

A Pragmatic Study of Euphemism in English Political News

Xiaorui Hong

Fuzhou University of International Studies and Trade
Fuzhou, China

Abstract—This paper mainly centers on the pragmatic analysis of English euphemism and its usages in the mainstream English political news. It begins with a brief introduction of English euphemism, followed by a relatively concrete description of the common formations of English euphemism and its pragmatic functions of achieving positively satisfactory communication consequences, together with the two important pragmatic principles that must be observed in practical applications in concrete contexts if certain pragmatic functions are to be effectively fulfilled. And the last part mainly concentrates on elaborating on the practical usages of English euphemisms in political news items, in which some examples are provided to illustrate the way English euphemisms are employed based on those pragmatic principles to fulfill certain functions and some methods of applications are offered to help the readers getting the hang of basic euphemistic theories and put them into practice in English political news concerning domestic and international affairs.

Keywords—*euphemism; pragmatic principles; political news*

I. INTRODUCTION

As an important element of language and a common linguistic phenomenon, euphemism is widely used in our everyday life. As a matter of fact, different societies, communities, and social classes have their unique euphemistic patterns. As Hugh Rawson (1981: 29) once put it in his book — English euphemisms are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plain-spoken, ever get through a day without using them. In general, people around the world are being exposed to euphemism in every aspects of their life. For that reason, the study of euphemism, especially at a pragmatic level, has a long history. In China, many papers have probed into the relations (similarities and differences) between Chinese and English euphemisms. Many Chinese scholars, however, mainly focus on studying English euphemism from the perspective of theoretical analysis. Obviously, great progress has also been made in the study of English euphemism in lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic level, but limitations inevitably exist in thoroughness and extensiveness. Thus, the pragmatic characteristics and functions of English euphemism, the theoretical foundations for euphemism and the interpretation of euphemism in different contexts still remain to be further discussed and explored. Inspired by the preceding achievements of those excellent researchers, this essay is trying to concentrate on a

pragmatic study of English euphemism which mainly consists of an introduction of English euphemisms during which the formation and functions of political euphemism will be elaborated on, major pragmatic principles and the application of euphemisms in English news. And a lot of examples will be used to illustrate the points. What makes this paper unique is that it will be mainly restricted to the scope of political news including business relationship, domestic safety, foreign affairs etc.

II. INTRODUCTION OF EUPHEMISM

A. Definition of Euphemism

The English word “euphemism”, comprised of “eu-” and “phemism”, originally comes from Greek language. More precisely, the prefix “eu-” means “good” and the stem “phemism” carries a meaning of “speech” (Bullon, 2005: 248). In Merriam-Webster’s Advanced English Dictionary (2008: 174), it is also defined as “a certain kind of commonly-used expressions which mainly aim at not making people feel much embarrassed by using some kind of words or phrases with vague and ambiguous meanings instead of those which may make people feel a little or very unpleasant and not so respected”. In western society, as early as the beginning of 1580s, George Blunt, the English writer who first cited the “euphemism” in English, had given it a definition as “a good or favorable interpretation of a bad word”. On the whole, the application of euphemism is a very normal and frequent language phenomenon and consequently has drawn great attention in a variety of contexts (especially in political affairs).

B. Formation and Functions of Political Euphemism

As an effective means of mildly expressing oneself, English euphemism plays a significant role in political affairs at home and abroad. It is apparent that the proper use of political euphemism is able to console the disadvantaged masses and make the harsh reality less desperate. This part will generally focus on how those political euphemisms come into being and their common pragmatic functions.

