Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TABOO AND EUPHEMISMS IN THE UZBEK AND PERSIAN LANGUAGES

Zokirov Mukhtorali Turdaliyevich
Professor of Fergana State University
Doctor of Philological Sciences (DSc)

Abstract

This article presents a comparative investigation of the lexical-semantic, structural-grammatical, linguocultural, and communicative-pragmatic characteristics of taboo and euphemisms in the Uzbek and Persian languages. It examines the linguistic representation of taboo concepts, the mechanisms underlying euphemistic nomination, and their relationship with national and cultural factors. Euphemistic expressions associated with death, illness, old age, family relationships, and socioeconomic circumstances are classified into thematic-semantic groups. Particular attention is devoted to the formation of euphemistic expressions through metaphorization, metonymization, periphrastic nomination, semantic generalization, and religious-cultural conceptualization. The study also identifies the communicative functions of euphemisms, including the expression of respect, linguistic tact, mitigation of emotional impact, and regulation of social relationships. The comparative analysis demonstrates that both languages employ universal semantic models alongside euphemistic devices characterized by distinctive national and cultural features. The theoretical significance of the research lies in interpreting taboo and euphemisms not merely as isolated lexical phenomena but as complex linguistic units shaped by the interaction of semantic, cultural, and pragmatic factors.

Keywords: Taboo, euphemism, Uzbek language, Persian language, comparative linguistics, linguoculturology, pragmalinguistics, metaphorization, semantic nomination, linguistic politeness, cultural semantics, functional equivalence.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Introduction

Language constitutes one of the principal means through which human cognition, culture, and social relationships are expressed. It reflects the historical experience, moral values, religious beliefs, and communicative traditions of a particular society. These characteristics become particularly evident in linguistic phenomena such as taboo and euphemism. In human communication, the direct designation of certain realities is not always considered socially, psychologically, or ethically appropriate. Explicit references to particular concepts may provoke negative emotional reactions, create social discomfort, or contradict established cultural norms. In such situations, speakers employ indirect, mitigated, or culturally acceptable expressions instead of direct nominations.

The emergence and development of taboo and euphemism are closely associated with the spiritual and cultural life of society, and these phenomena manifest themselves differently across linguistic communities. Taboo refers to sociocultural restrictions imposed on the naming or discussion of particular actions, objects, individuals, or concepts, whereas euphemism represents an alternative means of nomination arising from such restrictions or from the need for communicative tact. Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to regard every euphemism as the direct consequence of a strict taboo. Certain mitigating expressions are also motivated by politeness, respect, diplomacy, interpersonal sensitivity, and specific communicative intentions.

A comparative investigation of taboo and euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian is of particular scholarly interest. These languages belong to different language families: Uzbek is classified within the Turkic language family, whereas Persian belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. Despite this genealogical distinction, the two languages have coexisted within a shared historical and cultural environment for centuries, developing extensive literary, religious, social, and lexical contacts. Such circumstances have created favorable conditions for similarities in the figurative foundations, semantic patterns, and pragmatic functions of certain euphemistic expressions.

In particular, concepts associated with death, illness, aging, marriage, family relationships, physical conditions, and social status represent semantic domains in which indirect nomination is especially relevant in both languages. The

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

selection of euphemistic devices within these domains may depend on the age and social position of the interlocutors, their interpersonal relationships, the degree of formality of the communicative situation, and culturally established values.

The relevance of the present study is determined by the need to investigate taboo and euphemisms not only from the perspective of lexical meaning but also through an integrated analysis of their semantic formation, grammatical structure, national-cultural characteristics, and pragmatic functions. The existence of functionally similar expressions in Uzbek and Persian makes it possible to identify shared features, while differences in semantic content and figurative motivation reveal the cultural specificity of each language.

The aim of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the lexical-semantic, structural-grammatical, linguocultural, and communicative-pragmatic characteristics of taboo and euphemistic units in Uzbek and Persian and to identify their similarities and differences.

To achieve this aim, the following research objectives were established: to systematize theoretical approaches to taboo and euphemism; to identify their principal semantic categories; to classify the mechanisms of euphemistic nomination; to determine functional equivalents in the two languages; and to interpret their cultural and pragmatic characteristics.

The main part

1. Theoretical and linguistic interpretations of taboo and euphemism

Taboo and euphemism constitute interdisciplinary objects of investigation in linguistics, anthropology, ethnography, sociology, psychology, and cultural studies. Early scholarly interest in these phenomena was associated with the examination of prohibitions, religious rituals, mythological beliefs, and social restrictions within human societies.

