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**EUPHEMISMS IN MODERN JOURNALISM  
AS INDICATORS OF THE LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT**

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## INTRODUCTION

The evolution in the understanding of euphemisms occurred from the extra-linguistic approach to the linguistic one, and now there is a contamination of extra-linguistic and linguistic approaches to their comprehension. This gives rise to a wide scope for research.

A significant number of theoretical works are devoted to the problem of euphemisms. The complexity and multidimensionality of this problem have led to the need to consider it in an interdisciplinary way. At the moment this issue is most covered from the position of *linguopragmatics* [Kiprskaya 2005; Kovshova 2007; Savvateeva 2008; Bonhomme, Horak 2009; Córdoba Rodríguez 2015; Zvereva 2015, 2019 and others], *legal linguistics* [Osadchij 2011 and others], *sociolinguistics* [Vil`danova 2008; Miloenko 2009 and others], *cognitive linguistics* [Tereshhenko 2005; Cydendambaeva 2011, etc.], *linguocultural studies, including also comparative studies of euphemisms* [Tishina 2006; Poroxniczkaya 2014; Mugair 2014; Radulović 2016; Zvereva 2018, 2021; Mansur 2020, etc.], *from the perspective of the relationship of euphemisms and taboo* [Golovanova 2005; Dzhordzhaneli 2005; Brown Gfrorer 2015, etc.]. This is discussed in more detail in the first paragraph "History of the study of euphemisms in domestic and foreign linguistics" of the first chapter of the thesis.

Based on the general analysis of modern works devoted to euphemisms, we can conclude that their linguo-ecological, linguo-conflictological and a number of other aspects are far from being fully disclosed. The range of issues related to euphemisms is wide and requires additional research.

**The relevance of** the topic of this work has the following reasons. First, the consideration of euphemisms, taking into account the provisions of such interdisciplinary areas of linguistics as linguoecology, linguoculturology, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, fits into the framework of the currently dominant anthropocentric scientific paradigm in linguistics.

Second, modern science lacks a complete, systematic description of euphemisms, including as indicators of the state of the language environment.

And, thirdly, we should take into account the fact that in linguistics the question about euphemisms and the specificity of their actual variants will always remain open due to the fact that the layer of words and expressions related to euphemisms is dynamic and mobile, and what is perceived as a euphemism today may not be it after a while, or vice versa, as "euphemisms that entered into use, stop fulfilling their purpose and are rejected as too clear. <...> Euphemisms are now multiplying at an accelerated rate due to the setting for political correctness" [Zubova].

**The novelty** of the study lies in the fact that for the first time in modern linguistics an attempt has been made to analyze euphemisms as indicators of the state of the language environment on the material of modern journalism. The roles of euphemisms in the conditions of modern information reality have been analyzed. The topical variants of euphemistic units with the help of which mitigation of unpleasant, for whatever reasons unacceptable meanings in the texts of mass media and news agencies has been identified, described and grouped according to their correlation with the direct nominations they replace. An algorithm for considering euphemisms with the main parameters of linguoecology taken into account has been developed. The principle of terminological distinction of linguistic concepts is proposed.

**The object** of the study are the following concepts that are often euphemized: disability, poverty, overweight, dismissal, death, murder, losing in sports, illegal financial crimes and violations, and bribes.

**The subject** of the study is euphemization in publicist texts.

**The purpose** of research is to determine the relationship between the state of the language environment and the quantitative and qualitative indicators of euphemistic variants.

Achieving this purpose involves solving the following **tasks**:

- 1) analyze the history of the study of euphemisms in domestic and foreign linguistics;
- 2) consider the characteristics, properties, and basic classifications of euphemisms;

3) make a terminological distinction between the concepts of "euphemism," "euphemization," "euphemia" and other related linguistic concepts;

4) to process the extensive material of the study - publicist texts for the last 9 years - and to identify variants of euphemisms used instead of direct nominations: "invalid", "beggar/poor", "old man", "fat man", "dismiss", "die", "kill", "lose in sports", "illegal finances", "bribe";

5) taking into account the key parameters of linguoecology, study euphemisms as indicators to diagnose problematic phenomena in the language environment;

6) summarize the data of the analysis of modern euphemisms in the form of an infographic;

7) suggest topical additions to the dictionary of euphemisms of the Russian language.

**The research material included the** texts of the following newspapers and online news agencies: TASS, RIA Novosti, Izvestia, Novye Izvestia\*, Zavtra, Novaya Gazeta\*, Metro, Peterburgsky Dnevnik, Fontanka, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Kommersant, Moskovsky Komsomolets, Lenta.Ru, Gazeta.RU, Gazeta.fi, Finansovaya Gazeta, Parlamentskaya Gazeta, Advokatetskaya Gazeta, Rossiiskiy Dialog, Argumenty Nedeli, Rambler.News, IA Krasnaya Vesna, Krasnoe Vesna, Versiya, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Centralny Sluzhba Novostei, RBC, Miloserdiye.Novosti, PolitRossiya, Glas Naroda, Expert, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Argumenty i Fakty, Cosmopolitan, Woman.ru, Express Gazeta, Vedomosti, FederalPress, IA PrimaMedia, Internovosti.ru, Tsargrad, Teleinform, Interesting Russia, Vzglyad.Ru, Public News Service, IA Bel.RU, RuNews24, TUTNews, Moya Gazeta+, IA Rusnord, Rayon72.ru, Life.ru, Noticia.ru, HandyNews, Young Communar, 7 News, InoTV, INC-News, IA IslamNews, NewTimes.Kz,

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:

"Novye Izvestiya" - source blocked in 2022: <https://ria.ru/20220316/roskomnadzor-1778449564.html?ysclid=ln2ufyn6jh175019113>;

"Novaya Gazeta" - undesirable organization (No. 92 in the List: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/872881>.

Media.Az, IA REGNUM, IA BNK, Business-online, FB.ru, Deutsche Welle - Russian\*, Politpazl, Gazeta.SPb, Stolitsa S, Yuzhny Federal, Yarnovosti\*, VladTime, Pravda.Ru, Sputnik, Vysota 102, Championship, Sport-Ekspress, Sport24.Ru, Sovetsky Sport, Euro-Football, as well as texts reproduced in TV newscasts on First Channel, Russia 1, Russia 24, Ren.TV, Channel 5, and TV Channel St. Petersburg.

Chronologically, most of the materials refer to the period from 2014 to 2023, so the euphemisms that were used in publicist texts in the last 9 years are analyzed in more detail.

In addition, data from the national corpus of the Russian language (newspaper subcorpus of the central and regional media) and the search engine "Yandex" were analyzed to further estimate the number of matches, to assess the popularity and prevalence of a particular euphemism.

When processing the material, **a set of research methods** was used, the leading one being the descriptive-analytical method with its main components: observation, generalization and interpretation. At the stage of material collection, along with the method of random sampling, the method of contextual analysis was also used, allowing for the correct identification of euphemisms.

**The theoretical significance** of the study is due to the clarification of the meanings of a number of linguistic concepts and the solution of terminological issues, as well as the description of actual euphemisms in the context of linguoecology. The results obtained in the course of the study and the identified patterns make a definite contribution to the solution of general questions of the theory of euphemisms.

**The practical significance** of the work lies in the fact that the results of the study and the compiled dictionary of actual euphemisms of the Russian language can be used in the educational process, namely in the development of lecture courses and special courses related to the problems of lexicology, stylistics, linguoekology, sociolinguistics,

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:

"Deutsche Welle" - foreign agent (in the Register No. 340: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/activity/directions/998/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/826249>;

"Yarnovosti" - foreign agent (in the Register № 614: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/activity/directions/998/>).

psycholinguistics, lingvoculturology. The results of the study can be used in the training of specialists in the field of translation studies, as well as in the training and professional development of journalists.

The following **provisions** are presented for defense:

1) the concept of "euphemism" is not identical to other linguistic concepts, including the concepts of "euphemization" and "euphemia", despite the cases of their synonymous use in the scientific literature;

2) different is the number of actual variants of euphemistic substitutions relating to direct nominations: "invalid", "beggar/poor", "old person", "fat person", "dismiss", "die", "kill", "lose in sports", "illegal finances", "bribe";

3) euphemisms are an indicator of the state of the language environment: the number and quality of euphemistic variants related to one direct nomination indicates the presence or absence of an actual problem caused by linguocultural, sociolinguistic and other factors.

**The structure of the work includes the** following sections: introduction, two chapters, conclusion, list of references.

*The first chapter "Theoretical consideration of euphemisms"* is devoted to the history of euphemisms in Russian and foreign linguistics, the review of classifications of euphemisms, a special emphasis is placed on the definition of conceptual and terminological apparatus of the theory of euphemisms, their relationship with other linguistic concepts.

*The second chapter "Actual euphemisms in the modern language environment"* presents the results of the analysis of euphemistic units as indicators of the state of the modern language environment and language consciousness of speakers of the Russian language, gives a commentary taking into account the key parameters of language ecology, proposes topical additions to the dictionary of euphemisms of the Russian language.

*The conclusion* summarizes the results of the study and outlines the possible prospects for further analysis of the material in the chosen direction.



*The list of references* contains 158 titles of scientific works, dictionaries, normative and legal documents.

**The** main provisions and results of the work were presented to a wide scientific community in reports and were discussed at scientific conferences of international level, as well as at the XIII Congress of the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature:

- 1) International scientific readings "Russian language and methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language: past, present, future" (Moscow, Pushkin State Institute of Russian Language, February 12, 2015);
- 2) XLIV International Philological Scientific Conference (Saint Petersburg, Saint Petersburg State University, March 10-15, 2015);
- 3) XIII Congress of the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature (Spain, Granada, September 13-20, 2015);
- 4) XLV International Philological Scientific Conference (Saint Petersburg, Saint Petersburg State University, March 14-21, 2016);
- 5) International Conference of Young Philologists (Estonia, Tartu, University of Tartu, April 22-24, 2016);
- 6) II Interuniversity Scientific and Practical Conference "Language. Culture. Education" (St. Petersburg, Mikhailovskaya Military Artillery Academy, March 31, 2016);
- 7) XVII International Scientific and Practical Conference "Russian Cultural Space" (Moscow, Lomonosov Moscow State University, April 21, 2016);
- 8) V International Scientific and Methodological Conference "Teaching Russian as a foreign language in higher education: traditions, innovations, prospects" (Moscow, MGIMO, March 1-2, 2018);
- 9) II International Scientific and Practical Conference "Language and speech in the Internet: personality, society, communication, culture" (Moscow, PFUR, March 29-30, 2018);

- 10) XIX International Scientific and Practical Conference "Russian Cultural Space: Communicative Aspects" (Moscow, Lomonosov Moscow State University, April 19, 2018);
- 11) VIII International scientific conference "Russian language and culture in the mirror of translation" to the 200th anniversary of I.S. Turgenev (Greece, Thessaloniki, 27.04. - 02.05.2018);
- 12) International Conference of Russians at the University of Barcelona "МКР-Барселона 2018" (Spain, Barcelona, June 20-22, 2018);
- 13) IV International Scientific and Educational Forum "Language Policy and Linguistic Security" (Nizhny Novgorod, Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University named after N.A. Dobrolyubov, October 1-2, 2020).

The main provisions and results of the study are reflected in the following scientific **publications**.

*Publications in journals included in the VAK List:*

1. Zvereva M.I. Territory of terminological crossroads around the concept of euphemism // Philology and Culture. Philology and Culture. 2017. № 2 (48). С. 75-81.
2. Zvereva M.I. History of the study of euphemisms in Russian and foreign linguistics // Philological Sciences. Voprosy teorii i praktika. 2017. № 12(78)-4. С. 86-90.
3. Zvereva M.I. Euphemism as a multi-aspect concept // Philology: scientific research. 2018. № 3. С. 13-18.
4. Zvereva M.I. Analysis of euphemisms from the position of linguoecology // Philology: Research. 2019. № 5. С. 28-35.
5. Zvereva M.I. Taboo. Political correctness. Euphemism. Correlation of concepts // Philology: scientific researches. 2020. № 6. С. 52-59.

*Foreign Scientific Publications:*

6. Zvereva M.I. The role of euphemisms in modern newspaper texts // Collection of scientific works of young philologists "Russian Philology". № 27. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2016. C. 313-316.
7. Zvereva M.I. Euphemisms in media texts: pragmatic and semantic aspects // Current Trends and Future Perspectives in Russian Studies: Proceedings of the International Conference of Russists at the University of Barcelona "MKP-Барселона 2018". Barcelona: Ed. "Trialba Ediciones", 2019. C. 474-482.

*Publications in RSCI journals and scientific collections:*

8. Zvereva M.I. Euphemisms of our time and their communicative and pragmatic potential // Proceedings of the XIIIth Congress of MAPRYAL (Granada, Spain). SPb.: MAPRYAL. 2015. C. 104-108.
9. Zvereva M.I. Euphemisms in the texts of modern newspaper journalism // Theses of the XLIV International Philological Scientific Conference. SPb.: SPbSU, 2015. C. 372-373.
10. Zvereva M.I. Euphemisms as a means of expressing evaluation // Theses of the XLV International Philological Scientific Conference. SPb.: SPbSU, 2016. C. 418-419.
11. Zvereva M.I. Palette of meanings of euphemisms in the newspaper text // Proceedings of the II Interuniversity scientific-practical conference (March 31, 2016). St. Petersburg: SPbGETU "LETI", 2016. C. 54-60.
12. Zvereva M.I. How Euphemisms Change the Text // Proceedings of the XVII International Scientific-Practical Conference "Russian Cultural Space". Moscow State University, 2016. C. 231-236.
13. Zvereva M.I. Euphemisms and national mentality // Russian language and culture in the mirror of translation: VIII International scientific conference; 27.04 - 02.05.2018, Thessaloniki, Greece: Conference materials. Moscow: Moscow University Press, 2018. C. 494-501.

14. The specifics of the process of euphemization of modern media texts // Teaching Russian as a foreign language in higher education: experience and prospects: collection of scientific articles / Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Federation. Moscow: MGIMO-University, 2018. C. 56-63.
15. Zvereva M.I. Euphemisms in the media and linguistic security // II International scientific-practical conference "Language and speech on the Internet: personality, society, communication, culture": collection of scientific articles. M.: RUDN, 2018. C. 333-338.
16. Zvereva M.I. Perspective directions of euphemisms research // Collection of scientific articles on the results of the international conference "Actual theories, concepts, applied nature of modern scientific research" (May 30-31, 2019). SPb.: Publishing house "SPbSEU", 2019. C. 129.
17. Zvereva M.I. Cultural code of euphemisms // Kulturologija, art criticism and philology: modern views and scientific researches: collection of articles on materials of the I International scientific conference "Kulturologija, art criticism and philology: modern views and scientific researches". № 7(44). Moscow: Internauka, 2021. C. 51-55.
18. Zvereva M.I. Reflection of the national world in euphemisms of different languages // Proceedings of the IV International Scientific and Educational Forum "Language policy and linguistic security". Nizhny Novgorod: Publishing house of N.A. Dobrolyubov Novgorod State Linguistic University, 2021. C. 128-132.

## CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION OF EUPHEMISMS

The first chapter of this paper is intended to clarify the basic theoretical positions related to the concept “euphemism”, as well as to highlight the history of the study of euphemisms in domestic and foreign linguistics.

### 1.1. History of the Study of Euphemisms in Russian and Foreign Linguistics<sup>1</sup>

The history of the study of euphemisms in Russian and foreign linguistics should begin with the times when linguistics had not yet formed as a science, and the term "euphemism" had not yet appeared, however, the concept of euphemism (as an expression softening and replacing an inappropriate, rude word) had already appeared and undergone the first understanding. These were the days of antiquity, the heyday of the schools of oratory.

Since the fifth century B.C. texts and treatises have appeared which speak of euphemisms as words by which a speaker can avoid an evil word and remain silent [Ruccella, p. 17-18]. The ideas about words and expressions that soften and embellish speech are framed in a more specific sense in the Rhetoric of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle around 300 B.C. Two centuries later, in the treatises on oratory of the great Roman Marcus Tullius Cicero, advice on the choice of influential words, including euphemisms that exclude rudeness and inappropriateness, is presented as follows: "Between words in the proper sense one would choose the most beautiful, and in the choice of metaphors one would moderately use expressions borrowed by resemblance. <...> For if there is anything in the substance of a speech which is senseless or inappropriate, indelicate or a little ridiculous, this deserves a reproach; so also in expressions: if there is anything inelegant or unsuitable, careless, coarse or

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<sup>1</sup> The key ideas of the paragraph are reflected in the scientific article "History of the study of euphemisms in Russian and foreign linguistics" [Zvereva 2017].

incomprehensible, this is to be reprov'd. [Ciceron]. Hence, even before our era, the question of choosing such words which would exclude and replace rough names of objects, phenomena, any entities, in order to avoid a negative evaluation of the listener, reproach, censure, was formulated. Thus, in the time of Antiquity the concept of euphemism was considered in an explicit extra-linguistic refraction.

During the Middle Ages euphemisms manifested themselves in three main forms, which can be designated as three types: 1) words substituted for others because of superstition<sup>2</sup>, 2) words used instead of others out of modesty, 3) words substituted for others because of propriety [Orr, cited by Ruccella]. The former were used to replace words and expressions denoting bad omens, that is, such words that were thought to have a certain power and capable of attracting misfortune. Such euphemisms included figurative substitutions of the word "die" for "take your last breath," "the soul went to God," and the figurative name of Satan – the Evil One [Morier, cited by Ruccella]. Euphemisms of the second type expressed ideas forbidden by morality and were usually associated with sexuality and disease. Such euphemisms could be seen as a form of respect and sensitivity in people's interpersonal communication. Euphemisms of the third type have appeared since the 11th century - their emergence is associated with the "poetic boom", the time of the troubadours, when a number of social and religious prohibitions had to be "circumvented" with the dexterity of words. After all, the key theme of this literature, curtoise love, rests on the conflict between the desire to be loved and the satisfaction of the desire that promises the end of love. That is, it is a love that cannot exist in marriage, an adultery that must be concealed through the use of euphemistic instruments [Ruccella, p. 18]. As we can see, medieval euphemisms were particularly closely related to taboos. This understanding is also extra-linguistic, but it is noteworthy that during the Middle Ages three types of euphemisms - softening words on the basis of their thematic relevance - took shape.

As for the first dictionary record of the term "euphemism," it is believed to have been made in the middle of the seventeenth century. At that time, in 1656, Thomas

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<sup>2</sup> Superstition is understood here in a broad sense as "belief in something supernatural, mysterious, in omens, in omens" [Ozhegov, Shvedova].

Blount's *Glossographia: Or, A Dictionary Interpreting All Such Hard Words Of Whatsoever Language, Now Used In Our Refined English Tongue* was published, in which the term euphemism was recorded as follows: "euphemism (euphemismus) a good or favourable interpretation of a bad word." [Blount, p. 224], which literally means: euphemism is a good or favorable interpretation of a bad word.

More interesting details from the history of the study, comprehension, and reinterpretation of euphemisms during the Middle Ages and the Modern Age are contained in the dissertation study "*L'économiquement correct: analyse du discours euphémique sur la crise dans la presse française et italienne*" by Loredana Rousselli, professor at the University of West Paris Nanterre-la-Defrance and the University of Turin.

A new milestone in the history of the study of euphemisms was the end of the 19th century, because it was then that the works of the German researcher G. Paul were published, in which he distinguished euphemisms in the "scheme of semantic changes along with metaphor and metonymy". [Paul - cited from: Nikitina 2009]. Thus, now euphemisms have been looked at from the height of strictly scientific knowledge.

"The phenomenon of "euphemism" in linguistics is traditionally associated with the phenomenon of "taboo". Therefore, it is no coincidence that initially the study of euphemisms was engaged by ethnographers who studied the problem of taboos in primitive communities (D.K. Zelenin, A. Mayeux, J. Frazer). <...> In the first half of the 20th century following ethnographers to the problem of studying verbal taboos and euphemisms linguists of both Western Europe (Nyrop, Vendryes, Jespersen) and America (F. N. Scott, J. M. Steadman) joined" [Nikitina 2009].

One of the essential features of euphemisms research in the West is the applied nature of this research. This applies primarily to British and American linguistics. "Therefore, linguists dealing with the problems of euphemistic vocabulary are, as a rule, well-known lexicographers (J. Niemann and C. Silver; C. Kaney, R. Spears, H. Rawson, J. Aito, etc.). The American linguist and compiler of one of the first bilingual dictionaries of euphemisms, Ch. Kaney refers euphemism to the phenomenon of language, introducing the term "indirect naming" into the interpretation of this concept" [Nikitina

2009], which also emphasizes the loyalty to the tradition of a broad interpretation of euphemisms in American linguistics.

According to I. N. Nikitina's observations: "British and American lexicographers traditionally include various kinds of vulgarisms, slangisms, jargonisms, and technical terms as euphemisms. Thus, J. Niemann and C. Silver include slangisms and jargonisms in their dictionary of euphemisms on the grounds that, being an accessory of a limited professional or social group, they perform the function of veiling an undesirable subject for the main part of native speakers" [Nikitina 2009]. Such an approach to the study of euphemisms, such a mixture of concepts once again testifies to the debatability of the issue, the lack and difficulty of identifying clear criteria for distinguishing euphemisms, slangisms, etc.

The absence of clear criteria for distinguishing euphemisms is, of course, pointed out by Western researchers: J. Niemann and C. Silver, J. Ayto and B. Warren. Moreover, "R. Holder, the author of the most popular British dictionary of euphemisms, which has already had four editions, admits that the assignment of a particular word or expression to euphemisms is very subjective" [Nikitina 2009].

At the present stage in foreign linguistics euphemisms are actively studied not only and not so much from the position of lexicography, as *from the position of linguopragmatics* (M. Bonhomme, A. Horak "Stratégies rhétorico-pragmatiques de l'euphémisme dans le discours publicitaire", France, 2009; M. Córdoba Rodríguez "El eufemismo político llevado al extremo: el caso Bárcenas", Spain, 2015). Many works are devoted to the targeted study of specific *thematic groups of euphemisms*, e.g. political euphemisms, economic euphemisms, etc. (M. Al-Barakati "Translation of the sex-related Qur'ānic euphemism into English", Great Britain, 2013; L. Ruccella "L'économiquement correct: analyse du discours euphémique sur la crise dans la presse française et italienne", France, Italy, 2014), besides that euphemisms are analyzed *within specific discourses* (L. M. A. Moreno "La interdicción lingüística: estrategias del lenguaje políticamente correcto en textos legales educativos selección de leyes educativas (1986-2006)", Spain, 2009; M. Radulović "Euphemisms in English and Serbian public discourse", Serbia, 2016), and also quite popular *comparative studies of euphemisms* (S. K. Mugair "A Comparative



Study of Euphemism and Dysphemism in English and Arabic with Special Reference to Political Discourse", Egypt, 2014). It is noteworthy that even in the 21st century the scientific interest in the study of *the connection between euphemism and taboo* has not disappeared - this ensures the continuity of research traditions, the continuous development of scientific thought (B. Brown Gfrorer "Tabú y Eufemismos", Costa Rica, 2015).

From this brief historical passage it is clear that euphemisms have been understood and studied abroad for many centuries, and the range of views, approaches to the consideration of theoretical problems is expanding. And the more multifaceted linguistic studies of euphemisms, the more significant unsolved questions are discovered.

How the study of euphemisms in our country has been and still is being conducted is described below.

It is considered that the first mention of euphemisms in Russian linguistics refers to the middle of XX century and is associated with the publication in 1961 the work of B. A. Larin "About euphemisms", published in the collection "Problems of Linguistics", dedicated to the 75th anniversary of Academician I. I. Meshchaninov.

However, to be more precise, it is important to remember that twenty years earlier - in 1935-1940 - the Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language, edited by D. N. Ushakov, published an article devoted to euphemism. In this article euphemism was defined as follows: "Euphemism (from "Greek" euphemeo - to speak politely) is a word (or expression) used for an indirect, covert designation of an object or phenomenon, which is inconvenient, indecent, not accepted by its direct name in this situation (for example, "in a pregnant situation" instead of "pregnant"; "if nothing happens to the sick" instead of "if the sick does not die")". [Ushakov]. Moreover, an interesting fact: the definition of this term has not undergone changes in subsequent reprints of D. N. Ushakov's dictionary.

Returning to the work of B. A. Larin, it is worth noting its main message related to the need to study euphemisms, and the main provisions, which in many ways became programmatic for the further study of the problem of euphemisms:

- The connection between euphemism and taboo, with the caveat that it is necessary to distinguish surviving substitute words for the prohibitions of ancient religions (taboos) from modern euphemisms, meanwhile "direct historical connections with the euphemisms of modern times have only those renames by prohibition, which aim to embellish their subject to avert its bad influence" [Larin];
- the separation of the spheres of euphemisms use (on the one hand, diplomacy, journalism, oratory, where euphemisms are conditionally obligatory, and on the other hand, colloquial speech, in which euphemisms are not obligatory and are more often used for fun);
- the short-lived nature of euphemisms: "as soon as an implied, awkwardly pronounced expression goes out of use, the euphemism loses its 'ennobling' properties, as it passes into the category of direct names, and then requires a new substitution" [Larin];
- the perspectivity of classifying euphemisms according to their social nature, as opposed to classifying euphemisms according to purely formal indicators (part of speech, composition, origin);
- Identification of euphemisms and tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche) by semantic structure and their division by sphere of application and functional orientation (tropes are used for figurative representation of reality, euphemisms – for "darkening, covering unattractive phenomena of life or immodest thoughts, intentions". [Larin]).

The ideas outlined by B. A. Larin in that article played an important role in Russian linguistics, outlined another circle of linguistic issues, outlined the trajectory of the study of euphemisms, and provoked new scientific discussions.

In particular, the thesis on the relationship between the tropes and euphemisms was controversial. Thus, in his work "Euphemisms in the lexical system of the modern Russian language" V. P. Moskvina writes: "Euphemisms are a means of softening and purification of speech (for example, "jester" with it instead of "devil" with it), poetic

trope performs an aesthetic function in the text". [Moskvin, p. 29]. "In turn, N. M. Berdova, analyzing the signs of periphrase and trope in euphemistic expressions, refers to such indirectness, descriptiveness and allegorality, through which not only the veiling, softening, but also embellishing functions of euphemisms are realized". [Nikitina]. As we see, the problem of comparison and correlation of the concepts is particularly acute, and the present dissertation research is partially aimed at solving it.

In domestic linguistics of the XX century, as well as in foreign linguistics, a broad interpretation of euphemisms prevailed, due to which euphemisms and substitutes for taboo names were mixed. However, a narrow approach to the understanding of euphemisms was also outlined in the scientific literature. "Proponents of the narrow approach referred to euphemisms only words and expressions that are used by the speaker instead of the forbidden (tabooed) (L. A. Bulaxovskij, J. J. Varbot, A. A. Reformaczki); or substitutes for obscene vocabulary (V. Buj)". [Nikitina].

The problem of identifying the criteria by which a linguistic unit can be classified as a euphemism is also quite relevant for domestic linguistics, as well as for foreign linguistics. One of the attempts to solve this problem is presented in the work of E. P. Senichkina "Euphemisms of the Russian language". Nevertheless, the relevance of the problem of finding clear criteria remains at the present moment.

In domestic linguistics euphemisms are studied on the material of different languages: "English (Y. S. Baskova, T. S. Bushueva, E. E. Krasnova), German (N. V. Berdova, A. N. Prudy`vus), French (E. Yu. Golovanova, A. S. Turganbaeva), Bashkir (G. N. Muxamed`yanova), etc. The most significant studies of the last decade on this problem are made on the material of the Russian language" [Nikitina].

At the present stage of development of the theory of linguistics euphemisms are actively analyzed from the standpoint of:

- *sociolinguistics* (G. A. Vil`danova "The gender aspect of euphemisms", 2008; E. O. Miloenko "Specificity of the functioning of euphemisms in the individual lexicon", 2009);

- *linguoculturology* (N. V. Tishina "National and Cultural Features of Euphemism in Modern English and Russian", 2006; L. V. Poroxniczkaya "Conceptual Foundations of Euphemism in the Language", 2014);
- *cognitive linguistics* (N. V. Tereshhenko "Euphemistic means of objectification of the concept 'fear'", 2005; O. S. Cydendambaeva "Euphemistic picture of the world: conceptsphere 'man'", 2011);
- *linguopragmatics* (E. V. Kiprskaya "Political Euphemisms as a Means of Camouflaging Reality in Mass Media", 2005; L. V. Savvateeva "Ideas of Political Correctness and Their Realization in Modern Linguistic Space", 2008).

The above-mentioned way of understanding the concept of "euphemism" shows us the course of development of ideas, allows us to catch certain trends characteristic of specific time periods. Thus, if we combine the history of comprehension of euphemisms abroad and in our country (and this is the most productive research format), we can see how with the expansion of the range of theoretical problems the focus of attention of researchers is gradually narrowed on more specific, private issues, which is, in general, natural and logical for science.

Thus, there has been an evolution in the understanding and interpretation of the term "euphemism": from the extra-linguistic to the linguistic, and then (that is, now) a contamination of the extra-linguistic and the linguistic approaches to interpretation. This is also what Professor Luis Maria Armento Moreno of the University of Extremadura writes about in detail in his dissertation "La interdicción lingüística: estrategias del lenguaje políticamente correcto en textos legales educativos selección de leyes educativas (1986-2006)".