1) *Formation of political euphemism*: There exist numerous ways to form political euphemisms. In a political speech or conference, a speaker may use words or phrases politely by deliberately changing his or her intonation. From the perspective of word formation, different words can be

compounded or further converted into words whose meanings should be less offensive and more decent in political events. Other ways, such as changes in spelling and usage of rhetorical devices, are also feasible. Here are six common methods mainly applied to the formation of most commonly-used political euphemisms in major political journalism.

a) Use of abstract and general words: Simply by expanding the scope of a word, its meaning turns more obscure. In English industry, a strike is usually mentioned by businessmen as an industrial action, which will apparently alleviate the unpleasant truth and to some extent maintain the corporate image. Moreover, the superordinate term of a specific word carries a more vague meaning than its original meaning. Economic recession is normally called an economic thing by some economists in public reports. Besides, choices of proper words can make a real difference to the consequences. Most western statesmen constantly use “challenges” in their election to cover up all the “problems” existing throughout the nation, which subtly eases the severe status quo and motivates the crowds to face up to difficulties.

b) Use of wordy expressions: By the means of increasing the number of words, an impolite phrase or expression can show a more ambiguous meaning and steer clear of unintentional offence. A lot of presidents and governors of the United States favor lengthy phrases over brief words to convey what they’re thinking. John F. Kennedy, in his speech, once used “citizens with a visual impairment” to replace “blind people”, which effectively avoids offending those who are visually challenged. In addition, some governors typically use “the actions of breaking and entering without permission” in the newspapers to describe rampant local crimes in order to temporarily lessen fright and panic of residents.

c) Use of understatement: Undoubtedly, the application of understatement — a statement that makes something seem less important, serious, big, etc. than it really is — can implicitly convey potentially insulting words or phrases. In the Second World War, the British army mistakenly opened fire on their allied forces and the British press later described it as a “friendly fire”, trying to relieve the tense situation. Besides, the civilian casualties caused by warfare were once described as “inevitable damage” so as to give solace to those who had lost their family members. What’s more, the economic crisis can also be understated as “a period of economic adjustment” in the major British and American newspapers and periodicals.

d) Use of metaphorical transfer: As probably one of the most commonly-used rhetorical devices in everyday life, metaphor, an imaginative way of describing something or someone by referring to something else that is considered to have similar characteristics, makes it easier for users to shift the situation to a less harsh one and to show some respect to individuals engaged in certain occupations. American journalists normally describe the ethnic riots and unrests as “the fire in the nation” or “temporary domestic fire” which

can to some degree ease the masses. As for politeness for some occupations, western citizens tend to address “garbage collector” as “sanitation engineer”, “gardener” as “landscape architect”, “hairdresser” as “beautician”, “butcher” as “meat technologist”, “maid” as “domestic helper”, etc.

e) Use of negation: Negation is frequently employed by native English speakers to describe something unpleasant in the complete opposite, by using the opposite meaning of a word or phrase, which turns out to be more polite and more courteous than when it is used directly. Obviously, it often sounds rude and distasteful to exclaim that a person who just did silly things is “stupid”; however, it sounds less unfriendly to say that he or she is “unwise”. Similarly, some people will use “not feeling well” to express that they are “ill” when they catch a cold.

f) Use of acronym: Simply by abbreviating a word can, in many cases, be an effective way of making the meaning of it less blunt. In medical treatments, some very common examples are AIDS abbreviated from “acquired immune deficiency syndrome”, Big C (C means cancer), BO abbreviated from “body odor”, VD abbreviated from “venereal disease”, etc. In terms of poverty, “displaced person” is abbreviated to DP and “highly indebted poor countries” is abbreviated to HIPC, which serves as a good method of lessening embarrassment.

In brief, English euphemisms, including political euphemisms, can be normally formed by using the abstract and general forms of a concrete word, wordy expressions, figures of speech such as understatement and metaphorical transfer, negation and acronym. And these means of the formation of English euphemism, together with its pragmatic principles which will be elaborated on later, lay a solid foundation for its pragmatic functions in different contexts.

