

EUPHEMISM IN HAUSA AND YORUBA: A COMPARATIVE SOCIOLINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES

SHUAIBU Abdulwaheed, PhD.

*Department of Linguistics and African Languages, Adeyemi Federal University of Education,
Ondo
princedebyo11@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses euphemism in Hausa and Yoruba as a sociolinguistic and cultural phenomenon, in terms of the functions of indirect expressions in politeness, moral discretion, and social intercourse. A qualitative research design was used in collecting the data by conducting semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and an examination of media texts and daily conversations based on the selected communities of the Kano and Oyo States. They came up with about forty-five euphemistic terms and divided them into thematic areas which included death, sexuality, religion, body functions and social relations. Hymes SPEAKING model and Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson provide the framework of the analysis to consider the use of context and face management. The results indicate that the application of euphemism in both languages is socially structured based on the sociolinguistic variables such as age, gender, religion, and social status. Although euphemism is used in both languages to lessen face-threatening behavior, Hausa euphemism are more consistent with Islamic standards of humility and respect, and Yoruba euphemism are more of a blend of indigenous and Christian beliefs. The paper has shown that the application of euphemism in both cultures is a pragmatic practice that is anchored in cultural practices and not a simple substitution of words. It suggests the need to conduct more comparative studies on the euphemism of other Nigerian languages and its incorporation into language teaching and intercultural communication.

Keywords: Euphemism, Hausa, Politeness Theory, Sociolinguistics, Yoruba

Introduction

Euphemism is an international language and culture phenomenon. Euphemism is the acceptable cultural and social method of softening the effects of unpleasant, harsh or unacceptable words, phrases or even feeling. Allan and Burridge (1991) define euphemism as the application of type of linguistic shield that conceals unpleasantness regarding some taboo topics of discourse such as death, sex, disease, and body processes. Euphemism is a powerful tool of language that serves to maintain and propagate the social order. According to Burridge (2012), euphemisms depend on situations and culture they are contextualized. The linguistic innovativeness, the social attitude, belief, and the existing order of a certain community are enclosed in the context and culture on the basis of which a euphemism is constructed.

As pointed out by Adegbija (1994) and Akindele and Adegbite (2005) for example, some African cultures prioritize both politeness and indirectness in communication because they value social hierarchy and respect. In African cultures, communication becomes increasingly indirect as a person becomes older, holds a position of authority, or is talking about a sensitive issue. A sign of social and cultural sophistication is the tendency to use euphemisms rather than direct speech, and that awareness is critical. In African cultures, euphemism is social in nature.

In the Nigerian context, especially with the Hausa and Yoruba, the use of euphemism is important for the preservation of social order and the moral values of language. The Hausa people are predominantly influenced by Islam and see modesty and restraint as important social virtues (Ahmed, 2013). The speech of members of a Hausa community is expected to avoid vulgar expressions and to be polite, especially in public gatherings and in the intermingling of the genders. For instance, Hausa people will avoid saying “*ya mutu*” (“he died”) and instead use the euphemisms “*ya rasu*” (“he has departed”) or “*ya koma ga Allah*” (“he has returned to God”) as a sign of religiosity and cultural politeness (Yakasai, 2017).

The attitude of Yoruba speakers towards the norms of respect (*ibá*), good conduct (*ìwà òmólúàbí*), and politeness (*ìwà pèlẹ̀*) in communication is also exemplary. The researchers noted and saw that the Yoruba culture and etiquette dictate the necessity of euphemism, i.e., the need not to use too blunt, rude, or face-threatening words (Olatunji, 1984; Adegbite, 2000). As with the equivalents “*ó kú*” (“he died”), the Yoruba speakers change the emphasis on the emotional utterances and bereavement when they utter “*ó lọ*” (“he has gone”) or “*ó lọ silé ayé tó kù*” (“he has gone to the world beyond”). This is one of the considerations of the Yoruba accord speech as described by Akindele and Adegbite (2005): that speech must display considerations, decency and kindness.