In what way euphemisms will be further considered - it is difficult to say. However, given the fact that now, in addition to the traditional oral and written types of communication, there is another type – digital (as a conglomerate of oral and written communication, born of the time of high digital technology, information search and processing systems using the potential of artificial intelligence) - we can assume that there will be more interdisciplinary and comprehensive studies that purposefully combine

linguistic and extralinguistic approaches, research neurolinguistic studies, works and algorithms describing automatic (using computer programs) detection, identification and interpretation of euphemisms in large arrays of text, news information flows, a significant strengthening of the applied aspect of euphemism research is very likely; the number of comparative theoretical works representing a comparative analysis of euphemisms of different languages will gradually increase, while new languages that have not been previously considered from this position will also be included in the analysis of such a plan.

The achievements of thinkers and linguists throughout the study of euphemisms have formed a solid foundation for further research, defining the nature of euphemisms and drawing a clear line of demarcation between euphemisms and other concepts.

## **1.2. The Nature of Euphemisms<sup>3</sup>**

In the second paragraph of the dissertation research we will talk about the nature of euphemisms: several interpretations of the term "euphemism" in Russian, English, French and Spanish linguistics will be considered, the concept of euphemism will be analyzed both from the standpoint of language and from the standpoint of speech, the semantic structure of euphemism and its functional specificity will also be outlined.

In the scientific and reference literature there are many variants of more or less similar definitions of the term "euphemism". So, in works on linguistics and dictionaries of Russian, English, French and Spanish the following definitions of euphemism are found:

- "a word or expression used in place of obscene or intimate; is more indefinite, softened (instead of precise in meaning); originally euphemism was associated with prohibitions (taboos) due to superstition and prejudice" [Literary Encyclopedia Dictionary];

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<sup>3</sup> The key ideas of the paragraph are reflected in the scientific article "Euphemism as a multi-aspect concept" [Zvereva 2018].

- "an emotionally neutral word or expression used in place of words or expressions that seem indecent, rude, or inappropriate to the speaker (e.g., *elderly* instead of *old*); euphemisms also refer to the occasional individual-contextual substitution of some words for others to distort or disguise the true essence of what is meant" [Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary];
- "indirect substitutes for the names of the terrible, the shameful, or the odious, brought to life by moral or religious motives, which contribute to the softening effect" [Kacev 1988, p. 5];
- "a word or phrase used to avoid saying an unpleasant or offensive word: '*senior citizen*' is an euphemism for '*old person*'; the articles have so many of euphemisms that often its meaning was unclear" [Cambridge Dictionary];
- "the use of a mild or vague or periphrastic expression as a substitute for blunt precision or disagreeable truth" [Fowler, p. 152];
- "Adoucissement d'expression par lequel on déguise des idées désagréables, ou tristes, ou déshonnêtes, sous d'autres plus douces, plus indulgentes, plus décentes, qui laissent deviner les premières (*Mettre au secret pour Mettre en prison; L'exécuteur des hautes oeuvres pour Le bourreau; Probité douteuse; Goût contestable; Avoir des démêlés avec la justice*)"<sup>4</sup> [Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française];
- "atténuation dans l'expression de certain idées ou de certains faits dont la crudité aurait quelque chose de brutal ou de déplaisant. (*Exemple: he s'est éteint, he est parti pour un monde meilleur, etc., à la place de "il est mort"*)"<sup>5</sup> [Encyclopédie Larousse];

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<sup>4</sup> A soothing expression by which we disguise unpleasant or sad or obscene ideas under other softer, more tolerant, more correct ones, which in doing so allow us to guess the former (*incarcerated* instead of *imprisoned*; *executor of capital punishment* instead of *executioner*; *questionable honesty*; *questionable taste*; *having trouble with the law*).

<sup>5</sup> A softening in the expression of certain ideas or certain facts that may seem like something harsh or unpleasant (example: *he has faded away, he has gone to a better world, etc.* instead of "*he died*").

- "cualquier voz o expresión que sustituye a otra que, por razones diversas, resulta inapropiada para el hablante y para el oyente en un determinado contexto"<sup>6</sup> [Lechado García, p. 14];
- "el proceso lingüístico que, a través de unos mecanismos asociativos de formal ou semántico, logra como resultado una neutralización léxica del vocablo interdicto; <...> Eufemismo is ante and for excellence a social hecho, an act of habla, an actualización discursiva por parte de hablante de unos sustitutos léxicos - habituales o lexicalizados u ocasionales o creativos - which, a través de un conjunto de recursos lingüísticos y paralingüísticos, permit, in a context and pragmatic situation determined, to neutralize léxicamente el término interdicto"<sup>7</sup> [Casas Gómez, p. 35-36].

As we can see, the general idea of all definitions is the idea of the special functional specificity of euphemisms, namely, mitigation or neutralization of negative, unpleasant meanings in the text. Thus, function is the key to understanding the essence of euphemism, it is the main criterion for identifying this or that word or expression as a euphemism.

The works of a number of Russian and foreign researchers [Fowler 1957; Casas Gómez 1986; Kry`sin 1994; Kovshova 2007; Miloenko 2009; Mironina 2012; Zvereva 2015, 2016, etc.] are devoted to the functional aspect of euphemisms, these works deal with both the main function (mitigation and neutralization) and additional functions that euphemisms can perform.

Additional, often related, functions include:

- 1) manipulation through blurring, hiding the meaning,
- 2) an expression of political correctness,
- 3) creating a comic effect, a humorous function,
- 4) evaluation expression,

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<sup>6</sup> Any word or expression that, for various reasons, is inappropriate for the speaker and the listener in a particular context.

<sup>7</sup> A linguistic process which, through associative mechanisms of formal or semantic order, results in the lexical neutralization of the forbidden word; <...> euphemism is primarily a social fact, an act of speech, a discursive updating by the speaker of lexical substitutes – through simple replacements or lexicalization, or occasional replacements, or creative replacements – which is achieved by using a set of linguistic and extralinguistic resources and allows the lexical neutralization of the forbidden term

5) creating a certain speech image.

Next, let's illustrate each function with examples - excerpts from newspaper texts.

- 1) *«Я поддерживаю такие методы, когда у разведки есть достаточно информации по тому или иному кадру, по отношению к которому применяются так называемые **методы усиленного допроса**. <...> В докладе говорится, что минимум 26 человек были замучены ошибочно»* (Izvestia 13.12.2014). The euphemism “методы усиленного допроса” replaces the phrase "brutal torture", thanks to which not only the negative meaning is mitigated, but the unmasking power of the report is significantly reduced, which has the effect of forming a more positive image of the organization in the reader's mind.
- 2) *«32-летний форвард столичного “Динамо” Кевин Кураньи начал вести переговоры о продлении контракта с клубом. <...> Только в клубе знают, как обстоят дела со здоровьем Кевина. Всё-таки это **возрастной футболист**, которому в 2015-м исполнится 33 года»* (Izvestia 08.12.2014) - the euphemism “возрастной” - a product of the modern "politically correct world" - replaces the direct nomination "old" (here *old* only in relation to the norm of this sport).
- 3) *«Писатель и философ — о юношеском полёте, русском языке, вечных вопросах и **пятой точке** нашей литературы»* (Izvestia 09.12.2016) - the euphemism “пятая точка” in this context truly disguises nothing and is only used to realize humor, though a bit crude.
- 4) The high concentration of euphemisms or their absence can give an assessment. This is noticeable when comparing texts devoted to the same event, but placed in different newspapers, which are ideologically antagonistic, such as Novaya Gazeta<sup>\*</sup>: *«За ночь в Доме профсоюзов **погибло**, по последним данным, 40 человек. <...> В сгоревшем здании спасатели позже нашли 36 тел — люди*

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:  
 "Novaya Gazeta" - undesirable organization (No. 92 in the List: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/872881>.



*задохнулись от дыма. Еще несколько человек разбились, выбросившись из окон горевшего Дома профсоюзов»* (Novaya Gazeta\* 03.05.2014) and *Zavtra: «В ходе столкновений в Одессе приезжими боевиками-унитаристами заживо сожжено и убито более 50 человек»* (Zavtra 02.05.2014). In the first fragment, the euphemism “погибло” allows the author to bypass the axiological point and avoid even a general assessment of the event, in such a presentation the main participants of the situation are the dead people themselves, who play the semantic role of *agens* in the proposition, which promotes the idea of non-violent death. In the second fragment there are no euphemisms, the author clearly marks the semantic roles of the *agens* (“боевики-унитаристы”) and the *patiens* (“более 50 человек”), thus conveying the idea of a violent death, a clearly negative assessment of what happened and a negative emotional charge.

5) *«Потом Ключников стреляет в убегающего преступника — буквально за несколько секунд нужно успеть его обезвредить»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda. 2014.19 February) - the story is narrated on behalf of journalist Alexei Kotmyshev, the use of the euphemism “обезвредить” instead of “убить” is typical for a member of his profession.

Another common idea for the above definitions of the concept under study is the idea of the specific semantic structure of euphemisms, the essence of which is revealed in the wording: "replacement of one word or expression with another softer, neutral, blurred in meaning". That is, euphemism has a semantic structure of the type that the basic and contextual meanings of the euphemistic expression (word) do not coincide or coincide only partially.

A similar semantic structure is characteristic of metaphor. In this connection, the linguistic literature postulates the thesis that "by semantic structure euphemisms are one of the varieties of a trope, i.e. metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche" [Larin, p. 101], this idea is also supported in the 2016 work of E. A. Kupriyanov`cheva, S. L. Mishlanova, E. M.

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:  
 "Novaya Gazeta" - undesirable organization (No. 92 in the List: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/872881>.

Ximinecz "Features of identification of hyperbole and euphemism". With this approach certain hierarchical connections are built, fixing the position of euphemism only as one of the types of metaphor. If we follow this logic, then any euphemism is a priori a metaphor. In this case, it is not clear how to qualify the expression "сомнительные операции" in the following context: *«Параллельно неплохо было бы ввести и административную ответственность для руководителей банков, которые проводят сомнительные операции, зная об этом, добавляет зампред комитета Госдумы по финансовому рынку Анатолий Аксаков»* (Izvestia 25.06.2014). This expression clearly serves the function of mitigating the negative meaning, replacing the direct more crude nomination "fraudulent operations", while it is not a metaphor.

Moreover, since it is the functional specificity that is the key to understanding and identifying euphemisms (and the main function of euphemisms is to soften and neutralize negative, unpleasant meanings in a text - not to create imagery, which is typical of metaphor and tropes in general), this becomes an important argument for clearly distinguishing euphemisms and metaphors, not assuming their relationship as common and private.

Thus, within the framework of this dissertation research the accents in understanding the relationship between euphemism and metaphor are placed somewhat differently. Metaphor is understood as one of the means by which euphemisms can be formed (more details on this are set out in paragraph 1.4. "Comparison of Euphemisms with Other Linguistic Concepts").

The differences in the understanding and interpretation of euphemisms are due to the difference in approaches. For example, in a number of definitions euphemism is considered as a word or expression, i.e. as concretely as possible, formally definite. Some definitions demonstrate a broad view: euphemism is defined as an effect - mitigation [Encyclopédie Larousse] - or as a process [Fowler, p. 152; Casas Gómez, p. 35], which in this study we refer to as "euphemization".

An even broader approach to understanding euphemisms is contained in the concept of Natalia Mikhailovna Potapova, who in her dissertation study "Euphemisms in language and speech" substantiates the idea that "there can be many readings and

interpretations of the same event or phenomenon, hence euphemisms are not necessarily a replacement word, but another way to describe reality, another view on the described phenomenon". [Potapova 2008, p. 9].

The perception of euphemism as a speech act deserves separate attention. This position is close, in particular, to the Spanish linguist Miguel Casas Gomez and the Russian researcher Maria Lvovna Kovshova. The grounds for this understanding of euphemism are as follows:

- euphemism - "a fact of language focused on speech communication". [Kovshova 2007, p. 29];
- A euphemism is "a turn of phrase, the semantics of which are derived from the relationship between the sign, the meaning, and the speaker" [Ibid];
- A euphemism is "a turn used to perform a certain action - to soften speech. [Ibid];
- "euphemism metonymically denotes a unit of speech action and is treated as a unit: *euphemism* is a word (or expression) used for indirect, covert denotation, etc." [Kovshova 2007, p. 34-35].

Translating its description into the field of speech acts and, consequently, linguistic pragmatics, we speak about euphemisms in terms of semiotics, namely syntactics - "implicates", semantics - "means" and pragmatics - "expresses". It seems that euphemisms should be studied according to this "synthetic approach to language". [Arutyunova, Paducheva 1985: 4]" [Kovshova 2007, p. 46].

Luisa María Armento Moreno also speaks of this synthetic approach, which also has a psychosocial aspect: "Finalmente, no podemos obviar la necesidad de enfocar el estudio del eufemismo desde una perspectiva que trascienda un visión exclusivamente lingüística o extralingüística, dado que es un fenómeno inmerso en un realidad psicocial mucho más amplia, a la que remite y en la que decididamente influyenye" [Moreno, p. 100]. That is, according to her, we cannot ignore the need to focus on the study of euphemisms that goes beyond a purely linguistic or extra-linguistic vision, given that this phenomenon, euphemism, is immersed in a much broader psychosocial reality to which it refers and which it definitely influences.

It follows from the above that the nature of euphemisms is not only social and linguistic, but also pragmatic and discursive [Casas Gómez, p. 35-36].

To conclude our analysis of the nature of euphemisms, it is important to note a few more points.

1. Euphemisms have no limitations in their distribution: "from the point of view of the traditional understanding of style, which distinguishes a series: /high - neutral - lowered/, euphemisms of the modern Russian language are peculiar to all three components" [Senichkina, p. 8]; euphemisms are found in texts belonging to any functional style.
2. Euphemisms in language (language euphemisms) and euphemisms in speech (speech, contextual euphemisms): "the difference between them is due to the different properties of language and speech. Speech euphemisms occur in speech and appear regularly, and language euphemisms are those that have stood the test of time and found fixation in dictionaries, so their number is limited". [Potapova 2008, p. 10]. It should be taken into account that almost any word or phrase can be a speech euphemism - it all depends on its functions in a particular speech usage and on the context. But the so-called language euphemisms (which are recorded in the dictionaries of euphemisms) are not always such - sometimes they do not create a softening effect, do not veil unpleasant, rude meanings, and then, therefore, it will be erroneous to call it euphemisms. The examples with the word "скончавшийся", which is recorded (it turns out, as a language euphemism) in M. L. Kovshova's Concise Thematic Dictionary of Euphemisms and in E. P. Senichkina's Dictionary of Russian Euphemisms will illustrate this statement. So, let us compare two small text fragments from the modern press.

