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**EUPHEMISMS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: ENGLISH VS
AZERBAIJANI**

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INTRODUCTION

Actuality of research

Language is a unique tool that helps people to communicate. Thanks to language, individuals convey their thoughts about different matters. It occupies the central part of daily life serving various functions. Such as, it helps to pass down traditions and cultures from one generation to another. Because of this fact, language is considered the main tool which preserves history, discoveries and nationality. To achieve a successful communication process, language is not enough. Interlocutors should know how to use the language effectively.

Communication is a vibrant process. The reason behind this lies in the fact that communicators utilize different means to maintain the interaction. These may include metaphors, metonymy, idiomatic expressions, similes and so on. Each of them has its own contributions during the conversation. Euphemisms are one of them which have a vital role in communication. The definition of this phenomenon was defined differently by various scholars. According to Cameron (1995) euphemism is “a specific word which is purposely employed to avoid or mitigate the negative associations of words that are accepted directly as taboo subjects.” Lutz (2000) gives its definition as “a desirable or proper word or expression which is chosen by the speaker to avoid sounding harsh, unpleasant or inappropriate.”

Euphemisms encompass a large scope including death, illness, age, sex, war, gender etc. This research deals with the investigation of political euphemisms during the Second Karabakh War used by Azerbaijani and English politicians.

Language serves both transmitting information and shaping public perception in the political discourse. To present the information in an appropriate way, political figures utilize various linguistic strategies. The usage of euphemisms is one of the strategies that politicians often employ. They can talk about topics which are harsh or blunt by substituting them with their euphemistic counterparts which make those words sound mild and less direct. (Sharofutdinov, 2024)

Political figures primarily resort to this kind of euphemism for the discussion of topics including corruption, human rights, social inequality etc. Given these issues, it is obvious to notice their

potential risk bringing about misunderstanding, if they are expressed in a direct way. (Siahaan et al., 2024)

When the Second Karabakh war started, various journalists, leaders, officials came to Azerbaijan to make the world aware of this war. They bombarded president Ilham Aliyev with questions about the fate of the country. He utilized a wide range of political euphemisms to show the real face of the war to the world. Those euphemisms revealed some facts about the union and solidarity of the Azerbaijani people. The research focuses on the collection of these euphemisms and analyse the their impact on people's perception.

The study will have a great contribution in the political linguistics. The results of the research will demonstrate how political discourse differs from other types of discourse to achieve political goals.

This study is necessary because it investigates how the usage of political euphemisms shapes the way the audience perceives reality. It sheds light on some purposes that politicians achieve by utilizing euphemisms in their speech. The work dives into the euphemisms used by Azerbaijani president, diplomats and ministers to spread realities connected with war to the world. It proves the significance of euphemisms which avoid losing face and provocation.

The Objects of the thesis: The object of the study is to determine political euphemisms used by Azerbaijani and English politicians during the Second Karabakh War. It focuses on the pragmatic investigation of euphemisms which influences the way people interpret facts about war.

The Subject of the thesis: The subject of the thesis is politicians. Politicians are people who mainly resort to euphemisms to maintain their dominance and respect among people. The focus of the research is to collect political euphemisms and reveal their main functions in the political discourse.

The Aims and Objectives: The research aims to elaborate how political euphemisms are used as a main tool by politicians to affect the audience who receive the information. The following objectives also include the research:

- To identify political euphemisms used by Azerbaijani and English politicians during the Second Karabakh War
- To define the main purposes behind the usage of these political euphemisms
- To illustrate how euphemisms affected people's perception about the war

Research questions:

What purpose do political euphemisms serve in the context of war?

How do political euphemisms shape the perceptions of addressees regarding the Second Karabakh War?

In what aspects do these political euphemisms differ from each other?

The Method of the thesis: The study relies on the qualitative descriptive method. The data is collected from interviews, debates and news articles written about political euphemisms. To determine political euphemisms, the speech of politicians is analyzed detailed. The comparison is based on the determination of euphemisms which belong to different categories. The list of collected euphemisms is given on the table. The table classifies political euphemisms utilized by both Azerbaijani and English sides during the Second Karabakh War focusing on their categories and functions to talk about different aspects of the war.

The Novelty of the study: The unique value of the study is its focus on comparative study of political euphemisms used in Azerbaijani and English discourse during the Second Karabakh War. It is valuable work which contains comprehensive data about the main purpose and functions of these euphemisms to control the audience. The study tries to prove that political euphemisms are a powerful weapon utilized by politicians to protect themselves. It provides insightful examples that fills the gap of comparative study on political euphemisms in Azerbaijani and English discourse in the period of the Second Karabakh War.

The Structure of the thesis: The research work is composed of three chapters. Each chapter is divided into subsections. The first chapter of the thesis is literature review in which the researcher attempts to collect different ideas from scholars to make the investigation more comprehensive. This part contains five subtitles which explore the role of euphemisms in linguistics, the explanation of political rhetoric, analysis related to previous studies about political euphemisms to discuss war-issues and the clarification of the Second Karabakh War in terms of history. The second chapter of the study constitutes the methodology part. The investigator gives a clear outline of the data collecting process, the procedure of analyzing gathered materials and applying qualitative descriptive methods. The last chapter reflects the conclusion which the researcher drew based on a comparison of political euphemisms, examining political resources in detail. This chapter of the research work encompasses findings, discussions and conclusions. The conclusion part of the thesis summarizes all significant points that the researcher revealed during the analyzing.

CHAPTER I. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Euphemisms in linguistics

Language has great power over people. Having the ability of communication makes human beings different from other existences in the world. This ability gives us a myriad of chances in society. They may include the expressions of ideas, self-defense, transiting of thoughts, conveyance of feelings and emotions. We can even change the flow of the conversation with the help of our words. Therefore, the choice of right words is like an art. The harmony of colors looks like the string of truly chosen words.

There are several tools that help interlocutors to achieve good communication. As an example of them we can refer to hyperbole, metonymy, litotes, metaphor, simile and so forth. They play various strategic roles during the communication process. Such as, the speaker can exaggerate the importance of the current situation thanks to hyperbole. It serves the purpose of making something look more serious or expressive than it really is. The usage of such figurative means helps communicators to sound more persuasive. One of the figurative means which embraces different fields of daily life is euphemisms. This linguistic term derives from the combination of two Greek words in which “eu” means “good” and “pheme” expresses the meaning of “speaking”. In a nutshell, euphemism means “a good speaking” or “a good speech”. These linguistic tools substitute socially taboo or offensive expressions with their favorable and less harsher counterparts. They are an important part of communication enabling individuals to sound soft and discuss sensitive topics in a polite way. (Radjabkulov, 2023) In summary, definitions of euphemisms given above highlight them as gentle, soft and ambiguous expressions applied to replace less favorable words or harsh ones with milder and softer alternatives.

The term ‘euphemism’ was first introduced in English by lexicographer Thomas Blount in his ‘Glossographia’ in 1656 as he defined it as ‘a good or favorable interpretation of a bad word’ (Enright, 1985, p. 13). In linguistics this phenomenon has lots of definitions. It is mainly applied in speech to make some blunt, embarrassing or harsh ideas sound palatable. The usage of euphemisms lies in a long history. They were firstly utilized by the Greeks to sugarcoat some expressions which were not used by people straightforwardly.

A language without euphemisms would sound rude and cause the loss of respect among people. They serve to prevent offence that can cause because of the usage of rude or harsh words and make

the speaker look polite. On the one hand, euphemisms hinder the discussion of forbidden and unspeakable subjects. On the other hand, they also mitigate the effect of offensive language. Being more than merely pretty words, euphemisms often present some aspects of society including people's fears, biases and changing values. (Rawson, 1981) This highlights close connection of euphemisms with processes taking place within society. It means that social factors are the pivotal supporting force behind the emergence of euphemisms. Their usage is not based on random choice, instead they are deeply intertwined with social norms and needs. The following aspects are the major points that emphasize how euphemisms differ across various languages:

Taboo topics- they refer to some subjects that cannot be mentioned explicitly. Taboo words can be related to topics like bodily functions, death, misfortune and so on. The expression of ideas about one of these in a direct way is considered disrespectful, embarrassing and anxiety-provoking. So, euphemisms function as a tool which helps to avoid these feelings without breaking social norms. Such as, since death causes sadness and reminds people the temporal nature of human life, it is considered negative to talk about it straightforwardly. It can also reawaken someone's feelings who have experienced this situation. That is why, death is substituted with euphemistic expressions including "gone to a better place", "no longer with us" or "departed".

Social sensitivity- besides taboo topics which are associated with specific topics, there are several subjects that may be disturbing or cause uncomfortableness if they are conveyed directly. Thanks to euphemisms, these words sound polite and good to hear. For instance, instead of saying "toilet", it is employed "restroom" in many social contexts.

Cultural variation- what is considered as a sensitive topic to mention directly greatly differs across cultures. For example, delivering economic issues in the government by using euphemisms are different between societies.

Consequently, the usage of them prevents both speakers and hearers from losing face. Furthermore, scholars who did research about euphemisms have determined their various functions. One of such researchers is Nordquist (2019). He suggested the following functions of euphemisms.

1. Euphemisms are words or expressions which help to lessen the tension or intensity of the conversation. This function can be achieved by replacing rude or harsh words with palatable and appropriate ones.
2. They are great disguisers for topics that people cannot discuss because of their negative effects. In this case, euphemisms are used to conceal some facts and reality. This function can

obviously be noticed in the saying “there are many poor people and most of their voices are silenced”. In this saying, to sound milder and suitable, the word “silenced” was used instead of being ignored.

3. Euphemisms sometimes play the role of shield. Because it avoids the speaker and listener affronting their faces.
 4. As euphemisms are also employed to control or manipulate the audience, it functions as a spin.
- 19 (Nordquist 2019)

The main feelings that trigger the application of euphemisms include shame, fear and disgust (Bakhtiar, 2012). Euphemistic expressions demonstrate the cultural background and social state of the countries. This sentence implies that topics which are camouflaged with the help of euphemisms tell many things about how people perceive some concepts. It represents the way of shaping images related to different themes. Topics that are commonly spoken about with the help of euphemisms encompass death, illness, sex, bodily functions, disability, workplace, politics and so on.

Hugh Rawson (1983) distinguished two types of euphemisms: positive and negative in the “Dictionary of Euphemisms and other Doubletalk”. Former try to elevate or enhance the effect of words than they really are. For instance, the substitution of the word “janitor” with “custodial engineer” gives it a positive touch. “Sanitation worker” also includes positive euphemisms which refers to “garbage collector”. Because, calling someone as a “garbage collector” may be offensive and sound heartbreaking. The latter reduces the harshness and severity of unpleasant situations. “Layoff” can be the example of negative euphemisms which is utilized instead of “downsizing”. It refers to one of the negative situations related to losing a job. Since referring to job loss with direct words like “fired” or “terminated” is emotionally charged and harsh, it is better to replace it with “layoff”. Additionally, using the euphemistic word “layoff” focuses on external factors like reconstruction, economic downturns which can cause someone to lose his/her job.

Death is one of the wide-spread scopes of euphemisms. Since giving the news about somebody’s death is difficult to say, euphemistic expressions like “pass away”, “kick the bucket”, “gone to a better place”, “endless sleep” or “departure” are utilized to lessen the impact of it. It is also impolite to use euphemisms while talking about people who have some disabilities. Such as, if somebody is blind, it sounds rude to say “blind”. Instead of that word its euphemistic counterpart “visually impaired” can be used to soften the word.

Euphemisms are not only employed to diminish the harshness of reality, but also, they help us to prioritize our sense of self-importance, affect addresses and obfuscate responsibility. (Keyes, 2010, p7). Prioritizing self-importance illustrates the idea of creating an elevated image. There are some job categories which sound rude and insulting when they are directly referred to. For instance, if someone works as a “janitor” or “cleaner”, it is good to substitute the name with alternatives like a “facilities maintenance technician” or an “environmental services associate”. These examples show how the substitution of words with their euphemistic ones change the perceptions of them and enhance their status.

To create euphemisms, various linguistic techniques are applied. They include the following ways:

Conceptual metaphor- this phenomenon was introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. They did not present metaphors just as one of the literary devices. Instead, they suggested that metaphors reflect how the human brain works to create metaphorical concepts. This approach proved that people understand abstract or complex ideas by connecting them with more concrete or familiar experiences. This process is also noticed in the emergence of euphemisms. When we express euphemisms associated with death, they are based on the ideas which show death as a journey or moving to another world rather than a complete end of life. This idea is quite obvious from the examples like “gone to the other side”, “slip away” or “left us”. As if the dead person keeps his/her life in another world which consoles people who have experienced this sad situation. Simile- euphemistic expressions can be created based on the comparison of a sensitive or unpleasant topic with a palatable or soft one. To fulfill the comparison words, like “like”, “as” are employed to lessen the direct connection with the original concepts. Such as, to directly call someone “fat” is not polite and sounds heartbreaking. Instead, it may be said “he is as round as a barrel” which is more acceptable and polite. This is the example of expressing an offensive idea by using simile.

Metonymy- unlike simile, metonymy is based on direct association rather than a comparison. Thus, metonymy enables us to indirectly substitute the name of something which is harsh or sensitive with a less offensive one that is closely associated with the previous idea. For example, instead of saying “the war caused many deaths”, here the word “death” can be replaced with another name “casualty”. Referring to civilians who killed or injured during the war like “casualty” does not deviate from the main idea.