Other expressions that recognize the prominence of euphemism in the culture when addressing death are “*ó sáláísí*” (“he is no more”) and “*ó dàgbére fáyé*” (“he has bid the world farewell”). These euphemisms, like others previously discussed, are evidence of recognition of the need to shift the focus in the case of death and communicate empathy and dignity. These phrases also point to the Yoruba cultural sensitivity toward the phenomenon.

To a large extent, euphemism demonstrates the socio-cultural nature of the Yoruba and Hausa ethnicities. It shows that politeness, morality and social interdependence are negotiated by lexis. Even though both cultures might be seen to exhibit euphemisms as a communicative social strategy, the application of euphemisms witnessed in Hausa cultures is opposite to the Yoruba one. The differences could be due to the differences between the religions, worldviews, and social histories.

Statement of the Problem

It is generally recognized in sociolinguistics that euphemism is a pragmatic approach to handling politeness, taboo, and face-threatening action. The literature on languages in Nigeria, such as Hausa and Yoruba, has reported on euphemistic expressions within the personal speech communities, especially in the areas of death, sexuality and religion. Nevertheless, these studies are mostly language-specific and are seldom systematic in cross-cultural comparison and rarely address the impact of common sociolinguistic variables on euphemism in various cultural contexts.

What has not been thoroughly addressed is the nature of euphemism in relation to clearly delimited Hausa and Yoruba sociolinguistic groups, particularly in vernacular speech, in the mass media and in verbal arts, proverbs and idioms. The earlier studies have given little focus to the interaction of these factors, including age, sex, religion, and social class, between the two societies to determine how these factors influence the euphemistic decisions and the politeness behaviour.

It is noteworthy to fill this gap since Hausa and Yoruba are some of the key socio-cultural traditions in Nigeria. Although this study considers specific communities, not all dialect systems, this method of studying sociolinguistics illustrates the most important patterns of sociolinguistic euphemism as a manifestation of social values, power relations, and communicative norms, which are essential in the study of African sociolinguistics and language in context.

Objectives of the Study

1. The objective of the study was to locate and categorize common euphemistic phrases in the Hausa and Yoruba languages.
2. To examine how such social factors as age, gender, religion, and status influence the use of euphemisms.
3. To examine the application of euphemism strategy, which is trying to be polite when communicating and also a way of saving social face.
4. To find out and evaluate the euphemistic aspect of Hausa and Yoruba and observe similarities and differences.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide the study:

1. What are the most popular euphemisms in the Hausa and Yoruba languages?
2. How do social factors like age, gender, religion, and status, among others, affect their use?
3. What are the communicative and pragmatic roles of euphemisms in the two societies?
4. How do Hausa and Yoruba euphemisms both differ and resemble each other with regard to form and function?

Literature Review

Concept of Euphemism: Definitions and Worldviews

As a rule, euphemism is perceived as a language technique of referring to a socially sensitive or taboo issue in an indirect manner. Allan and Burridge (1991) theorize that euphemism would be a process in which speakers bargain over the taboo by using non-offensive forms in their conversations. Burridge's (2012) metaphor of euphemism being a verbal lubricant also makes it clear that it is a more pragmatic approach to ease social interaction. Pragmatically, Leech (1983) places euphemism in the context of politeness behaviour, where he believes that indirectness is used to preserve social balance and reduce friction between two people.

Although these definitions have been very powerful, they are mainly based on the Western communicative standards where euphemism is commonly associated with personal face management. Other scholars like Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2018) go beyond it by admitting that euphemism is also a component of culture and shared psychology that is especially important in non-Western cultures where the language is intimately tied to communal morality.

Euphemism, Politeness, and Theoretical Debates

Brown and Levinson (1987) have come up with Politeness Theory that has been extensively used in explaining euphemism as a face-saving strategy. This model implies that euphemism is used to decrease acts that are face-threatening to protect positive and negative face on the speaker and the hearer. Nevertheless, the argument of universality in the theory has been subject to long-term criticism, especially by those scholars working in African and Asian languages. There are critics who state that the concept of face is excessively individualistic and fails to capture the social identity that is collectively defined in societies (Adegbite, 2000; Akindele and Adegbite, 2005).