Example 1.

*«В больницах создадут базу данных вещей пациентов.*

*К нам обращались родственники пациентов, вещи которых пропали, — рассказал Саверский. — К сожалению, речь шла о людях, скончавшихся в больницах, и, разумеется, сначала близкие о вещах не думали вообще» (Izvestia 08. 07. 2013).*

Example 2.

«От осложнений гриппа умерли 36 человек.

«Среди скончавшихся не было детей и привитых граждан. Все умершие имели тяжёлые сопутствующие заболевания» (Metro St. Petersburg 03.02.2016).

In the first text fragment the word “скончавшийся” acts as a euphemism, as it aims to soften the tragic negative of the topic of death, in the second case it is neutral, not a euphemism, as it acts as an equivalent synonym of the word “умерший” and is used only to avoid tautology in the text, as it is used in direct contextual proximity to the direct nomination. Thus, when identifying and qualifying euphemisms, the meaning of the context becomes decisive (i.e. both the immediate verbal environment and the general ideological message, in which the functional specificity of the lexical unit is manifested, are taken into account).

3. In addition to its special functional specificity (mitigation, neutralization of negative, unpleasant meanings), the defining features of euphemisms are the following:

- "The first feature is the designation of a negative *denotatus*. The *denotatus* of euphemism refers to an object or phenomenon characterized by a negative evaluation or negative connotation" [Senichkina, p. 15]. Here we can also add that such a negative evaluation or negative connotation may be purely subjective, relevant only to the speaker in a particular speech situation, or may be associated with the undesirability of direct nomination.
- "The second feature is the semantic indefiniteness of the euphemism, which allows to reduce, mitigate the negative assessment of the *denotatus*. The substituted, substituted name, as compared to the substituted one, has a semantic reduction. In a euphemism, as compared to the direct nomination, the share of information is reduced, and the number of differential characteristics is reduced.

- The third attribute is the improvement of the *denotatus* as compared to the word or expression being replaced.
- The fourth feature is the formal character of the improvement of the *denotatus*. It is due to the formal nature of euphemistic improvement of the *denotatus* that the addressee manages to understand what subject or phenomenon the speaker is talking about" [Senichkina, p. 15].

Thus, we can conclude: euphemism is a multidimensional concept. Euphemism has a large set of characteristics, which become the principles of systematization of euphemistic words and expressions, the basis for the development of various classification models. And this is what will be discussed in the next paragraph.

### 1.3. Types of Euphemisms Classifications

At the moment, the issue of euphemisms classification is considered multifaceted. Linguistic literature describes different types of classifications of euphemisms. There are separate dissertation studies devoted directly to the problem of euphemisms classification. The most recent of them is the 2015 dissertation study by A. R. Degtyaryova "Functional typology of euphemisms in modern Russian", in which the author consecutively examines the grounds for the classification of euphemisms in modern linguistics, presenting in detail an experimental verification of the functional classification model of euphemisms in modern Russian. The value of A. R. Degtyaryova's work is also great because, having analyzed the principles of construction of the classifications existing in the scientific literature, she structured the theoretical material and united all the classifications into four large groups.

- Classification of euphemisms on structural grounds, which are focused mainly on the "ways of euphemisms formation in the language and their structural characteristics. The structural characteristics of euphemisms are usually understood as units of euphemistic nature: separate words, word combinations, sentences, the final form of which depends directly on the ways and methods of their formation. The first attempts to describe

individual methods of euphemisms formation are presented in the works of foreign researchers in the early twentieth century [Greenough, Kittredge 1902; Jespersen 1902]" [Degtyareva, p. 26]. Since the second half of the 20th century English [Kany 1960; Neaman 1990; Partridge 1948; Warren 1992], Russian [Larin 1960; Moskvina 1999], American [Williams 1975 and others], Polish [Dabrowska 1994 and others], Swedish [Warren 1992 and others] researchers have been studying euphemisms with regard to their structural basis.

- Classifications of euphemisms on lexical grounds related to the intentional omission of an offensive term in speech, a change in the taboo word form, replacement of the taboo word with a more general term, translation of an unacceptable term into a foreign language [Kany, p. 34] and taking into account the way of implementation and the sphere of euphemisms' use. "In Russia, the classification of euphemisms on lexical grounds is associated with the sphere of taboo [Varbot 1997; Dzhordzhaneli 2005; Kacev 1988; Yakovlev 2006 and others], borrowings [Kry`sin 1998 and others], functional and stylistic differentiation of speech [Larin 1961, Budagov 2003 and others], aesthetic function [Larin 1961; Moskvina 1999, 2007; Mejrieva 2000; Senichkina 2006; Temirbaeva 1991; Chernenec 2001 and others]" [Degtyaryova, p. 41].
- Classifications of euphemisms on semantic grounds, closely related to the semantic changes proposed by G. Paul. The semantic changes highlighted by the author are built on the type of a logical scheme, including extension (extension, widening or generalization), narrowing (restriction or specialization), shift (shift or transfer) of meaning" [Degtyaryova, p. 47]. The creation and description of classifications of euphemisms according to semantic grounds at different times were engaged in by both foreign and domestic linguists [Partridge 1948; Kany 1960; Larin 1961; Berdova 1981; Neaman, Silver 1983; Kacev 1988; Zabotkina 1989; Warren 1992;

Andreeva 1999; Kry`sin 1999; Moskvina 1999; Czareva 2001; Shuvalov 2002; Nam 2005; Potapova 2007 and others].

- Classifications of euphemisms on functional grounds, reflecting the range of functions that euphemisms perform in the text. "Prerequisites and classifications of euphemisms on the basis of the functional load that euphemisms bear in the activity of the speaker and listener are reflected in modern works in the field of euphemology on the material of different languages [Vanyushina 2010; Korchevskaya 2011; Kuz`mina 2010; Osadchij 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013; Potapova 2008; Pryadil`nikova 2006; Tadzhibaeva 2006; Rawson 2002 and others]" [Degtyaryova, p. 76].

Each of the designated types of classification models is represented by dozens of variants of more or less concretizing, complementary classifications.

In general, different types of classifications are also described in the works of E. P. Senichkina, who united all the classification models considered by her into four groups: level and lexical-semantic classification, motivational classification, classification of euphemisms according to the complexity of encryption, and morphological classification.

The analytical work done by E. P. Senichkina and A. R. Degtyaryova is of great importance because the ordered theoretical material becomes more accessible for clear understanding and its further application.

Next, let us consider several striking classification models of euphemisms, most often reproduced in the works of representatives of the scientific community.

### ***Morphological classification of euphemisms by E. P. Senichkina.***

- Nouns as euphemisms. Euphemisms include words of generalized semantics; hyperonyms; foreign-language words; words formed by means of abbreviation; proper names used to mean nouns (appellatives); diminutives; some nouns with the particle not-; nominations consisting of nouns in the participle genitive case; objectifical substantives.
- Adjectives with "diffuse" semantics; foreign words, diminutives; adjectives involved in negative nomination.



- Numerals.
- Pronoun (personal, index, determinative, and indefinite).
- Verbs (incomplete verbs, compensatory verbs, conversions, transitive verbs in absolute use, verbs of some modes of verbal action, desemantized verbs).
- Adverbs (adverbs with the meaning of attenuation of a sign of action, a sign in situations that do not allow for gradation or attenuation of a sign).
- Impersonal-predicative words as euphemisms (words containing the subjective evaluation suffix *-оват-* and homonymous with qualitative adverbs in *-о*. E.g.: «У самого уха услышал голос Бакина: – Темновато с непривычки?» (Б. Попов. Бурелом)).
- Onomatopoeic words (such as «блин», «ёлы-палы»).
- Sound-inducing words (e.g., «тьфу»).
- Particles (abnormal use of «как бы») [Senichkina, p. 70-92].

The above classification gives a complete idea of the fact that euphemisms are morphologically heterogeneous - they can be represented by different parts of speech. The author of the classification rightly points out the limited possibilities for creating euphemisms relating to any one part of speech (for example, not all pronouns can act as euphemisms, but only personal, indicative, determinative and indefinite ones).

#### ***V. P. Moskvina's classification of the complexity of euphemistic encryption.***

1. "One degree, e.g., direct appellation (*cockroach*) → appellation of the nearest generic concept (*insect*).
2. Two degrees: direct name (*louse*) → name of the nearest generic concept (*parasite*) → name of the next generic concept (*insect*).
3. Three degrees: direct naming (*КГБ*) → name of the nearest generic concept + definition naming a distinctive feature of the object (*competent authorities*) → name of the nearest generic concept + definition indicating the reluctance of the speaker to name such a feature (*known organization*) → name of the nearest generic concept (*authorities*). Euphemistic substitutions are arranged

according to the degree of "veiling" of the corresponding concept" [Moskvin - cited by Senichkina, p. 69-70].

V. P. Moskvin's classification according to the degree of difficulty of euphemistic encryption is interesting by the very approach to the analysis of euphemisms. Given the fact that euphemisms are linguistic units called into speech to replace other, more rude, unpleasant and less acceptable words in this connection, it is extremely important to understand the mechanism of such replacements, the logic of euphemistic encryption. Moreover, it is possible to assume the parallel coexistence of variants of euphemistic substitutions belonging to the same degree. And also the emergence of the fourth degree is likely. If so, the structure of this type of classification is open.

***Motivational classification by V. P. Moskvin***

- "Euphemism based on deliberately *ambiguous* speech (metonymy, metaphor, antiphrasis, paronymic substitution).
- Euphemization on the basis of deliberate *obscurity* (provided that it is completely removed by the context or by the connotation): pronomialization, replacement of a word with the name of a corresponding generic concept, antonomasia, ellipsis, artificial bookishness.
- Euphemistic encryption based on deliberately *imprecise* speech (shift from species to species, synecdoche, meiosis).
- Using as euphemisms the *direct* designation of the subject of speech (book words and expressions, foreign words not mastered by the language)" [Moskvin - cited by Senichkina, p. 67].

V. P. Moskvin's motivational classification is logically connected with his previous classification, but here the emphasis is placed on the means of euphemistic ciphering and motives (the first three of which can also be regarded as reflexion in speech perception, i.e. they can be applied not only to the position of the speaker/writer, but also to that of the listener/reader).

***Motivational classification by E. E. Krasnova:***

- "euphemisms motivated by a sense of fear (*уснуть вечным сном*);
- euphemisms motivated by propriety (*мягкое место*);
- euphemisms motivated by sensitivity (*с отклонениями в развитии*);
- masking euphemisms (*превентивный удар*);
- ennobling euphemisms (*исправительное учреждение*)" [Krasnova - cited by Senichkina, p. 68].

The motivational classification of E. E. Krasnova, in contrast to the motivational classification of V. P. Moskvina. P. Moskvina, reflects only the motives that can induce the speaker or the writer to use euphemisms. E. E. Krasnova does not indicate the possible means of creating euphemisms, thus she does not limit the choice of these means. The motifs highlighted here are no longer transformed into the reflexion of the addressee of speech, as in the previous classification.

***The lexico-semantic classification of euphemisms by E. P. Senichkina***, which is based on the classifications of A. M. Katsev and V. P. Moskvina:

- "names of supernatural forces (*он* instead of *чёрт, леший; лукавый, нечистый, нечистый дух* instead of *чёрт*);
- names of the concepts of death and disease (*она* instead of *смерть; это, болезнь* instead of *прямого названия болезни; опухоль, онкология* instead of *рак; педикулез* instead of *вшивость*);
- The names of human shortcomings (physical and mental) (*недослышит* instead of *глухой; незрячая* instead of *слепая; того, со странностями* instead of *сумасшедший*);
- The names of human vices (*экономный* instead of *жадный, нечист на руку* instead of *вор, поклонник Бахуса* instead of *пьяница; Дон Жуан* instead of *развратник; жрица любви* instead of *продажная женщина*);
- names referring to the physiological sphere (*отправиться в Ригу; исполнить арию Риголетто* instead of *извергать рвоту, рыгать*);

- names related to the sexual sphere (*интимные отношения, отношения полов, отношения между мужчиной и женщиной*);
- the names of some items of clothing;
- the naming of crimes and their consequences (*дело instead of преступление; это instead of убийство*);
- the names of the sphere of money;
- the naming of the concepts of poverty;
- the names of non-prestigious professions;
- naming the sphere of socio-political life (*нецелевое расходование бюджетных средств instead of воровство; теневая экономика instead of экономика, основанная на преступных действиях*);
- names of disreputable political actions" [Senichkina, p. 61].

The value of such a classification lies in the breadth of its coverage and in the orderly presentation of the semantic diversity of euphemisms. As in the case of V. P. Moskvina's classification according to the complexity of euphemistic ciphering, this classification is also "open" - and it is important to take this into account. Thus, for example, it can be supplemented with a group of names relating to the designation of age (when the lexeme «старый» is replaced by «пожилой», «с богатым жизненным опытом», «возрастной» etc.). Such a group, of course, would not be equivalent to the already denominated notions of death and disease, human shortcomings or, all the more so, vices. The logic of the arrangement of the lexico-semantic classification groups is remarkable - from the supernatural, beyond human control to the natural, direct result of human activity - a peculiar descending gradation.

*The classification of spheres of social life in which euphemisms are used, according to L. P. Kry`sin, is as follows.*

1. The field of diplomacy. "It is quite obvious that the communicative tasks with which diplomats and politicians have to deal cannot be solved using only direct nominations, making do without insinuations, hints, understatements, camouflage, that is, without everything for the expression of which

- euphemisms are supposedly designed <...> (*пойти на крайние меры, непредсказуемые последствия, конфронтация (in the case of a war, even if it is local), определённые круги, соответствующие инстанции, миротворческие акции, принцип взаимности*) etc. – were born precisely in diplomatic discourse).
2. Repressive action by the authorities: *задержать instead of арестовать* <...> *применить санкции* – this turn is used in a very indefinite sense: it can mean criminal prosecution, imprisonment, an economic or military blockade of areas and entire states. <...>
  3. State and military secrets and secrets, which include the production of weapons, certain types of equipment, the social and numerical composition of institutions (not only military), the profile of their work and much more <...> (*объект, продукт, изделие, разработка необычных видов оружия <...>, нетрадиционные формы войны (meaning forms of war aimed at the complete destruction of enemy troops while retaining their military equipment)*).
  4. The activities of the army, the intelligence service, the police, the criminal investigation department, and some other authorities, whose actions should not be "in plain sight. Here, words and expressions with a fairly general meaning are used, while they are applied to specific actions and phenomena: *задание, операция (идти на задание, выполнить задание, провести операцию по задержанию преступника), объект in the meaning of "лицо, за которым ведётся негласное наблюдение"*. <...>
  5. Sphere of distribution and service: *товары повышенного спроса, дефицитные товары*. <...>
  6. The relations between different national and social groups, the status of these groups: <...> *группы повышенного риска* – about drug addicts, homosexuals, prostitutes who have a higher (than other social groups) chance of contracting AIDS.
  7. Some types of professions, euphemistic designation of which is intended to enhance the prestige of these professions or to hide the negative impression of

the occupation designated by the "direct" name: *оператор машинного доения, оператор на бойне, оператор очистных работ (compare the former ассенизатор, which has ceased to perform its euphemistic function), контролёр instead of надзиратель*" [Krysin].