Synecdoche- relies on the connection between a part and a whole. When a euphemism is created with the help of synecdoche, the part of something refers to the whole idea. Such as, “the company decided to fire 150 workers”. This is a harsh version of the sentence. However, it can be said with a synecdochic euphemism like “the boss is reducing his headcounts”. Here the word “headcounts” represents the whole idea of “layoffs”.

Circumlocution- to describe something, circumlocution focuses on the usage of more words than needed. Therefore, it is often defined as the art of talking around. It means that you do not mention the intended idea directly, instead you just imply or refer to the features of that word in a roundabout way. Such as, to refer to unfaithfulness, instead of delivering the idea like “he cheated on his wife”, it can be talked around by saying “he is seeing someone” or “he is going out with someone” and so forth.

Litotes- is a figure of speech that downplays a positive idea by delivering it with its contrary. Using negation can mitigate the unpleasantness and offensive nature of the expressed word. For example, to convey an idea of lack of intelligence, to refer to someone merely saying “he is stupid” is harsh. By expressing the word “stupid” with this “he is not the sharpest tool in the shed” adds a positive touch to the context. Here in the example, “sharpest tool” points to the same idea without using the offensive term.

Amelioration- refers to change by which a word gains a positive meaning overtime. It does not happen in a short time span, it sometimes takes decades for this process to happen. Such as, refer to someone by saying “very old” or “elder” is offensive and its central focus is on age. An ameliorated term “senior citizen” is considered as an acceptable way of pointing to “old people” without making the age factor the main focus. This expression draws attention to experience and status that older adults own.

Borrowings and foreignisms- sometimes a language can lack certain words to designate offensive or sensitive subjects. In this case, words from other languages can be borrowed to deliver them in an appropriate way. As mentioned above, bodily functions are commonly expressed by utilizing their euphemistic counterparts. In English “sweat” can sometimes be replaced with its French borrowing variant “perspiration” which sounds better and like a medical term.

Abbreviation and initialism- showing some words with their abbreviated or initialized forms can reduce their directness and negativity. Such as, to talk about the financial condition of a country,

an initialism “ED” (economically disadvantaged) is utilized to diminish the negative effect of poverty.

Research on euphemisms mainly focuses on the domains of semantics together with pragmatics and sociolinguistics and psychology. Hugh Rawson a prominent British linguist establishes two categories for euphemisms known as positive and negative euphemisms. Rawson points out that euphemisms function as proper replacements of words which may sound improper or unpleasant while addressing someone. Culture embeds euphemisms because words which replace offensive expressions reveal the shared social beliefs and sensitivities of a particular community. Cultural groups express sensitive social topics through euphemisms to make these issues more tolerable. Euphemism is a useful tool which maintains politeness in conversation. All cultures mark selected matters as sensitive, so they institute specific avoidance language dealing with death and illness as well as bodily processes. Through euphemisms we can speak about sensitive subjects in less objectionable ways. Differing cultural standards determine what counts as polite or impolite communication which directs the selection of euphemisms. For language translation between different cultures the adaptation of euphemisms becomes necessary for cultural fit. A linguistic phrase which works well in one language system fails to achieve similar impact in another language framework. Younger generations often create new euphemisms that reflect contemporary cultural shifts. These expressions evolve with societal changes and influence communication styles. The work named “analysis of English euphemisms from semantic standpoint and cultural practical value” written by Beibei Li is dedicated to the semantic investigation of English euphemisms. In his article Suwen Li highlights functions of euphemisms including saving face, avoiding offence, ensuring positive communicative atmosphere by applying principles like cooperative, politeness and face theory. Concealment and distortion functions of euphemisms are mainly observed in the sphere of politics. He also presented euphemisms as “cultural embodiments” in his works. Because of cultural distinctions which arise from aspects like continents, worldview, surroundings and experience, language learners may find it difficult to understand euphemisms literal meanings. The main reason behind this difficulty lies in the fact that each euphemism has a close bond with culture and life lessons that local people go through. The author investigates how different cultural conditions, particularly religion and moral culture, impact the usage of euphemisms. In the sociolinguistic field a number of research works are written about euphemisms. For example, the book called “Fair of Speech: The Use of Euphemism” written

by D.J. Enright identifies social situations that lead euphemisms to arise. He presented euphemisms as “cultural embodiments” in his works. Several research is done related to euphemisms in the field of psychology, as well. Such as, Sun Rujian describes euphemisms as speech activities which show stronger connection to psychological elements stemming from the “unwillingness to say” phenomenon. Chunling San investigated factors which stimulate the deployment of euphemisms from the perspective of socio-cultural psychology. In her works, she posits that euphemisms reflect social psychology. Because people use these terms while trying to reach various goals of deception and avoidance and embellishment in their everyday conversations.

Utilizing euphemisms has both advantages and disadvantages. The following statements point to the upsides of employing them.

Ensuring politeness- as euphemisms hinder being too direct, people sound polite and appropriate without causing offence or disturbance. It lets the interlocutors talk about topics which are sensitive or unfavorable in a polite or roundabout way.

Reducing severity and avoiding negative implications- some words may bring about embarrassment or humiliation, if they are articulated straightforwardly. Such as, it is better to say “between jobs”, if someone is unemployed. Through euphemistic language speakers can substitute inappropriate language with versions which maintain social acceptability. Euphemisms make people who are communicating feel comfortable by providing respect and understanding towards taboo topics. In this example the euphemism used to describe unemployment sounds less negative and harsh.

Expressing ambiguous ideas and saving face- the delivering process of awkward or undesirable ideas may involve some facts which are ambiguous or indirect. This is one of the techniques that is applied to sound softer and milder. It leads to maintaining face and dignity. Throughout literary works authors frequently use euphemisms when discussing sensitive themes. The literary work *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy presents painful subjects through euphemisms to make challenging themes more suitable for reader understanding. As people in the world belong to different races, beliefs, culture and mentality, topics which are expressed euphemistically distinguish from the users of euphemisms in other countries across the world. The use of euphemisms about death and illness and social status demonstrates cultural differences among societies, but some communities prefer to maintain political correctness and diplomatic speech.

The statements noted above prove how much the employment of euphemisms contribute an effective and polite communication. Despite these advantages, this linguistic tool has some downsides, as well.

Obscuring facts and precision- as euphemisms are based on indirectness, it may sometimes cause misleading or confusion. The ambiguity of the statements may elevate the vagueness of the conversation and result in misunderstanding.

Distorting the truth- this function is often noticed in euphemisms utilized in the political discourse. The deviation from the reality masks harshness of the current situation.

Allowing for manipulation- euphemisms used in some fields aim to gain the support of the addressees. That is why their main goal is trying to persuade them. So, they camouflage certain points to hide them from the audience.

Euphemism functions as a replacement for words which are impolite, harsh or inappropriate. It plays the role of political tool for politicians to conceal details and cover their real objectives while controlling audience perceptions. Two categories of euphemisms can be distinguished in terms of semantics. These are so-called “positive” and “negative” euphemisms. The former functions as a semantic elevation because it transforms negative elements into positive ones while amplifying their significance. It is also called “stylistic euphemism”. Semantic derogation describes negative euphemism because it involves expressing harsh or excessive ideas in a mild manner. People use negative euphemisms to discuss delicate subjects including death alongside weight problems and age-related issues as well as physical disabilities. The military and political spheres do not mention full names of weapons. Instead, they utilize abbreviations which aim at preventing public anxiety. Politicians frequently resort to euphemisms to protect their reputation. Euphemisms are main tools to deviate reality and mislead the audience for them. Political discussions regularly utilize euphemisms to control public comprehension of topics. Through political ideologies euphemisms function as instrumental tools to present matters that affirm core principles. They strive to cover their real goals behind economy, war, protest by using euphemisms in their speech. The employment of such kind of euphemisms has a protective function. Politicians employ euphemisms to talk about significant issues like inequality, human rights, corruption and other concerns that can lead to misunderstanding or controversy if it is expressed directly. It is like an active pragmatic strategy that politicians benefit from in a specific time and situation. Their main function is to cover things that are unpleasant or sound too harsh to ear. Moreover, they mitigate

the degree of seriousness and severity of political issues. For instance, the euphemistic expression “collateral damage” is used to refer to harm or destruction occurs to civilians or non-combatants. George Orwell condemned euphemisms which are used in political and social contexts. He asserted that euphemisms are figurative tools that control human mind. In his essay *Politics and the English Language* (1946) Orwell stated that euphemisms serve to obscure reality and manipulate people. Political euphemisms like “collateral damage” or “enhanced interrogation” disguise the real harshness and torture behind war. Former was utilized during Iraq and Afghanistan wars to lessen the emotional burden of lost lives. The latter was employed to describe techniques used to interrogate suspected terrorists by the Bush administration. He also coined new terms like “doublespeak” and “newspeak”. They were observed in his novel “1984” for the first time. (Sharofutdinov, 2024)

Leading to the creation of emotions by persuading the audience (pathos), employing words which appeal to authority (ethos), or illustrating logical disputes in a polite way (logos) depict major principles of political euphemisms. According to Lakoff (1975) the usage of euphemisms is widespread among women. Because women mainly tend to convey their thoughts in a more polite way than men. However, there are other social factors including education, profession, and social status that can affect how often euphemisms are used by genders.

Euphemisms are not limited to the English language. They are used in all languages across the world. The Azerbaijani language is also rich with euphemisms which surround different topics. In fact, they involve the same fields as the English euphemisms do. One of the common areas in which euphemisms are utilized is related to family relationships. In Azerbaijani it is not a good manner to call your wife/husband with his/her direct name. Therefore, they mainly address each other by saying “uşaqların anası”, “kişi” and so on.

Euphemisms connected with death are also famous in Azerbaijani context. To express someone’s death, euphemisms like “o dünyaya getmək”, “dünyasını dəyişmək”, “həmişəlik getmək” are used. They demonstrate the grief appearing after someone’s death.

It is impossible to overlook the connection between metaphor and euphemism in terms of cognitivism. Both are based on cognitive processes and conceptual mapping. To change the focus from an offensive or taboo part of an idea to a more appropriate and positive one, euphemism mostly uses metaphorical language. When we express death with euphemism, we can compare it

with travel. Because this concept is commonly expressed like going somewhere, departure or leaving. (Salimova, 2024)

The special kind of euphemisms which is known as political euphemisms are utilized in Azerbaijan political discourse, as well. They are addressed to inform people about issues including economics, war, protest and so on. The main feature of political euphemisms is having magical power. Because it conveys information to recipients in a different way without changing its fundamental meaning. (Ahmadova, 2018) For instance, “vətən müharibəsi” (patriotic war) was one of the political euphemisms used by Azerbaijan President İlham Aliyev during the Second Karabakh war to demonstrate the solidarity and unity of people for their land. However, naming that like “conflict” or “war” would cause a negative connotation or would sound brutal.

1.1.1 Political rhetoric as a means of persuasion

Politics is a kind of system which connects people who share diverse cultures, interests and experience within a group. The decisions made by political figures aim to share resources and set up rules for all people, in spite of their differences. To achieve this, politics contains some elements which are only specific to this field. Power, dominance, authority and influence are considered main elements that make politics stand out from other fields. Without having these features, people who surround the whole society would not rely on the government. (Heywood, 2019) These aspects should be reflected in the way political actors communicate with people. Thus, the process of communication is not only the flow of information, but it also shows the effort to persuade the crowd, maintain people’s support and influence their thoughts. Successful political communication depends on the strategic use of the language. The words used to make up sentences carry underlying meanings and contribute to delivering some serious issues in a slight form, rather than being just a string of letters. Addressing people and keeping them informed related to issues within the country by politicians are known as political rhetoric. The strategic employment of linguistic elements by political figures creates political rhetoric which serves to control particular audiences for reaching political targets. It constitutes the cornerstone of politics functioning as a primary tool for managing a safe atmosphere of interaction, making the speech become persuasive and trustworthy.

The term “rhetoric” was defined differently by various remarkable rhetoricians. According to Quintilian, who was a famous rhetorician in the ancient Rome, rhetoric is the act of “speaking well”. However, in the past majority of scholars interpreted rhetoric as an “art of persuasion”. Unlike them, Aristotle described rhetoric not only as a means of persuading but also revealing all possible cases of persuasion in communication.

Today’s political rhetoric has come a long way. Because it changed a lot from how it was during the period of Greek and Roman empires. At that time politicians used to make their speeches outdoors. The main weapon they used to have was loud voices and gestures to look confident and influence receivers. However, political messages can be delivered in various forms nowadays including on social platforms or tv and so on. Additionally, orators attempt to become sincere with the addressees to build support and positive atmosphere. The following features are the principal characteristics of political rhetoric:

1. Persuasion- the main goal of transmitting information is to persuade the target listeners. They are convinced to take a step for an important issue, support an idea or vote for the election of a candidate who promise for a better future. The speech should have an emotional impact on recipients.
2. Being aware of the audience- before addressing the audience, politicians usually know about beliefs, values and thoughts of the audience. This knowledge makes the person be ready for unpredictable circumstances,
3. Using language strategically- achieving a successful political speech mainly depends on the linguistic devices and techniques employed during the communication. Metaphors, simile, euphemism and metonymy are main figurative tools which politicians mostly resort to. Repetition is one of the main techniques which helps to stress some points and show their importance.