In anthropological research, the term taboo denotes a sociocultural norm restricting particular actions or regulating attitudes toward certain objects. The studies of J. G. Frazer and S. Freud addressed the religious, mythological, and psychological dimensions of taboo. These approaches demonstrate that taboo is

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

not restricted to language but constitutes a complex phenomenon associated with social behavior and cultural practices.

From a linguistic perspective, taboo manifests itself through restrictions imposed on the use of particular words, names, or concepts in speech. Such restrictions may lead to the development of alternative nominations, descriptive expressions, and devices that mitigate potentially offensive or emotionally disturbing meanings.

In their research, K. Allan and K. Burridge pay particular attention to the relationship between taboo, euphemism, and dysphemism. They examine euphemisms as mitigating expressions employed instead of linguistically or socially inappropriate alternatives. Their work also demonstrates that the linguistic representation of taboo subjects depends on cultural norms and communicative circumstances.

An important characteristic of euphemism is that its mitigating meaning frequently emerges in context. A particular linguistic unit may perform a euphemistic function in one communicative situation while retaining its ordinary nominative meaning in another.

For example, the Uzbek verb ketmoq generally means “to leave” or “to go away.” However, in the expression u bu dunyodan ketdi (“he/she departed from this world”), it becomes a euphemistic designation of death. Similarly, the Persian verb رفتن (raftan, “to go”) acquires a euphemistic meaning in the expression رفتن از دنیا (az donyâ raftan, “to depart from this world”).

This demonstrates that euphemism should be interpreted not merely as a lexical phenomenon but also as a contextual-semantic and pragmatic category.

Within pragmalinguistics, euphemism is examined as a means of considering the interlocutor's emotional state, maintaining social distance, expressing respect, and reducing the possibility of communicative conflict. The theoretical framework of linguistic politeness developed by P. Brown and S. Levinson provides an important methodological basis for explaining these communicative functions. Nevertheless, the application of general politeness theories to individual linguistic cultures requires consideration of locally established norms of communication.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

In Uzbek linguistics, euphemisms have been investigated within lexicology, stylistics, speech culture, and ethnolinguistic studies. In particular, A. Omonturdiyev's research on euphemistic expressions is relevant to the investigation of this phenomenon in relation to national communicative traditions. Numerous manifestations of euphemism can be observed in Uzbek folklore, literary texts, religious discourse, and everyday communication.

In Persian, lexical-semantic, pragmatic, and cultural approaches are also significant for investigating taboo concepts and their alternative linguistic representations. Within Persian-speaking communities, respect, politeness, social status, and interpersonal relationships may influence the selection of euphemistic expressions.

Thus, theoretical interpretations of taboo and euphemism make it possible to distinguish three principal dimensions of investigation: first, nomination arising from sociocultural restrictions; second, mechanisms of lexical-semantic transformation and indirect designation; and third, pragmatic devices serving specific communicative purposes.

2. Research materials and methods

The object of the study comprises taboo-related nominations, euphemistic words, fixed expressions, and contextually mitigating constructions in Uzbek and Persian. The subject of the research consists of the lexical-semantic, structural-grammatical, national-cultural, and communicative-pragmatic characteristics of these units and their comparative relationships.

The research material includes euphemistic expressions associated with death, illness, aging, family relationships, and social circumstances in both languages. These expressions were analyzed according to their general lexical meanings, figurative foundations, grammatical structures, and contextual functions. Some examples represent commonly used expressions, while others are constructions that may acquire a euphemistic function under particular communicative circumstances.

The investigation employs descriptive analysis, componential analysis, contextual analysis, comparative-typological analysis, linguocultural interpretation, and pragmatic analysis.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

The descriptive method is used to explain the formal and semantic characteristics of euphemistic units, while componential analysis identifies the elements constituting their semantic structure. The comparative method enables the identification of functional equivalents, partially corresponding expressions, and nominations with different figurative foundations.

Contextual analysis is employed to determine the conditions under which a particular word or expression acquires euphemistic significance. The linguocultural approach reveals relationships between national values, religious beliefs, communicative etiquette, and euphemistic nomination. Pragmatic analysis considers the relationships between participants, communicative intentions, and the functions of mitigating expressions.

The examples presented in this article are treated as material for theoretical and comparative analysis rather than as a statistically representative sample extracted from an independently compiled electronic corpus. Consequently, no conclusions are drawn concerning the overall frequency or quantitative predominance of euphemisms in either language.

3. Lexical-semantic characteristics of taboo and euphemisms in uzbek and persian

3.1. Euphemistic nominations associated with death and mourning

Death represents one of the most emotionally sensitive and psychologically complex experiences in human life. Accordingly, it constitutes a central semantic domain of euphemistic nomination in numerous languages. In both Uzbek and Persian, direct references to death are frequently replaced with expressions that mitigate emotional impact, convey respect toward the deceased, and correspond to the conventions of mourning discourse.