With his classification L.P. Kry`sin outlined a clear circle of spheres of euphemisms use. However, life is dynamic – the language reacts timely to changes, ideological and socio-economic shifts. And now, more than twenty years after Krysin's classification, the circle of spheres in which euphemisms are used can be legitimately presented in a more expanded form by including, for example, the medical sphere («человек с особенностями в развитии» instead of «инвалид»), the economic and business spheres («серый капитал» instead of «незаконный капитал»; «теневой бизнес» instead of «незаконный бизнес»; «оптимизация штата сотрудников» instead of «увольнение работников»), the sports sphere, competition («команда уступила» instead of «команда проиграла»; «удача была на стороне противника» instead of «мы проиграли»). Moreover, the tendency to expand the spheres of euphemisms' use at the moment remains.

***The functional classification of euphemisms, according to A. R. Degtyaryova, should be*** presented simultaneously from two positions: from the position of the speaker and from the position of the listener. According to the researcher, this is dictated by the fact that "the communicative act represents the constructive interaction of the speaker and the listener, whose messages and reactions are mutual, but this mutual reaction may be different, as it is entirely subject to the original strategy of the speaker and the qualities of the listener (communicative abilities), the circumstances of communication". [Degtyaryova, p. 86]. And below both of these classifications are consistently presented.

***Functional classification of euphemisms from the speaker's perspective.***

S1. "According to the degree of intensional loading:

S1.1. Intentionally unloaded - automatic, not realized as euphemisms ("Хз", "блин", «пупец»);

S1.2. Intentionally loaded, among them by type of intension:

S1.2.1. in order to evade legal risks (legefemisms):

S1.2.1a. Synthetic legefemisms (*“открытый рейдерский захват чужой интеллектуальной собственности”* instead of *“воровство авторской телепередачи”*);

S1.2.1b. Analytical legefemisms <...>;

S1.2.2. In order to avoid ethical risks (*“представители сексуальных меньшинств”* instead of *“геи, лесбиянки”*).

S2. By the mode of correlation between the language sign and the denotative:

S2.1. explicit (*“изверг из желудка весь обед”* instead of *“стошнило”*);

S2.2. obscured (*“массированная психологическая обработка”* instead of *“предварительный сговор”*);

S2.3. Perverse (*“скромное обаяние расизма”* instead of *“не скромное обаяние, ужасное деяние”*; *“ласковые милицейские руки”* instead of *“грубые милицейские руки”*).

### ***Functional classification of euphemisms from the listener's perspective.***

L1. According to the degree of distinguishability in the stream of speech, that is, the degree of potential identification as a euphemism:

L1.1. Non-excludable (*“Ой, блин, как больно!”*);

L1.2. the deduced (*“некие ‘не мальчики-одуванчики’ вывезли его (Эдуарда Багирова) в Россию”* instead of *“организаторы побега, сообщники”*, *“финансово-неблагополучный”* instead of *“бедный”*)

L2. By the mode of correlation between the language sign and the denotative:

L2.1. non-transparent (*“сотрудники нагрели учреждение”* instead of *“обманули”*);

L2.2. Transparent (*“травка”* instead of *“наркотическое средство”*).

L3. By type of hermeneutic support:

L3.1. precedent (*“всё уходит, как в канкин мох”* instead of *“всё остается без ответа”*);

L3.2. unprecedented (“нет ничего удивительного, что совместные проекты 'трещат по швам'”)” [Degtyareva, p. 87-88].

A. R. Degtyareva's functional classification is unique, first of all, because it takes into account both the position of the speaker and the position of the listener. Moreover, both of the presented classifications are built in an almost "mirror" way: the position of the speaker correlates with the position of the listener, reflecting a certain regularity. It is also noteworthy that the author singled out in the classification lefemisms as a special type of intensively loaded euphemisms used for the purpose of avoiding legal risks. This reveals a conceptual connection between the work of A. R. Degtyareva and the ideas of M. A. Osadchij, who also touched upon the issue of leghemisms in his dissertation study "Public speech communication in the aspect of legal risk management" [Osadchij 2012]. Having built a rather detailed structure of the functional classification, A. R. Degtyareva thereby pointed out the nuances of the functional aspect of the issue of euphemisms.

To conclude our review of the main classifications of euphemisms, let us give another one that is clearly different from those already discussed: *the level classification of euphemisms* by the Spanish professor *Miguel Casas Gómez*:

#### I) PARALINGUISTIC (EXTRALINGUISTIC) LEVEL:

intonation

gestures

#### II) FORMAL LEVEL:

##### Phonetic:

change

unintelligible pronunciation

reduction

paronymic substitution

##### Morphological:

derivation

contamination (word fusion)

word change



## Syntactic:

default  
 ellipsis  
 euphemistic expression  
 syntagmatic grouping

## III) LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE:

## Vocabulary:

transplants (*foreign borrowings, semantic translations, book words, archaisms, slang words, colloquialisms*)

expressive names

## Semantics:

metonymy

metaphor

hyperbole

antonomasia

antifrasis

litote

periphrasis

descriptive expression

a generic term (a word of more general meaning) [Casas Gómez].

In the classification of euphemisms Miguel Casas Gómez showed a completely different approach: euphemisms are considered simultaneously in three planes (extralinguistic level, level of form and level of meaning). The logic of combining these levels within the framework of one classification is quite interesting. Based on this classification we can conclude that Miguel Casas Gomez in his understanding of euphemism is not limited to the idea of its verbal embodiment (in this case, gestures and intonation can be added to mimicry as well). Thus, a broad view of euphemisms is

presented, which includes not only euphemisms as such, but also the phenomenon of euphemia in general, ways of euphemization the text, both written and oral.

Summarizing the above, we emphasize that the diversity of classification models indicates, firstly, the existing scientific interest in the problem of euphemisms, its relevance, secondly, it indicates the complex specificity of the object of research (euphemisms), the possibility of studying it from different sides, highlighting different principles of classification, and thirdly, it indicates the set of possibilities in the analysis of euphemisms in the text.

The dynamic processes of life affect the dynamic processes in the layer of words and expressions related to euphemisms. This factor complicates the task of building a universal and "timeless" actual classification with a specifically outlined, closed structure that does not require additions (this especially concerns lexical-semantic classifications and classifications according to the spheres of euphemisms' use).

In examining the various classifications, including those briefly commented on in this section, another theoretical problem was discovered: the concept of "euphemism" is confused with the concept of "euphemization" (for example, as in V. P. Moskvina's classification) and with the concept of "euphemia". In the scientific literature devoted to euphemisms, this problem has not received due attention, despite the fact that terminological, conceptual inaccuracies lead to inaccurate conclusions and prevent the achievement of logical consistency in the theory. In this connection, we consider it logical to devote the next paragraph to the distinction between the concept of "euphemism" and other, often, indeed, related, linguistic concepts.

## 1.4. Comparison of Euphemisms with Other Linguistic Concepts<sup>8</sup>

The activation of scientific, research thought generates new definitions of existing terms. Each such definition is intended to make even more clarification, to multifacetedly present the concept being explained. However, the study of theoretical works on the topic of "euphemism" has led to the conclusion that at the moment in the linguistic literature, both theoretical and dictionary-type, the "line of demarcation" is often blurred between the term "euphemism" and the terms "euphemization", "euphemia", "antiphrasis", "meiosis", "litote", "hyperbole", "periphrasis", "Aesop language", "pronomination", "synonym", "metaphor", "metonymy", "synecdoche", "taboo", "political correctness". That is why below we will consecutively consider all the listed concepts, define their semantic boundaries and their relation to the concept of "euphemism", mainly by three parameters: general characteristics, semantic structure (determined by the methodology developed by the Pragglejaz Group of the Free University of Amsterdam and adapted by Russian scientists from Perm State National Research University) and function.

### 1.4.1. *Euphemism – euphemization – euphemia*

The term "euphemism" comes from the Greek – "εὐφημισμός", which literally means: "εὐ" for "good" and "φημί" for "speak".

If we collect and analyze the definitions of euphemisms from several authoritative linguistic terminological dictionaries, we get the following definition-contamination.

**EUPHEMISM** (or, alternatively, **euphimism** [Kvyatkovskij]) – a softer expression instead of a crude or obscene one (*e.g.*, “сочиняет” instead of “врѣт”) [Zherebilo]. A soothing designation of some object or phenomenon (*e.g.*, “she is in an interesting situation” instead of “she is pregnant”) [Rosenthal, Telenkova]. A polite expression (sometimes ostensibly polite) that softens the direct meaning of a harsh, rude, or intimate statement [Kvyatkovskij]. A word or expression used in place of obscene or

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<sup>8</sup> The key ideas of the paragraph are reflected in the scientific articles "The Territory of Terminological Confusion Around the Concept of Euphemism" and "Taboo. Political Correctness. Euphemism. Correlation of Concepts" [Zvereva 2017, 2020].

intimate; is more indefinite, softened (instead of exact in meaning). Originally was associated with prohibitions (taboos) due to superstition and prejudice [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary]. An emotionally neutral word or expression used in place of words or expressions that appear indecent, rude, or untactful to the speaker (*e.g.*, “*пожилый*” instead of “*старый*”). Euphemisms are also understood as occasional individual-contextual substitutions of some words by others in order to distort or disguise the true essence of the denoted [Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary].

The interpretations of euphemisms in other sources are in one way or another consonant with the provisions outlined above. Although there are other definitions of euphemism, such as in O. S. Axmanova 's Dictionary of Linguistic Terms, where euphemism is seen as the absolute equivalent of antiphrasis [Axmanova, p. 513], but information on this - on the distinction between these concepts – is presented in one of the following sections of the paragraph.

**So, the key ideas of the definitions:**

- 1) Euphemism is a linguistic unit (word, expression), it is a periphrastic means, i.e. expression of one concept with the help of another, a kind of allegorical expression;
- 2) semantic structure of euphemism – mismatch of basic and contextual meanings, i.e. the basic (dictionary) meaning of the lexeme, which is a euphemism, has positive connotations or is neutral, and the direct nomination it replaces in the context has a negative meaning;
- 3) the function of euphemism is to replace the direct nomination of a subject, object or phenomenon (and not necessarily by an equivalent unit of the same level of the language structure, i.e. one word of direct nomination may be replaced by several words - a word combination, a euphemistic expression, or vice versa); euphemisms soften, blur or hide the meaning of the direct nomination they replace.

**EUPHEMIZATION** is a process, a linguistic mechanism for softening or concealing meaning, "brought to life by the general tendency to allegorize, political correctness, and the desire to soften and disguise the point of view expressed.

[Poroxniczkaya, p. 3]. Here it is important to emphasize the idea of process, the processuality of the term.

**EVPHEMIA** is a pragmalinguistic category, a discursive phenomenon (given that the text is seen as one of the realizations of discourse) or a discursive strategy, "which involves verbal dominance of the speaker with reliance on the principle of communicative cooperation and in some cases involves implication of resistance of the listener to the pressure put on him" [Saakyan, p. 12-13]. That is, the strategy at the stage of planning, writing the text; the finished text is an already implemented strategy, displaying the phenomenon.

Thus, the relationship of the terms "euphemism", "euphemization", "euphemia" within the framework of pragmalinguistics is as follows. **Euphemism is a technique, a method of softening, concealment of meaning. Euphemization is a tactic. Euphemia is a strategy.**

Or, in other words, **a euphemism is a linguistic unit - a tool that triggers the process of euphemization, aimed at the implementation of euphemia strategy, at the embodiment of the phenomenon of euphemia in a written or oral text.** Moreover, euphemia as a phenomenon or as a strategy can be realized in the text not only with the help of euphemisms, but also with the help of other techniques, language and speech resources, for example, with the help of default or innuendo. A similar idea is found in the work of L. N. Saakyan: "In some cases the euphemia strategy is implied without being explicitly presented by any euphemism, as in M. Plisetskaya's assessment of A. Volochkova's performance: "*Yes, she danced. But there is no need to kill her for it*". The implicature, the inference of the addressee of this statement, is based on the assumption of non-accidental use of the adversative construction by the speaker and knowledge of the fact that "they kill" usually for a badly done job, as a result the conclusion about the presence of negative-evaluation meaning in the word "*dancing*" is made, the communicative intention of the speaker is "deciphered"" [Saakyan, p. 13]. Consequently, **the implementation of euphemia in the text does not imply the obligatory use of euphemisms, as softening or concealment of meaning can be achieved by means of**

**other tools of language and speech and more broadly by extralinguistic means (gestures, facial expressions, etc.).**

### ***1.4.2. Euphemism and Synonym***

The word "synonym" comes from the ancient Greek "συνωνυμος", which means monosemantic.

**Synonyms** – members of a thematic group, which *a)* belong to the same part of speech and *b)* are so close in meaning that their correct use in speech requires precise knowledge of the semantic shades and stylistic properties distinguishing them [Axmanova, p. 397]. These are words close or identical in their meaning, expressing the same concept, but differing or shades of meaning, or stylistic coloring, or both [Rosenthal, Telenkova]; These are units of the same language level (words, morphemes, syntactic structures), different in form, but close or identical in meaning. Synonyms are most peculiar to the lexicon and develop within a certain part of speech: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs [Literary Encyclopedia Dictionary]. Synonyms can also be a word and a word combination (“ударить” – “нанести удар”), a word and an affix (“маленький нос” – “носик”), etc. [Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary]. The most important functions of synonyms are two: clarifying and stylistic [Concise Literary Encyclopedia].

#### **Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) synonyms are linguistic units very close in meaning (often they are units of the same linguistic level and belonging to the same part of speech);
- 2) semantic structure of the synonym - the coincidence of basic and contextual meanings or non-coincidence – all depends on which language units act as synonyms; so, for example, the synonym phraseological units will not have the same basic and contextual meanings in most cases: *он мчался на всех парусах, бежал, сломя голову = очень быстро бежал* (euphemisms do not coincide);
- 3) function – clarifying shades of meaning (both more positive and negative - depends on the purpose) and stylistic differentiation.

Therefore, **a euphemism is essentially a synonym of another word (often a contextual synonym), if it fulfills its mitigating function and is contextually insulated from the direct nomination it replaces.** Conditionally, it is possible to make a synonymic series of euphemisms (for example, *нейтрализовать, обезвредить, ликвидировать*), but if we supplement this series with a direct nomination - *to kill* - we will get a general synonymic series.

