

them to develop skills for subjecting their personal interests to the execution of a common goal.

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## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND EUPHEMISMS BY CHINESE STUDENTS: EMPIRICAL STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

When we use euphemism, we avoid saying things we think the audience would rather not hear for various reasons. The purpose of this paper is to explore and discuss the role being played by euphemism in our daily life and check whether there are statistically significant differences between the responses of males and females. For the purposes of the study, we developed questionnaire, which consist of three sections (rate degree of agreement with a statement with a Likert-type five-point scale, multiple-choice test in which the participants were asked to choose the suitable answer out of four choices and open questions). The participants' gender played a significant role in their performance on the questionnaire. In particular, the female participants were significantly more aware of euphemisms than the males. But the difference in the use of euphemisms in certain situations is not significant

**Key words:** euphemism, positive euphemism, negative euphemism, gender differences.

### INTRODUCTION

We should carefully consider the destructive power of words, declared or thought. Words and their associated feelings and gestures can hurt, maim, injure, and even kill. The mystifying power of language is not a new concept. Through euphemism, we replace, override, and reinvent reality by the magic of language [17]. Euphemism is about how we humans devise deliberately slippery language to justify to ourselves and to others, if not to impose on them, the degradation of categories of people, if not the literal extinction of their lives [17]. Euphemism is the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for an offensive or unpleasant one.

There has been a remarkably large number of studies conducted on the characteristics of men's and women's language. Such studies highlighted gender differences in language.

In this course paper we interesting to find relationship between gender and euphemisms. Because according to Hysi, use of euphemisms is a distinct linguistic feature employed by women. But according McGlone and Batchelor did not find any notable difference between men and women.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

The English word "euphemism" is derived from Greek, euphemismos with the prefix eu - which means "good" and the root phemi which means "speaking". Thus, the whole word means "speaking well" [10]. When certain words or expressions are too offensive, harsh or carry a high degree of risk for a given social

situation, speakers tend to use euphemism. According to Stien [17], speakers of a language should pay much attention to the destructive power of expressions. It is undoubtedly clear that the feelings and gestures that accompany words could hurt people's feelings and destroy relationships. Euphemism is a tool that helps people communicate in a smooth and effective way.

Shemshurenko O. and Shafigullina L. considers the concept of "euphemism" is closely connected with the concept of "taboo" [16]. Taboos are usually defined as prohibitions of certain actions or words that appeared in ancient times and came from mythological interpretations of the person.

In modern languages taboos have not disappeared, but are expressed in a different way. The necessity to replace taboos encouraged the emergence of euphemisms in a language.

The definition of euphemisms can be explored via three perspectives: pragmatics, semantics, and sociolinguistics [6]. From a pragmatic perspective, as Allan and Burridge [1] stated, "a euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own or others." In other words, euphemisms satisfy a linguistic need to give face to others by disguising something unpleasant.

From a semantic standpoint, Domínguez [5] claimed that euphemisms are lexical substitutes that must satisfy two criteria: 1. the meaning of a euphemism "must be ambiguous enough"; 2. a euphemism must have "ameliorative or emotionally positive connotation or an axiological neutral term."

That is, the meaning of a euphemism is not direct but sounds pleasant or is at least neutral.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, euphemisms are born out of social pressure to be courteous and are regarded as “in-group identity markers” [1]. The usage of euphemisms develops from and builds up community’s beliefs as a sharing ground in that community. Euphemisms also function as markers showing one as being well mannered and well educated [16].

Euphemisms are powerful linguistic tools that “are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them,” [15]. The need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it allows discussion of “touchy” or taboo subjects (such as sex, personal appearances or religion) without enraging, outraging, or upsetting other people, and acts as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility.

The function of euphemism is to protect the speaker/writer, hearer/reader, or all of the above from possible effrontery and offence. This offence may occur in the broaching of a taboo topic, e.g. religion or death, or by mentioning subject matter to which one party involved may be sensitive, such as politics or social issues. In order for communication to progress smoothly and without conflict, accommodations are continually, and often subconsciously, made. Interpretation varies according to context, i.e. whether the speaker means the term to be euphemistic, and the hearer interprets it in that light [17].