In Uzbek, expressions such as vafot etmoq (“to pass away”), olamdan o‘tmoq (“to depart from this world”), dunyodan ko‘z yummoq (“to close one's eyes to the world”), boqiy dunyoga rihlat qilmoq (“to depart for the eternal world”), and bandalikni bajo keltirmoq (“to fulfill one's earthly duty as a servant of God”) represent different semantic and stylistic forms of indirect nomination. Some approach a neutral and respectful register, whereas others are closely associated with religious and spiritual beliefs.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

In Persian, expressions such as فوت کردن (fout kardan, “to pass away”), از دنیا رفتن (az donyâ raftan, “to depart from this world”), چشم از جهان بستن (cheshm az jahân bastan, “to close one's eyes to the world”), and به رحمت خدا رفتن (be rahmat-e Xodâ raftan, “to enter God's mercy”) similarly designate death through expressions differing in their degree of indirectness and emotional mitigation.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of death-related euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian

Uzbek	Persian	Semantic model
Vafot etmoq	فوت کردن	Respectful, relatively neutral nomination
Olamdan o‘tmoq	از دنیا رفتن	Death as departure from the world
Ko‘z yummoq	چشم از جهان بستن	Death as the closing of the eyes
Xudoning rahmatiga yetishmoq	به رحمت خدا رفتن	Death as attainment of divine mercy
Boqiy dunyoga rihlat qilmoq	به دیار باقی شتافتن	Death as a journey to another realm

he examples in Table 1 demonstrate that death is conceptualized through several common semantic models in both languages. Particularly significant are the models of “departure from the world,” “closing the eyes,” and “transition to an eternal realm,” which constitute cognitive foundations of euphemistic nomination.

In olamdan o‘tmoq and از دنیا رفتن death is conceptualized as leaving a spatial domain. Human life is understood as existence within a particular space, whereas death is represented as departure from that space. In ko‘z yummoq and از بستن چشم جهان the termination of life is symbolically associated with the cessation of visual perception.

The semantic similarities between these expressions may be associated with historical and cultural contacts between Uzbek and Persian-speaking communities. However, the conceptualization of death through “departure,” “journey,” or “sleep” also occurs in other languages. Therefore, these similarities cannot be explained exclusively through direct linguistic influence. They may also reflect universal cognitive metaphors and shared religious-cultural representations.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Differences between the two languages emerge primarily in the stylistic status and conditions of use of particular expressions. For example, Uzbek vafot etmoq may occur in official announcements, condolences, and literary discourse, whereas bandalikni bajo keltirmoq is more closely associated with religious-cultural representations. Similarly, Persian فوت کردن functions as a relatively conventional respectful designation, while به دیار باقی شتافتن tends toward a more literary and elevated register.

Consequently, a comparative investigation of euphemisms must consider not only denotative meaning but also stylistic markedness, emotional impact, and communicative purpose.

3.2. Euphemisms denoting illness and physical conditions

Concepts associated with illness and human health constitute another important domain of euphemistic nomination. Direct references to certain diseases may produce anxiety, fear, or psychological discomfort. Therefore, speakers may employ generalized, indirect, or emotionally mitigated expressions.

In Uzbek, expressions such as toblari qochgan (“feeling unwell”), o‘zini yaxshi his qilmayapti (“not feeling well”), mazasi yo‘q (“not in good health”), and sog‘lig‘ida biroz muammo bor (“has some health problems”) may indirectly indicate illness or deterioration in health.

In Persian, expressions such as حالش خوب نیست (hâlesh xub nist, “he/she is not feeling well”), کسالت دارد (kesâlat dârad, “he/she is indisposed”), and مساعدی ندارد حال (hâl-e mosâ'edi nadârad, “he/she is not in good condition”) may perform comparable functions.

In these expressions, the specific name of the disease is not stated; instead, information is conveyed about the individual's general condition. Accordingly, they may be classified as examples of euphemistic nomination based on semantic generalization.

Nevertheless, such expressions are not necessarily euphemistic in every context. A speaker may use a generalized description simply because the precise diagnosis is unknown or irrelevant to the communicative situation.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

A euphemistic interpretation becomes more evident when the speaker possesses specific information about an illness but deliberately chooses an indirect formulation to protect the interlocutor's emotional well-being.

This issue is particularly significant in medical communication. When informing a patient about a diagnosis, a physician may employ tactful and respectful language. However, excessive euphemization should not obscure the medical meaning of the diagnosis or prevent the patient from receiving essential information. In such circumstances, the function of euphemism should be to communicate information sensitively rather than to conceal or distort it.

