



## EUPHEMISMS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE AMERICAN AND RUSSIAN CONTEXTS

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**Abstract:** *Linguistic tools are instrumental in shaping political discourse in modern states. Euphemisms, in particular, serve as a key mechanism for mitigating sensitive issues and managing public opinion. This paper explores the role of euphemistic expressions in political communication, focusing on how political actors utilize language to legitimize controversial decisions and minimize negative societal responses. The study provides a comparative analysis of the American and Russian political traditions, highlighting differences in euphemism usage shaped by political culture and historical context. It is argued that while both nations employ euphemisms strategically, their communicative approaches reflect divergent rhetorical priorities and sociopolitical objectives.*

**Keywords:** *Political discourse; Euphemisms; Political communication; Language and power; American political rhetoric; Russian political rhetoric; Public opinion management; Ideological framing; Comparative linguistics; Political culture*

### INTRODUCTION

Political discourse is a domain where language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a tool of influence and power. Among the array of



linguistic strategies employed by political actors, euphemisms stand out as particularly effective in framing contentious issues and maintaining ideological control. This paper examines the function of euphemisms in the political discourse of the United States and the Russian Federation, with a focus on the ways in which these linguistic devices contribute to public perception management and political legitimacy.

Euphemisms are commonly defined as mild or indirect expressions used to replace those considered harsh, blunt, or socially uncomfortable. In political communication, euphemisms serve to obscure reality, soften criticism, and justify actions that might otherwise provoke public dissent. Their role is both rhetorical and strategic, often functioning to align controversial measures with socially acceptable values.

### **The American Political Tradition: Euphemisms as Avoidance and Justification**

The American political discourse demonstrates a systematic reliance on euphemisms to rationalize complex or unpopular decisions. U.S. political elites frequently employ softened terminology when discussing military interventions, economic austerity measures, and other potentially contentious policies. One salient feature of the American approach is the deliberate avoidance of direct confrontation with the public through the substitution of negatively charged terms with more neutral or abstract alternatives. This practice enables political leaders to maintain a façade of consensus and preserve public support amid policy controversies. Examples of such usage include the replacement of "war" with "military operation," or "civilian casualties" with "collateral damage." These lexical choices reflect an underlying intent to depoliticize aggressive actions and mitigate emotional reactions among the electorate.



## **The Russian Political Discourse: Euphemisms and Ideological Framing**

In contrast, the Russian political context reveals a distinct pattern of euphemism usage, driven by internal political dynamics and national ideological positioning. The Russian political elite utilizes euphemistic expressions as a means of exerting control over both domestic discourse and international narratives. Euphemisms are prevalent in discussions of national security, state authority, and opposition movements. A defining trait of the Russian approach is its integration with patriotic rhetoric. Euphemistic constructions often serve to reinforce the image of the state as the protector of national sovereignty and cultural identity. For instance, political actions that may be perceived as authoritarian or repressive are framed in terms of "stabilization," "restoration of order," or "defense of national interests." Such linguistic choices are designed to resonate with the historical consciousness of the populace and evoke a sense of collective unity and resilience.

### **Cultural and Historical Influences**

While euphemisms are present in both American and Russian political discourse, their deployment reflects differing communicative goals and cultural frameworks. The American model emphasizes public image management through depersonalization and abstraction. Conversely, the Russian model focuses on consolidating internal authority and legitimizing power structures through nationalistic and moralistic framing.

These differences are rooted in the respective historical experiences, media systems, and political ideologies of each country. In the U.S., democratic accountability necessitates persuasive rather than coercive language, while in Russia, state-controlled narratives often rely on emotive and symbolic appeals to reinforce governmental authority.





## CONCLUSION

Euphemisms represent a powerful linguistic instrument in the arsenal of political discourse, enabling governments to navigate the complexities of public communication while safeguarding institutional legitimacy. This comparative analysis underscores that while both American and Russian political actors utilize euphemisms strategically, the form, function, and intent of these usages diverge significantly. The American discourse favors neutrality and ambiguity to mitigate public dissent, whereas the Russian discourse employs patriotic and authoritative framing to reinforce national cohesion. Understanding these patterns contributes to a deeper awareness of how language shapes political reality and mediates the relationship between state and society.

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