Accordingly, as Chamizo D. and Sánchez B. [4] argue, euphemism – apart from its main function of concealing or veiling something unpleasant – serves other minor functions that may be itemised as follows: 1) the politeness or respect function; 2) the dignifying function; 3) the function of attenuating a painful evocation; 4) the function of naming the taboo object.

There has been a remarkably large number of studies conducted on the characteristics of men’s and women’s language. Such studies highlighted gender differences in language. According to Hysi gender differences in communication cross linguistic borders and take cultural, ethnic and psycho-social dimensions [9]. For instance, women tend to use linguistic forms which are closer to the polite language variety and are more hesitant to use taboo in public and while men have more freedom in using taboo language, women have always been expected and trained to talk “lady like” [2].

Similarly, Gumperz maintained that women and men have different cultural rules for friendliness, and these different rules can sometimes create miscommunication between them. With respect to topic preferences in conversations, Holmes emphasizes that women tend to talk about their feelings and their relationship, while men tend to compare their knowledge, experiences, and recount competitive exploits. The same finding was found in Eschholz, Rosa and Clark, who established that men could practically talk about anything except personal feelings. In Poynton, it was concluded that men’s greatest conversational interests seem to be business and money, followed by sports and amusements, while women tend to talk about men and clothes [18]. Besides, topics about person play a larger part in women’s conversation than in men’s. In an analysis of conversations of males, female and mixed-sex

groups of some university students, Nugroho and Agustin found that “persons” is the typical topic in female group, while “objects/belongings” is the most favorite topic in a male group. Interestingly in the mixed-sex group, topics are chosen depending on how well male or female participants negotiate a particular topic they like for discussion [13].

Aside from topic preferences, another focus on the sociolinguistics of male and female language is the use of euphemisms.

According to Hysi, it is a given fact that use of euphemisms is a distinct linguistic feature employed by women. In her investigation of categories of female speakers that frequently use euphemisms and the main areas in women’s language that abound in euphemistic expressions, Hysi found that the use of euphemisms is not only gender-related but is closely related to other factors such as education, culture and social class especially in environments where women have a secondary role in communication and where women’s freedom of expression is suppressed [9].

McGlone and Batchelor examined euphemism but did not find any notable difference between men and women [11]. If we consider euphemisms as a form of politeness, then we can assume that since women are found to generally be more polite than men, they would have a higher use of euphemisms. Bowers and Playdell-Pearce have established that euphemisms call forth a physical reaction as well as women using relationship building linguistic styles, along with Trudgill’s findings that women believe that they have higher prestige in language, it makes sense to assume that at least some women are more likely to deploy euphemisms in everyday speech [3].

## MATERIAL AND RESULTS

There has been a remarkably large number of studies conducted on the characteristics of men’s and women’s language. Such studies highlighted gender differences in language. According to Hysi [9] gender differences in communication cross linguistic borders and take cultural, ethnic and psycho-social dimensions. For instance, women tend to use linguistic forms which are closer to the polite language variety and are more hesitant to use taboo in public and while men have more freedom in using taboo language, women have always been expected and trained to talk “lady like” [2]. Similarly, Gumperz maintained that women and men have different cultural rules for friendliness, and these different rules can sometimes create miscommunication between them. With respect to topic preferences in conversations, Holmes emphasizes that women tend to talk about their feelings and their relationship, while men tend to compare their knowledge, experiences, and recount competitive exploits. The same finding was found in Eschholz, Rosa and Clark, who established that men could practically talk about anything except personal feelings. In Poynton, it was concluded that men’s greatest conversational interests seem to be business and money, followed by sports and amusements, while women tend to talk about men and clothes [12]. Besides, topics about person play a larger part in women’s conversation than in men’s. In an analysis of conversations of males, female and mixed-sex groups of some university students, Nugroho and Agustin found that “persons” is the typical topic in female group, while “objects/belongings” is the most favorite

topic in a male group. Interestingly in the mixed-sex group, topics are chosen depending on how well male or female participants negotiate a particular topic they like for discussion [13]. Aside from topic preferences, another focus on the sociolinguistics of male and female language is the use of euphemisms.

