

**ENGLISH EUPHEMISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN “LITTLE WOMEN” AND THEIR  
UZBEK EQUIVALENTS: A LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS***Hayotxon Ma'ruffjonovna Shernazarova**Lecturer, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan*

**Abstract:** The experiences, values, and worldviews of every person during their life are reflected in the language, and they reflect the social and cultural environment in which they exist. Through language, there are soft, hard, sarcastic, funny and of course soft speech skills, especially women's speech is often expressed by euphemisms - soft or indirect expressions that replace harsher or more direct language. Through these linguistic elements, not only language expressions in speech become beautiful, but also give an understanding of women's social status, cultural norms, their place and expectations in society. This study examines the linguistic and cultural characteristics of euphemisms in women's speech in English and Uzbek, focusing on Louisa May Alcott's Little Women. Analyzing euphemisms related to death and illness, the study examines how these expressions contribute to the modulation of emotional affect in English and Uzbek, their interpretation, delivery, and language and communication. The findings show the role of euphemisms in the formation of linguistic politeness, cultural sensitivity and historical discourse, and show their importance in the English and Uzbek socio-linguistic contexts.

**Key words:** Louisa May Alcott, Little Women, euphemisms, linguistic elements, politeness, women's speech, death and illness.

**Introduction:**

Throughout our lives, we often come across and use euphemisms. When we read a novel, artistic period, or in the composition of stories and poems, we can see that expressions are used for such words, as if they are an expression of a beautiful reflection of the language. They are often cited as a set of negative words and fancy words intended to convey negative connotations. Through such expressions, it can be seen that the writer is focused on showing how cultured and attractive speech expressions his hero has, and is used to convey that state to the reader. Every language, including English and Uzbek, has euphemisms related to its culture, traditions and history, and such words show that the language changes depending on the ethnic grouping, appearance and formation of society. Article explains and compares the similarities and differences of euphemisms in English and Uzbek by analyzing and giving some examples from May Alcott's Little Women.

A person's life, values, and perspective are reflected in their language, which is an essential component of the sociocultural environment. Women's speech is characterized by euphemisms, or softened terms, which convey significant information about their social standing, position in society, and cultural standards. They help people speak more softly and gently. Based on Louisa May Alcott's "Little Women" ("Little Women"), the linguistic and cultural

characteristics of euphemisms in women's speech in Uzbek and English are examined, as well as the linguistic and cultural aspects of corresponding euphemisms in Uzbek and English.

#### Euphemisms their linguistic and cultural characteristics

Euphemisms are generally used to express concepts that are considered sensitive or inappropriate in society in a gentler way. The main euphemisms found in English and Uzbek are divided into the following categories:

Euphemisms related to death and illness:

Pass away – (vafot etmoq) – olamdan o'tmoq

In a better place (yaxshiroq joyga ketmoq) – oxiratga rixlat qilmoq.

"These words clearly show that the role of euphemisms is invaluable in the formation and refinement of language and its modes of expression." "The word 'pass away' can be translated into Uzbek in several ways, including: 'o'tib ketmoq', 'olamdan o'tmoq', 'vafot etmoq', 'dunyoni tark etmoq', or 'o'lmoq'.

This euphemism reduces the tension about death and helps convey it in an emotional way.

Any linguistic unit, depending on the speech context, can soften, coarsen, or enhance the expressiveness of an utterance. From this perspective, euphemisms contribute to making language more refined and culturally elegant. "Louisa May Alcott's Little Women contains numerous euphemisms, and through their use, the author attempts to illustrate the social and cultural norms of that era.

"Gone to a better place" (Passed away)

Context in the text: Used to describe death in a religious and emotionally comforting way.

Equivalent in Uzbek: Oxiratga rixlat qilmoq, jannatga ketmoq

This expression conveys the concept of death in a comforting and respectful manner. Particularly in religious societies, such euphemisms serve to honor the deceased and alleviate the grief of those left behind. In Uzbek culture, these expressions do not directly mean "to die" but rather "to pass away," reflecting a linguistic tendency to soften harsh realities through polite and culturally refined language. This phenomenon is evident in many works of Uzbek literature, where euphemistic expressions are employed to uphold decorum and social sensitivity.