Politeness in the African communicative setting is not considered as much of an individual strategic option but rather a moral and social requirement which is rooted in a communal system and hierarchy and respect. Adegbite (2000) argues that politeness among African societies cannot exist outside the context of ethics, social roles and power connections. This view puts the sufficiency of Western paradigms of politeness into question and advocates culturally based understandings of euphemism with a predestined communal harmony as opposed to individual face.

Euphemism in African Languages and Cultural Contexts

The research of the African languages has always revealed that euphemism is at the heart of the taboo, respect and social control management. As Adegbija (1994) notes, indirectness is a favoured communicative practice in most African societies and has the roles of respect, caution and avoidance of conflicts. Similar findings are by Finnegan (2012), who observes that African oral traditions are based on the use of metaphor and indirection to support the high moral and aesthetic values.

Euphemism in Hausa culture is directly associated with the Islamic morality and the cultural concept of *kunya* (modesty). The language represents religious and moral restraint through such phrases as “*ya rasu*” (“he has departed”) for death and “*ta samu juna biyu*” (“she has two bodies”) for pregnancy (Ahmed, 2013; Yakasai, 2017). Instead, Yoruba euphemism is influenced by the ideas of *ibá* (reverence) and *èwò* (taboo) and also by the combination between native beliefs and Christianity and Islam. Research results presented by Olatunji (1984) and Odebunmi (2008, 2010) prove the power of euphemism in the Yoruba proverbs of the Yoruba people and their real-life conversation to strengthen social peace and moral uprightness.

Sociolinguistic Variables and Use of Euphemisms

Sociolinguistic studies stipulate that the use of euphemism is predisposed by the variables of age, gender, religion, and social position. Based on the ethnography of communication introduced by Hymes (1974), researchers believe that the selection of language should be decoded within the boundaries of a certain social event. Holmes (2008) and Ahmed (2013) opine that It is found that women use euphemisms and indirect expressions more than men do, which is consistent with gendered norms of politeness and reservedness. Religion is also decisive, especially among Hausa society and social hierarchy and kinship affect indirectness in Hausa and Yoruba interaction (Adegbite, 2000).

Gaps Identified

Even though the literature available contains important information about the subject of euphemism in Hausa and Yoruba, respectively, it is largely monolingual and descriptive. Very little research carries out a systematic comparative analysis that can study the similar sociolinguistic variables that perform within the two speech communities. In addition, the pre-eminence of Western politeness structures has curtailed closer interaction with African-focused communicative ethics. This paper fills these gaps by providing a comparative, culturally based insight into euphemism in Hausa and Yoruba and thus adds to African pragmatics and sociolinguistic theory.

Theoretical Framework

The research follows a mixed sociolinguistic-pragmatic approach and relies on Ethnography of Communication by Dell Hymes (1974) and Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). This combination of these frameworks makes it possible to study euphemism as a context-dependent communicative practice, as well as a tactic of managing social relations. Euphemism is therefore not only a behaviour in the form of lexical substitution but a socially constructed mode of action, which is deeply fixed in culture.

Sociolinguistic Theory (Ethnography of Communication)

The main analysis framework of euphemism that is socially determined presented by Hymes in his Ethnography of Communication offers the main method of studying this phenomenon. The SPEAKING model prefigures important variables, including setting, participants, norms and genre, which determine the option of direct and indirect expressions. As an example, indirect mentions of death are more desirable during communication with elders or during the official situation in the Hausa and Yoruba cultures, which are culturally predetermined by the norms of respect and decency. Hymes (1974) and Saville-Troike (2003) believe that this framework is especially appropriate in the African communicative situation, the meaning of which cannot be detached or separated even by social position, status, and cultural norms.

Politeness Theory

The Politeness Theory describes the pragmatic reasons for euphemistic decisions. Brown and Levinson (1987) do not present euphemism as a theory but recognize strategies of face-saving according to which indirectness reduces potentially face-threatening actions. Euphemism is one of the strategies that operate in this context. But the individualistic concept of face in the theory has its constraints in Africa, where politeness is based on societal ethics and moral compulsion and not individual autonomy (Adegbite, 2000). The present research thus employs politeness theory critically, which is modified to explain culturally shared rules of respect within Hausa and Yoruba societies.