Political linguistics is a specific field of linguistics which investigates mutual connection between language and politics. It delves into how political figures perform certain actions by deliberately making use of linguistic tools. The main research scope of this branch of linguistics is political discourse. This is associated with the context which contains political elements. In a nutshell, political linguistics explores the language of debates, news reports, speeches, disputes etc. It proves that language is not only a means of communication, but also it has such a power which can influence how people approach the reality. The research about the comparison of political

euphemisms used by Azerbaijani and English officials is one of the study areas of political linguistics. Because the work focuses on the analysis of political interviews, news articles, posts on social platforms and so forth. Findings illustrate how carefully politicians communicate with the audience and choose words. These uncover distinct features of political rhetoric. In fact, the employment of euphemistic expressions is not an unconscious act. They are deployed on purpose to avoid contentious confrontations, ensure long-term attention, creating friendly bond with the receivers.

The Second Karabakh War is considered one of the most remarkable events in the history of Azerbaijan. The victory was achieved with the help of successful strategy both in the army and language. The intentional employment of various figurative means is frequently observed in political rhetoric. One of such figurative tools was also widely used in the context of the Second Karabakh War. That linguistic tool resorted by political figures is euphemisms. They encompass different categories related to the conflict. The main focus of the thesis is to shed light on how political euphemisms contributed to delivering war-related facts in an appropriate and favorable way. They guarantee the maintenance of public support and approval, avoidance of bias by utilizing the language of “us”.

1.2.2 Euphemisms in political discourse

Political discourse takes place with the participation of individuals, the state and society and can affect the addressees' perception of the world and reality. It requires a high level of language culture from politicians. Therefore, politicians are sometimes called political actors. They strive to achieve political goals with the help of their speech. The vocabulary, sentence structure and expressiveness are at different levels in political discourse. It serves four major functions: instrumental, informational, persuasive and prognostic.

The instrumental function is related to the usage of political discourse as a device of political power. It consists of seven elements including social control, legitimization of power, reproduction of power, social orientation, social solidarity, differentiation, agonistic and actional functions. Calling for support for those who are in authority, controlling public opinion, influencing how people perceive political issues, trying to achieve the union or separation of social groups are some examples of aims this function serves (Sheigal, 2004).

Thanks to informational function, the instrumental function fulfills. It involves political actors and the media. In fact, people are informed about political issues happening in the country on the media. Because most of them are not involved in political communications directly (Chekmenev, 2016).

Persuasive function illustrates how political speech can influence the recipients. As political discourse has its own professionally-oriented signs, phraseology and paremiology, politicians utilize them for specific political purposes. This function of political discourse can be noticed in party programs, parliamentary debates, propaganda materials. Because in these contexts providing information is not enough, it is also necessary to affect, convince the public. (Horbenko, 2023)

Last function highlights how political discourse can reflect past, present and future events simultaneously. Based on past events or strategies used to manage political issues, it can predict how the political condition of the country will become in the future.

Political leaders and other individuals who deliver public messages employ euphemisms to achieve control over information flows. These linguistic tools that arise in political discourse have multiple functions which include obscuring scandals and distorting facts and manipulation of public opinion during social communication. The study by Mahdi and Eesa (2019) shows that political discourse is an indispensable part of political discourse by which political actions are performed. Political figures depend on language as their primary instrument to present their thoughts to the public. This carefully chosen language helps them to maintain public support and approval. Because politicians need to present a positive impression of themselves and their parties through precise changes in their speaking style that target different listener groups. Political speeches often involve self-glorification which is achieved by uncovering the shortcomings of other officials utilizing severe word choices. Politicians use euphemisms to avoid leaving negative impressions on people, especially those who include disadvantaged groups. They involve people who are considered sensitive. They may be homeless, disabled individuals or members of ethnic minorities.

In today's globalized world people resort to substitutions of words about some topics which are sensitive or harsh to discuss. When they think their ideas can come out as a blunt or abrupt expression, they mainly look for a softer and milder alternative. These alternatives are known as euphemisms. (Fataliyeva, 2015) Euphemisms are indispensable figures of speech that avoid certain offences or disturbances which could occur as a result of discussing some sensitive topics. They

are helpful when we cannot express something clearly. Because the thing that we want to talk about may sound impolite or rude, if it is spoken directly. Global linguistic culture shows widespread use of euphemism which yields three main advantages: preventing communication insult while selecting different phrases to reduce negative emotional responses and using euphemistic wording as expressive language. Euphemism in English the linguistic element of euphemism functions as a basic building block of English while becoming a central element in English cultural practices. Understanding linguistic phenomena along with language culture demands studying the functional aspects of cross-cultural communication within euphemism. English euphemisms have evolved through many generations since their origin. Most euphemisms originate from biblical sources. Euphemism has existed for longer periods in the UK than in other regions. From the eleventh century onwards the word euphemism received its first known use as "an elegant word." Some occurrences exceed human understanding. Since some concepts like ghost, heaven, death etc. sound mystical to ear, people mainly try not to refer to these ideas explicitly. Instead, they prefer to mention them in a roundabout way to overcome their fear. These taboo words play the role of main triggers for the creation of new euphemistic expressions. Since the dawn of civilization English euphemism has been adapting naturally while reflecting its social functions more vividly.

People always have concerns about the impression which they leave on the front side. That is why they are often careful in the word choice. The addressee may have different thoughts about the information that she/he gets from the addresser. So, the usage of euphemisms guarantees achieving a good conversation. Using euphemism helps a person to prevent harsh or obscene language during communication. Euphemisms become necessary for discussing unwelcome topics to protect someone's emotional well-being. Unacceptably harsh language in real life situations creates unwanted misunderstanding resulting in serious conflicts and eventual discord. Interpersonal disagreements occur quite frequently. Language demand compassion from its users to communicate effectively. Through the use of implicit language one communicates judgments about others while creating a respectful manner for communication that maintains pleasant exchanges between involved parties. Self-cultivation produces itself through this phenomenon. For example, if someone is fired, breaking this news to family members by saying "I am fired" sounds too straightforward". Because they may think that this person was not a good employee, or she/he did not qualify for that job. Instead, euphemisms like "I am no longer with the company",

“I am between jobs” or “I am pursuing new opportunities” can be employed. These examples demonstrate the power of euphemisms over interlocutors’ attitudes about the current issue.

Euphemisms are closely connected with cultural beliefs of people. The fields in which they are applied are not a simple choice. It reflects which topics people consider taboo and feel embarrassed to talk in a direct way. Those topics prove that people are afraid of being disrespectful or losing face in front of the other individual. Positive functions are sometimes referred to as beautification functions. This expression system utilizes English euphemistic properties to convey challenging verbalizations then replaces unpleasant derogatory vocabulary with euphemized implicit wording to create more aesthetic language. Expression reaches constructive outcomes which support aesthetic development. Euphemisms operate as communication tools which reduce annoying friction that arises from being too direct in speaking. English euphemisms present major benefits for the UK by elevating hard-to-praise careers and helping people maintain their self-perception. Euphemisms serve as protective measures against unnecessary stimulation which protects people who have physical or mental disabilities from harm.

Shemshurenko and Shafigullina (2015) studied political euphemisms in American and Turkish mass media and found US newspapers along with magazines and online sources demonstrated a greater frequency of politically correct terminology.

Politicians who address people publicly do not utilize euphemisms randomly. On the contrary, they have deliberate intention to achieve specific purposes related to self-portrayal and political party representation. Political parties along with their members employ various tactics to display themselves and their political participants in a positive manner. Politicians who have gained experience employ rhetoric as a skillful elegant way of effective communication to present their views and decisions. So, the effective employment of political euphemisms both in written and oral communication can persuade and satisfy the target audience. During political debates politeness theory uses subtle indirect language as an off-record strategy. In political discussions politicians tend to select roundabout methods instead of directly handling sensitive matters. The speakers use euphemisms to express their purposes and concerns indirectly. (Domínguez, 2005) This method enables discussion of sensitive matters between interlocutors as it both saves their reputation and avoids open intervention of different viewpoints.

One of the main functions that euphemism serves is to ensure politeness. Because euphemistic expressions chosen by political figures keep the atmosphere positive and hinder negative

situations. People use numerous communication techniques to protect their social identity and dignity throughout interactions based on politeness theory. The use of euphemisms by politicians allows them to minimize harsh or uncomfortable messages through positive politeness mechanisms. (Brown & Levinson, 1987) The usage of euphemisms in political speeches is influenced by negative politeness as explained by Kasper (1998). Political figures utilize euphemistic language as a method to avoid disputes when discussing issues that divide different factions of society. In political communication language is utilized as a weapon to affect public opinion, as well as, to transmit information. A range of techniques is primarily employed by politicians, journalists or media outlets to transform information in a way that makes it sound better and plausible. The application of euphemisms in speech is one of the most effective tools. Euphemisms penetrated into various areas of human life. Politics, economics, business, medicine, and mass media are mainly influenced spheres of human activity by euphemisms. Especially, the main purpose of using them in politics differs from other fields.

Politics comprises lots of skills in it. A politician must be a great speaker to draw the attention of the audience. Because politicians should have the strength to convince the listeners. Therefore, they employ different ways to carry it out. One of the tools they utilize is euphemisms. Brown and Yule (1983) expressed that denial, litotes and hyperbole are the main tools that create political euphemisms. However, Burrige (2004) approached this type of euphemism differently. He identified them as a strategic tool to talk about various political issues like racism, sexism etc. According to Galperin (1977) euphemisms are implemented by politicians with the purpose “to attain political correctness or instead of pronouncing unpleasant facts”. On the contrary, some linguists believe that the usage of euphemisms in political science aims at misleading people and reality. Such as, instead of “raising taxes”, euphemistic counterparts like “revenue raise”, “progressive taxation” are used in political discourse. Another example is related to “nuclear weapons”. They are mainly substituted by “special weapons”. Furthermore, to refer to “investment”, “government spending” is preferred. From the examples above, we can observe how the application of euphemisms mitigates the danger or seriousness of the fact.

According to Crespo-Fernandez (2014) politicians regard language as a crucial tool to control, influence and manipulate others. They employ euphemisms to attack their opponents and deal with controversial topics without influencing their audiences negatively. When politicians communicate

with people, they play the role of actors. Because politics is the art of persuading (Siahaan et al., 2024).

By using political euphemisms, politicians can achieve goals including transferring a message from one side to another without having the fear of being misunderstood by competitors, creating a positive and empathetic figure, providing a safe and conflict-free environment.

Lakoff's (2004) investigation of political metaphors which are commonly employed as euphemisms is regarded one of the pivotal works written about euphemisms in the political context. In his work he gave various examples of political euphemisms like "the war on terror" or "collateral damage" to indicate how the usage of them in the speech covers the real intention behind them. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) claim that euphemisms are conceptual metaphors that have a great impact on how the public understands abstract political concepts in terms of cognitive linguistics perspective on euphemisms. Such as, when politicians present the word "torture" by utilizing its euphemistic counterpart "enhanced interrogation techniques", they use a conceptual metaphor that serves to make violence and brutality sound acceptable and palatable. Other examples that prove how closely euphemisms are connected with conceptual metaphors may include the usage of "nation-building" or "cleaning up the mess" to talk about military intervention. Politicians try to deviate the public's attention from the destructive nature of the war by resorting to these euphemisms.

Aristotle (2007) identifies political rhetoric as the art of persuading the audience. People in the policy employ political euphemisms to get control of the addressers and manipulate them.

Since the language chosen by politicians appeals to feelings and emotions, euphemisms are the main tools to ensure political stability, prevent confrontation and hide controversial decisions. For instance, expressing "layoffs" by utilizing the phrase "downsizing" diminishes the emotional effect of unemployment. This change in the expression of the target idea aims at mitigating public resistance towards the government. Moreover, euphemisms are frequently employed to lessen public backlash that can lead to contentious political actions. Especially, euphemisms like "peacekeeping mission" or "humanitarian intervention" contribute to justify war that brings about loss of thousands of lives, destruction and starvation etc.

Euphemisms used within political discourse violate the maxim of quantity to minimize public concerns while enhancing image perception. The maxim of quantity contains two violations. The speaker's information exceeds what is necessary for understanding along with lacking the required

details. Such as, *“As we speak, al-Qaeda continues to plot against us, and its leadership remains anchored in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan.”* (Obama, 2010)

In the example cited above the term "al-Qaeda" used by Obama describes the worldwide terrorist organization established by Osama bin Laden. The lack of sufficient details in Obama's statement violates the quantity maxim because it fails to provide necessary information. Referring to the name of the terrorist group in a direct manner may lead to disturbance and panic among people. However, with the help of euphemisms which bring about the violation of maxim of quantity, people can be warned without causing any fears.

“...sometimes in the midst of these storms”. (Obama, 2010)

The metaphorical use of storms in this speech is related to the tough times which America went through in the period of war in Iraq. The Iraq War became a serious problem for America's political interests when the Bush administration started it without other countries' involvement. It caused damage to American international standing while simultaneously reducing America's capacity to influence others through soft power tools. On the other hand, an extensive increase in fiscal spending during the Iraq War has produced a substantial financial burden for the United States government. The impact of the war was also felt on national security in the United States. Because it faced severe challenges from newly formed terrorist organizations. Obama violates the quantity principle when he chooses expressive language instead of substantive information to illustrate the United States' challenging experience in Iraq War thus weakening his discourse's effectiveness.