### ***1.4.3. Euphemism and Periphrasis***

At the heart of the term "periphrasis" ("periphrasis") is the Greek word "περίφρασις," which means: "περί" "around", "about", "above", "φραζω" "speaking", i.e. literally translated as "speak roundabout", "allegorizing".

Before giving the definition-contamination, let us note two significant points: 1) here we take into account only the basic meaning of periphrase, shared by the majority of philologists, so we intentionally omit the rare interpretations of such a plan, as: periphrase is the use of a well-known work to create a meaningfully different work of parodic character with a humorous or satirical purpose; 2) despite the fact that in some linguistic dictionaries we meet the following note: "periphrase – the same as paraphrase, paraphrase" [Axmanova], [Rosenthal, Telenkova] – in this work these terms are not identified, because paraphrase is understood as a retelling of a text, stating it in one's own words in order to simplify or reduce it, or, conversely, to explain it in more detail, etc. And by periphrasis we mean the following.

**PERIPHRAISIS** is a trope, a descriptive expression of one concept with the help of several [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary]. Periphrasis is a stylistic device consisting in the replacement of a word or phrase with a descriptive turn of phrase, which indicates the features of an unnamed object [Kvyatkovskij]. It is a type of tropes focused on an indirect description of an object (*зелёная красавица* instead of *ёлка*); a turn of speech that replaces the direct name of an object with its description indicating characteristic features (*the capital of Ingushetia* instead of *Magas*) [Zherebilo], [Rosenthal, Telenkova], [Concise Literary Encyclopedia]. Periphrasis is a trope consisting in replacing an ordinary

word with a descriptive expression («Унылая пора / Очей очарованье!» instead of *autumn*) [Axmanova, p. 301]. There are artistic, figurative and logical periphrases (these include euphemisms in particular) [Linguistic Encyclopaedic Dictionary].

### **Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) Periphrasis is a means of expression, a turn of speech aimed at replacing direct nomination (euphemisms are also used to replace direct nomination, being a periphrastic means);
- 2) the semantic structure of the periphrasis: the basic and contextual meanings may or may not coincide completely («*нишущий эту строку*» instead of «я»), while gaining additional connotations (in the semantic structure of the euphemism the basic and contextual meanings do not coincide);
- 3) the function is to enhance the expressiveness and effectiveness of a statement by means of a descriptive, allegorical designation of something (for euphemisms it is characteristic when it allows to soften, neutralize or blur the negative meaning of the direct nomination being replaced).

**A euphemism is a type of periphrasis, that is, not every periphrasis is a euphemism, but every euphemism is a specific periphrasis.**

#### ***1.4.4. Euphemism and Antiphrasis***

The term "antiphrasis" also comes from the Greek – "ἀντίφρασις," which literally means "ἀντί" – "instead of," "φρασις" – "phrases."

The following is a similar definition of the term "antiphrasis", despite the fact that not every linguistic dictionary gives an interpretation of antiphrasis (for example, it is not found in the Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary edited by V. N. Yartseva, in the Dictionary of Linguistic Terms by D. E. Rosenthal, M. A. Telenkova).

**Antiphrasis** (or, alternatively, antiphras [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary]) is the use of a word or expression in an opposite sense and with an opposite evaluation [Zherebilo]. A stylistic figure, the use of a word or expression in the opposite sense, usually ironic (*in*



I. Krylov's fables: «Откуда, умная, бредёшь ты, голова?» – about a donkey; «Ай, Моська, знать, она сильна, что лает на слона»). Less often the antiphrasis is used as a praise, expressed in the form of a friendly censure or a gruffly humorous rebuke [Квыатковскій].

**Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) antiphrasis is a periphrastic means (euphemism too);
- 2) semantic structure of antiphrasis - mismatch of basic and contextual meanings (euphemisms have the same);
- 3) function - to "flip" the polarities of the word meaning, evaluation from "+" to "-" or vice versa (with a euphemism the change of meaning, evaluation occurs only in one direction: from "-" to "+"). That is why it seems impossible to put a sign of absolute equality between antiphrasis and euphemism, unconditionally accepting the statement from O. S. Axmanova 's Dictionary of Linguistic Terms that "antiphrasis is the same as euphemism" [Axmanova, p. 48].

So, euphemism and antiphrasis are not identical terms, but in some cases, contexts, the stylistic figure of antiphrasis may be the basis of euphemism. Thus, **antiphrasis is one of the means to form a euphemism.**

#### ***1.4.5. Euphemism and Litote***

The term "litote" comes from the Greek word "λιτότης," which means "simplicity," "restraint."

The following is noted in the dictionary entries.

**LITOTE** - a trope consisting in the use of the antonym with negation, as a means of rhetorical "diminishment" ("*it is not difficult to guess*" instead of "*it is easy to guess*") [Axmanova, p. 213]. A trope close to emphase and irony: strengthening the meaning of a word by double negation ("*небезызвестный*" instead of "*пресловутый*") [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary]. A stylistic figure, the definition of a concept or object by

negating the opposite ("*he is not stupid,*" instead of "*he is clever*"; "*О, я не плохо в этом мире жил!*" (N. Zabolotsky)) [Kvyatkovskij].

**Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) litote is a periphrastic means (euphemism, too);
- 2) the semantic structure of a litote is not a complete coincidence of basic and contextual meanings due to negation (the negative particle "not", prefixes "not", "without", etc.), which only partially neutralizes the mismatch of semantic structures, for which the used antonym is intended (for euphemisms it is mostly mismatch, which can be achieved without negation);
- 3) function – "belittling" of meaning through the negation of both positive and negative qualities and properties (euphemisms are used to soften, blur meaning, which can also be called "belittling," but it is directed only at negative meanings).

Thus, **a litote can also be a means of creating a euphemism if it seeks to "diminish" through the negation of something negative.**

Some dictionaries (e.g. Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary edited by V. M. Kozhevnikov and P. A. Nikolaev, A. P. Kvyatkovskij's Poetic Dictionary, D. E. Rosenthal and M. A. Telenkova's Dictionary of Linguistic Terms, O. S. Axmanova's Dictionary of Linguistic Terms) also provide a second meaning for litotes, according to which litote is equated with meiosis. However, we will distinguish between these terms for the reason that "in contrast to litote, meiosis underestimates an objectively normal or even exceedingly normal condition, property, quality, etc." [Brusenskaya, Gavrilova, Maly`cheva, p. 119], i.e. there is not negation of the opposite, but exactly understatement of properties. Therefore in this section only the first meaning of the litote is taken into account. And the relationship between meiosis and euphemism is more appropriate to consider separately.

### *1.4.6. Euphemism and Meiosis*

The term "meiosis" is also of Greek origin – "μείσις," which literally means "decrease," "attrition."

This term is found in few linguistic dictionaries. Sometimes the reason for this is the identification of the concepts "meiosis" and "litotes". In view of this fact, the following definition-contamination has been made.

**MEIOSIS** – an understatement of a grade in order to raise it [Zherebilo]. A deliberate understatement of the degree or property of something; inverse hyperbole (*“играют прилично” instead of “очень хорошо”; “мальчик с пальчик”*) [Axmanova, p. 218]. Type of tropes, understatement of the intensity of the properties of the object of speech, any actions, processes, states, etc.; understatement of objectively normal condition, property, quality, etc. (*“приемлемые условия” about “хорошие условия”*). Meiosis on the basis of the category of number is possible, when instead of the expected form of the plural the singular is used (in I. Ilf and E. Petrov: *“Вся мука погони за бриллиантами...”* instead of the expected stereotypical *“все муки”*) [Brusenskaya, Gavrilova, Maly`cheva, p. 119].

#### **Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) meiosis is a periphrastic means (euphemism too);
- 2) the semantic structure of meiosis is not a complete coincidence of basic and contextual meanings (with euphemisms it is mostly a mismatch);
- 3) function – downplaying both positive and negative values of qualities, properties (through euphemisms only negative ones are downplayed).

**Meiosis can be a means to form a euphemism if it is used to diminish negative qualities and properties.**

### 1.4.7. Euphemism and Hyperbole

The term "hyperbole" from the Greek means: "ὑπερβολή" – "excess," "exaggeration."

From the dictionary interpretations of the term, we get the following contamination.

**HIPERBOLA** is a stylistic figure or artistic device based on exaggeration of certain properties of a depicted object or phenomenon [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary]. A figurative expression containing an exaggeration of the size, power, meaning, etc. of any object or phenomenon *“В сто сорок солнц закат пылал”* (Mayakovsky) [Rosenthal, Telenkova]. A stylistic figure, a figurative expression exaggerating some action, object, phenomenon *“Пройдет — словно солнцем осветит! / Посмотрит — рублём подарит! / Я видывал как она косит: / Что взмах — то готова конна”* (N. Nekrasov) [Kvyatkovskij]. A figure of speech consisting in deliberate exaggeration, which enhances expressiveness, giving the utterance an emphatic character (*"I have not seen you for a hundred years", "Forgive me a thousand times!"*) [Axmanova, p. 95]. Artistic device of exaggeration, having the purpose to strengthen the expressiveness of speech; in terms of linguistic form hyperbole is most often a type of trope: the usual comparison (*"love is boundless, like the sea"*), a comparison in the form of instrumental case (*“дым столбом”*), metaphor, which may include both nouns and adjectives (*“золото волос”; “стальные мускулы”*) [Concise Literary Encyclopedia].

#### Key ideas of definitions:

- 1) Hyperbole is a periphrastic means (euphemism too);
- 2) the semantic structure of hyperbole is a mismatch of basic and contextual meanings (euphemisms have the same);
- 3) function – exaggeration, amplification of an attribute or property. "In the process of hyperbole, a negative feature is amplified. If the trait was positive, it receives an increment of positive meaning due to the use of hyperbole" [Kupriyanov`cheva, Mishlanova, Ximinecz]. In other words, the polarity of meaning ("+" or "-") does not change, only increases. This is not characteristic

of euphemisms, since euphemisms are used to shift or even change polarity (from "-" to "+").

Thus, hyperbole and euphemism are united by the fact that they are similar in semantic structure and belong to the periphrastic means. However, functionally they are not similar, therefore, **hyperbole cannot be a means to form a euphemism.**

#### *1.4.8. Euphemism and Metaphor*

From the Greek "μετάφορα" literally translates as "transference.

**METAPHORA** is a type of trope, a transfer of the properties of one object (phenomenon or aspect of being) to another, on the principle of their similarity in some respect or by contrast. Unlike comparison, where both members of the comparison are present, metaphor is a hidden comparison, in which the words "as", "as if", "as if" are omitted, but implied [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary; Zhrebilo; Rosenthal, Telenkova; Axmanova]. A word or expression becomes metaphorical when it is used not in a direct, autologous, but in a figurative sense. [Kvyatkovskij]. It is one of the means of enhancing the representativeness and expressiveness of speech [Concise Literary Encyclopedia]. A trope or mechanism of speech consisting in the use of a word denoting a class of objects, phenomena, etc., to characterize or name an object belonging to another class, or to name another class of objects similar to the one in some respect. By associating two different categories of objects, metaphor is semantically dual. Semantic duality of a metaphor obscures its subject relevance [Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary].

##### **Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) metaphor is a periphrastic means (euphemisms, too);
- 2) semantic structure – mismatch of basic and contextual meanings (like euphemisms);
- 3) function – to enhance the expressiveness and expressiveness of speech (euphemisms may not add expressiveness to speech, because it is not necessary to create imagery in a statement in order to soften and disguise crude and unacceptable meanings).

Euphemism and metaphor are united by the similarity of the semantic structure and the fact that these are peripheral means, but they are not functionally identical. **Metaphor often serves the purpose of creating new euphemisms.**

#### ***1.4.9. Euphemism and Metonymy***

The ancient Greek "μετωνομία" means "renaming.

**METONYMY** is a type of trop or speech mechanism based on the principle of contiguity, which is the superimposition of the direct meaning of a word on a figurative meaning [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary; Zhrebilo; Axmanova; Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary]. It is the use of the name of one subject instead of the name of another subject on the basis of an external or internal connection between them. The connection may be: a) between the object and the material of which the object is made “*Не то на серебре — на золоте едал*”; b) between the contents and the containing “*Ну, скушай же ещё тарелочку, мой милый!*”; c) between the action and the instrument of that action “*Перо его местию дышит*”; d) between the author and his work “*Читал охотно Апулея, а Цицерона не читал*”; e) between the place and the people in that place “*Но тих был наш бивак открытый*” [Rosenthal, Telenkova]. Metonymy differs from metaphor in that metaphor is paraphrased into a comparison with the help of auxiliary words “*как бы*”, “*вроде*”, “*подобно*” etc., with metonymy this cannot be done. [Kvyatkovskij]. This is one of the techniques of verbal description that allows us to show things "close-up. In this case, in the center of the image is that detail of the object, which at the moment is the most significant. In some cases, metonymy also gives speech a certain emotional tone (shades of exaltation or humiliation) [Concise Literary Encyclopedia].

#### **Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) metonymy is a periphrastic means (euphemisms, too);
- 2) semantic structure - mismatch of basic and contextual meanings (like euphemisms);

- 3) function is to enhance the representativeness and expressiveness of speech by focusing on a significant detail or characteristic of an object, and the "magnifying glass effect" can extend to positive, neutral, and negative characteristics and properties (euphemisms are constructed with a focus on a positive or neutral characteristic of an object).

**Metonymy can be a means of forming a euphemism if it shows "close-up" the positive or neutral characteristics of the denotation, so that the negative and undesirable meanings remain "in the shadow"** (for example, in the case of the expression "человек с богатым жизненным опытом" instead of "старый человек" it is not the number of years lived but the experience that a person has gained during his life that is in the foreground; the positive connotation is also strengthened by the word "БОГАТЫЙ").

#### ***1.4.10. Euphemism and Synecdoche***

The word "synecdoche" is also of ancient Greek origin (σύνεκδοχη) and means correlation.

**SYNECDOCHE** is a variant, one of the modifications of metonymy; a stylistic turnover [Zherebilo], a transfer of meaning from one phenomenon to another on the basis of a quantitative relation between them: a) part instead of whole "All the flags will be visiting us" (meaning "ships"); b) generic name instead of species "Well, sit down, luminary" (instead of sun); c) generic name instead of generic "Most of all save a kopeck" (meaning "money"); d) singular instead of plural "And one could hear until dawn how the French rejoiced"; e) plural instead of singular "We all look at Napoleons" [Rosenthal, Telenkova; Axmanova]; part (detail, side), which in a given situation for some reason seems important and therefore is brought to the fore, is turned into a representative of the subject [Concise Literary Encyclopedia; Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary].