Integration of Theories

The framework by Hymes describes the conditions under which euphemism is employed, the location of its use, and the individuals involved. Politeness Theory describes the reasons why speakers choose to be indirect in a sensitive situation. This kind of integration allows them to provide a more sufficient explanation of the contextually based explanation in the Hausa and Yoruba culturally grounded speech communities through the analysis of euphemism (Holmes and Wilson, 2017; Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015).

Methodology

Research Design

To study the use of the language in natural communicative situations, a qualitative and descriptive design was taken. This method would enable one to have a profound insight into the functioning of euphemisms socially and culturally in Hausa and Yoruba speakers.

Population and Sampling

This research targets native Hausa speakers of Kano City, Dala and Tarauni (Kano State) and Yoruba speakers of Ibadan, Oyo town and Iseyin (Oyo State). They were participants chosen purposely based on linguistic competence and knowledge of culture.

In order to obtain an adequate diversity, 30 participants will be included in each community, being balanced in terms of age (youth, adult, elder), gender, and educational level. This size is both feasible and representative, with the advantage of providing comparative analysis. The study received ethical approval by the institutional review board; the study was informed consent and participants were assured anonymity.

Data Collection

Three techniques have been used that complement each other:

1. Semi-Structured Interviews: The respondents talked about euphemisms, meanings and context of use. A questioning process was flexible, allowing an elaboration of details.
2. Participant Observation: natural speech in markets, religious meetings and social events was observed where spontaneous euphemistic usage was to be observed.
3. Media and Oral Sources: Radio shows, movies, music, and proverbs were taken as additional information on modern and traditional euphemistic expressions.

Data Analysis

Transcription of data was performed verbatim, and euphemisms were systematically coded into the themes of death, sexuality, religion, bodily functions, and social relations. Coding was done in two phases whereby two independent coders were involved in order to improve reliability; differences were solved through discussion. The SPEAKING model (Hymes, 1974) was also used to analyze the context, participants and norms and the Politeness Theory as stated by Brown and Levinson (1987) to explain the use of euphemisms as a face-saving mechanism. Similarities and differences between Hausa use and Yoruba use, as well as the role of age, gender, religion and social class, were analyzed systematically by comparative analysis. The cross-referencing of field notes, recording, and literature minimized the biases related to their interpretation (Leech, 2014; Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015).

Data Presentation and Analysis

This paper analyzed the euphemistic expression in Hausa and Yoruba, focusing on identifying, categorizing, social variables, pragmatic functions, and comparisons between the two cultures. It is aimed at showing patterns in a systematic way and not impressively.

Recognition and Classification of Euphemisms

Euphemisms were observed in thematic domains such as death, sexuality, religion, bodily functions and even social relations. Coding included the extraction of expressions from interviews, field observations and media data. Categories were created because of similar semantic domains and sociocultural contexts. Such representative examples are:

1. Death: Hausa: *ya bar duniya* (“he has left the world”) and *ya koma ga Allah* (“he has returned to God”); Yoruba: *ó ti ló* (“he has gone”) and *ó wà ní ilé ìtùnú* (“he is in the house of comfort”).

2. Sexuality and body functions: Hausa: *yin bayan gida* (“go behind the house”); Yoruba: *n se igbé ayé ọkọ àti aya* (“living the life of husband and wife”).
3. expressions relating to religion: Hausa: *ya tafi gidan gaskiya* (“he went to the house of truthfulness”); Yoruba: *Ó sùn nínú Olúwa*. (“He sleeps in the Lord”).

Social Variables

Euphemism use was analyzed based on age, gender, religion and location:

1. Age: Younger speakers are more indirect with the older ones.
2. Gender: Females tend to employ more euphemisms, especially when it comes to sensitive issues.
3. Religion: Hausa Muslim and Yoruba Christian traditions have an impact on euphemistic expressions in the discourse of death and morality.
4. Urban vs. Rural: City speakers use expressions that are affected by media or incorporate both media expressions and traditional ones, whereas rural speakers maintain their traditional idioms.

Note: These observations were supported by quantitative counts and representative excerpts which were recorded systematically.