Violation of maxim is not only observed in quantity. It also occurs in quality, manner and relation.

According to Quality maxim speakers must avoid statements when they believe something is false and lack sufficient evidence for its truth. Euphemism tends to break this maxim through the practice of replacing problematic or offensive expressions with alternative polite language. For instance, *“Our troops fought block by block to help Iraq seize the chance for a better future. They shifted tactics to protect the Iraqi people; trained Iraqi Security Forces; and took out terrorist leaders.”* (Obama, 2010)

Through this statement Obama explains how the United States military defended Iraq's population and worked toward a better future for its people. Here, the president concealed the real goals behind that war which is the example of the violation of maxim of quality. Obama violates the cooperation

principle by making statements he knows to be false while supporting America's Iraq war and praising U.S. military actions.

The key aspect of the maxim of relation is relevance. The violation of this maxim happens when the substituted word or expression are not related to the intended topic. For instance, *“But as was the case in Iraq, we cannot do for Afghans what they must ultimately do for themselves.”* (Obama, 2010)

Obama did not employ the word "troops" in his speech to indicate that American forces would withdraw permanently from Iraq. Instead, he presented his position in a roundabout manner "Iraq had to do what was needed on its own." The direct use of the word "troops" would make the target audience stressed and panic.

The deliberate use of a phrase with a vague meaning to talk about a taboo or to hide a true intention is a violation of the Maxim of Manner. For example, *“...And we have moved millions of pieces of equipment out of Iraq.”* (Obama, 2010)

In the example sentence, Obama substituted the word “weapon” with “equipment” to reduce the negativity of the war which influences people psychologically.

According to political leaders, political euphemisms play the role of controller for transmitting information. In fact, they have several functions including concealing reality, justifying wrong behaviors, affecting people’s perceptions related to right and wrong. This linguistic term is proof that language does not only reflect the objective world but also influences people to shape mental concepts.

Politicians strategically select euphemisms for political purposes in order to control information transmission. Politicians along with other individuals deploy euphemisms to conceal unappealing facts when they discuss social issues while building up public sentiment. The main functions of these euphemisms consist of influencing others while simultaneously hiding undesirable facts. The use of reassuring language with meaning different from offensive terminology helps politicians prevent making offensive statements (Mudau, 2023).

Political euphemisms are produced in political discourse and the purpose in their usage also relates to political reasons. It is a device for politicians to distort facts, hide conflicts, divert the truth and guide public thoughts (Zhao & Dong, 2010). Although political euphemisms have some similarities with other figurative tools, they have their own characteristics, too. Greater degrees of

deviation from its signified, more vague meanings, strong characteristic of times are primary features which make political euphemisms unique.

According to Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure language is comprised of signs. Additionally, these signs are composed of two parts known as signifier and signified. Former refers to the sound or appearance of the word. However, the latter points to the object or idea the word stands for. Aforementioned two components are not based on any logical or natural connections. They put together in the string arbitrarily. Thanks to the existence of this arbitrary relationship, euphemisms can cause a great difference between the word and its real meaning (signified) by shifting the signifier (the word or phrase). This change does not cause the loss of connection between a new euphemistic one and its original meaning. It only softens the way it is interpreted by others maintaining its previous meaning (Xu, 2002). However, this fact is not about political euphemisms. Because ideas about different political areas expressed by euphemisms experience a complete distance or distortion from its signifier. For instance, former US president Ronald Reagan employed the euphemistic expression “peacekeeper” to refer to “the 10-warhead intermediate-range missile”. Later, other political figures named this attack as “active defense”. Moreover, they even used “negative growth” to substitute the word “recession”. Because it sounded negative and offensive to the ear.

George Orwell determined two main features of political discourse in his book called *Politics and the English language*. These features mentioned in the book are ambiguity and obsolescence of figure of speech. Such as, to talk about the atomic bombs exploded in Hiroshima ambiguous terms like “the gadget”, “the thing” are commonly utilized. When journalists presented American army’s invasion into Grenada in 1983, they referred to it by calling “invasion”. As a result, President Reagan was dissatisfied with the usage of that negative word. Because it could lead to misinterpretation by other countries. Therefore, he used the euphemistic expression “a rescue mission” to sound milder and softer. He presented that invasion as a help for other countries by that substitution. Similarly, when US organized air attacks in Vietnam and Libya, it was referred as “air operation” by press. In return, President Bush called it “military operation” or “disarm” in his speech by declaring war against Iraq in 2003.

Some political actions occur within the country make way for the emergence of new euphemisms. That is why they come out in certain periods depending on political issues. Such as, during

economic decline in US people used to use expressions including “negative growth”, “disinflation” or “recession” to refer to this process. This issue caused the creation of euphemistic expressions like “workforce adjudgment” or “downsize”. One of the main triggers that bring about appearance of new euphemisms is war. Because horrible things that happen after the war are camouflaged by euphemisms (Page, 2003). As war is a terrifying event that brings blood, death and mourning with itself, people always look for an appropriate way to talk about it. Shorthand euphemistic terms serve well as subliminal triggers. According to political psychology research the instrument known as priming can activate preconscious expectations. The automatic reaction invoked by priming operates differently than framing while requiring readers to only view a portion of the article rather than reading through it. The informative value of the title activates priming effects within a brief moment of viewing. Primes succeed in molding public sentiment by requiring minimal cognitive work while requiring minimal processing time compared to frames. All information succeeding a prime will be perceived through the prism of coloration provided by the prime. The proposed article examples “Birthright Citizenship for Children of Undocumented Immigrants” exist alongside “Illegal Alien Anchor Babies.” Different verbalization of an equivalent message creates subconscious reader response that clouds subsequent processing of information. When readers encounter the first expression their brain establishes a pro-immigration prejudice but when they read the second expression, they develop an opposing impartiality.

We are going to take a look at how political euphemisms can carry out perlocutionary and illocutionary acts in accordance with Austin’s Speech Act Theory. This theory will help us to discover the social functions of political euphemisms.

Illocutionary acts reflect itself in the disguising and deceptive functions of political euphemisms. Political leaders take political euphemisms as major tools to ensure safe information transmission and conceal some disgraceful behaviors from the public audience. For example, nuclear experiment done by the US government in South Pacific was called “operation sunshine”. However, it is obvious that the main purpose behind carrying out that experiment was to test it. So, the usage of this euphemism ignores the real intention of the action. Multiple indirect statements exist outside the definition of euphemisms. A practice known as "catch and release" involves police agencies detaining illegal immigrants before their subsequent release. A sanctuary city operation refers to restrictions on federal immigration authorities in certain urban areas. The

designation of sanctuary city refers to municipality institutions that restrict how they assist federal immigration agencies with their tasks. These immigration debate terminologies lack positive or negative alternatives while serving both debate sides equally. The expressions present problems because they can imply "animal kingdom" terminology that becomes offensive and disrespectful when discussing human beings. Too often both terms refer to fishing or hunting practices rendering those caught and later released less than humans. Wildlife refuges often get described through use of the term "sanctuary." Just like "anchor babies" they carry a demeaning core definition. These euphemistic expressions produce negative attitudes regardless of their creators' good intentions.

Perlocutionary act lies in the persuasive function of political euphemisms. This relation relates to the fact that the users of political euphemisms influence people's thoughts and even affect the way they realize political processes going around.

According to Joss in Fishman (1972), euphemisms exist in five different styles which can be categorized according to the degree of formality and their employment during the interaction.

Consultative style- when the communicators who share common experience or background knowledge about the intended topic gather in semi-formal meetings, this style arises.

Formal style- represents the most official and ceremonial language which appears in official settings.

Casual style- it refers to the communication process involves people who are friends or close to each other. This kind of style appears in informal contexts.

Intimate style- unlike casual style, this one describes a deep connection between interlocutors which may contain delivering private expressions.

Frozen style- identifies outdated language used in religious or traditional ceremonies together with ancient written materials.

Politicians carefully pick sentences when they are making a speech in front of the mass media or people. Because the words they choose in fact determine their fate. If they do not pay attention to word choice, they can end up with losing face. Here the word "face" refers to "image" and "respect" they gained by people live in the society. In the face-work theory formed by Goffman (1995), he presented "face" as self-respect or dignity. He also explains that face is a kind of public

image people build up before others communicate with them. It is the main sign that how you want others to see and accept you. But this face is not permanent. It can change depending on how you behave or react in certain situations. Goffman defined the term “face” in a different way later like “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self, delineated in terms of approved social attributes (Goffman, 1967). The further development of the concept of “face” is related to two linguists Brown and Levinson (1987). So, politicians have a reputation and respect among people. And it is their duty to protect their name. They can achieve this by using euphemisms to talk about certain issues taking place in the country. Given other presidents like Obama or Biden, Trump does not use euphemisms in his speech frequently. But it does not mean that he speaks with the audience directly all the time. He also employs euphemisms in certain cases. Such as, to refer to people who are poor, he utilizes “forgotten men and women” which is not insulting and sounds better. On the other hand, when the number of abortions increased in the country, he expressed it by using the softer substitution of it “to protect the unborn” (Begzjav & Nyamsuren, 2023).

Euphemisms are also known with another name called “cosmetic words”. This name is related to one of the functions that political euphemisms carry out. This function is about their distortion and deviation from precision (Bakhtiar, 2012).

Sometimes, political euphemisms are mistaken for political correctness. However, there are distinct differences between them. The main purpose of political correctness is to avoid hurting individuals according to their sex, race, culture or ability. It strives to achieve equality and tolerance among members of society. One of the issues it tries to solve is gender discrimination. It can be observed in various fields of life including job, education, career and so on. As an example of political correctness, we can show the word “chairman”. Since it points to the gender of the person directly, it is not considered polite. Instead, utilizing the word “chairperson” is much better. Because it does not draw people’s attention to the gender of the person, instead it only cares about how well that individual manages the situation. The replacement of the word “chairman” with “chairperson” ensures gender neutrality and inclusivity. Threat frame euphemisms lead to both dehumanization and negative attitudes toward selected groups. The euphemisms “anchor baby” along with “catch and release” refer to children born to undocumented foreign nationals present in the United States. By law children born in U.S. territories automatically become naturalized citizens under the Constitutional framework. The term "anchor baby" provides an

anthropomorphic description of children born to foreign parents who seek to establish U.S. residence even though their parents typically fail to accomplish this goal. The derogatory expression dishonors both parents and their offspring by referring to them as an inanimate object called “anchor” while reducing their existence to a solution for parental immigration legal problems. Immigrant-related criminal conduct is an additional component of threat framing.

Implementing euphemistic expressions in speech helps both to avoid negative reactions of the audience and ensure social beliefs. Euphemisms serve as effective tools to hide the truth alongside keeping genuine intentions secret. International communicators gain success in avoiding sensitive topics through the deployment of political euphemisms. Politicians sometimes make strong statements which diminish other nations' interests to protect their national interests and reputation. Politicians can build fruitful diplomatic relationships with other nations by deploying euphemisms that both maintain the politeness principle and relate to the circumstances.

Although, political euphemisms are also used in the fields mentioned above, its purpose differs from political correctness. Politicians mainly resort to them hinder direct confrontations and make harsh realities sound suitable. It is like turning words into ones that are acceptable on political agenda. Additionally, unlike political correctness, this kind of euphemisms have the ability to affect the way how people perceive the reality. This is related to the nature of political discourse. Because it does not aim at describing or highlighting facts with words, instead, it focuses on persuading listeners and simulating them to take an action (Volobuev, 2015).

1.1.3 Previous studies on euphemisms in war context

The intentional use of political euphemisms exists in every world culture and community. A number of research works were dedicated to the investigation of political euphemisms throughout history. Academics Zhao and Dong (2010) and Liu (2016) published numerous books and essays in Chinese academic settings to study euphemisms with different theoretical applications since the 1980s. According to Zhao and Dong (2010) political euphemism serves as a fundamental tool for foreign political linguists when analyzing Chinese political discourse. Since ancient periods euphemisms continue to appear regularly in British literature as reported by Burchfield (1985). Euphemisms exist throughout the works of William Shakespeare, Geoffrey Chaucer and other writers such as Charles Dickens and Jane Austen according to Burchfield (1985).

We make use of euphemisms during situations where we need to avoid words which carry unpleasant or undesirable connotations to prevent misinterpretations, disagreements or embarrassment. If the formality of communication is more, it requires to be more careful about words we utilize to make up sentences. Since politics encompasses important issues including making a law, informing people about ongoing events and cooperation with other countries, politicians need a linguistic strategy to diminish severe nature of the situations. Euphemisms stand out as a prominent linguistic instrument which is widely resorted to in the political discourse. It is employed in the military context, as well. The military uses euphemisms to express its international ideological functions while maintaining operational requirements for distinct military units. As a result, euphemisms change the way how recipients reflect on political input they receive from various resources.