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that women believe that they have higher prestige in language, it makes sense to assume that at least some women are more likely to deploy euphemisms in everyday speech [3,7].

The purpose of this study is to examine whether there is any correlation between the use of euphemisms and gender. Twenty-six subjects were involved in this study: twelve females (46%) and fourteen males (54%).

This study uses one research methods - quantitative (questionnaire). There were three sections for subjects to complete in the self-administered questionnaire (Appendix A). First, they were asked to rate the degree of agreement with a statement with a Likert-type five-point scale, from 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). Second, they were proposed the multiple-choice test, in which the participants were supposed to choose best answer to complete the sentences. Third, they were proposed to answer 7 open questions.

Most of participants strongly agree or agree with the statement “Euphemism plays an important role in interpersonal communication”, but 1 female and 1 male answered neutral. That is, participants note the importance of using euphemisms in interpersonal communication.

For statement that euphemism can be used inappropriately males and females have different opinion (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

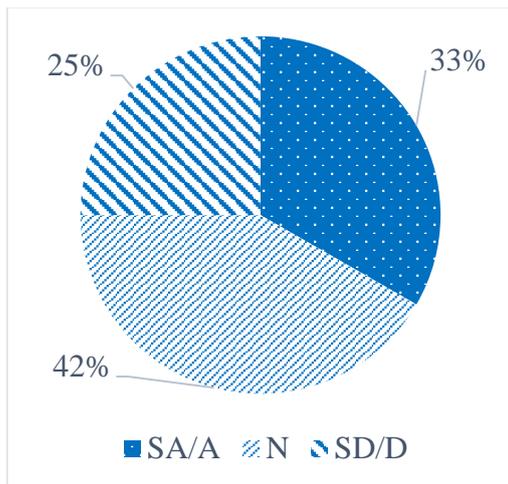


Figure 1. Results of male participants

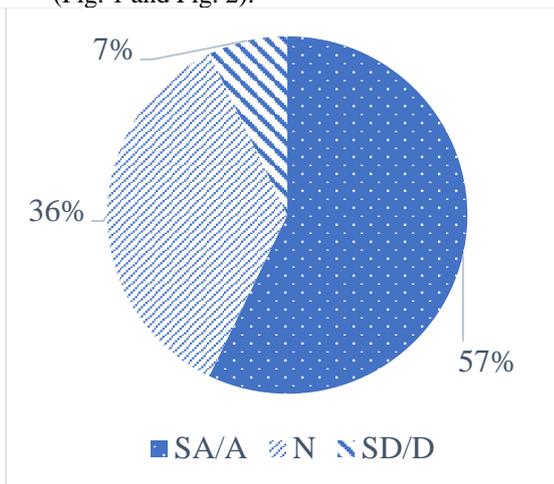


Figure 2. Results of female participants

Fifty-seven percent of males are strongly agree or agree, thirty-six percent are neutral and only seven percent are strongly disagree or disagree. Thirty-three percent of females are strongly agree or agree, forty-two percent are neutral and twenty-five percent are strongly disagree or disagree. Seventy-two percent of males are

strongly agree or agree that females are more conscious of euphemism than males, twenty-one percent are neutral and seven percent are strongly disagree or disagree (Fig. 3). But fifty-eight percent of females are strongly agree or agree and forty-two percent are neutral (Fig. 4).