#### **Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) synecdoche is a periphrastic means (euphemism, too);
- 2) semantic structure – a mismatch of basic and contextual meanings (euphemisms, too);

- 3) The function is to enhance the representativeness and expressiveness of speech by transforming a part of an object into the object itself, one object into its many, by denoting a hyponym through a hyperonym or vice versa, moreover, this may have nothing to do with the suppression of negative and unacceptable meanings (the function of euphemism is softening or concealing an unpleasant, undesirable meaning).

**Synecdoche can serve the purpose of creating euphemisms only if it blurs an undesirable meaning** (as in the expression “*компетентные органы*” instead of “*ФСБ*”; although the phenomenon of euphemism here appears not only and not so much through the use of the plural “*органы*” instead of the singular – the word “*компетентные*”, which, on the one hand, is abstract-positive, on the other, has already become easy to decode, than ensures for Russian speakers the connection of the expression with the denotative, plays an important role).

#### ***1.4.11. Euphemism and Pronomination***

The word "pronomination" is of Latin origin and literally translates as "instead of naming: "*pro*" – instead of and "*nominatio*" – naming, naming.

**PRONOMINATION** is a type of metonymy, replacement of a nominal name with a proper one (or vice versa), for example: *Othello instead of a jealous man, Aesculap instead of a doctor* [Kvyatkovskij].

#### **Key ideas of the definition:**

- 1) pronomination is a periphrastic means (euphemisms, too);
- 2) semantic structure – mismatch of basic and contextual meanings (like euphemisms);
- 3) The function is to enhance the representativeness and expressiveness of speech through renaming the subject, thanks to which some striking characteristic of this subject is emphasized and strengthened, including a negative one (euphemisms never strengthen negative characteristics of the denotative).



**Pronomination may be a means of creating euphemisms**, but in some cases it does not serve this purpose: 1) when it creates a hint of a more negative characteristic than it actually is, and 2) when this renaming has nothing to do with denotations whose direct designation is considered rude, inappropriate, or undesirable.

#### ***1.4.12. Euphemism and Aesopian Language***

The term "Aesop language" comes from the name of the ancient Greek fable writer Aesop (Ἄϊσωπος), who lived in the 6th-5th centuries B.C. Dictionaries contain different variations of this term: Aesop language, Aesopian language, Aesopian speech, but this does not affect the definitions.

**AESOPIAN LANGUAGE** – a two-planned, disguised style of a literary work, in which behind the direct meaning of what is said lurks a second plane of understanding, revealing the author's true thoughts and intentions [Kvyatkovskij]. An allegorical, disguised language [Axmanova, p. 526]. A special kind of secrecy, uncensored allegorical language, to which fiction, criticism, and journalism turned, deprived of freedom of expression under censorship oppression [Literary Encyclopedic Dictionary], [Concise Literary Encyclopedia]. A special style of narration designed to disguise for the censors the direct expression of ideas contrary to official policy, ideology. Aesop language is a set of methods of allegory, organized in a certain way: allegories, contextual and situational periphrases, allusions, "talking" pseudonyms, figures of reticence, veiled irony, characters of fable, folklore, elements of fairy fiction, etc [Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary].

#### **Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) Aesop language is a style of presentation (a euphemism is a word, a technique, a periphrastic means);
- 2) semantic structure of style is not defined in the usual way, however, in this section we can say that such a style implies biplanarity: behind the explicitly expressed there is a different, implicitly implied meaning; in other words, the basic meaning does not coincide with the contextual at the level of the text,

the idea (semantic structure of euphemism - mismatch of basic and contextual meanings of a word or expression);

- 3) function – an allegorization, concealment of meaning with the expectation that this meaning will be deciphered by the reader-addressee (euphemisms are also characterized by functions of concealment, blurring of meaning, but far from always with the expectation of deciphering, especially in situations of manipulation).

Thus, **euphemisms are one of the means used in such a style of narration as Aesop language**. And the detection of euphemisms in a text does not at all signal that the text is composed in Aesopian language. Conversely, it is possible to create texts in Aesopian language without the help of euphemisms.

#### ***1.4.13. Euphemism and Tabu***

According to terminological dictionaries, the origin of the word "tabu" refers to the Polynesian languages (root "*ta*" – to mark/emphasize, root "*pu*" – all; *tapu* > *tabu*").

**TABU or TABOO** is the ban on words that denote revered or, on the contrary, "bad" phenomena and concepts [Zherebilo]. It is a word, the use of which is forbidden or restricted under the influence of extra-linguistic factors (superstition, prejudice, the desire to avoid crude expressions, etc.) [Rosenthal, Telenkova; Axmanova, p. 457]. The phenomenon of taboo is connected with magical function of language (speech), i.e. with belief in the possibility of direct influence on the surrounding world by means of language. Taboos are characteristic for languages of peoples with archaic culture (Africa, Australia, Oceania, peoples of the North, etc.), however, to a greater or lesser extent they are found in all languages. In modern languages, taboos include the tendency not to speak directly about death, serious illness, to avoid mentioning "indecent" objects, etc. The concept of taboo is closely connected with the concept of euphemism [Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary].

**Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) taboo is a prohibition (rule) or a forbidden word that cannot be uttered (a euphemism is a technique, a periphrastic means, a word or expression that can be uttered and sometimes even needed to avoid rudeness or words perceived by the speaker or listener as taboo);
- 2) the semantic structure of a taboo word is the coincidence of basic and contextual meanings, because it directly implies the denotation (the semantic structure of a euphemism is the mismatch of basic and contextual meanings);
- 3) the function of the taboo word is to mark, highlight, define a special concept or object of reality, the mention of which by means of this word is capable of harming a person or provoking something unknown (the function of euphemism is to soften the meaning of a statement, to hide the meaning, to replace the taboo word or other direct nomination of something with another, more acceptable from considerations of culture, etiquette, personal attitudes of communication participants).

Thus, **euphemisms and taboo words can relate as substitutive and substitutable**. Taboo is usually based on rational or irrational fear, and, as a rule, a euphemism will be called upon to replace the taboo word, but not every euphemism arose to replace the tabooed vocabulary: almost the absolute majority of modern euphemisms appeared from the desire to express thought politely, delicately or vaguely, veiledly.

#### ***1.4.14. Euphemism and Political Correctness***

The word "*political correctness*" came into the Russian language from the English language relatively recently - in the twentieth century. The English spelling of the expression "*political correctness*" in the literal translation is more accurate not with the words "political correctness" (because the essence of the concept is not politics), but with the words "prudent correctness" (from "politic": prudent, courteous, thoughtful, calculating, cunning, crafty). In fact, "political correctness" is understood as "*communicative correctness*" [Stixin] or "*language tact*" [Ter-Minasova].

In the dictionaries that were used to interpret all of the terms in this paragraph, the concept of "political correctness" does not exist. Therefore, other sources were used for the definition-contentation of political correctness.

**POLITICAL CORRECTNESS** is "a cultural, behavioral, and language tendency to replace established terms that might hurt an individual's feelings and dignity with emotionally neutral and/or positive euphemisms [Great Current Political Encyclopedia]. "These are carefully chosen words, deliberate actions, and considerate attitudes" [Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English – cited in Sharapova I. V., Kobenko Y. V.]. "It is a commitment to the belief that language and actions that might hurt one's feelings should be excluded" [Merriam-Webster Dictionary – cited by Sharapova I. V., Kobenko Y. V.]. "Political correctness of language is expressed in the desire to find new ways of language expression to replace those that hurt the feelings and dignity of the individual, infringe on his human rights habitual language tactlessness and/or straightforwardness in relation to race and gender, age, health status, social status, appearance, etc." [Ter-Minasova].

**Key ideas of definitions:**

- 1) political correctness is a cultural-behavioral and language tendency, a special policy aimed at finding and approving in society such forms of expression in which racial, ethnic, religious, gender, age, physiological, social, etc. characteristics would not be regarded as negative characteristics of an individual (euphemism is a device, a periphrastic means, this word or expression);
- 2) the semantic structure of a tendency is not definable in the usual way (the semantic structure of a euphemism is definable - a mismatch of basic and contextual meanings);
- 3) the function is to set a reference point, to develop general rules for the implementation of an idea, to regulate the behavior of people, including language behavior, to ensure a certain social order (euphemism softens, neutralizes, blurs the unpleasant or undesirable meaning of the word or expression it replaces).

Thus, **political correctness is now one of the effective stimuli for the formation of new euphemisms** referring to nominations that characterize a person.

In conclusion, it remains to summarize briefly: **a euphemism is not identical with any of the above terms**, with the exception of the term "synonym. However, a euphemism is not every synonym for a direct nomination, but only one that performs the function of mitigating a negative, unpleasant meaning and is contextually insulated from the direct nomination it replaces. Euphemism correlates with euphemization and euphemia, as a technique with a process (tactics) and a phenomenon (realized strategy). Antiphrasis, litote, meiosis, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, pronomination can act as the basis for the formation of euphemisms, unlike hyperbole, by which euphemisms are not created. Euphemism is a type of periphrasis (logical periphrasis) with a special functional feature. Periphrasis (and euphemism in particular), antiphrasis, litote, meiosis, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, pronomination, hyperbole can be means to create a special style of presentation – Aesopian language. Euphemisms replace taboo words. Modern euphemisms multiply and are generated under the influence of the propagated trend toward political correctness.

## CHAPTER 1 CONCLUSIONS

People have been interested in euphemisms, euphemistic words and expressions since antiquity. The necessity to search for euphemistic substitutions was initially conditioned not only by notions of rudeness and decency, but also by the belief in the power of forbidden words - taboos. The first dictionary fixation of the term "euphemism" happened in the 17th century, and since the 19th century euphemisms became the subject of linguists' study. Scientific interest in euphemisms increased significantly in the XX century: first in the West, then in our country. Now scientists are actively studying euphemisms from different sides, discovering and analyzing more and more new facets.

Euphemisms are multidimensional in nature: social, cultural, psychological, discursive, pragmatic and linguistic. Linguistics distinguishes euphemisms of language (fixed in dictionaries) and euphemisms of speech. The criteria for correctly identifying euphemisms in context are: 1) function (softening, blurring of crude, objectively or subjectively negative meaning), 2) semantic structure (mismatch or incomplete coincidence of basic "-" and contextual "+" values), 3) context (absence of direct nominations).

Different approaches to the study of euphemisms have contributed to the emergence of different classifications: by structure and method of formation, by semantics and pragmatics, by stylistic coloring and sphere of use, by emotional and expressive potential, by specificity of use, etc.

In the turbulent stream of scientific thought, such concepts as: "euphemism", "euphemization", "euphemia", "periphrasis", "antiphrasis", "litote", "meiosis", "metaphor", "metonymy", "synecdoche", "pronomination", "hyperbole", "taboo", "Aesop language", "political correctness" – are sometimes put on a par. However, euphemism is not identical with any of these concepts. The only often equivalent concept is "synonym" (provided this synonym fulfills a euphemistic function in the utterance).

## CHAPTER 2. ACTUAL EUPHEMISMS IN THE MODERN LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

In the second chapter of the dissertation, the description of the results of the analysis of euphemisms, taking into account the key parameters of language ecology, is preceded by a short digression devoted to the main idea of the direction of linguoecology in linguistics, mentioning the scientists and explaining the main definitions.

### 2.1. Euphemisms in Modern Journalism with Consideration of Key Parameters of Language Ecology<sup>9</sup>

The word "ecology" is of Greek origin: "*οἶκος*" – home and "*λόγος*" – doctrine [Small Academic Dictionary]. Literally, it is "the doctrine of home", more broadly, of the environment, the habitat.

Man exists in nature, in society, in culture, man exists in language. And the state of man's language environment is no less important than the state of the surrounding visible and tangible natural environment.

The dictionary of linguistic terms by T. V. Zhrebilo defines language environment as "a type of communicative space in which communication is realized" [Zhrebilo]. In a broader understanding: language environment is a communicative space permeating the consciousness of native speakers of a language; it is externally realized through texts in oral and written forms generated by native speakers of this language.

The language environment of man is also a system, which appears both as a closed language environment of an individual and as a language environment of people, speakers of one language and mankind. People live in this environment and at the same time use its resources. The state of the language environment is influenced by various factors, which can lead it to changes, both positive and negative. When the quality of the language

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<sup>9</sup> The key ideas of the theoretical part of the paragraph are reflected in the scientific article "Analysis of euphemisms from the position of linguoecology" [Zvereva 2019].

environment and, consequently, of its resources deteriorates, so does the quality of human life, because, as Patriarch Alexis II said, "You cannot build a good life with a bad language".

Half a century ago, a new trend in linguistics began to take shape, designed to evaluate and analyze the quality of the language environment, to respond to the changes occurring in it, to investigate "the natural, social and cultural conditions necessary to preserve the identity of a nation and its language" [Zherebilo]. This direction is called **linguoecology** (in some sources – ecolinguistics). Since the 70s of the XX century and up to the present time Russian and foreign scientists (E. Haugen, A. P. Skovorodnikov, A. A. Bernackaya, V. A. Romano, G. A. Kopnina, A. V. Moiseenko, S. V. Ionova, E. M. P. Sidorenko, M. Y. Chernyshov, V. I. Shlyakhov, M. G. Cerczvadze, H. Resinger and others) formulate and clarify the main ideas, problematics, key provisions, interpretations of linguoecology. Of all the many existing multilingual definitions of the term, here is the definition, whose author is a modern linguist, Professor A. P. Skovorodnikov, who has a strikingly bold insight into various issues of linguistics and draws attention to both the breadth of semantic horizons and the depth of the concept of linguoecology:

"linguoecology is a field and direction of interdisciplinary research of language and speech from ecological positions, closely interacting with a number of linguistic disciplines (such as sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, ethnopsychology, psycholinguistics, linguoculturology, jurislinguistics, linguoconflictology, political linguistics) as well as with philosophy, political science, general history and history of specific peoples" [Skovorodnikov 2016, p. 22].

The subject of linguoecology is defined as follows: "the study of the state of language as a complex semiotic system, conditioned by the quality of the environment of its habitat and functioning, as well as the language consciousness of its speakers. Accordingly, the ultimate task of linguoecology is the search or elaboration of means and methods of protection of language, speech and language consciousness from negative



influences, on the one hand, and sources, methods and means of their enrichment and development, on the other hand" [Skovorodnikov 2016, p. 22-23].

Consequently, according to the theoretical statements from the scientific literature revealing this issue, two diametrically opposed parameters are the main ones in the linguoecological evaluation of texts with any linguistic phenomena:

- 1) the positive impact of a language unit on the process of communication, the participants of communication, the language, and the language consciousness of its speakers;
- 2) the negative impact of a language unit on the process of communication, the participants of communication, the language, the language consciousness of its speakers.

When analyzing the material of this dissertation research from the position of linguoecology, these two parameters were primarily taken into account. The need for this analysis was reinforced by the fact that the issue of euphemization, namely the pros and cons of euphemizing speech [Skovorodnikov 2016, p. 26], is defined by linguists as one of the most significant and unresolved issues of linguoecology of the Russian language.