Beth has gone to a better place." (Beth yaxshiroq joyga ketdi.)

Alcott's "Little Women" shows the influence of euphemisms on the social and cultural aspects of women's speech. The Victorian era was characterized by a preference for refined and indirect language, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as death and loss. This tendency is evident in Little Women, where euphemisms play a crucial role in softening the harsh reality of mortality. One striking example of this linguistic phenomenon is found in Marmee March's words upon Beth's passing:

"Beth is well, my dear, at last."

For example, Marmee March uses gentle expressions instead of speaking directly when explaining complex life situations to her daughters. Finding the equivalent of these euphemisms in translation requires translators' deep knowledge of language and culture.

The analysis of the group of euphemisms used for the word pregnancy can be given as follows.

In Victorian times, the term "pregnant" was considered too blunt and even vulgar in many social settings, in which case the word was not actually pregnant. Instead, euphemisms such as "in a delicate state" were used, and were generally used to describe a woman's pregnancy in a more subtle and socially acceptable way. This linguistic tendency to tone down references to pregnancy reflects the broader cultural norms of the time regarding modesty, propriety, and gender requirements. Analysis: This euphemism demonstrates how Victorian culture viewed conversations about women's bodies - specifically, pregnancy and sexuality - as improper. The social conventions that governed women's roles and the social restrictions on talking about their private lives are reflected in these euphemisms. Both cultures use euphemisms to conform to linguistic etiquette and cultural conventions, as evidenced by the softening of terminology related to pregnancy in Uzbek culture. Historically, the role of women in society has been a subject of significant discussion. In Victorian society, women's roles were largely confined to domestic life, reinforcing traditional gender norms that emphasized their place within the household and family structure.

"Make money" or "to make ends meet" are expressions that are often used in English and Uzbek as euphemisms.

According to the textual context analysis, this phrase is used when the family is facing financial problems, and with its equivalents such as to work hard to make ends meet, to make a living, to make a living, to make ends meet, it shows the richness of the language, dealing with culture, and showing the signs of politeness.

On closer analysis, this euphemism avoids direct discussion of financial struggles. It presents economic hardships in a less dramatic way and helps people discuss hardships without overtly emphasizing financial hardships.

The euphemisms used in *Little Women* demonstrate how language adapts to cultural and social changes. Comparing their equivalents in Uzbek and English reveals that both languages employ euphemisms to soften speech, align with cultural norms, and enhance emotional expression. Particularly in discussions of sensitive or controversial topics, euphemisms serve to make communication more palatable. The similarities between Victorian English and Uzbek euphemisms highlight their shared communicative and moral functions.

Euphemisms about marriage and love used in this work include the following. For example

Quote: "Better to be happy old maids than unhappy wives."

Context: Instead of rejecting societal expectations that women should marry, Marmie gently reassures her daughters that personal happiness is more important than conforming to social norms.

These examples show how Marmie uses softened language and indirect expressions to guide her daughters through life's challenges while maintaining a nurturing and supportive tone. The use of euphemisms (efemizmlar) for death (o'lim) in *Little Women* and their Uzbek equivalents highlights the deep connection between language, culture, and social norms. Euphemistic expressions serve not only as linguistic tools for softening harsh realities but also as reflections of societal attitudes toward mortality (o'limga bo'lgan munosabat). In both English and Uzbek, indirect and respectful terms are preferred over direct ones, demonstrating a shared cultural tendency to approach sensitive topics with delicacy and decorum.

**Conclusion:** Furthermore, the Victorian preference for euphemisms aligns with the Uzbek tradition of using softened expressions to convey respect and emotional sensitivity (hissiy sezgirlilik). The phrase "Beth is well, my dear, at last," like its Uzbek equivalents "olamdan o'tmoq" or "oxiratga rixlat qilmoq", exemplifies how language helps mitigate grief and uphold social etiquette (ijtimoiy odob).

Ultimately, the analysis of euphemisms in both languages reveals that language is not merely a means of communication but also a powerful instrument for shaping human emotions and perceptions of life and death. Understanding these linguistic choices provides insight into the historical and cultural contexts that influence the way different societies address existential experiences.

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