Pragmatic Functions

In both languages, euphemisms can be used:

1. Politeness and Deference: Reduce the tension socially and be respectful.
2. Taboo Avoidance: Respond to sensitive things without offending.
3. Social Harmony: Have an interpersonal balance when interacting with the community.
4. Cultural Identity: Firm personal values and moral standards.

Comparative Insights

Convergence: Hausa and Yoruba use euphemisms to ensure politeness, respect and social integration. Death and physical activities are much euphemized. Divergence Hausa euphemisms are mostly religious and Arabic-inspired, with Yoruba euphemisms being full of figurative language, proverbs, and traditional beliefs. Urban Yoruba speakers also incorporate English-based euphemisms.

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the result of the study on euphemism in the Hausa and Yoruba languages with regard to moral conscience, etiquette, religion, intercultural communication effect, and linguistic identity. The argument in question integrates the aspects of sociolinguistics and pragmatics, and especially the concepts of social use of language, as it is an example of how a culturally driven linguistic tool is used to cope with relationships within a given society.

Euphemism as Cultural Etiquette and Ethical Consciousness

Findings showed that Yoruba and Hausa speakers use euphemisms to be socially acceptable and protective as well as to construct meaning socially in a polite way. It applies to the politeness and social distance theory (Leech, 2014) and his discussion of how face-threatening behaviour should be prevented when addressing people in circumstances that warrant such behaviour.

Another way through which the Hausa-speaking people respect the dead is the avoidance of the term "*ya mutu*" that means "he died". It would rather be said "*ya koma ga Allah*" (he has turned back to God) or "*ya bar duniya*" (he has left the world). In the Yoruba language, one would not even say "*ó kú*" (He died) but say "*ó ti ló*" (He has gone) or say "*ó wà ní ilé itùnù*" (he is in the house of comfort). The application of these euphemisms indicates that

the cultural beliefs of the Yoruba and the Hausa people about the dead are more readily available and that there is a need to use decent and respectful language when addressing the dead.

Allan and Burrige (2006) elaborate the different roles played by euphemisms. He describes the linguistic euphemism as a linguistic deodorant, which demonstrates the way that euphemisms make more offensive forms of taboo such as death, sex, and illness appear less offensive with the help of this linguistic method. In the Hausa and in the Yoruba culture, the degrees of euphemistic expression are not only linguistic, but also moral and spiritual. Directness can be considered to be rude or insensitive and in situations where there are social hierarchies, the juniors are required to serve the seniors or social superiors. In these cultures therefore, the application of euphemisms implies cultivation and social maturity as morality.

The lack of moral sensitivity is more pronounced in the not mentioning the functions of the body. Hausa speakers translate “*yana cikin halin lafiya*’ (he is in a state of health) as opposed to (he is sick) “*yana da cuta*” but Yoruba speakers would say “*Ó şáláísí*” (he is no more / he has passed on.) In both terms, attention is given to the euphemism and the cultural significance of silence to the unity of society.

The Influence of Religion on the Development of Euphemistic Language

Focusing on the extremely eloquent and mindful use of euphemisms in the speech of the Hausa and the Yoruba, one can point out the Islamic religion that, for the desirers of God, hotly requests to accompany one’s speech with quotations invoking the Divine and His will. The one who says, “*ya koma ga Allah*” and “*Allah ya ji kansa*” both subscribe to the view, Islamic in principle, that Allah ordains life and death.

Moreover, such general euphemisms do not only apply to euphemisms that pertain to death. Certain topics, such as pregnancy, retention of children, and sexual intercourse, are medically and clinically taboo in the Hausa culture. For example, instead of saying “*ta yi ciki*”, a speaker of Hausa can say “*ta samu juna biyu*”, which is a euphemistic form that corresponds with the principles of the Islamic culture and etiquette to which she adheres.

The diversities of jurisdiction reveal an acculturated encounter of religion, modernity, and a spirit of a dominant religious duality. Euphemisms such as “*ó ló s’òdó Olúwa*” reveal the Yoruba sensitivity of the euphemisms to Christian influences and less direct sayings such as “*ó ló sí ilé òrun*” expose the pre-colonial religion and cosmological views. Adegbite (2015) writes of the Yoruba metaphors that they weave their way artfully using open and uninhibited strings of the metaphorical in order to hide and socially suture flaws of ultimate realities, a point that arguably upholds an argument that metaphors are used to soften realities without losing the aspect of communication.