3.3. Euphemistic expressions associated with aging

Nominations related to age and old age are closely connected with linguistic etiquette and cultural attitudes. In some societies, old age is associated with experience, wisdom, and social respect, whereas in other communicative contexts it may evoke associations with physical weakness or social limitations.

In Uzbek, expressions such as yoshi ulug‘ inson (“a person of advanced age”), nuroniy (“a venerable elderly person”), and keksa kishi (“an elderly person”) may convey respectful attitudes toward aging.

In Persian, expressions such as سالمند (sâlmand, “elderly”), سالخورده (sâlxorde, “advanced in age”), and بزرگسال (bozorgsâl, “adult” or “grown-up”) are used to refer to age-related categories, although their meanings and contexts of use are not identical.

An important distinction must be emphasized: not every respectful nomination is a euphemism. For example, Uzbek keksa and Persian سالمند frequently function as relatively neutral age-related designations. They acquire a euphemistic function when deliberately selected instead of a negatively marked or potentially offensive alternative.

The Uzbek lexical unit nuroniy is particularly noteworthy because it may express not only the biological characteristic of old age but also a positive social evaluation. Its semantic structure can involve associations with age, life experience, respect, and spiritual values.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Persian also possesses respectful lexical and address forms, but identifying a complete semantic equivalent of nuroniy requires careful consideration of contextual and stylistic correspondence.

Thus, euphemistic expressions associated with aging may serve not only to designate age indirectly but also to construct a positive social attitude toward the person being described.

3.4. Euphemisms associated with family relationships and private life

Communicative norms relating to family relationships influence the formation and use of euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian. Matters involving marriage, pregnancy, divorce, and private life may be expressed indirectly in particular social circumstances.

In Uzbek, pregnancy may be referred to through expressions such as og‘iroyoq (“pregnant,” literally “heavy-footed”), bo‘yida bor (“expecting a child”), and farzand kutyapti (“expecting a baby”).

These expressions are not identical in meaning or stylistic coloring. For example, farzand kutyapti represents pregnancy through a relatively positive emotional perspective, whereas og‘iroyoq is a figurative nomination associated with traditional colloquial speech.

In Persian, باردار بودن (bârdâr budan, “to be pregnant”) constitutes a relatively neutral designation, while منتظر بچه بودن (montazer-e bachche budan, “to be expecting a child”) may acquire a mitigating or emotionally positive meaning depending on the context.

These examples demonstrate that the conceptual model of “expecting a child” can be employed in both languages to refer to pregnancy. However, the frequency and stylistic status of this model in each language require verification through corpus-based evidence.

Indirect expressions may also be used in discourse concerning divorce and family conflict. In Uzbek, yo‘llari ayrildi (“their paths separated”) and birga yashamay qo‘yishdi (“they stopped living together”) may mitigate references to marital separation.

In Persian, a figurative construction such as راهشان از هم جدا شد (râheshân az ham jodâ shod, “their paths separated”) may perform a comparable function.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

In these expressions, the termination of a family relationship is conceptualized through the metaphor of diverging paths. Consequently, a potentially negative event is represented through a spatial and movement-related model.

3.5. Euphemisms associated with socioeconomic circumstances

Concepts associated with social inequality, poverty, unemployment, and economic hardship may also motivate euphemistic nomination. Such expressions are frequently used to avoid stigmatization, mitigate social evaluation, or describe a particular condition in relatively neutral terms.

In Uzbek, expressions such as kam ta'minlangan oila ("a low-income family"), moddiy ahvoli og'ir ("experiencing financial difficulties"), and ish qidirayotgan shaxs ("a person seeking employment") may perform mitigating functions in certain contexts.

In Persian, lexical units and expressions such as کم درآمد (kam-darâmad, "low-income"), کم برخوردار (kam-barkhordâr, "underprivileged"), and جویای کار (juyâ-ye kâr, "job seeker") may serve comparable communicative purposes.

Nevertheless, the euphemistic status of these nominations depends on their context. For instance, kam ta'minlangan may function as a formal socioeconomic classification rather than as a euphemism. It acquires a mitigating pragmatic function when deliberately employed instead of a socially stigmatizing designation.

This distinction demonstrates the need to investigate the relationship between terminological neutralization and euphemization.

4. Semantic mechanisms of euphemistic nomination

The formation of euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian is based on several lexical-semantic mechanisms. These mechanisms involve the acquisition of a specific communicative function by an existing linguistic unit, the figurative renaming of a concept, or the indirect representation of potentially negative meanings.

One of the most important mechanisms is metaphorization. Metaphorical transfer involves the designation of a particular concept through characteristics or relationships associated with another conceptual domain.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

For example, Uzbek olamdan o‘tmoq and Persian از دنیا رفتن conceptualize death as departure from a spatial domain. The negative and emotionally difficult meaning of death is thereby mitigated through a metaphor of movement.