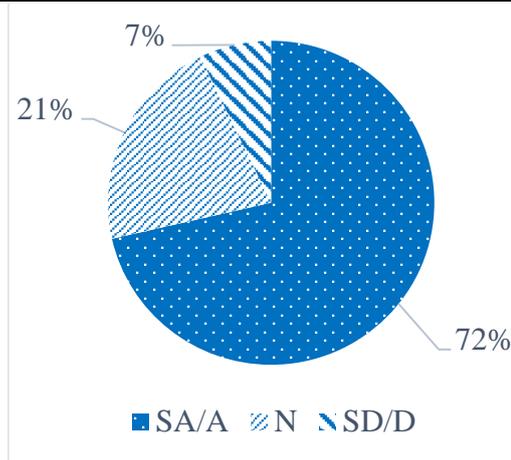


Figure 3. Results of male participants

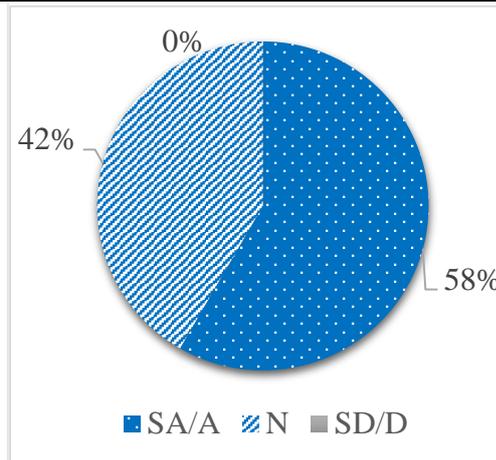


Figure 4. Results of female participants

Seventy-nine percent of males are strongly agree or agree that older people are more conscious of euphemism than teenagers, fourteen percent are neutral and only seven percent are strongly disagree or disagree. But one-third of female participants are strongly agree or agree, one-third are neutral and one-third are strongly disagree or disagree.

Eighty-six percent of males are strongly agree or agree that politicians employ euphemism consciously and only fourteen percent are strongly disagree or disagree. But sixty-seven percent of females are strongly agree or agree, twenty-five are neutral and only eight percent are strongly disagree or disagree. Neither males nor females deny the need for euphemism to apply to terms relate to health.

Seventy-nine percent of males and eighty-three percent of females are strongly agree or agree that people should consciously employ euphemism in regard to terms that relate to race. Also, eighty-six percent of males are strongly agree or agree that people should consciously employ euphemism in regard to terms that relate to religion and fourteen percent are neutral. Females participants ninety-two and eight percent, respectively.

All of participants strongly agree or agree that people should consciously employ euphemism in regard to terms that relate to death. It is also necessary to note that all of female's participants strongly agree or agree that using euphemism promotes social harmony. Seventy-eight percent of males are strongly agree or agree and twenty-one are neutral.

The statement that euphemism should receive greater attention in the mass media strongly agree and agree seventy-five percent of females and twenty-five

are neutral. Nevertheless, forty-two percent are strongly disagree or disagree, fourteen are neutral and forty-two percent are strongly agree or agree.

The great difference between the answers arose in the statement that euphemism should receive greater attention in the area of intercultural communication. Ninety-two percent of females strongly agree or agree and only eight percent strongly disagree or disagree. On the other hand, sixty-four percent of males are neutral and only thirty-six percent are strongly agree or agree.

With statement "Euphemism should receive greater attention in educational programs" eighty-three percent of female are strongly agree or agree but only thirty-six percent of males. Fifty percent of males are neutral. Most of participants strongly agree or agree that euphemism is learned primarily by socialization.

Ninety-two percent of females are strongly agree or agree that people should be conscious of euphemism when talking about racial issues and only eight are neutral (Fig. 5). But, sixty-four percent of males are strongly agree or agree and thirty-six are neutral (Fig. 6).

All of participants strongly agree or agree that people should be conscious of euphemism when talking about personal disability.

Eighty-six percent of males are strongly agree or agree that the word black is less offensive than Negro, but only forty-two percent of females. All of males strong agree or agree that the word blind is more offensive than visually impaired, but only fifty percent of females.