2) Functions of political euphemism: When it comes to political euphemism, the well-renowned English novelist George Orwell (2013: 30) has cited and criticized it a million times in most of his political satires, and in one of his essays, he once referred political language to “words or phrases mainly designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind”. However, in contemporary English newspapers and news broadcasts, the application of political euphemism undoubtedly contributes a lot to political correctness and social stability and development and therefore its functions cannot be totally denied. Furthermore, appropriate use of those euphemisms is able to clear up many conflicts and collisions simply caused by misunderstanding of the text. Here are five general functions of euphemism in mainstream English political news.

a) Function of avoiding taboo: In pretty much every language have certain unmentionable words or phrases, as they typically convey offensive meanings that they cannot be used in public discourses. Those impolite words or phrases are taboos, which originate from the incorrect cognition or misunderstanding of the relationship between conceptions and indications, namely taking concept equally as referent.

Uneducated and primitive human ancestors used to employ taboo terms with the intent of violating and cursing devils or those they dislike. And the original reason for using euphemism by politicians is to avoid taboo, which can effectively reduce the unpleasantness of taboo terms.

There is a close relationship between euphemisms and taboos. Euphemism is deeply rooted in the production and concrete application of taboos — that is to say, it serves as the overcoat of taboos. In human language communication, there are some words or phrases that can not be used for certain reasons. They are regarded as being dangerous, not holy, or even vulgar. Therefore, they are used restrictedly only on particular occasions. As for English political news, there are numerous taboos in many unpleasant aspects of human society such as death, disease, sex, unemployment, poverty, physical shortcomings, killing, etc.

b) Function of concealment: Joanna Channell (2000: 147) once described “covering-up function” as “deliberately withholding information”, which virtually means “not giving information that the speaker possesses and that could be appropriate in the situation”. In western countries, many politicians tend to make up a large number of political euphemisms to reach certain unspeakable political goals. They try to conceal the truth in order to soften the tense relations with other countries. In the description of Iraqi War, a great number of English euphemisms were utilized by some national journalists to gloss over the horror and cruelty caused by those frightening battles and to consequently relieve those extreme emotions among domestic citizens.

In addition, when it comes to the disadvantaged living standards of individuals, for instance, the word “slum” is commonly modified by American governors as “substandard housing”, which is used to cover up the nature of the facts, deceiving the public with trickily decorated words. And there is no doubt that concealing the dark side of society by proper applications of political euphemisms in the news items can positively alleviate various social contradictions triggered by unemployment, poverty, criminal violence, etc.

c) Function of refinement: The refining function of euphemism plays a very significant role in social communication. In order to avoid hurting other people’s feelings, western journalists constantly apply certain euphemisms in their news items to refine displeased facts or something that will probably impairing public credibility. Such euphemisms are extraordinarily popular with official merchants and educators.

In the business area, for instance, many western airline companies tend to use them to beautify different ranks of seat. The first class seat is refined as “deluxe class”. The second class is more often than not refined as “business class”. And the third class normally has a better name of “economic class” to avoid disrespect.

In the field of education, teachers insist on using proper euphemisms to describe students’ academic performances to avoid hurting the feelings of certain averagely-performed students and it usually works perfectly. When a teacher talks about a “dull” or “stupid” student, he or she often uses

phrases like “someone who is able to do better with help” instead of directly using the word “slow” or “stupid”. And the teachers also prefer to replace “mental deficiency” with some expressions like “a bit slow for his age”, and often categorize disabled students into “special students”.

d) Function of politeness: J.S. Neaman (1983: 39) once pointed out that there exist two major psychological bases of euphemisms; they are taboo and politeness. Undoubtedly, politeness serves as a universal phenomenon in a variety of languages and cultures throughout history, for it restrains action and speech of human beings, and further coordinate the relationship between individuals. Therefore, it is one of the most important factors a language learner or user must pay special attention to if positive effects are to be achieved in social communication.

With rapid social development, more and more taboos in various languages turn out to be acceptable, and they are no longer as mysterious or terrible as they used to be; therefore, more and more euphemistic practices are out of politeness inclination. Modern citizens still take death as taboo, but the difference part is that nowadays people normally consider more about the unpleasantness and the horror of death; for that reason, how to politely express it becomes rather necessary. In English newspapers, when a certain political figure dies, the reporter will vaguely say that he or she passes away.