Another manifestation of metaphorical nomination appears in the model of “closing the eyes.” In Uzbek dunyodan ko‘z yummoq and Persianجهان چشم بستن از the cessation of visual activity is associated with the termination of human life. Within this metaphor, the individual's relationship with the external world is conceptualized through visual perception.

The second mechanism is metonymic nomination. In metonymy, a concept is represented through an associated feature, action, or condition. For example, referring to the symptoms of an illness or the patient's general condition instead of explicitly naming a disease may acquire a metonymic mitigating function in certain contexts.

The third mechanism is periphrastic nomination. Periphrasis involves replacing a direct lexical designation with a more extensive descriptive expression.

For example, the Uzbek expression boqiy dunyoga rihlat qilmoq (“to depart for the eternal world”) represents death through religious and spiritual imagery. The Persian expression به دیار باقی شتافتن (“to hasten toward the eternal realm”) demonstrates a comparable nominative model.

The fourth mechanism is semantic generalization. In this process, a specific and potentially distressing concept is replaced by a more general expression.

For example, saying sog‘lig‘ida muammo bor (“has health problems”) instead of explicitly naming a disease reduces the directness of the nomination. The Persian expressionحالش خوب نیست may perform a similar function depending on the communicative situation.

The fifth mechanism is religious-cultural reconceptualization. Here, a particular event is represented through religious beliefs and spiritual concepts.

For example, Uzbek Xudoning rahmatiga yetishmoq and Persian به رحمت خدا رفتن associate death with divine mercy.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Table 2. Principal semantic mechanisms of euphemistic nomination

Mechanism	Uzbek example	Persian example	Main characteristic
Metaphorization	Olamdan o‘tmoq	از دنیا رفتن	Death conceptualized as departure
Metaphorization	Ko‘z yummoq	چشم از جهان بستن	Death associated with the cessation of vision
Periphrasis	Boqiy dunyoga rihlat qilmoq	به دیار باقی شتافتن	Death represented through an extended descriptive expression
Semantic generalization	O‘zini yaxshi his qilmayapti	حالش خوب نیست	Illness described through a general condition
Religious nomination	Xudoning rahmatiga yetishmoq	به رحمت خدا رفتن	Mitigation through religious conceptualization

As shown in Table 2, Uzbek and Persian employ similar semantic mechanisms of euphemistic nomination despite their different grammatical structures.
However, the formal realization, stylistic characteristics, and communicative use of these mechanisms do not necessarily coincide completely.
Furthermore, certain euphemistic expressions may simultaneously exhibit characteristics of several mechanisms. For example, boqiy dunyoga rihlat qilmoq possesses a periphrastic structure while also incorporating a spatial metaphor, the concept of a journey, and religious-cultural conceptualization.
Therefore, the classification of euphemisms should distinguish between dominant and supplementary nominative characteristics rather than assigning every expression to a single rigid semantic category.

5. Structural and grammatical characteristics of euphemisms in uzbek and persian

The structural characteristics of euphemisms are determined by the grammatical means through which they are formed, the syntactic models on which they are based, and the extent to which they have become conventionalized in speech.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Although Uzbek and Persian differ in their genealogical and typological characteristics, both languages employ individual words, word combinations, verbal constructions, and phraseological expressions for euphemistic nomination. In Uzbek, lexical units such as nuroniy, keksa, and marhum may function as single-word euphemistic nominations in particular contexts. Nevertheless, these words should not automatically be classified as euphemisms in every instance. Their status must be determined by their pragmatic function and their relationship to alternative designations.

In Persian, units such as سالمند, درگذشته (dargozashte, "deceased"), and مرحوم (marhum, "the late" or "deceased") may similarly function as respectful or mitigating nominations in particular communicative situations.

Multiword euphemistic expressions possess considerable semantic potential in both languages. Uzbek combinations such as yoshi ulug‘, moddiy ahvoli og‘ir, and sog‘lig‘ida muammo bor, as well as Persian expressions such as کم درآمد and حال مساعدی ندارد may be employed to represent certain concepts indirectly or in a mitigated form.

Verbal euphemistic constructions are particularly prominent in the semantic domain of death. Uzbek expressions such as olamdan o‘tmoq, ko‘z yummoq, and vafot etmoq correspond functionally to Persian expressions such as از دنیا رفتن, چشم از جهان بستن, and فوت کردن

Certain differences can be observed in the grammatical organization of these constructions.

Uzbek possesses an agglutinative morphological system in which grammatical meanings relating to person, number, tense, and mood are predominantly expressed through morphological markers. Persian, by contrast, makes extensive use of compound verbs, prepositions, ezafe constructions, and verbal inflection. For example, the Persian expression از جهان چشم بستن consists of a noun, a prepositional phrase, and a verb. The Uzbek expression dunyodan ko‘z yummoq consists of a noun marked by the ablative case, another noun, and a verb.