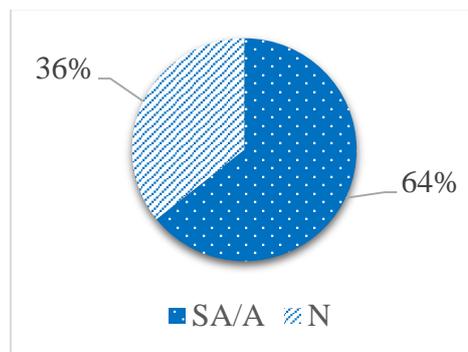


Figure 5. Results of male participants

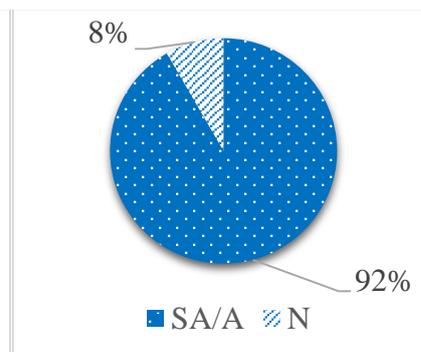


Figure 6. Results of female participants

Choosing between euphemisms such as fat, chubby, chunky and I don't know in a particular situation, eighty-six percent of males chose chubby and fourteen chose chunky, but seventeen percent of females chose fat, fifty-eight percent chose chubby, seventeen percent chose chunky and only eight percent chose I don't know. Most of males and females chose chubby. Nobody of males

didn't choose euphemism fat (Fig. 9).

Choosing between euphemisms such as handicapped, sick, disabled and I don't know, seventy-eight percent of males and forty-two percent of females chose disabled. And only twenty-five percent of females chose handicapped.

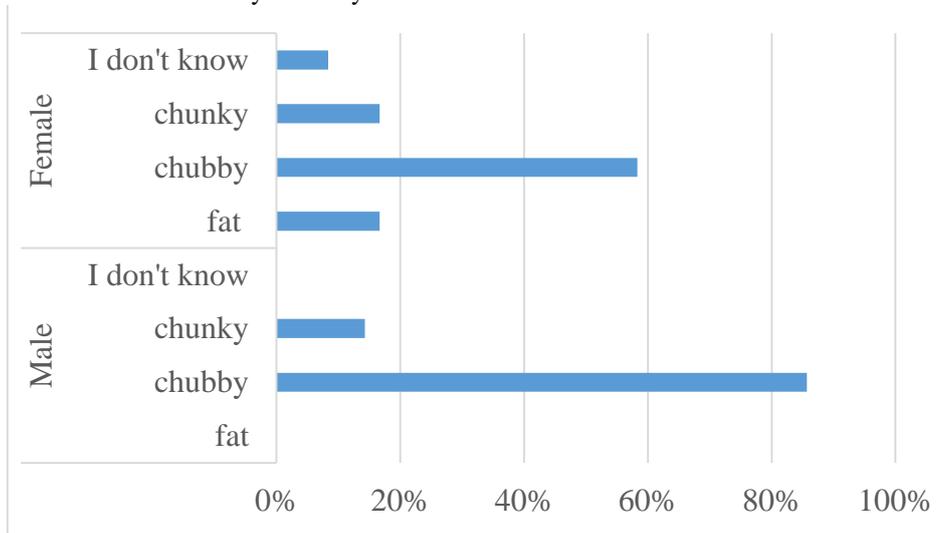


Figure 7. Comparison of answers between males and females

Seventy-nine percent of males chose euphemism visually challenged and fourteen percent chose visually impaired. But fifty percent of females chose visually challenged and forty-two percent chose visually impaired.

and twenty-one chose lazy, but fifty-eight percent of females chose unmotivated and thirty-three careless.

Choosing between euphemisms such as slim, skinny, slender and I don't know, fifty-seven percent of males chose slim, forty-two percent chose slim and slender.

Nobody of males didn't choose euphemism gay, most of males and females chose homosexual. Also, forty-two percent of females chose homoerotic (Fig. 10).

Nobody of males didn't choose euphemism died, most of males and females chose passed away.

Seventy-six percent of males and forty-two percent of females chose euphemism in a family way, respectively. Seven percent of males chose pregnant and with child, and twenty-five percent of females chose pregnant and with child.