As Joanna Channell (1983: 46) once put in her book, “Vagueness is used as one way of adhering to the politeness rules for a particular culture, and of not threatening face.” It means that the polite function of English euphemism is to avoid things that are not decent or elegant and to make people feel more comfortable and pleasant; in daily life, when individuals meet with certain unpleasant happenings, they usually choose a few of vague expressions to avoid being rude or hurting other people’s emotions. It is harsh to point out bluntly that a person is deaf, so people tend to use “auditory-impaired” as a replacement, which clearly sounds less impolite and more graceful.

e) Function of compliment: The last important function of euphemism is its praise function, which generally refers to the employment of neutral or commendatory words or phrases to reflect certain things. In western society, the occupation rank is rather conspicuous; quite a few individuals who rank in relatively low levels of social status tend to be very sensitive. Therefore, in order to weaken profession discrimination caused by the value gap of different occupations. Garbage collector is called as “sanitary engineer”, prostitute is often replaced with expressions like “street walker” or “lady of pleasure”, housewife is called as “domestic engineer”, and butcher is called as “meat cutter” or “meat technologist”.

When people refer to certain areas of service industry, they also utilize certain euphemisms. “Industry” is normally viewed as a more decent substitute for the word “trade” in modern service industry, including women’s beauty industry, garbage industry, motor vehicle industry, etc. In many contexts, the word “worker” is replaced by “engineer”; “pipe

engineer” is a replacement of “plumber”. “Packing engineer” can be substituted for “porter”, and “dwelling engineer” is a substitute for “nurse”.

From the above analysis, it is clear that the social communication effects of English euphemism are quite apparent — harmonious interpersonal interactions. However, in order to achieve these satisfactory communication outcomes — to fulfill the above pragmatic functions of English euphemisms, not only should the formation of euphemisms of all kinds be paid much attention to, but also the pragmatic principles should be taken into serious consideration.

III. PRAGMATIC PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF EUPHEMISM

Pragmatics is the study of meaning conveyed by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener or a reader, which is more about the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than the analysis of what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves. English linguist G.N. Leech (1983: 128) once had pointed out that the main function of using English euphemisms is to achieve satisfactorily expected communicative results, namely positively desired pragmatic outcomes. However, in order to successfully achieve positive results in English political news, without any offence or rudeness, two pragmatic principles, Politeness Principle and Cooperative Principle, must be taken into proper account.

A. Cooperative Principle

According to another linguist Grice’s (2002: 53) theory, our talk exchanges are orientated towards a common purpose or a set of common purposes, and in order to reach these goals, the participants at least should mutually cooperate with each other. He eventually made a precise explanation of Cooperative Principle — to make your conversational contribution as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. In order to make his theory of Cooperative Principle more explicit for interpretation, Grice distinguishes four major categories about it: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner.

1) *Maxim of quantity*: When applied in a certain language context, words or phrases (functioning as euphemisms) should be as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). More importantly, they should not be more informative than is required and here is an example of the violation of it:

- Miss Chen, we have received all your application forms together with your qualification certificates and read them patiently. It is well acknowledged that you are a very distinguished student, for your excellent academic performances and achievements and your extraordinary gifts have left a deep impression on us. However, the sad fact is that only 20 students are allowed to our school and you are unfortunate to be the No. 21 in our list. It does not necessarily mean that you have no opportunity to study in our school. If

any of those 20 students cannot enter for any reasons, then there is still the chance of your enrollment.

Obviously, in the above paragraph, much more information is provided than necessary, which can be a total waste of time for both sides. While filled with many wordy expressions, the paragraph is not that informative whose main idea is as simple as a rejection of enrollment. In this case, seemingly being too euphemistic may cause some unnecessary inconvenience for the reader.

