

## The Concept of Dysphemism in French Linguistics

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**Annotation:** *This article will talk about the concept of dysphemism, the feedback of linguistic scholars on this concept, the pragmatic features of dysphemisms in the French language. It has also been suggested that the phenomenon of dysphemism, its characteristic feature, dysphemism is a discursive phenomenon, and dysphemism is both a linguistic and a speech phenomenon.*

**Key words:** *dysphemism, euphemism, dysphemism, cacophenism, orthophenism.*

**Introduction.** Language functions to convey, describe, and articulate an individual's inner world, including their emotional state. This includes feelings such as anger, fear, surprise, admiration, and more. Notably, not all these words and expressions have positive meanings, they also encompass negative terms like "insult", "mockery", "disrespect", "rudeness", "irony" and "sarcasm" to express negative emotions, hatred, and malice against societal norms and values. Each language has both euphemisms and dysphemisms, which can be either optional or non-optional. Many of these terms are perceived as "unpleasant" or "offensive" by both the speaker and the audience.

Currently, the number of words with negative meanings is increasing, leading to a need to study the concept's essence and origins, known in linguistics as "dysphemism". There are various reasons for rude speech. Sociologists and sociolinguists note that "deepening stratification between social groups in different areas of life, conflict of interest, the existence of one group's desire to dominate another group" has contributed to the coarsening of speech.

**Results and Discussion.** Currently, there is no comprehensive theory regarding the general principles of dysphemism formation and usage. Linguist A.N. Rezanova attributes the lack of in-depth study of dysphemisms to their nature as "a concept contrary to moral norms". Although dysphemisms are common in spoken language, their use in literary contexts is prohibited, hindering their study. Key aspects of this phenomenon, such as the origins of dysphemistic pragmatics and their socio-historical and psychological distribution, remain underexplored [2, pp. 3]. Scholar L.V. Kvaskova advocates for a detailed examination of the linguistic and functional nature of negative terms to understand their roots in oral language [1, pp. 353].

To define "dysphemism" we turn to lexicographic sources:

The dictionary edited by V.N. Yarseva defines dysphemism as "replacing an emotionally and stylistically neutral word with rude, unkind words" [3, pp. 590].

T.V. Matveeva offers a broader definition: dysphemism is "the rough expression of an emotional state, replacing a stylistically neutral word or phrase with a rough equivalent". In communication, the speaker aims to humiliate, insult, or discredit the interlocutor, often violating speech norms and displaying impudence in relationships [4, pp. 95].

From these definitions, it can be inferred that every dysphemism has a stylistically neutral synonym. However, L.V. Porokhniskaya notes that this neutral word cannot always be clearly distinguished from euphemisms, dysphemisms, and orthophemisms [5, pp.143].

N. Abakova, who researched dysphemisms in the political arena, concludes that dysphemization can be seen as a tactical language tool used to achieve a desired pragmatic effect and purposefully influence an audience [6, pp. 27].

A.N. Rezanova understands dysphemism as the use of neutral lexicon to represent or negatively assess taboo language forms that are inappropriate for the speech situation and serve a communicative purpose.

Dysphemism is a discursive phenomenon, while dysphemism encompasses both language (replacing one lexical unit with another) and speech phenomena (a means of substitution to achieve a communicative goal). The study of dysphemism is less extensive than that of euphemism, and this concept has not been a distinct object of study in French linguistics.

When we turned to the etymology of the concept of "dysphemism" in French, we looked at this information:

*La notion du XXe siècle, construit sur le modèle de euphémisme par substitution du préfixe dys- au préfixe eu-. Mot de formation savante forgé à partir du grec ancien δυσφημισμός, dysphémismos ("emploi d'un mot défavorable"), composé de δυσ, dys ("difficile, mauvais, négatif") et de φήμη, phêmê ("parole") [site]. (The term "dysphemism" is derived from ancient Greek, with "dys" meaning "difficult, bad, negative" and "phêmi" meaning "I speak". Unlike euphemism, it signifies "bad speech")*

Spanish linguist da Silva Correa refers to dysphemism as "cacofemismo", "contra-eufemismo" or "anti-eufemismo" [7, pp. 445-787]. Linguistic scholar Grant describes dysphemism as "mot fort" (strong words) or "malphemism" (bad utterance), encompassing rudeness, hatred, ridicule, blasphemy, and other negative expressions [8, pp. 246-253].

Therefore, dysphemism does not take a single form, except for etiquette, it is not limited to vulgar, obscene words. That is, it would be wrong to view dysphemism as a product of coarse, vulgar speech, words and phrases expressing unpleasantness. It is desirable to define dysphemism through the context (text). For example, taking a word as a strictly dysphemic word, may not justify itself in all contextual situations:

1. Dans de nombreuses propriétés, les bêtes commencent à mourir en raison du manque d'eau [Le Monde (2002)]. – (Animals are dying due to water shortages in many places.)
2. Et voyez maintenant comme elle aime les bêtes! [Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869)] – (Now you see how she loves animals.)
3. Elle n'est pas bête, elle est loin d'être bête. – (He is not stupid, he is far from stupidity.)
4. "Quelle bête es-tu?" – ("How stupid?")
5. "Elle aime toujours chercher la petite bête dans mon travail!" – ("He always likes to find fault in my work!")
6. Cette femme est sa bête noire! – (He hates this woman!)
7. Elle a un caractère de cochon. (avoir un sale caractère) – (Her character is pig-like.)

In the examples above, it can be observed that the same word acquires a different meaning in different contexts, the dysphemic meaning is determined by the state of the text.

**Conclusion.** Thus, the main purpose of dysphemism is to draw attention to something unpleasant or an unfortunate event, using stylistically negative or neutral words to intentionally humiliate, discredit, or express dissatisfaction, disdain, or hatred towards the interlocutor in a specific situation.

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