Choosing between euphemisms such as lazy, unmotivated, careless and I don't know in a particular situation, sixty-four percent of males chose unmotivated

Seventy-one percent of males and fifty-eight of females will say that their grandmother is experienced.

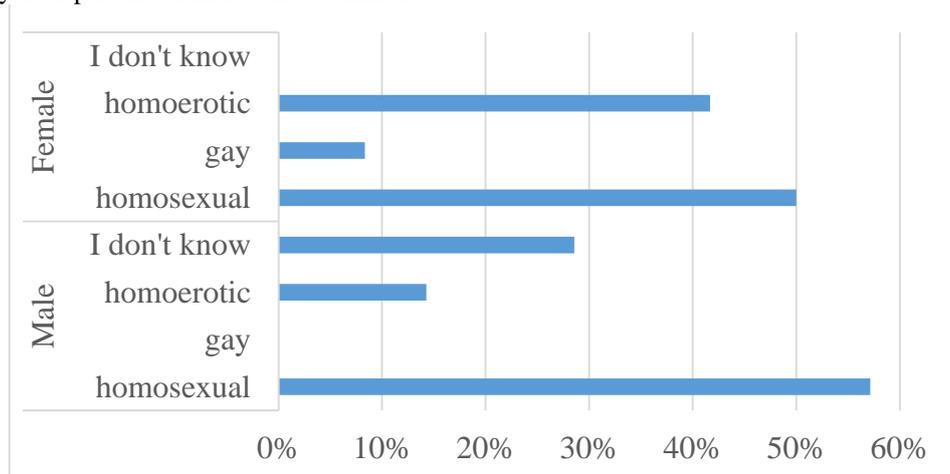


Figure 8. Comparison of answers between males and females

**CONCLUSIONS**

Euphemism is a universal phenomenon that can be defined as an indirect way of substituting a word or a phrase for one considered to be too offensive. Put differently, it is a polite way to replace a word that is considered harsh, unpleasant or inappropriate to say. Euphemism is considered a significant part of every language

and people, in general, strive to sound polite and courteous rather than rude.

Euphemism is one of the oldest and most recognizable forms of language, having existed throughout human history [1]. Put simply, euphemism is “a word or phrase that is considered a more polite manner of referring to a topic than its literal designation” [6]. We have found

same difference between gender and euphemisms, but this difference is insignificant. We can note that most of participants strongly agree or agree that euphemism plays an important role in interpersonal communication. Neither males nor females deny the need for euphemism to apply to terms relate to health. All of participants strongly agree or agree that people should consciously employ euphemism in regard to terms that relate to death and people should be conscious of euphemism when talking about personal disability. Most of participants strongly agree or agree that euphemism is learned primarily by socialization. Ninety-two percent of females agree that people should consciously employ euphemism in regard to terms that relate to race, but only fifty-three percent agree that the word black is less offensive than Negro. Also, most of females agree that euphemism should receive greater attention in the mass media.

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## ОБНОВЛЕНИЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫХ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЙ ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛЯ ДОПОЛНИТЕЛЬНОГО МУЗЫКАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

### UPDATING THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHER IN ADDITIONAL MUSIC EDUCATION

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**АННОТАЦИЯ:** в статье определены и рассмотрены профессиональные компетенции преподавателей музыки в системе дополнительного образования, обусловленные поликатегориальностью обучающихся, их специфическими личностными особенностями и образовательными потребностями. Одной из актуальных педагогических проблем является обучение музыке детей с особыми образовательными потребностями, а именно детей иностранного происхождения. Выявлены категориальные составляющие педагогических компетенций, основанных на когнитивных, энергетических и эмоционально-волевых особенностей ребёнка. В связи с проведённым анализом сделан вывод о необходимости расширения и дифференциации профессиональных компетенций педагога, разработки теоретико-методических материалов, специального инструментария, программ обучения для преподавателей, для реализации индивидуального подхода и оптимизации обучения детей с особыми образовательными потребностями.