2) *Maxim of quality*: When employed in language contexts, especially in oral contexts, what one believes to be false or anything lacking in adequate evidence ought to be avoided. In other words, the statements or arguments should stand up to themselves. However, at times, the speakers, especially politicians, intentionally express something that might not be true in order to hide the truth or appear to be more decent and here is an example:

- It’s going to be a big chance for our country (Liu, 2001: 139).

Is there really going to be a big chance? Apparently, it is, more often than not, either a “slim” chance or a big “challenge” or even “problem”. Anyway, presenting a piece of the truth as well as emphasizing the positive consequences is probably one of the most commonly used tricks by western politicians to provoke the enthusiasm of the masses for collective participation.

3) *Maxim of relation*: The Maxim of Relation actually means that the utterance of the speaker should be as relevant to the context as possible. Lack of relation can result in misunderstanding of the expressions. However, some native speakers sometimes do violate this maxim through the application of certain euphemistic expressions so as to be more polite, and here is an example:

- A: Let’s listen to some music.

B: I want to sleep.

The first speaker A has made a proposal asking if B is willing to listen to some music, but then finds B’s answer to it is not a pertinent one since it is not an answer of acceptance, of rejection, of counter-proposal, or of further discussion. Thus, there must be some underlying meaning. But it is clear to both of them that one usually needs quietness when he sleeps while playing music will produce unwanted sound. For that reason, it is quite understandable that B has said something that has the function of refusing A’s proposal by applying the euphemistic sentence — “I want to sleep.”

4) *Maxim of manner*: As is mentioned above, English euphemisms can be formed by the use of vague words or phrases. Without the context, it is rather hard for people to grasp what those words or phrases convey. The Maxim of Manner is to be perspicuous, which means the avoidance of ambiguity and obscurity of expressions and unnecessary prolixity. In other words, context clues are very significant for people to interpret the underlying and real meanings of

those wordy expressions and to find out the motivations of the users. In addition, Manner Maxim also advocates brief and orderly expressions. Technically, wordy expressions are not master keys for all euphemistic contexts and here is an example:

- Mrs. Smith is a middle-aged woman who has difficulty distinguishing between imaginary and factual information (Lu, 2007: 407).

It is definitely inappropriate for the users to describe a person who lies as a person who has difficulty distinguishing between imaginary and factual information, which is totally lengthy and sometimes even bewildering to the hearer. Although existing as a euphemistic example in some old-fashioned textbooks, this sentence is clearly not a reader-friendly one. Just because certain wordy expression is applied here doesn't mean it is euphemistic, polite or easy to understand. And personally there is really no point in euphemistically beautifying a habitual liar.

B. Politeness Principle

In addition to Cooperative Principle, there exists another essential principle operating simultaneously in communication. This is Politeness Principle, which is put forward to collaborate with, make up for and even rescue the former Cooperative Principle.

As far as various English euphemisms are concerned, it can be confirmed that they are either more or less informative than necessary, or not that true to the real facts or meanings, or seemingly irrelevant to the meanings originally conveyed, or subject to ambiguity. With people's desire to be more polite, the limitation of Cooperative Principle can be reduced by the cooperation of Politeness Principle in communication.

Politeness Principle was proposed in the 1980s by G. N. Leech (1983: 134), as a supplement to Cooperative Principle. Technically, the Maxims of Politeness Principle encourage people to minimize personal judgments and arguments harmful to others but beneficial to themselves, dispraise of others and praise of themselves, disagreement with others in opinion and opposition to others in emotions. As long as those principles are observed by the participants, equal position and friendly relationships can be safely maintained, which are indispensable to effective language communication.

On many occasions, people tend to utilize euphemism in order not to offend others and meanwhile to take their emotions and personal feelings into account. Politeness Principle, with its six maxims, more often than not, has a higher regulative role than Cooperative Principle does. The violation of Cooperative Principle can at times even be necessary in order to follow Politeness Principle, for it can contribute to the establishment of mutual comfort and assurance and promote rapport in social communication.

