come", "نفكر" "we think", "نبدأناها" "we started it", "نحنا" "we started", "بدينا" "we balance".

However, we cannot say that the politician is trying to be little himself (as the maxim propose) to be modest, on the contrary he is trying not to show any weakness or shortening.

For the agreement maxim which means to minimize the disagreement with people, the politician uses a periphrastic way to maximize the agreement with the audience: "وإن شاء الله سينفذ قريباً" "God willing, will be implemented soon",

"وانتهاء بالوصول إلى قناعة يجب حسم الأمر باجتماع قريب إن شاء الله في اللجنة الخاصة بهذا المشروع ان شاء الله"

"and ending with the conviction that the matter must be resolved in a meeting soon, God willing, in the special committee for this project".

The hedgy word "ان شاء الله" "God willing or if God wills" has used twice to help the politician for the easy convince of the public and at the same time avoiding committing himself with any deadline.

The last maxim in the politeness principle is the sympathy maxim which requires people to minimize their aversion to others and maximize their sympathy for others. A good example is:

"طبعا في الطائرة غير أنه في الميدان تشوف حجم الإهمال.. الوحدات السكنية متناثرة... العشوائية نوعية شبكة الطرق قطعاً ما بيها بها أي خدمات بنى تحتيه فهذا مكان ومواقع غير لائقة لمواطن عراقي يعيش في العاصمة بغداد في بلد مثل العراق"

"Looking from the plane, of course, differs from looking from the ground, where you can clearly see the extent of neglect. The residential units are scattered. The randomness, the quality of the road network, of course, has no infrastructure services. These are unsuitable places for an Iraqi citizen living in the capital, Baghdad, in a country like Iraq."

By saying this, the politician shows sympathy towards the conditions of the Iraqi citizens, the lack of services, infrastructures, randomness, all these make it inappropriate place to live for the Iraqi citizen.

As such, we can say that the politician is observing most of the politeness maxims except the generosity maxim (which involves putting the other party in a higher position, and putting ourselves in a lower position), and since the speaker is a statesman of high status, it is illogical to do this.

It can be said that the euphemisms not only save the face of people, but creates a good communication atmosphere. Hence, analyzing the politeness principles is beneficial to understand the motivations of using euphemism.

15-Conclusion

The analysis carried out demonstrates that euphemism is well established in the discourse of Iraqi politicians. It shows also, how Iraqi politicians use euphemism that violate the cooperative principle and follow the politeness principle to ease conflicts and conceal unsettling or controversial issues from public opinion. Political euphemism can effectively circumvent sensitive topics. It can diminish the seriousness of a matter or obscure the truth to a certain extent. It is interesting to note that Iraqi politicians use understatements, overstatements, periphrasis and metaphor basically as a linguistic device in creating euphemism. In fact, the speech of Iraqi politicians is filled with tricky euphemism so as to achieve certain pragmatic functions. At the same time Iraqi politicians pay attention to the politeness principle in their speeches. This study confirms other studies that the cooperative principle and politeness principle are two essential pragmatic principles that contribute to satisfactory communicative results. Actually, politeness principle serves as a complement that usually collaborates with cooperative principle to make the communication more decent.

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