The language of the military distinctly differs from any other field serving two functions: practical and ideological. The former function points to specific terms utilized by soldiers, commanders and others to ensure everything goes smoothly during complex operations. These terms can only be understood by people who serve in the military. For instance: the term “hold position” refers to the act of waiting in the same spot for hours until the enemy comes out. However, the latter function involves the usage of words that reduce negative thoughts and panic among people arising from military operations. As an example, we can give this expression “neutralizing a target”. This term which is commonly employed to replace the word “to kill” lessens the horrible side of the event (Kiš, 2014).

War brings horror, depression, death and grief with itself. Its emotional impact on people can last for a long period. Since war only causes negative outcomes, people do not usually refer to words about it directly. One of the areas in which euphemisms are employed is military context. They are an indispensable tool that helps to distort the real nature of contentious actions, shroud the violence and brutality of conflicts. Politicians commonly employ them to deliver the cruel character of war as justified or noble. It is a way of framing political events in favor of the government. Modern political discourse requires people to memorize multiple euphemisms yet those who fail to use them get widely criticized. Virtually everyone adopts numerous standard euphemisms yet political left and right crowds maintain separate euphemisms which connect to political correctness and patriotic correctness respectively. The use of euphemisms gives individuals an opportunity to

announce their allegiance to specific political tribes while simultaneously nudging undecided voters toward particular policy choices. Using inappropriate euphemisms of the opposing political tribe might boost a candidate's chances of becoming President. The analysis investigates why political participants employ euphemisms during debates alongside an assessment of these strategies' practical value. Euphemisms change over time. Steven Pinker of Harvard defined the linguistic process described above as the "euphemism treadmill" when he presented his hypothesis about using new terms instead of old ones two decades ago because people wrongly believed that language dictates thought patterns yet cognitive scientists have proved this hypothesis wrong. This kind of euphemism whose focus is to diminish the emotional burden of war or mislead people is known as "double-talk". They transfer codes that try to convince the audience and hide the truth. Such as, during the Iraq War, the US employed the euphemism "regime change" to describe the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's government. The use of this substitution presents his government's overthrow as part of a democratic mission rather than an act of military aggression (Chomsky, 1997).

According to Backhouse (2017), euphemisms utilized in war-related context tend to obscure violence behind the actions, keep political actors away from the results of their decisions and generate a kind of narrative that serves political objectives. It is crystal clear from the example below.

"Framework agreements" or "deals" refer to "peace agreements" which points to the end of war. Their major function is to lessen the complexity of negotiations and avoid criticisms for possible failure (Skyles, 2019).

Euphemisms used in the war context faced criticisms by George Orwell because of their attempt to deceive people and hide the truth. He described political language as a tool which makes lies sound truthful and murderers respectable (Orwell, 1946). For instance, "bath houses" or "showers" are one of the examples of euphemisms related to war context used by Nazis during the Holocaust. It hides the real purpose of the gas chambers where they killed millions of Jewish people.

Military related euphemisms are used based on three categorizations: obfuscation, abbreviation and using extant words or phrases in new ways.

Obfuscation is related to the employment of euphemisms in military to describe “retreat”. As the direct description of the retreat can show the fighters or soldiers weak, it is replaced with mild expressions including “disengage with enemy”, “coordinated withdrawal” “phased departure” or “tactical redeployment” (David, 2013).

Benjamin (1991) describes presidential war messages as serving two key purposes: making people aware of the historical background of the war to gain justification and belief, delivering goals which will ensure a better future for the country. However, Lordan (2010) identified six distinct aspects of war rhetoric which include the expression of self-defense, presentation of the enemy as the aggressive side, only war theory, enunciation of the reasons which support war, having no possibility to stop war, and promise for victory. According to Gross and Ni Aolain (2014) presidential rhetoric identifies the participants of war by two groups “us” and “them”. Here “us” points to “in-group” which involves the population who suffers violence, destruction and needs protection. On the contrary, “them” describes “out-group” which is the enemy or aggressor who is a danger for “us”. Addressing the population by employing “us” leaves a good impression on people. Because it leads to the creation of a sense of solidarity, unity and patriotism. Since “them” is related to the enemy, it reveals its barbarian and brutal character.

According to Allan and Burrige (1991) euphemisms can be made with the help of circumlocution, acronyms and abbreviation, too. Especially, abbreviations are frequently employed in mass media to mention military terminology. “CD” for “collateral damage”, “WMD” for “weapon of mass destruction” can be considered as the examples of abbreviated euphemisms.

To convey new ideas in the military discourse, the existing words are used in a different way from their literal meanings. Such as, the verb “neutralize” literally means to make something ineffective, however, it expresses a different meaning in the war discourse. It means to beat enemies. The discourse about immigration uses many evasive expressions in its political discussions. The precise legal description of “illegal alien” used to be neutral but now only appears in nativist writing while more sympathetic groups use “illegal immigrant” followed by “undocumented immigrant” and “unauthorized immigrant” as substitutes. Exercisers navigating the euphemism treadmill keep some hope alive. The framing of political discourse must suffice as an acceptable outcome since changing concepts through word choice remains a futile endeavor. Humans perceive phenomena through framing because it represents a psychological method which shapes how people understand both public events and social leaders. Studies in political psychology demonstrate how

framing functions by making available specific beliefs in memory when particular frames appear. One's accepted beliefs become active when a person encounters framing so those beliefs impact their processing of all new information. The way is portrayed as a public danger, or an issue of free expression determines what people believe about it.

Euphemisms employed in the context of war are dedicated to either the justification of war or concealment of the truths. This can be noticed in the following examples:

“Friendly fire” is used when the military forces kill someone from their own side by accident.

“Blue-on-blue” means to bomb your own battalions.

“Buffer zone” refers to the area between fighting sides.

“Surveillance” is a positive way of referring to spying.

“Take out a target” means to incapacitate the forces of the enemy.

“Camping” is the process of waiting for enemies to catch or kill them.

“Unwelcome visit” is used to describe “invasion”.

This type of euphemisms was also employed in Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War by different political figures. It was not only utilized by Azerbaijan, but also foreign officials who were closely interested in the outcome of the war.

The Second Karabakh War took place on the 27th of September in 2020. The main goal was to liberate ancient Azerbaijani territories from Armenian occupation. To achieve this, not only soldiers in the frontline, but also the whole country struggled. The Azerbaijanis united to ensure the integrity of the country. Journalists from various parts of the world visited our country to learn more about the war. To provide them with exact and satisfying information president Ilham Aliyev used remarkable euphemisms in his speech. Political euphemisms are employed in the context of war widely. Because various issues like economic decline, protests, conflicts appear during and after the war. To deliver all of them in an appropriate and acceptable way it is necessary to resort to euphemisms. Therefore, the usage of euphemisms was inevitable when it came to the Second Karabakh War.

He answered all questions addressed by journalists wisely, even though some of them were determined to refute him. The reason for his successful dispute with other officials was the linguistic strategies he used in his speech. He especially paid particular attention to the appropriate choice of words. Here are the examples of some political euphemisms the president employed:

“Patriotic War”- the usage of this euphemism points to the character of Azerbaijanis who are patriotic and ready to fight for the unity of the country. Calling the Second Karabakh War like this shows the solidarity of people who always supported soldiers and were proud of them.

“Operation Iron fist”- can be the most common euphemism used in the period of the war. It highlights the strength and decisiveness of armed forces to get back historical lands. On the other hand, this expression also presents this war as a struggle of the whole country.

“Historical Justice”- this euphemistic expression supports the idea of reclaiming ancient territories from the enemy to restore the integrity of the country.

Political euphemisms mentioned above express the purpose of the war in a slight manner without touching points like death, damage or destruction. Therefore, they serve to mask the truth and present it in an acceptable way. The application of euphemisms in the context of war serves the following purposes:

To mitigate the emotional weight of negative outcomes- since war leads to horrible consequences like taking hostage, missing, destruction and death, euphemisms help to diminish its impact and make these facts sound less emotionally charged.

To ensure long-term public support- deliberately chosen words serve to gain people’s trust and emphasize the solidarity of the nation.

To justify military operations- delivering underlying historical facts about the conflict contributes to persuading the audience and moving forward.

To control information flow- when political issues occur within the country, the representatives must be careful in a way they convey the information to the public audience. They should follow the rules of diplomacy and keep some points covered.

Euphemisms employed in the war discourse mainly fall into several categories including military actions, death and casualties, artillery and so on. The following examples are related to the categories mentioned above respectively.

“Military operation” or “special operation” are utilized instead of the direct words like “war”, “conflict” or “aggression”.

“Stabilization efforts” or “peacekeeping mission” describe “military incursion”.

“Loss of life” or “personnel reduction” refer to people who died during the war.

“Equipment” or “ordnance” illustrate various kinds of bombs, weapons used for protection.

Previous studies done related to the investigation of euphemisms are mainly about the expression of taboo topics with the help of euphemisms. A few of these studies are committed to the comparison of political euphemisms especially in the war-related context. So, this research aims to fill this gap by comparing political euphemisms utilized during the Second Karabakh War by Azerbaijani and English officials. On the other hand, since the war happened quite recently, the linguistic aspect of this political event has not been investigated deeply yet. Therefore, this research work is one of the valuable studies which focuses on the analysis of political euphemisms from the linguistic perspective.

1.1.4 Historical background of the Second Karabakh War

Karabakh is an ancient Azerbaijani territory which stands out for its nature, resources and strategic location. As this region is the birthplace of notable musicians, poets, composers and writers, it is called the cradle of Azerbaijani culture. Because of such factors, it drew the attention of others who wanted to settle in that area and exploit its wealth. The main force who struggled for achieving this goal was the Armenians. Karabakh and other territories situated near it have remained under the occupation for more than 25 years by the enemy. At that time, Azerbaijan could not manage to return back those areas because it declared its autonomy and Soviet Union has ended recently. That is why this conflict was known as “frozen ethno-territorial conflict” by other countries after the dissolution of USSR (Yavuz & Huseynov, 2020). As time goes by, the army of Azerbaijan developed, and financial condition of the country got better. Moreover, the sovereignty of Azerbaijan was recognized in the world. Although, it wanted to achieve peaceful deal with Armenia, the enemy did not stop its attack and violation of the ceasefire. So, the Second Karabakh War was inevitable.

The core focus of the Second Karabakh War was the liberation of the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh. During the First Karabakh War which took place between 1988 and 1994, seven districts of Azerbaijan surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh were separated from Azerbaijan by Armenian military force. As a result of this occupation, 30,000 innocent people lost their lives, and 700,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled from Karabakh and those seven regions. This was a catastrophic loss for Azerbaijan who gained its independence newly.

Clashes that occurred in the region of Tovuz in July 2020 were a turning point in the fate of the Karabakh conflict. After this attack which brought about the grief and protests of local people, thousands of Azerbaijanis raised their voice against the violence and brutality of the enemy by demonstrating posters on which there were writings including “Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan”, “Stop Armenian Agression” and so on. These protests were one of the simulators which encouraged the government to take an action. It showed that the only way of getting back occupied territories was war. Because attempting to restore the historical integrity of Azerbaijan with the help of peace organizations including the Minsk Group, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) did not result in any change. All of them carried out negotiations between competing sides over 25 years and none of them worked out. Thus, the following points triggered the start of the war:

1. The attempt of persuading other countries that Karabakh is a historical part of Armenia by the prime minister Nikol Pashinyan.
2. Useless meetings arranged by “peacemaking” organizations to accomplish reconciliation over years.
3. Clashes done by the enemy in Tovuz border which resulted in the death of the prominent Azerbaijani general and other military personnel.
4. The insistance of Azerbaijani people against the government for liberating occupied territories after Tovuz events.

Although Armenians always claimed that Karabakh is their own historical land, their emigration to Karabakh happened after the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828. They were migrated from Iran and the Ottoman empire to Karabakh. The number of them increased by 1910s considerably. The main purpose of Armenian administration was to achieve the recognition of the “Nagorno Karabakh Republic” (the Republic of Artsakh). But it never came true. Its integrity was confirmed neither by any members of UN, nor other countries.

On 27 September 2020 Armenian side violated the ceasefire and caused the destruction of civil infrastructures and the death of 76-year-old men ignoring all discussions on the documents. To avoid large scale of provocation and damage Azerbaijan’s Armed Forces moved forward and this time they were consistent to end the war with victory. The war was officially announced on the same day. The strength of the Azerbaijani army astonished the enemy. Because they were not competing with the same army that was defeated in the First Karabakh War. Within a short period

of time a few villages and strategic bridges were taken under control by Azerbaijan. One of the goals of our country during the beginning of the war was related to the Lachin Corridor which held great significance for Azerbaijan. It constitutes an important part of the country in terms of both history and strategy. This corridor is the main way that connects Azerbaijan and Armenia. Therefore, there were claims over this area that lasted for years. Getting control of this corridor by Azerbaijan had devastating outcomes for the enemy. As a result, they were deprived of support connected with artillery, fuel etc. coming from other countries. The first city which liberated from the occupation of the enemy was Jabrayil. The liberation of this ancient city after 27 years encouraged the Azerbaijanis. They always adhered to the decision of restoring the integrity of the country.

The war did not only take place on the battlefield. The conflict kept going on social media or even in some areas which were not considered a war zone. The attacks to the cities including Ganja and Barda by using heavy artillery and ballistic rockets proved the fact that the enemy targeted civilians. Deliberately committed provocations resulted in the death of 21 innocent people, injuries of more than 70 civilians and huge destructions in the infrastructures. These attacks illustrated the brutality of the enemies to the whole world. The violent and wild characters of them can also be observed in the condition of liberated territories. Houses, museums, mosques and schools were completely destroyed. This destruction shows that they do not tolerate the culture of the other countries.