Despite these grammatical differences, both expressions are based on a similar semantic model. This demonstrates that grammatical structures may differ while the underlying conceptual content remains comparable.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Another characteristic of phraseological euphemisms is their semantic integrity. For example, the meaning of olamdan o‘tmoq cannot be fully explained through the simple combination of the ordinary lexical meanings of olam (“world”) and o‘tmoq (“to pass”). Rather, it functions as a conventionalized figurative expression within a particular communicative tradition.

Thus, the structural and grammatical characteristics of euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian are shaped by the internal grammatical systems of the respective languages while simultaneously serving comparable semantic and pragmatic purposes.

6. Linguocultural characteristics of taboo and euphemisms

The formation and use of taboo and euphemisms are closely associated with national worldviews, cultural values, religious beliefs, and social relationships. From this perspective, euphemistic units are not merely elements of the lexical-semantic system of a language but also linguistic manifestations of how a particular cultural community interprets reality.

The historical and cultural contacts between Uzbek and Persian-speaking communities, their shared participation in certain Islamic cultural traditions, and their literary heritage have contributed to similarities in communicative etiquette. Comparable euphemistic strategies may be observed in situations involving respect for elders, respectful references to the deceased, sensitive descriptions of illness, and tactful discussions of family relationships.

In Uzbek, lexical units such as yoshi ulug‘, nuroniy, and marhum may convey respect in particular contexts, whereas Persian nominations such as سالمند, مرحوم, and درگذشته may perform similar respectful or mitigating functions.

Nevertheless, these units cannot be regarded as completely identical in semantic terms, since their stylistic coloring, emotional effects, and conditions of use may differ.

Religious-cultural representations are especially evident in euphemisms associated with death.

Expressions such as boqiy dunyoga rihlat qilmoq and Xudoning rahmatiga yetishmoq, together with Persian به دیار باقی شتافتن and رفتن به رحمت خدا,

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

conceptualize the end of human life not as absolute disappearance but as transition to another state of existence.

Such nominations may function as expressions of consolation, spiritual reassurance, and respect toward the deceased.

At the same time, an analysis of the national-cultural characteristics of taboo and euphemisms must distinguish shared religious beliefs from the individual historical development of each language.

Linguistic communities belonging to a similar religious-cultural environment may employ comparable euphemistic models, but their lexical realization, grammatical structure, and communicative conventions can develop independently.

Within Persian communicative etiquette, the tradition of ta'ârof (تعارف), associated with politeness, respect, and indirect expression, occupies an important position.

However, ta'ârof and euphemism should not be treated as identical phenomena. Ta'ârof represents a broader system of social and communicative relationships, whereas euphemism constitutes a linguistic device used to designate a particular concept indirectly or in a mitigated manner.

Therefore, euphemistic expressions may occur within ta'ârof-related communicative practices, but not every ta'ârof formula should be classified as a euphemism.

In Uzbek communicative culture, respect, consideration for others, tact, and sensitivity to social relationships also play an important role.

The selection of particular euphemistic expressions may depend on the interlocutor's age, social position, kinship relations, and the formality of the communicative situation.

Accordingly, three principal factors can be distinguished in determining the national-cultural characteristics of euphemistic nomination in Uzbek and Persian: universal cognitive models, shared historical-religious representations, and community-specific communicative norms.

The interaction of these factors shapes the semantic content and pragmatic functions of euphemistic expressions.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

7. Communicative and pragmatic functions of euphemisms

A comprehensive understanding of euphemism requires consideration not only of the concepts expressed by euphemistic units but also of the purposes for which they are employed in particular communicative situations.

The euphemistic character of a linguistic expression frequently emerges through its communicative function.

One of the most important functions of euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian is the maintenance of linguistic politeness.

Instead of directly expressing information that may be uncomfortable for the interlocutor, the speaker selects a mitigated nomination in order to preserve the social appropriateness of communication.

For example, when reporting someone's death, the Uzbek expressions vafot etdi (“passed away”) and olamdan o‘tdi (“departed from this world”) may be preferred to the direct verb o‘ldi (“died”).

This choice expresses respect toward the deceased and sensitivity toward the bereaved.

In Persian, فوت کرد and از دنیا رفت may perform comparable communicative functions.

A second important function is the mitigation of emotional impact.

The direct designation of certain events may intensify negative emotions. Euphemistic expressions allow speakers to communicate such information more sensitively.

This function is particularly relevant to discourse concerning illness, death, and family difficulties.

A third function is the expression of social respect and the regulation of interpersonal relationships.