From the above analysis, the conclusion can be drawn that the appropriate application of English euphemisms, within the scope of pragmatics, comes from the intentional use of Cooperative Principle and the rigid observation of

Politeness Principle. And the two pragmatic principles, followed by different forms of English euphemisms, contribute to more satisfactory social communication outcomes.

IV. APPLICATION OF EUPHEMISM IN ENGLISH POLITICAL NEWS — BASED ON POLITENESS PRINCIPLE AND COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

In western society, political activities are usually viewed as tricky games of seemingly polite and humble expressions, which essentially contain allusive political intentions. There is no doubt that media, especially newspapers and news broadcasts are the most effective ways of conveying information of the government and its decision making. For that reason, political euphemisms are commonly used in English news concerning domestic and foreign affairs so as to avoid expressions probably offensive to the masses.

In the field of domestic affairs, which are mainly involved with the relationship between employees and their bosses and the safety affairs that we are all concerned about, a great number of political euphemisms are employed by both statesmen and journalists. And in terms of foreign affairs, the relationship among countries and military activities, which, if not carefully taken into consideration, may cause severe economic disputes and terrible trade wars or even lead to real warfare. This part, based on above different formations of English euphemism and pragmatic functions and principles, will mainly focus on illustrating the frequently-used euphemisms in everyday English political news and offering some practical methods in the applications of euphemism.

A. Domestic Affairs

1) *Employee-employer relationship*: The past decades has witnessed enormous global industrialization, which not only gives birth to an unprecedented economic boom worldwide but also amplifies the relationship between labor workers and their employers. The employees, especially those of service industry, are increasingly sensitive to their social status, and therefore their bosses have to be more careful about the usage of those work-related expressions. When the relationship between both sides becomes tense, in order to keep the conflict to a minimum, the method of understatement is suggested as in the following example:

- He's between jobs (Lu, 2007: 330).

Directly referring someone who has just lost his or her job to expressions like "he's out of work" is clearly rude and mean. Instead, based on Politeness Principle, the means of understatement is adopted here to politely categorize those "without a job" into those "between jobs", which definitely sounds more decent and seemingly ease the anxiety of unemployment.

In addition, when it comes to the transfer of personnel, "firing" or "dismissing" employees does sound impersonal and show no empathy. In that case, the means of

metaphorical transfer is more appropriate as in the following example:

In a nutshell, the applications of rhetorical devices such as understatement and metaphorical transfer is strongly recommended in the news concerning employee-employer relationship, which can be effective methods of softening the recurrently tense relationship and contributing to more appropriate communication consequences.

2) *Safety affairs*: Domestic safety and stability has long been regarded as the foundation of a country's development. Without it, nothing in the country could ever have flourished. In addition, safety affairs are one of the most important concerns in most political elections. The candidates should be very cautious about the expressions they use because whether they can win the election largely depends on their oratory in comforting the voters. For that reason, in terms of official announcements, using wordy expressions is an effective way of fulfilling certain pragmatic function. In America, the notorious Watergate Scandal was once beautified by the Democratic Party of the United States as "national information disclosure", which conspicuously blurred the truth by the application of understatement. And the scandal was later described in some newspapers as an event, which is used as an abstract and general word in place of the scandal, cunningly weakening the seriousness of it. In addition, the secret agents of FBI are more often than not referred to as "plumber" whose mission is "information gathering" instead of infringing on citizens' privacy — another application of metaphorical transfer.

We can be inspired by the above tricky usages applied by the American government that abstract, general and wordy expressions are effective methods of applications in the news concerning safety affairs, which successfully lead to Function of Concealment in pragmatics and meanwhile observe Cooperative Principle — the Maxim of Quality which is frequently employed when one intends to cover up and make the fact less than truthful so as to sustain the subtle relations of both sides.