This war is known as “Patriotic War” or “Operation Iron Fist” worldwide. Calling the Second Karabakh War with these names by president Ilham Aliyev was not a random choice. The former highlights how patriotic the Azerbaijanis are. Because when the martial law was declared in the country, thousands of the young were willing to join the army and fight for their countries’ integrity. The latter points to the unity and solidarity among the Azerbaijanis which admired other countries. The people of Azerbaijan from all over the world united like a fist and kept moving for their struggle to return to their motherlands. The Patriotic War lasted for 44 days. That is why it is sometimes called “44 days war”, as well.

On November 8, 2020, Shusha gained its liberation. The victory of the Azerbaijani army is regarded as the most prominent pages in the history of the country. Thus, the liberation of Shusha

from the enemy is celebrated as “Victory Day” on 8 November every year. The conflict was solved fairly.

The third country which involved in the war towards the end was Russia. It aimed to show its hegemony and presence in the South Caucasus. The involvement of this country was not a coincidence. It wanted its own political interests to come true. The Second Karabakh War ended with trilateral agreement signed by Ilham Aliyev, Nikol Pashinyan and Vladimir Putin. The peace deal touched on the following points:

1. Hostility comes to an end and ceasefire must not be violated.
2. Armenia leaves Lachin, Kalbajar and Aghdam until December 1st, 2020. And those territories will be under the control of the Azerbaijani government.
3. Russian soldiers are sent to Karabakh and Lachin Corridor for five years to ensure peaceful condition.
4. Azerbaijani refugees return to their motherlands with the help of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Euphemisms are one of the language tools which help to achieve successful communication by making some sensitive topics sound appropriate and palatable. They can be encountered in various subjects like health, religion, education, social problems and so on. Especially, euphemisms serve to obscure taboo topics which cannot be spoken about directly. The main focus of this thesis is political euphemisms employed in the Second Karabakh War context. The study attempts to answer research questions including “what functions do these euphemisms fulfill in the political discourse?”, “how does this kind of euphemism change the real nature of the war?”. The analysis of political materials uncovers the strategic choice of language units to make some political issues sound good to ear. Collected examples from various sources like speeches, news articles or interviews demonstrate the way euphemisms frame some political aspects to avoid affront or losing face. The outcomes of the study shed light on underlying purposes of political euphemisms utilized by Azerbaijani and English officials to fulfill various functions.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

The study is based on a qualitative method which enables to deeply analyze the content and find answers to the research questions. The main purpose of implementing this method is to reveal how political discourse differs from other kinds of discourse in terms of word choice and addressing thoughts. It guides to pay careful attention to contexts in which political euphemisms are employed to serve various functions. The research attempts to carry out a comparative analysis of political euphemisms utilized by both Azerbaijani and English officials. This qualitative comparative method focuses on determining how these euphemisms differ from each other in terms of their functions. This comparison uncovers how politicians approach the same event by choosing different euphemisms.

For this study, the research instrument is the researcher herself. Because collecting data from various resources was done by observing, analyzing and interpreting political materials.

Speeches (transcripts of speeches made by politicians during the conflict), official statements (government documents or press releases connected with war) and media coverages (articles, interviews and broadcasts where politicians convey their thoughts) include the main sources used to get the required data. These sources were chosen by implementing purposive sampling. Since this kind of sampling enables the researcher to explore specific materials that are directly related to the research topic, it is a good choice to deliberately work on media coverage, speeches etc. that are rich with political euphemisms employed during the Second Karabakh War. It contributes to analyzing euphemisms utilized in a specific nuance rather than generalizing them.

The data was gathered observing political interviews, debates, analyzing news articles and examining political experts' thoughts. The collected data is presented in the forms of words and expressions. They were retrieved from official websites or platforms where political speeches are shared publicly.

The main limitation which the researcher faced during the investigation of the topic was lack of materials written about the Second Karabakh War in terms of linguistics. On the other hand, most of the interviews which were given orally were not available in the written form.

To examine the collected materials, content analysis was carried out. It helps to carefully analyze political euphemisms and observe which functions they serve within the context. Political euphemisms utilized by both sides will be compared according to these functions: softening negative realities, justifying actions or policies, rallying public support, framing opponents. To determine under which conditions those euphemisms were used, President Ilham Aliyev's interviews with journalists, his addressing speech to Azerbaijanis were listened and analyzed in a written form, as well. On the other hand, news articles were also explored.

To collect political euphemisms employed in the Azerbaijani discourse "the official site of the president of the Azerbaijan Republic" constitutes the main resource. All written forms of interviews which Ilham Aliyev gave to foreign journalists are available on this site. The interviews were taken by journalists of internationally popular TV channels including BBC, TRT haber, France24, Fox news and so on. Some interviews took even more than thirty minutes, as the president wanted to make all questions in their minds clear. Mr. Ilham Aliyev was well-prepared for all interviews. This can be observed how confident and self-assured he made his speeches in front of the whole Azerbaijani population. In fact, these characteristics must be in the personality of every politician. Because they must be role models for the people of their country. Role models are closely associated with the idea of being a good example and saving your image and respect all the time. In fact, one of the main purposes of using euphemisms is related to its face- saving function. Avoiding words which are the potential sources of unintended problems or risky circumstances, they aim to protect their positive image behaving patiently.

The second resource which helped to find materials for analyzing is the site of "Ministry of defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan". This site contains valuable information about the condition of military operations on the battlefield. It consists of news which make people aware of the advancement of Azerbaijan military, which territories were liberated, how much military equipment of the enemy was destroyed and so on. "44days.info" is one of the resources which is rich with important data encompassing from the 27th of September to the 9th of November. It even contains tweets shared by the officials of Azerbaijan. News articles were read on the site called "VirtualKarabakh". There are several news articles about Karabakh conflict written by Azerbaijani authors on this site. To conduct this research work only one article was analyzed. This article is called "The Second Karabakh War: Russia vs Turkey?". It describes historical

background of this event emphasizing points like how the Armenians settled in Karabakh for the first time, how they committed ethnic cleansing towards local Azerbaijani people and how claims over Nagorno Karabakh arouse etc. Totally 14 political euphemisms were revealed in Azerbaijani discourse. 5 of them was gathered on “President.az”, another 5 was from “44days.info”, 2 euphemisms were discovered in the article and the remaining 2 was “VirtualKarabakh”.

English political euphemisms were mainly gathered analyzing questions given by foreign journalists or exploring articles written by the authors of other countries. 9 political euphemisms were detected in the English context. 4 of them was acquired from the interview of the South Caucasus Expert Laurence Broers to the channel named “CivilNet”. 3 euphemisms were found on the site “Center for strategic & international studies”. Another 2 political euphemisms are “Conciliation resources”.

The Procedure of Data Analysis

Since the research work is based on qualitative methods, the first part of the study is to examine materials and analyze them in detail to understand the language of the political narrative. After the examination of materials, the next stage is classifying political euphemisms according to their functions which they serve. These functions include how they contribute to the process of successful communication or how political euphemisms influence public perception and so on. Firstly, Azerbaijani euphemisms are gathered, after finishing them the researcher started to search for political euphemisms in the English discourse. English political euphemisms were reached online sites. When all euphemisms from both Azerbaijani and English sites are collected completely, they are presented on the table. The table helps readers to clearly explore euphemisms based on their categories and functions. Their interpretations are also provided on the table.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Euphemisms in Azerbaijani political discourse during the 2nd Karabakh War

Applying qualitative descriptive method, the researcher revealed ten political euphemisms which carry out various functions within the context of war. The usage of these particular linguistic tools highlights the unique character of political rhetoric. This part of the research work presents the interpretations of political euphemisms utilized by Azerbaijani politicians focusing on their functions and different categories they belong to.

Euphemisms encompass a very large space of human activity. They can be encountered in different types of contexts. Politics is one of these fields in which euphemisms arise. They are resorted to delivering any political issues in an acceptable and desirable way which is approved by the target audience. The following examples of political euphemisms found in various resources shed light on how they are applied to control the effective flow of information.

Data 1. Armenian armed forces committed yet another military provocation against Azerbaijan. (President.az, September 27, 2020)

“Military provocation” is the example of political euphemism which belongs to the category of military action. It was employed by president Ilham Aliyev while he was having an online Security Council meeting. The main functions of this political euphemism detected in the president’s speech are to diminish the severity of the action done by the enemy, justify for response actions by presenting the front side as a “provoker”. It conveys the seriousness of the event in a roundabout manner. The employment of this euphemism avoids the recipients being panic or disturbed by a negative or direct terms like “attack”, “invasion” and so on.

Data 2. Azerbaijan Army’s Troops launched a counter-offensive operation along the entire front. (Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan, September 27, 2020)

The euphemistic expression “counter-offensive operation” used in the news to make the population aware of the latest condition on the battlefield is related to the category of military action. It is composed of three words. “Operation” mitigates the negativity of word and presents it in an appropriate form. The “offensive” part of the expression refers to the aggressive actions done by the enemy against Azerbaijan. “Counter” requires for response by Azerbaijani side

towards “offensive actions”. As a complete euphemistic expression “counter-offensive operation” justifies for Azerbaijan’s defensive reaction towards the enemy.

Data 3. They committed ethnic cleansing against us. (President.az, October 9, 2020)

“Ethnic cleansing” is associated with the fact when thousands of Azerbaijani people were expelled from Karabakh and seven districts adjacent to it. This euphemism is emotionally charged and involves the description of unfair action carried out by the enemy. It was used to deliver historical background related to the settlement of the Armenians in the Karabakh territory, when president Ilham Aliyev was interviewed by CNN international TV channel. The employment of this expression may aim to ensure the condemnation of international organizations or other countries by illustrating illegal and violent displacement of local people from their own lands by the opposing forces.

Data 4. We are together on the fight against international terrorism, we are together in Afghanistan, and we keep our military servicemen in Afghanistan, thus, providing the cause of our peacekeeping operations. (President.az, October 25, 2020)

The example sentence given above involves political euphemism “peacekeeping operation”. President Ilham Aliyev utilized it in his interview to the U.S. Fox News Tv channel. Conveying military intervention by replacing it with “peacekeeping operation” adds a positive connotation to the way it is perceived by the receivers. It legitimizes the act of intervention putting emphasis on its purpose of providing peace. This falls the category of euphemisms used to refer to military operations. The application of this political euphemism eases the process of accepting new information without touching negative aspects like death, combat, violence etc.

Data 5. We are on the righteous path, the battles are going on in Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan is restoring its territorial integrity, and we have every right to do so. (President.az, September 30,2025)

“Resorting territorial integrity” serves as a means of justification for keeping “battles” going on. It portrays the conflict as an act of reclaiming occupied territories by pushing its war-related character backward. On the other hand, this expression also carries some elements which characterize Azerbaijani people’s efforts to achieve the integrity of their country. These points highlight patriotic character of the Azerbaijanis who performed heroism on the battlefield. Mr.

Aliyev employed this expression when he visited injured servicemen. The main purpose of using this political euphemism may include maintaining public support or expecting international understanding from other countries in the world.

Data 6. The humanitarian catastrophe experienced during the 44-day war could have been avoided had Armenian politicians sought a compromise. (Yavuz & Huseynov, 2020, p. 104)

In political discourse euphemisms do not always lessen the harsh nature of issues. Such as “humanitarian catastrophe” stresses negative outcomes resulted in a huge number of deaths, wounds and human sufferings directly. However, connecting these horrible results with unsuccessful Armenian policy purposely aims to impose the responsibility on the opposing side.

Data 7. According to Prof. Dr. Vusal Gasimli, Executive Director of the Center for Economic Reforms Analysis and Communication (CAERC) in Azerbaijan: “this includes 22 missile strikes that were launched to destroy and trigger collateral damage to the innocent people of Ganja city, second largest city of Azerbaijan. (Tase, 2022)

The political euphemism “collateral damage” aims to reduce the emotional impact of the word on the addressees. Instead of employing emotionally charged expressions including “civilian deaths”, “loss of lives” or “killing civilians”, pointing all these aspects by using “collateral damage” expresses unintended and inevitable consequences that war brings about. It presents the severe side of military conflict avoiding the emergence of feelings like anger, hatred and so on. It leads to the creation of the perception that such kind of loss is the natural feature of war.

Data 8. That is the position which I articulated many times, at the same time, this is not the whole issue on the negotiation table. (President.az, November 9, 2020)

Attempting to solve the conflict on “the negotiation table” indicates that Azerbaijan only wants to achieve peaceful agreement, rather than causing enormous damage or destruction and human loss. However, the usage of this euphemism covers the main interests of each side which will be discussed on the negotiation table. Moreover, it encourages people for peaceful solutions and increases their hope for a bright future. Thus, resorting to this expression serves to transform positive ideas which ensure maintenance of public support and belief.