In such cases, euphemism serves as a means of communicating a positive attitude toward an individual, avoiding stigmatizing nominations, or maintaining appropriate social distance.

A fourth function is the indirect transmission of information.

Here, the speaker does not express information completely explicitly but expects the interlocutor to infer the intended meaning from the context and shared background knowledge.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

For example, the Uzbek expression ularning yo‘llari ayrildi (“their paths separated”) may indicate divorce in a particular family-related context. In another situation, however, the same expression may retain its literal meaning.

A fifth function is the reduction of social discomfort.

Direct expressions concerning sensitive matters may negatively affect an interlocutor's privacy, social position, or emotional state.

In such circumstances, euphemism functions as an instrument of communicative tact.

Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to assume that euphemisms always serve positive communicative purposes.

In certain political, administrative, and media contexts, mitigating nominations may be employed to obscure negative aspects of reality, reduce the apparent degree of responsibility, or communicate information ambiguously.

This demonstrates that euphemism is a linguistic mechanism whose ethical implications and communicative effects depend on the speaker's intentions and the surrounding context.

Consequently, pragmatic analysis of euphemisms requires simultaneous consideration of speaker intention, interlocutor status, communicative circumstances, and the potential effects of the expression.

8. Comparative equivalence of euphemisms in uzbek and persian

A comparative investigation of euphemistic units requires separate consideration of formal similarity, lexical meaning, and pragmatic function.

Although expressions in two languages may designate the same concept, their stylistic register, emotional coloring, and communicative conditions may differ.

The first category comprises semantically and functionally close equivalents.

For example, Uzbek olamdan o‘tmoq and Persian از دنیا رفتن conceptualize death through the model of departure from the world.

In this case, the principal denotative meaning, figurative foundation, and mitigating function are closely related.

The second category consists of partial equivalents.

These expressions share a general conceptual meaning, but their lexical composition or stylistic characteristics do not correspond completely.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

For example, the relationship between Uzbek nuroniy and Persian سالمند may be interpreted in this way.

Both expressions are associated with advanced age, but nuroniy may additionally convey positive evaluative meanings in particular contexts.

The third category includes functionally corresponding expressions with different figurative foundations.

In such cases, the principal communicative purpose in both languages is to mitigate a particular concept, but this purpose is achieved through different nominative models.

The fourth category comprises culturally specific euphemistic expressions.

Such units are closely associated with particular customs, religious representations, or traditional communicative norms and may therefore lack direct equivalents in another language.

Table 3. Comparative characteristics of selected euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian

Uzbek	**Persian**	**Comparative interpretation**
Olamdan o‘tmoq	از دنیا رفتن	Close semantic and figurative correspondence
Ko‘z yummoq	چشم از جهان بستن	Shared conceptual model
Vafot etmoq	فوت کردن	Close denotative and functional correspondence
Yoshi ulug‘	سالمند	Partial functional correspondence
Farzand kutmoq	منتظر بچه بودن	Context-dependent functional similarity
O‘zini yaxshi his qilmayapti	حالش خوب نیست	Generalizing mitigation model

The expressions presented in Table 3 are intended to illustrate semantic and pragmatic correspondences.

Establishing whether a particular pair constitutes a complete translation equivalent requires comparison of its use in equivalent communicative situations.

The principal challenge in translating euphemisms lies in preserving the relationship between lexical meaning and pragmatic effect.

An expression considered respectful and polite in one language may sound excessively formal, literary, or unnatural in another.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Therefore, the translation of euphemisms requires consideration of denotative content alongside emotional, stylistic, and national-cultural characteristics.

This demonstrates that equivalence in comparative linguistics should be evaluated not merely through the lexical correspondence of two expressions but through their semantic, functional, and pragmatic compatibility.

9. Discussion of results

The comparative analysis of taboo and euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian demonstrates that the formation of these phenomena involves the interaction of universal cognitive mechanisms, shared historical-cultural factors, and the specific structural characteristics of each language.

First, the analysis indicates that concepts associated with death, illness, aging, family relationships, and socioeconomic circumstances may constitute important semantic domains of euphemistic nomination in both languages.

These similarities can be explained through universal psychological and social needs associated with human experience.

Mitigating reports of death, discussing illness tactfully, and referring indirectly to sensitive aspects of private life represent communicative strategies found across different cultural environments.

At the same time, certain death-related euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian share comparable figurative foundations.

Expressions such as olamdan o‘tmoq and از دنیا رفتن, as well as ko‘z yummoq and چشم از جهان بستن, represent the termination of human life through metaphors associated with movement or visual perception.

These similarities provide valuable material for investigating historical and cultural relationships between the two languages.

However, demonstrating that such expressions developed through direct borrowing would require additional etymological and historical evidence.