B. Foreign Affairs

1) *International relationship*: In an era of globalization, the diplomacy of a country tends to represent its position and the benefits of its citizens. Obviously, blunt statements and openly arguments should be avoided if both sides are going to maintain their friendship and to further cooperate with each other. In order to dealing with vulnerable relationship among countries around the world, the method of metaphorical transfer is suggested, and here is a relevant example of TIME Magazine:

- Speaking at last night's Mansion House banquet in London, Dr. Owen said no one should be in any doubt about the true nature of the Soviet and Cuban intervention in the Horn of Africa and why it placed such a large question mark over the future of detente.

In what Dr. Owen had said at the banquet, "it placed such a large question mark over the future of detente" actually means that the future situation will become more serious if the international conflicts between two countries cannot be timely settled, where "a large question mark" is used euphemistically as a metaphorical transfer to indicate the uncertainty of the future relations of the two countries. Dr. Owen's speech successfully integrates Cooperative Principle with Politeness Principle and therefore he not only successfully maintained the bilateral relationship but also had the other side realize the seriousness of the current affairs.

Enlightened by what Dr. Owen said, we can use similar euphemistic ways of expressions when describing relationship among different countries. In addition, unlike domestic affairs which mainly aim at domestic safety and stability, news regarding international relationship normally serves a purpose of representing certain position of the country. For that reason, there can be no compromise at times and therefore negation (or acronym) is then strongly recommended.

2) *Military affairs*: Throughout human history, warfare is undoubtedly an absolute disaster and people in any countries are too scared to read or hear such horrible word, for it always means massive destruction and numerous casualties. The government, however, will try every means its politicians could think of to cover up the terrible consequences caused by warfare and here is an example of Lyndon Johnson, the 36th president of the United States, when he was trying to convince American citizens of declaring war on Vietnam:

- I want you to know that it is not a light or an easy matter to send our American boys to another country, but do not think that the American people expect their president to hesitate or to vacillate in the face of danger, just because the decision is hard when life is in peril.

In his speech, soldiers are weakened by the use of abstract and general words "boys" and Vietnam is mildly replaced by "another country" as if those boys were going on vacation to another country, which immensely softens the heavy costs and consequences of the war. And he also employed the method of wordy and ambiguous expressions such as "in the face of danger" and "when life is in peril" to a distortion of truth that America did not act as an intruder but the one who's going to save the world through warfare.

From the analysis of the example, in terms of military affairs, the methods of using abstract, general and wordy expressions are more constructive than the others, for they have a stronger effect on Function of Concealment. In comparison to other news items, military news usually seems much more serious and therefore it is necessary to avoid applying extreme expressions.

In a word, the concrete methods of the applications of political euphemisms largely depend on what category the news items belong to. From the above analyses, it is clear that figures of speech, especially metaphorical transfer, are

more commonly used in sustaining domestic safety and stability issues while abstract and wordy expressions or negation may be better choices when it comes to international affairs where national position ought to be seriously taken into account. And the two pragmatic principles must be obeyed if certain pragmatic functions are to be fulfilled.

V. CONCLUSION

English euphemisms are basically words or phrases in an indirect, unclear or agreeable way to substitute those words or phrases with disagreeable or less respectful meaning, and they are universally employed in English news concerning events at home and abroad. Furthermore, there are a variety of ways to form political euphemisms such as replacing a concrete expression with an abstract one, and using wordy expressions, rhetorical devices (understatement, metaphor etc.) and acronym. And those euphemisms do function considerably in English political news, for they can avoid taboo and make a contribution to refinement, concealment, politeness, and compliment. In the meanwhile, much attention should be paid to the pragmatic principles of English euphemism in order to use them in an appropriate way. Basically, Politeness Principle and Cooperative Principle are two essential pragmatic principles that contribute to satisfactory communicative results. Of the two principles, Cooperative Principle is the one that points out communication is a mutual process and a few of maxims should be observed while Politeness Principle serves as a complement that usually collaborates with Cooperative Principle to make the communication more decent, both of which are aimed at more effective interaction and lead to better understanding. English political news is filled with tricky euphemisms and these pragmatic functions and principles should be properly taken into consideration.

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