Data 9. These days, I have repeatedly addressed the people of Azerbaijan and showed my fist to the enemy. I said that this was not just a fist. This is an iron fist. And this is an iron fist operation. (Virtualkarabakh.az, November 8, 2020)

The usage of metaphorical euphemistic expression “an iron fist operation” reflects the determination and consistency of the Azerbaijani army to accomplish its main goal. It justifies the efforts of Azerbaijan against the opposing forces who conquered its ancient territories in 1990s. On the other hand, this expression demonstrates the confidence and belief towards the power of Azerbaijani army. Describing this struggle as an iron fist points to the unity and solidarity of people who get together for the mutual aim. The iron shows the invincibility of this reunion.

Data 10. For us it is a Patriotic War. (44days.info, October 9, 2020)

Naming the Second Karabakh War by using the emotionally charged word “patriotic” presents that this conflict is not just over occupied territories, instead this political euphemistic expression makes this issue the matter of national identity and having strong bond towards the homeland. On the other hand, referring to this military operation by this way emphasizes that this is not only the struggle of the Azerbaijani army on the battlefield, but also the whole Azerbaijani people have a contribution in the victory. It involves strong emotions like patriotism, love towards the motherland and a sense of duty which are the main characteristics of the Azerbaijanis.

Data 11. Destroyed military equipment by Azerbaijani armed forces proved the weakness of the opposing side again. (44days.info, November 3, 2020)

The usage of the euphemistic expression “military equipment” underestimates the power of dangerous artillery which is frequently employed by competing sides. The main purpose of not specifying any particular names like “bomb”, “rocket”, “drone” or “tank” is to hinder fear or other emotional reactions coming from the recipients. It carries out one of the main functions of political euphemisms which is about the distortion of reality. Saying “military equipment” rather than “weapons of war” presents the destructive nature of the military conflict in a slight way. Thus, it facilitates the process of acceptance of news by normalizing military activities and diminishing potential unexpected reactions.

Data 12. 30 years long environmental terror came to an end with the de-occupation of Sugovusan village of Azerbaijan. (44days.info, October 8, 2020)

The euphemistic expression “environmental terror” reflects actions or policies applied by the enemy that resulted in a large scale of damage to the environment and the ecological system. It highlights the long-lasting and significant impact of the damage which even reached to ecosystem and human health. The employment of this expression carries urgent calls for action and seeks to condemnation by international organizations which deal with the protection of the environment. There may be a range of deliberate actions which ruin nature. “Environmental terror” frames horrible plans like sending bombs or other kind of poisoned chemicals through water. In this case, this euphemism contributes to delivering such terrible actions in an appropriate manner, as well.

Data 13. Then both sides will select who these peacekeepers will be. (President.az, October 9, 2020)

In this sentence “peacekeeper” can include political euphemisms. It refers to military personnel or forces who are sent to a certain area with the aim of ensuring peace between fighting sides, avoiding any instant conflicts or preventing the violation of the ceasefire. Although, “peacekeepers” strive to protect civilians or prevent violence against them, the country who provides these personnel in that area may have its own interests, too. That is why this euphemistic expression camouflages the real nature and objectives of providing military staff. However, it leads to the creation of feeling safe and secure on the population. It makes people think that those personnel maintain stability in the region.

Data 14. The salvation mission of the Azerbaijani Army continues. (President.az, October 12, 2020)

The description of the military actions by using the word “salvation” awakes strong feelings like hope, pride etc. on the target audience. It also adds some points related to patriotism and nationalism. On the other hand, the presentation of the conflict in this way controls people’s thoughts about ongoing issues by masking processes which do not happen explicitly. “Salvation mission” increases people’s support and maintain their belief toward the government, which is trying to come true its major goal.

Table 1. The presentation of political euphemisms with their categories and functions found in the Azerbaijani context.

Category	Euphemisms	Functions
Describing military actions	Military provocation Counter-offensive operation An iron fist operation Patriotic War The salvation mission	Presenting military actions in a way that sounds milder and can be legitimized by other countries as a way of responding to injustice
Downplaying negative impacts	Collateral damage Military equipment Peacekeeper	Avoiding negative perceptions that can lead to overreactions or emotionally charged feelings like fear, anger or hate
Framing objectives	Territorial integrity Peacekeeping operation The negotiation table	Concealing some realities behind the military goals to achieve prolonged support by the population
Portrayal of the opposing side	Ethnic cleansing Humanitarian catastrophe Environmental terror	Revealing deliberate actions carried out by the enemy aims to spread realities to the world and accomplish the condemnation of international forces against the opponents

2.1.1 Euphemisms in English political discourse during the 2nd Karabakh War

This part of the thesis presents political euphemisms utilized by English media representatives, political figures or articles which were dedicated to the investigation of the Second Karabakh War. They employed this linguistic device in their speech strategically to touch various aspects

of war including its background history, financial condition of the country, the level of readiness of the Azerbaijani army and countries who support Azerbaijan etc. The following example sentences gained from different resources clarify underlying functions which those euphemisms serve.

Data 1. In the official statements issued by Azerbaijan's defense ministry and presidential administration this Tuesday, Baku announced that it had begun an anti-terrorist operation in Nagorno-Karabakh aimed at neutralizing illegal Armenian armed groups engaged in sabotage and dissolving the illegal regime itself. (Csis.org, September 22, 2023)

“Anti-terrorist operation” is a kind of political euphemism which aims to legitimize military action. It demonstrates that the government takes the responsibility of protecting its nation against any threats caused by terror. This euphemistic expression shows the country from the perspective of “protector”. Additionally, since terrorism is a significant danger for a population, the use of this term gives right to Azerbaijan for taking measures to remove them from the country.

Data 2. On 9 November, a Russian-brokered ceasefire declaration was signed, mandating the deployment of some 2,000 Russian peacekeepers to the region. (C-r.org, 2021)

“Russian-brokered ceasefire” indicates the involvement of another country to the process of political settlement. It points to the geopolitical dominance of Russia in the South Caucasus. Achieving to bring two competing countries to the negotiation table describes the image of power and hegemony. This euphemistic expression may lead to different viewpoints on people. Some of the recipients may have a positive approach to peaceful agreement for solving the issue. However, others may not be satisfied with the intervention of the external country (Russia) to the conflict. The political euphemism also points to some hidden aspects of Russia's involvement which is closely related to its political interests.

The sentence noted above involves two examples of political euphemisms. The other one is “peacekeeper”. Despite the fact that military personnel are sent to war-related zones to maintain peace and prevent violence or injustice against the civil people, it contains some political points, too. Because the country which is involved in the process provides peacekeepers for something in return. This may reflect its future policy or political interests.

Data 3. Sir, I spoke to the President of Armenia, and he told me that this conflict is dramatically different from the previous clashes, because of the open support that Turkey is providing Azerbaijan. (President.az, October 9, 2020)

During the war, the opponents attempted to spread false information about the superiority of Azerbaijani army. They tried to persuade the other countries that it is not the victory of Azerbaijan or external mediators involve the war and fight on the battlefield. The euphemistic expression “open support” may change the listeners’ thoughts about the ongoing conflict. It can form the idea that Azerbaijan is advancing thanks to other countries. However, Ilham Aliyev clarified that Turkey supports Azerbaijan morally as a symbol of brotherhood. Members of Turkish army were not mobilized to fight on the battlefield.

Data 4. OSCE’s Minsk Group which has sought a solution to this long-standing dispute since the 1990s is co-chaired by France, by the US and by Russia.

Referring to the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh by saying “long-standing dispute” highlights its duration which took decades. On the other hand, it may also function as a way of presenting the current level of tension, clashes or human casualty in a roundabout way. It makes the process sound less harsh by imposing emphasis on its duration.

Data 5. The EU can mitigate this risk, both by playing a networking role among disparate actors and by nurturing a soft regionalism supporting informal initiatives to encourage trade, people-to-people contacts, and educational and cultural exchanges. (Eurasianet.org, 2021)

The example of political euphemism “soft regionalism” is associated with building connection and providing integration with internationally recognized organizations like EU and so on. It describes the power of this organization as a main way of fixing stagnation after the conflict. Showing the willingness of the EU focuses on preserving the approval of the population and receiving their trust.

Data 6. Now we have this trilateral agreement uh between Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The political euphemism “trilateral agreement” describes the end of the Second Karabakh War which was ceased after the agreement signed between three parties: Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, this expression may have subtle connotations. The word “trilateral”

serves to hide the imbalance of power between participated countries. However, this deal was heavily influenced by Russia to bring Armenia to negotiation table. Additionally, sudden intervention by the Russian government to the issue demonstrated its dominance over two countries. There is no doubt that it involved this complex process for its own interests.

Data 7. Some old ideas that have been circulating in the peace process such as a transit corridor across southern Armenia and a strong dose of geopolitical interests I think what's interesting about this agreement is that it really truncates decisive outcomes.

“Transit corridor” is related to a road or railway which has a geographical significance for the country. It may serve as a primary means of carrying goods, fuel, and medicine from one country to another. Therefore, the opposing forces did not want to lose such corridors. Its loss would bring about devastating consequences including the avoidance of getting military equipment from other countries, economic development and building cooperations. The main purpose of not giving up on this transit corridor reflects the geopolitical interests of two sides. The principal corridors which were the matter of discussion include “Lachin” and “Zangezur” corridors. The former is the only way which connects Armenia with Nagorno-Karabakh. Because of its vital importance, the Armenians named it as “humanitarian corridor” or “lifeline”. The latter plays the role of bridge between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Mentioning the word “transit corridor” shows the side of the conflict which fighting sides also have some geopolitical interests.

Data 8. A heavy peacekeeping mission into a conflict is actually you know not the way that a hegemon would normally behave. (CivilNet, November 20, 2020)

“Peacekeeping mission” is associated with the act of providing international personnel in the areas where were potentially affected by the conflict for the purpose of security and peace. These missions are mainly carried out by international organizations including the United Nations Security Council or Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). While it serves several positive functions by aiming to keep the civilians in safe and secure condition, peacekeeping mission may sometimes disappoint the government causing some unintended harm or even exploitation of natural resources by peacekeepers. However, it is mainly perceived as a means of protection, the prevention of violence by the population.

Table 2. The interpretations of political euphemisms in terms of their categories and functions detected in the context of English

Category	Euphemisms	Functions
Describing military actions	Anti-terrorist operation	Achieving the protection of the population and whole country from forces which are as dangerous as terrorists
Diminishing negative impacts	Peacekeeper	Ensuring the security of civilians in the war-affected zones
Pointing to diplomatic efforts	Russian-brokered ceasefire Trilateral agreement Long-standing dispute	Demonstrating long-term negotiations and complex nature of the issue which lasted for ages
Framing objectives	Peacekeeping mission	Distorting the real expectations by emphasising its peaceful side
Expressions of support	Open support	Presenting the moral support and strong bond between Turkey and Azerbaijan
Geopolitical concepts	Transit corridor Soft regionalism	Delivering the fact of having political interests between forces and mediators in a slight way

DISCUSSION

3.1.1.Explanation of key findings

Table 1 which demonstrates political euphemisms employed by the Azerbaijani political figures or media outlets contains more euphemisms which fall the category of military actions. This reveals the fact that Azerbaijani political rhetoric strategically employed words for the description of military actions to legitimize measures which were taken against the opposing forces of the enemy. On the other hand, the active usage of such terms by Azerbaijani side presents its actions as a right response to the side who attempts to achieve the international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh which always belongs to Azerbaijan. Other euphemisms like “Patriotic War”, “an Iron Fist Operation” or “the Salvation mission of Azerbaijan” shown on the table involves slight nuances which are related to the character of the typical Azerbaijanis. National sentiments including solidarity, unity, patriotism and bravery may be reflected by employing these euphemisms. They also control other people’s thoughts who are not familiar to the Azerbaijanis. The audience who hear these expressions perceive Azerbaijan in a positive way illustrating the image of people who love their country and strive to achieve its integrity. “Territorial integrity” is one of the political euphemisms which were frequently employed by the Azerbaijani officials to deliver its primary objective worldwide. Frequently applying this expression president Ilham Aliyev aimed to stress that this struggle is not only the act of aggression or violence, but also it is Azerbaijan’s right to reclaim its historical territories where the Armenians inhabited illegally. “Ethnic cleansing”, “environmental terror” and “humanitarian catastrophe” include political euphemisms which designate long-lasting provocations carried out by the opponent side against Azerbaijan. The usage of these euphemisms attempts to make the world aware of the brutalist character of the enemy.

Political euphemisms employed by the English news articles, journalists, political experts are described on table 2. Unlike euphemisms shown on table 1, these euphemisms mainly concentrate on the interpretations of political euphemisms used to talk about the diplomatic phase of the conflict related to steps taken to achieve negotiations and peaceful agreements.

For instance, euphemistic expressions including “Trilateral agreement”, “Russian-brokered ceasefire” emphasize efforts which aims to manage peaceful reconciliation, rather than continuing to move forward which would result in more destruction, civilian casualty and so on. The employment of these political euphemisms by the English side shows their intense curiosity about the progression of the conflict and how it was solved. Furthermore, “Transit corridor”, “Soft regionalism” refers to political objectives of external mediators which are beyond the restoration of the territorial integrity. The main purpose of employing these euphemistic expressions by the English representatives is to draw attention to the involvement of other countries to the conflict.