Second, the lexical-semantic mechanisms of euphemism in both languages include metaphorization, periphrasis, semantic generalization, and religious-cultural nomination.

Several mechanisms may operate simultaneously within a single expression, demonstrating the multilayered semantic nature of euphemistic nomination.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Third, the grammatical realization of euphemisms is conditioned by the internal linguistic structures of Uzbek and Persian.

In Uzbek, syntactic models involving case markers and verbal forms are significant, whereas Persian makes use of constructions involving prepositions, ezafe relationships, and compound verbs.

Nevertheless, structural differences do not prevent semantic and pragmatic similarities.

Fourth, the use of euphemistic expressions is directly associated with communicative circumstances.

The same lexical unit may function as a respectful designation in one context, a neutral term in another, and a mitigating euphemism in a third.

Consequently, classifying euphemisms exclusively on the basis of their dictionary meanings does not fully reveal their communicative characteristics.

Fifth, the analyzed examples demonstrate differences in the degree of functional equivalence.

Certain euphemisms are semantically and figuratively close in both languages, whereas others perform similar communicative functions only in particular contexts.

This observation is significant for translation studies and intercultural communication.

On the basis of the present theoretical and comparative analysis, it is appropriate to propose an integrated set of analytical criteria for describing euphemistic units: denotative meaning, figurative nomination model, grammatical structure, stylistic markedness, national-cultural foundation, and communicative-pragmatic function.

These criteria make it possible to investigate euphemisms not merely as isolated lexical units but as components of an interconnected system of semantic and sociocultural relationships.

Conclusion

The theoretical and comparative analysis of taboo and euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian demonstrates that these phenomena emerge through the interaction of language, cognition, culture, and communicative activity.

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

In both languages, euphemistic nomination is closely associated with sociocultural norms, psychological needs, religious representations, and conventions of linguistic etiquette.

The investigation identifies death, illness, aging, family relationships, and socioeconomic circumstances as significant domains of euphemistic nomination. In particular, the existence of shared conceptual models such as "departure from the world," "closing the eyes," and "transition to an eternal realm" in death-related expressions indicates that euphemistic nomination in Uzbek and Persian may rely on comparable semantic mechanisms.

Metaphorization, metonymic nomination, periphrasis, semantic generalization, and religious-cultural reconceptualization play important roles in the formation of euphemisms.

The possibility that several of these mechanisms may coexist within a single expression demonstrates the complex semantic nature of euphemistic units.

Although differences in the grammatical structures of Uzbek and Persian influence the formal realization of euphemisms, certain similarities can be observed in their communicative functions.

In both languages, euphemisms may serve to maintain linguistic politeness, mitigate emotional impact, express respect, and regulate interpersonal relationships.

At the same time, the analysis demonstrates that functional equivalence does not necessarily imply complete semantic correspondence.

Therefore, a comparative investigation of euphemisms must simultaneously consider denotative meaning, figurative motivation, stylistic characteristics, and pragmatic function.

The principal theoretical conclusion of the study is that the similarities and differences between taboo and euphemisms in Uzbek and Persian emerge through the interaction of universal cognitive mechanisms, shared historical-cultural factors, and nationally specific communicative norms.

This approach may provide a theoretical foundation for comparative investigations of the lexical-semantic systems of Uzbek and Persian, the compilation of dictionaries of euphemistic expressions, the improvement of

Modern American Journal of Linguistics, Education, and Pedagogy
ISSN (E): 3067-7874
Volume 2, Issue 10, October, 2026
Website: usajournals.org
This work is Licensed under CC BY 4.0 a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

literary translation practices, and the study of pragmatic characteristics of intercultural communication.

References

1. Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (1991). Euphemism and dysphemism: Language used as shield and weapon. Oxford University Press.
2. Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (2006). Forbidden words: Taboo and the censoring of language. Cambridge University Press.
3. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). Politeness: Some universals in language usage. Cambridge University Press.
4. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. University of Chicago Press.
5. Freud, S. (1950). Totem and taboo. Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Original work published 1913).
6. Frazer, J. G. (1922). The golden bough: A study in magic and religion (Abridged ed.). Macmillan.
7. Leech, G. N. (1983). Principles of pragmatics. Longman.
8. Levinson, S. C. (1983). Pragmatics. Cambridge University Press.
9. Crystal, D. (2008). A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics (6th ed.). Blackwell.
10. Saeed, J. I. (2016). Semantics (4th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
11. Dehkhoda, A. A. (various editions). Loghatnāme-ye Dehkhodā (لغت نامه دهخدا) University of Tehran.
12. Mo'in, M. (various editions). Farhang-e Fārsi (فرهنگ فارسی). Amir Kabir.