The contradictions that arise from socially prescribed rules to speak euphemisms emphasize the invisible religious discipline. In Islam, the phrase “*an yi masa aure*”, literally meaning “he has been married” suggests a certain degree of moral and social order and divinely sanctioned order, which viscerally differs from the Yoruba Christian community’s performative style of speaking euphemisms of thanking *Olúwa*, like “*à dúpé l’owó Olúwa*” (we thank the Lord), to each other. Both linguistic societies speak of the isolation and the expansive domain of religious influence that permeates their verbal modesty.

Euphemisms, social factors, and social power

The importance of social factors like age, gender, social status, and context was noted when analyzing euphemisms. Among the Hausa and Yoruba speakers, younger participants tend to employ euphemisms more often when speaking to elders and people of higher social status, which illustrates the African age-based respect system (Odeunmi, 2008). To illustrate, a young

Yoruba would say “*ó wà nibè ní báyii*” (“he is there now”) instead of saying, “he has died”, while a younger Hausa person would say, “*ya tafi lahira*” (“he has gone to the hereafter”) instead of “*ya mutu*”.

Again, there is the factor of gender; women tend to use more euphemistic and indirect forms of speech than men, which supports Lakoff’s (1975) claim that women’s language is more polite and conservative. The results support earlier sociolinguistic research by Trudgill (1983) that found women’s language use shows more adherence to social norms than men’s language use.

In Hausa societies, a woman speaker is more likely to use indirect language when addressing things to do with marriage or reproduction, using various metaphorical terms, including “*ta shiga gidan aure*” (she has entered the house of marriage), rather than a simple statement such as she got married. On the example of the Yoruba women, they prefer to use the euphemism “*ó bímò*” (she bore a child) rather than “*ó lóyún*” (she was pregnant) when speaking formalistically. These gendered distinctions bring out the aspect that euphemism is a sociolinguistic marker of respectability and gender identity.

Communication and Its Effects on One’s Linguistic Identity

Euphemism is one of the instruments of communication and protection of one’s linguistic identity within the multicultural confines of Nigeria. These expressions are highly cultural and, if misunderstood, can lead to communication breakdown among members of different ethnicities. For example, a Hausa speaker covering the phrase “*ya bar duniya*” is likely to misunderstand a Yoruba-speaking counterpart who, not familiar with the idiom, takes the literal meaning of the phrase, “he died.” Thus, knowing the different euphemistic expressions and their meanings is crucial in fostering respect and communication among different ethnic groups and within institutions (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

Euphemism is also a reinforcer of linguistic identity, as it supports the local phrases that are being undermined by Westernization. An example is Hausa and Yoruba speakers who use proverbs, which in their cultural meaning result in the speaker and the hearer being respectful and self-restrained. According to Finnegan (2012), the oral traditions in Africa are dominated by indirectness and metaphor, which makes sure that strong moral teachings are imparted without being emphatic. As such, euphemism is not only to make discourse ameliorate but also to create the long-term sense of self in the community and continuity with the cultural traditions of the ancestors.

Summary of Major Findings

To examine euphemism as a sociolinguistic phenomenon of Hausa and Yoruba languages and its functions, cultural motivations, and pragmatic implications was the purpose of this study. The findings suggest that euphemism is an integral part of both languages for the purpose of keeping civility, harmony, and moral decorum. The study ascertained that euphemisms in Hausa and Yoruba serve as linguistic means of respect, taboo avoidance, emotional control, conflict resolution, and cultural values of the speakers.

Euphemism is also a regulated and influenced use in regard to religion, social status, and even gender and situations of social contexts. Hausa is quite interesting, as even the predominantly Islamic environment promotes pious, modest, and euphemistic mentions of religion, including “*ya koma ga Allah*”. Yoruba speakers’ mixture There is a mixture of traditional phrases like “*ó ló s’òdò Olúwa*” and “*ó wà ní ilé itùnú*” and Christian ideas in euphemisms.