3.1.2. Implications of political euphemisms used by both countries

Political rhetoric makes use of specific strategies to be sure about the effective transmission of information among people. Thus, political euphemisms are one of the ways they resort to. The usage of these linguistic figures has a potential influence on people. It means that they can shape people’s thoughts and the way they perceive reality by manipulating or choosing particular political terms which appeal to the recipients. That is why political euphemisms observed in both Azerbaijani and English contexts have different impact on people. Such as, “Patriotic war”, “the Salvation mission of Azerbaijan” and “an Iron fist operation” create close and sincere bond with the audience by depicting the characteristic features of the Azerbaijanis. The resemblance of the unity of Azerbaijani people to a fist leads the creation of positive atmosphere and encouragement of the population. On the other hand, these expressions demonstrate that the government has a strong belief towards its population. Other euphemistic expressions like “counter-offensive operations”, “collateral damage” reduce harshness of the conflict by covering it with these words. “Collateral damage” is employed to talk about the loss of innocent people who are not combatants on the battlefield. It may somehow console people who lost their familiars during the war. Because the usage of direct words like “death”, “killing” etc. may arouse their grief and they may feel worse. Thus, the employment of the milder term “collateral damage” is the sign of empathy towards the sorrow of people who experienced this horrible situation.

“Territorial integrity” reminds the audience that Azerbaijan never forgets its ancient lands despite passing years. Because this is a matter of dignity for the whole country. The usage of this expression touches the addressees morally and emotionally, because they longed for their motherland for over thirty years.

“Environmental terror”, “ethnic cleansing” point to actions taken by Azerbaijani armed forces to resist against tricky plans of the enemy. Although these expressions sound direct and harsh, they try to show the real face of the opposing side to the nation. They may leave thoughts like being cautious and defensive on the audience. Additionally, “Peacekeeping operation” and “Negotiation table” elevate people’s hope for a better future and peaceful life which will come true after the discussions of all issues between both countries. To sum up, political euphemisms found in the Azerbaijani context mainly reflect some cultural elements like heroism, solidarity and so forth.

Euphemisms found in the English political discourse also triggered the emergence of different perceptions. Since political euphemisms revealed in the English context are primarily connected with diplomatic stage of the issue, ordinary people may interpret them differently. For example, “Russian-brokered ceasefire” and “trilateral agreement” are political euphemisms which transform the information about the intervention of the third country. It may lead to both positive and negative impressions produced by the population. The positive impression is related to the deal which was signed with the leadership of Russia. This deal was the end of the conflict and people would no longer expose to violence, attack, suffering etc. They would keep living their life calmly. However, possible negative thoughts are also predictable associated with the intervention of the external force. People may think that the third country (Russia) joined the process of solving this conflict for its own interests. “Long-standing dispute” makes a connection between past, present and future condition of the Karabakh issue. It draws the attention of the audience to the non-stopping character of negotiations and determination of Azerbaijan who attended hundreds of formal meetings with international organizations. This expression gives the feeling of how much patient the Azerbaijanis were to overcome this complex problem. While euphemisms employed in the context of Azerbaijan are emotionally charged, euphemisms in the English discourse are neutral and give preference to diplomatic aspects.

3.1.3. Comparison of political euphemisms in both discourse

There are some distinct differences between Azerbaijani and English political euphemisms employed to discuss controversial issues related to the Second Karabakh War. These different sides can easily be noticed in the emotional character of expressions like “Patriotic war”, “an Iron fist operation” and “the Salvation mission of Azerbaijan”. These euphemisms carry “national sentiment” which conveys some ideas about the Azerbaijanis. Those ideas identify Azerbaijani people as strong lovers of the motherland, brave soldiers who contribute to liberating occupied territories. On the contrary, euphemisms (“Russian-brokered ceasefire”, “trilateral agreement”) revealed in the political discourse of English perform neutrality and seriousness by essentially touching diplomatic process. Because the English political rhetoric approaches the situation as an observant without direct intervention. Therefore, we do not discover the depiction of emotions. However, the Azerbaijan Republic is the main participant of the conflict. Thus, political euphemisms of Azerbaijani side are deeply emotional and assertive. Another difference that can be spotted in the Azerbaijani context is related to nationalistic nature of the political euphemisms. This feature of euphemisms mainly serves to create a comfortable and friendly political narrative where the target audience is sure about their security and safety. Besides the emotional side of Azerbaijani political euphemisms, they also put stress on justification of their actions against the operations carried out by the enemy. Since the English side is only a passive observant of the whole process, its quiet position resonates with political euphemisms. These euphemisms portray England as a country which is closely interested in the diplomatic solution of the claims over Nagorno-Karabakh. Moreover, the English side paid more attention to political euphemisms which prioritized the role of external countries and geopolitical interests (“Trilateral agreement”, “Open support”). While euphemisms chosen by the Azerbaijani political figures have a direct connection with history, political euphemisms employed by English are instant and do not have such a relationship. Additionally, Azerbaijani political euphemisms are more specific than English ones in the audience it addresses, points it touches etc. English political euphemisms surround broader aspects without drawing attention to specific sides of the conflict.

3.1.4. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The study dedicated to the analysis of political euphemisms used by Azerbaijani and English political figures during the Second Karabakh war is a valuable research work which delves into how euphemisms are employed in this political discourse to deliver issues related to the conflict. As this research work investigates political euphemisms as powerful linguistic devices to control people's thoughts, influence their perception, mask some unfavorable facts, it has a significant contribution to political linguistics. While working on materials, the researcher faced some limitations related to data availability. Although there is a myriad of articles about political euphemisms, the authors mainly focus on them in terms of politics. Therefore, materials which approach political euphemisms linguistically are in limited number. Another difficulty is related to the connection between politics and linguistics. As political rhetoric requires careful use of language, political figures employ it strategically. Therefore, the researcher had some difficulties determining their intentions for making certain sentences.

Since the central aim of this investigation is to determine how euphemisms contribute to the political narrative of the Second Karabakh War, it fundamentally concentrates on primary functions of euphemisms, their role in shaping public perception and so on. Thus, future research works may focus on the influence of history and culture on the creation of political euphemisms. They can analyze them from the perspective of sociolinguistics. Additionally, further studies can also be about the linguistic comparison of the Second Karabakh War with other war-related contexts.

CONCLUSION

The research work has conducted the successful investigation of political euphemisms in both Azerbaijani and English context. Findings illustrate the role of this linguistic tool as one of the important language strategies that political figures often resort to. Especially, political euphemisms observed in president Ilham Aliyev's speech shows that he has deep knowledge about politics, and he is an experienced orator. He was interviewed by many journalists who were sent from other countries to learn more about the ongoing process. Majority of them bombarded Mr. president with questions to uncover diplomatic truth behind the conflict. He provided all representatives coming from different parts of the world with satisfying answers following the main principles of political diplomacy. Major aspects of his speech include delivering information in a persuasive manner, confident image of the leader and determination of achieving the goal. Political euphemisms change depending on who the president addressed. For instance, when the president made a phone call with the presidents of other countries or met the officials, he preferred to employ broad or neutral euphemistic expressions which do not contain any emotions. However, the euphemistic terms when Ilham Aliyev utilized to address the nation are domestic and show sincerity with the population of Azerbaijan. The principal aim of creating such an atmosphere is to appeal to Azerbaijani people in a friendly way without deviating from the frame of politics.

Fourteen political euphemisms have been found in the Azerbaijani side. They were discovered in interviews, tweets of officials and news articles. These euphemisms are an indispensable part of the conflict, because they also had a significant role in reaching victory. Although they were not involved in active fighting on the battlefield, they played the role of linguistic weapons in political rhetoric. Findings collected within the discourse of Azerbaijan highlight the fact that political euphemisms are crucial linguistic tools which contribute to convey political issues in a desirable and suitable way without bringing about any confrontations or problematic moments. In the speech of Azerbaijani politicians, political euphemisms serve the following functions:

1. Justification and legitimization of military operations aimed at the defense of people against attacks committed by the opposing forces

2. Maintenance of public support by reducing harshness of severe activities
3. Attempting to shift people's perception related to conflict from negative to positive
4. Delivering harsh realities in a way which is appropriate for public approval

“Territorial integrity” can be the most frequently employed political term which Ilham Aliyev used to clarify the main objectives of the Karabakh conflict. Avoiding words like “aggression”, “occupation” or “invasion”, the president mitigates the weight of negative thoughts like death, loss, destruction etc. about war and presents this action as a process of restoring territorial integrity. On the other hand, emphasizing this goal serves to inspire and encourage people evoking national sentiment.

“Patriotic war”, “an Iron fist operation” fall into the category of political euphemisms which Azerbaijan leader used when he addressed the whole nation. These terms sound assertive and self-assured which transform the ideas including having enough power of getting ancient lands back and decisiveness of the Azerbaijani army.

Carefully chosen words highlight characteristic features of political rhetoric. Especially, a topic like war requires extreme attention from the political figures while conveying any updates or latest conditions to the audience. That is why political euphemisms were widely utilized in the Azerbaijani context to discuss war-related issues in a favorable way. Since war contains negative things, people do not normally have good perceptions related to this concept. Therefore, it is necessary to portray it in a way which does not evoke feelings like panic, disturbance and so on. Euphemistic expressions found in the Azerbaijani context also served this function. They managed to make people aware of conflict without directly conveying all diplomatic points which is against politics.

Besides political euphemisms found in Azerbaijani context, these linguistic figures were also employed in the English politics. Nine of them was analyzed. While political euphemisms found in Azerbaijani political narrative have some emotional aspects, English ones are basically based on diplomacy. They convey geopolitical concerns of other countries and do not have any nationalistic tone. Instead of reflecting moral feelings like euphemisms discovered in the Azerbaijani context do, the central focus of the political euphemisms noticed in the English side is legal and humanitarian aspects of war. In fact, this demonstrates their interest towards

the diplomatic part of the issue which is related to the way of solving the conflict. Principal functions of political euphemisms can be summarised as follows:

1. Slightly pointing political interests of other countries
2. Trying to learn about future condition of the war
3. Talking about civilian casualty

The functions mentioned above show the main differences between political euphemisms revealed in both contexts. Analyzing euphemisms in wartime discourse depicts the power of language in which it can change people's attitudes and feelings towards by manipulating or persuading them.

The study proves that euphemisms constitute the main part of political rhetoric. They play the role of face saver by providing an appropriate way of discussing and talking about significant issues. The research work has examined the strategic application of political euphemisms in the context of Azerbaijani and English politics in the period of the Second Karabakh War stressing points like how language shapes political narrative, controls public perception and facilitates to communicate with target audience effectively. The findings indicate clear differences between Azerbaijani and English euphemisms. Azerbaijani euphemisms distinguish from English euphemisms with the fact that they highlight solidarity, national unity and justification. However, English euphemisms have neutral character and avoid sensitivity.

Findings about political euphemisms employed during the Second Karabakh War prove the role of language use in the political discourse. As this kind of context contains some diplomatic facts which cannot be shared directly, the best way of pointing them is the usage of euphemisms. They deliver war related issues including controversial facts, protests against the government, death, destruction etc. in a way that avoids public criticism or misunderstanding. Euphemisms used during the Second Karabakh War also serve to soften these aspects. There is one thing that is achieved with the help of them is shaping people's perception of reality. This is done by applying linguistic strategies like softening, reframing or distorting attention from uncomfortable realities. For instance, "collateral damage" is one of the examples mentioned above. This euphemism is used instead of "civilian casualties". It changes the way the usage of emotionally charged one can influence the recipient. Analysis

of interviews which President Ilham Aliyev gave to foreign media representatives is the example of touching political points in a way that provides satisfying answers to journalists' questions. The president referred to controversial matters without causing any misunderstanding by mass media.

The use of political euphemisms avoids losing face, offence and ensures mutual respect among interlocutors. Such as, during the war expressing each fact related to war explicitly, would cause public aggression, protests and internal conflicts. On the other hand, being too direct in the political discourse is against the diplomatic rules. Further investigations should be dedicated to the comparison of political euphemisms used by Azerbaijani side versus any other countries focusing on its pragmatic aspects.

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APPENDIX

ABSTRACT

This research work aims to explore political euphemisms which were utilized by Azerbaijani and English political figures during the Second Karabakh War. By working on interviews, news articles and other materials the researcher investigates the primary roles of this language tool which leads to avoiding offensive terms, taking the control of the audience and influence the way of understanding reality. Implementing qualitative methods to analyze the contents of political materials, the investigator succeeds in gathering euphemisms in both contexts. Presenting them on the table gives a clear explanation of their functions to the readers of the work.

Doing research about the investigation of political euphemisms in this topic focuses on showing how language is used strategically in wartime to shape public perception, transforming the negative side of this concept to audience in a suitable way without leading to any disturbance, panic or offensive confrontations. Findings noted in the results section demonstrate the principal distinctions between English and Azerbaijani euphemisms in terms of their emotional sensitivity, downplaying effects and so on. Categorizing these euphemisms highlights which aspect of war they encompass. The main categories that finding euphemisms fall are military actions, showing diplomatic relations and expression of casualty. Euphemisms revealed in the Azerbaijani discourse do not only demonstrate political aspects of war, they also contain some subtle details related to the character of Azerbaijani people and their beliefs.

In summary, the study tries to deliver the influential role of euphemisms in the context of the Second Karabakh War depicting its main functions including delivering facts in a roundabout way, providing safe information flow, hiding some harsh realities and preventing offence.

Keywords: The Second Karabakh War, Political Euphemisms, Political Rhetoric, War Discourse, Strategic Use of Language.

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