The results of this study also indicated that age- and social-standing-related factors also impact users of euphemisms in each society. Elders and social superiors are addressed with more respect. Younger speakers often utilize euphemisms in order to express deference and restraint. Feminine and masculine differences were also clear in that women were more prone to greater degrees of indirectness and greater degrees of linguistic sensitivity, which is in line with the findings of Trudgill (1983) and Lakoff (1975) on language and gender.

In the pragmatic perspective, the euphemisms are applied to save the face of the speaker in Hausa and Yoruba. As a means of avoiding the face-threatening behaviour, the speaker is trying to save the dignity of the other person in the conversation. It is also a cultural prism that renders hard and unfriendly realities smooth and palatable socially. It corroborates the opinion of Allan and Burridge (2006) that euphemism is an expression that enables the unspeakable to be said.

The study as a whole continues to confirm the point that euphemisms are not simply linguistic embellishments but a cultural requirement. It serves as a barometer of both social morals and the interpersonal relations of the speakers of Yoruba and Hausa.

Reestablishment of Euphemism as a Manifestation of Politeness and Social Decorum

The evidence taken up supports the claim that euphemisms are manifestations of social politeness and etiquette among the African communication systems. Direct speech is considered to be rude and even aggressive in Hausa and Yoruba cultures and it interferes with the wider social structure, especially when speaking to an elder, authority or even about a taboo subject like death, illness or sex.

Euphemism, as a theory of social ethics, is also a territorial courtesy, a reflection of the common good of the people in the society. Politeness, as referred to by Leech (2014), is a focus in pragmatics, which aims at the management of interactions within a social setup where order is needed. The same phenomenon can be observed within Hausa and Yoruba communication, where euphemism is used in the preservation of social face by both the speaker and the hearer. The level of decorum within which the speaker and the hearer communicate is thus maintained and emotional balance is retained.

Hausa speakers use “*Allah ya jikan sa*” (may God forgive him) instead of saying death. This is compared to the Yoruba speakers who employ “*ó ti ló*” (he is gone) with greater empathy and emotional limitation. This proves that euphemism in an African setting is not just a linguistic approach. Instead, it is a social philosophy, which is critical within the more dominant ethics of a good speech, “*iwa omoluabi*”.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study proves that euphemism in Hausa and Yoruba is not merely a linguistic phenomenon. The poly-layered meanings are used to emphasize the hidden dimensions of morality and spirituality of the two societies. It appeals to the mass consciousness of the people to value tranquillity, moderation and civility in the language of politics. This study can thus be pertinent in the study of African sociolinguistics and pragmatics. It demonstrates the importance of language as a means of conveying the cultural and social codes of morality of a people. On observing social and cultural facets that relate to euphemisms, language users and language scholars will know the relation that exists between discourse and the individuals. Words are more than a medium of communication. They become instruments of compassion and etiquette as well as social cohesion.

Future Study Recommendations

Considering the findings, future studies and linguistic use can be suggested as follows:

1. Other Nigerian Language and Dialect Thematic Studies:
To further the study of the African euphemistic politeness system, research on euphemism should be expanded to other Nigerian languages and dialects like Igbo, Tiv, Kanuri or Nupe, and this will also be useful in comparative study that entails use of the native linguistics, which is of unquestionable significance to the African continent.
2. Research on euphemism in political discourse and in the media:
It is possible to propose other scholars focus on the euphemistic application in politics and the more recent media, including social media, to observe the development of indirectness and politeness in Nigerian discourse due to the modern progress and technology.
3. Investigations on the Use of Euphemism as a Discourse Strategy in Religious and Domestic Scenarios:
Moreover, researchers can choose to examine the speech of women and how they operate in the social construction and the process of negotiating the expectations on modesty and propriety to analyze the social order and the disposition that is fluctuating in the society.
4. Euphemism in Cross-Cultural Communication:
It also requires more comparative studies in the rest of the continents, especially Africa, in order to concentrate on the euphemism in intercultural communication with reference to Africa, especially in diplomatic, scholarly, and business communication.

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