In order to analyze popular euphemisms from the position of linguoecology, a sample of euphemistic words and expressions from the texts of modern newspaper and television journalism was made (in detail and in full the research material is shown in the Introduction section).

At the first stage of work with the material, direct nominations were identified, instead of which journalists of the media and news agencies often prefer to use euphemisms. Such direct nominations include the following words and phrases: "**bribe**", "**illegal finances**", "**beggar/poor**", "**old person**", "**fat person**", "**invalid**", "**to die**", "**to kill**", "**to dismiss**", "**to lose (in sports)**". Further selection of all possible variants of euphemisms was carried out taking into account the focus on these 10 direct nominations. As a result, it turned out that **more than 200 (!) variants of euphemisms are used in modern Russian journalism to replace the selected 10 direct nominations**. Undoubtedly, this fact discovered during the selection of the material set

the vector for scientific work, became a pulsating signal of the importance and relevance of the study of euphemisms, inspired the search for the causes and the prediction of possible consequences.

At the second stage, the collected euphemisms were classified by themes and further by spheres. According to the number of detected variants, it was found that the topics related to the spheres: "**economy**", "**sports**", "**business relations**" and "**person**" are subjected to euphemization to a different extent. After conducting a simple mathematical calculation, the following distribution of the collected euphemisms by spheres and topics was obtained<sup>10</sup> :

**13% of** the studied euphemisms belong to the sphere of "**Business relations**" – the topic of "Termination of employment relations";

**8% of** the studied euphemisms belong to the sphere of "**Sports**" – the theme "The result of the game";

**5% of** the studied euphemisms belong to the sphere of "**Economy**" – the topics "Corruption and financial fraud";

**14% of** the studied euphemisms belong to the spheres of "**Economy**" and "**Person**" at the same time – the theme "The financial situation of man".

In general, the largest block of euphemisms on various topics is associated with the sphere of "**Person**":

**10% of** the studied euphemisms are related to the theme "Body type";

**11% of** the studied euphemisms refer to the topic "Age";

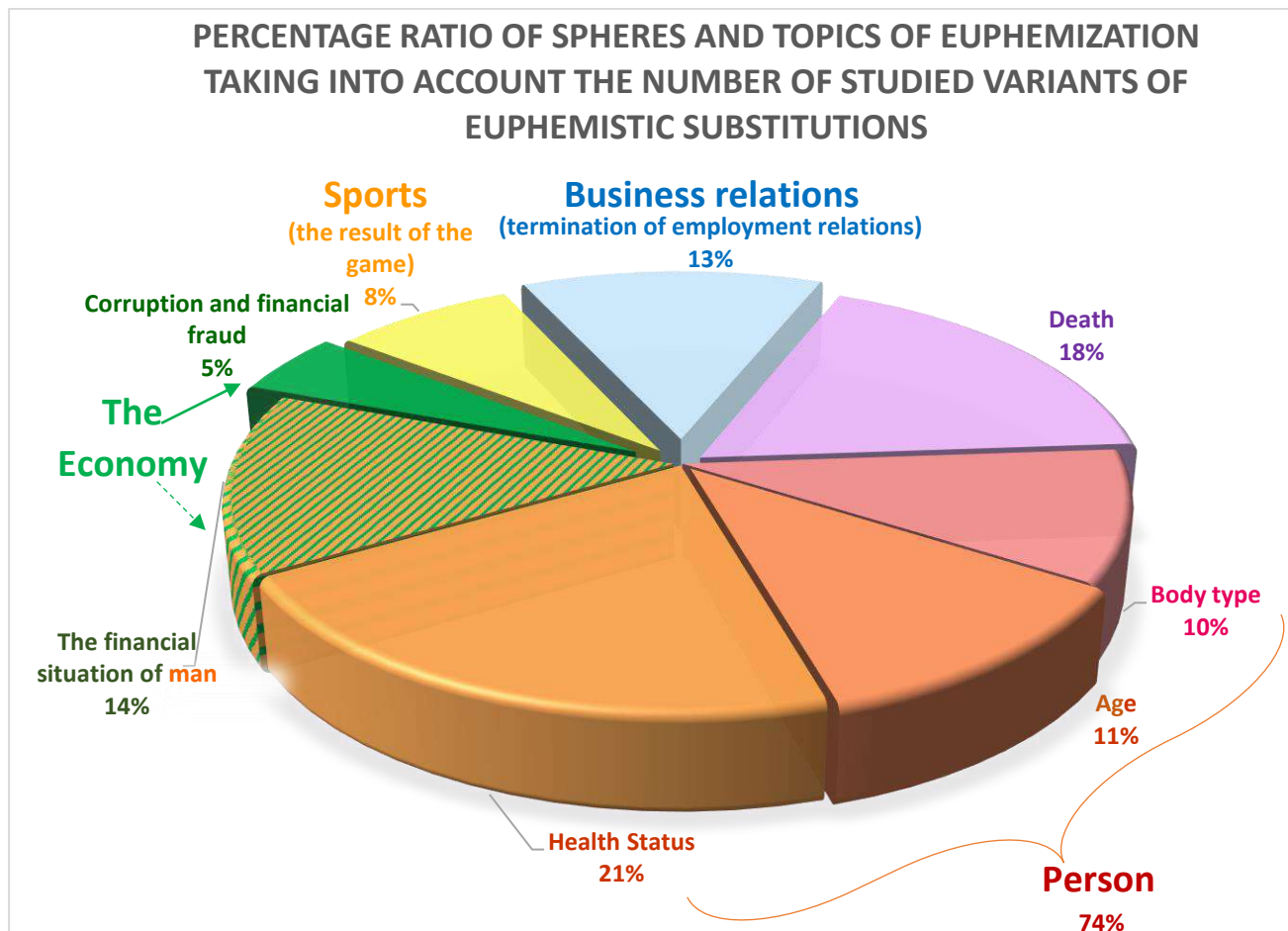
**18% of** the euphemisms studied refer to the theme "Death" (here we considered euphemisms used instead of the verbs "*to die*" and "*to kill*");

**21% of** the euphemisms surveyed relate to the topic "Health Status ".

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<sup>10</sup> These topics are by no means all possible topics related to the spheres of "Business", "Sports", "Economics", and "Person". For example, the themes of "race", "nationality", "social vices", "physiological processes" (pregnancy, etc.), which are often euphemized, also belong to the sphere of "Person", etc. There are more topics and spheres in which the phenomenon of euphemism manifests itself to varying degrees; the dynamic processes occurring in the layer of euphemistic words and expressions will invariably provide material for analyzing and supplementing the existing classifications discussed in paragraph 1.3. This dissertation study focuses on the themes to which the selected 10 direct nominations belong: *invalid, beggar/poor, old person, fat person, to die, to kill, to dismiss, to lose (in sports), illegal finances, bribe*.

The distribution of euphemisms by topics and spheres is clearly presented in *Diagram 1. "Percentage ratio of spheres and topics of euphemization, taking into account the number of studied variants of euphemistic substitutions"*.



*Diagram 1. "Percentage ratio of spheres and topics of euphemization, taking into account the number of studied variants of euphemistic substitutions"*.

At the third stage of work with the material all the found variants of euphemisms were analyzed separately for each direct nomination: the number of synonymous variants of euphemisms, their semantic shades, contextual features of their use were taken into account, also euphemisms were distributed on the conventional scale of emotional and expressive evaluation from euphemistically inefficient to almost complimentary variants, also abstract (semantically blurred) and figurative variants of euphemisms were distinguished. A summary of the results of this analysis is a brief linguoecological

commentary, based on the two key parameters in linguoecology, which were discussed a few pages earlier.. The details of the analysis of euphemisms for each of the 10 direct nominations are given below.

### **2.1.1. Direct nomination "invalid"**

Originally, the word "invalid" came from the French language into the Russian language in the sense of "retired military man", "veteran". For example, it should be understood in this sense in the work of Alexander Pushkin "Eugene Onegin":

*В любви считаюсь инвалидом,  
Онегин слушал с важным видом,  
Как, сердца исповедь любя,  
Поэт высказывал себя.*

Shortly before these lines appeared, a year after the beginning of the Patriotic War of 1812, the newspaper «Русский инвалид», which subsequently became the official newspaper of the War Ministry of the Russian Empire, began to appear in St. Petersburg.

But over time, there was a transformation of the meaning of the word "invalid" and its simultaneous transformation into a euphemism used to replace the designations "cripple" and "freak". However, the frequent and regular use of the lexeme "invalid", on the one hand, significantly reduced its original euphemistic potential and required a new replacement, on the other hand, led to the phraseologicalization and consolidation of this word as a legal concept.

Federal Law No. 181-FZ of November 24, 1995 (revised on April 28, 2023) "On Social Protection of Disabled People in the Russian Federation" establishes the following definition of the concept of "disabled person": "a person who has a health disorder with an enduring disorder of the functions of the organism, caused by illnesses, the consequences of traumas or defects, leading to restrictions on day-to-day activities and causing the need for his social protection" [Federal Law of 24.11.1995 № 181-FZ].

Now the activity of searching for a successful and unambiguously understood euphemistic replacement is indicated by the record high number of variants used now in

the texts of modern journalism instead of the word "invalid". The variants found are grouped together and briefly analyzed below.

The largest group combines variants of euphemisms, the key semantic component of which is the idea of "limitation": «люди с ограниченными возможностями», «люди с ограниченными возможностями жизнедеятельности», «люди с ограничениями жизнедеятельности», «человек с ограниченными способностями», «люди с ограниченными интеллектуальными способностями», «люди с ограничениями по здоровью», «люди с ограничениями здоровья», «люди с физическими ограничениями здоровья», «люди с физическими ограничениями», «люди с умственными ограничениями», «люди с умственными и физическими ограничениями», «люди с умственно ограниченными способностями», «люди с тяжёлой формой умственных ограничений», «люди с ограничениями слуха, зрения», «лицо с ограниченной трудоспособностью», «люди ограниченной трудоспособности», «физически ограниченный человек», «умственно ограниченный человек», «люди с ограничениями», «люди с ограниченными возможностями здоровья» (this expression in some cases does not refer to disabled people in its direct meaning) and a similar expression, only as an abbreviation, «люди с ОВЗ». As an example for this large group of euphemisms, below are several fragments of texts from the modern media and news agencies.

- *«Минобрнауки повысит доступность профобразования для студентов с **ОВЗ**»* (RIA Novosti 13.03.2023).
- *«**Физически ограниченные люди не ограничены в творчестве**»* (IA Bel.RU 02.08.2007).
- *«В нашей стране в дистанционном формате стартовал Национальный чемпионат по профессиональному мастерству среди **людей с ограниченными возможностями**»* (First Channel. News 24.11.2020).
- *«Как правило, подшефными оказываются ветераны Великой Отечественной войны и **люди с ограниченными возможностями жизнедеятельности**»* (Argumenty i Fakty 20.05.2020).

The euphemistic expression «люди с ограниченными возможностями жизнедеятельности» given here is the longest of all and, therefore, the most uneconomical in terms of speech effort. In spite of this, the expression is very frequent in media texts, and it is also used in verbal official announcements, for example, at Pulkovo International Airport in St. Petersburg.

The following contexts, illustrating the first large group of euphemisms, are given to demonstrate euphemistic expressions, the difference between which is not expressed lexically, but grammatically: the second variant differs from the first only by the use of the instrumental case and the preposition "with" to characterize the subject.

– «*Минюст зарегистрировал “Объединенную партию людей **ограниченной трудоспособности России**”*» (Kommersant 19.06.2014).

– «*Партия выступает за создание новых рабочих мест для граждан России, за активное вовлечение **людей с ограниченной трудоспособностью** в трудовую деятельность*» (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 02.07.2014).

Among all the variants of euphemisms of the first conditional group the expression «люди с ограничениями» has the greatest manipulative potential, because without a clarifying context it can mislead the recipient, while the undoubted advantage of this expression is its brevity, especially against the background of other euphemistic expressions. Probably, it is the desire to save speech efforts that underlies the creation of such a euphemism.

– «*О том, как спорт помогает **людям с ограничениями** преодолеть страхи, найти себя в жизни, поднять самооценку...*» (Rayon72.ru 08.12.2022).

Another group of euphemistic expressions is united by such a component of meaning as "disturbance": «люди с нарушениями развития», «люди с нарушениями слуха, зрения», «люди с ментальными нарушениями». The word "disturbance" itself predetermines a reduced emotional and expressive coloring for such expressions.

– «*Люди с **нарушениями развития** нуждаются не в обслуживании, а в сопровождении*» (Kommersant 18.07.2021).

- *«Музеи, разрабатывая программы для детей с **ментальными нарушениями**, начинают использовать различные методы визуальной поддержки (карточки, предметы, которые можно держать в руках) и эти программы пользуются невероятным успехом у всех детей» (Argumenty i Fakty 04.12.2019).*
- *«Мы решили подключить к велоактивности **людей с нарушениями слуха и зрения**, и нас поддержали в министерстве труда и соцзащиты Республики Крым» (Moskovsky Komsomolets 04.07.2021).*

The next group combines euphemisms characterized by maximally reduced emotional and expressive coloring, due to which their euphemistic potential to mitigate negative meanings is very ambiguous: «люди с теми или иными отклонениями в развитии», «люди с физическими недостатками», «неполноценный».

- *«Когда стало известно, что я вырасту **неполноценной**, многие люди советовали моим родителям отказаться от меня и отдать в интернат» (Life.ru 07.09.2018).*
- *«Где найти работу **людям с физическими недостатками**? <...> Сколько людей с ограничениями здоровья лишились работы?» (Argumenty i Fakty 12.06.2013).*
- *«Ещё вчера появление в семье **ребенка с теми или иными отклонениями в развитии** воспринималось родителями как своего рода приговор» (Argumenty i Fakty 14.07.2021).*

In the next group of euphemisms the word "needs" acts as the main lexical unit, thus there is a departure from words with clearly negative meanings: "shortcomings", "deviations", "disturbance", "limitation" – and the effect of softening the meaning of the direct nomination is achieved, but with a high risk of misleading the addressee. Examples of such euphemistic expressions: «люди с особыми потребностями», «люди с особенными потребностями», «люди с повышенными потребностями», «люди со специальными потребностями». A few of their uses in context are given below.

- *Как много теряют компании, которые не приспособливают свои сервисы для людей с особыми потребностями?»* (Izvestia 30.11.2018).
- *«Как информирует фонд, в соответствии с законом, лица с особыми потребностями могут получить право доступа к выделенным парковочным местам»* (Kommersant 15.11.2022).
- *«Люди с повышенными потребностями зачастую талантливы, и, как показала моя практика, они интересные собеседники»* (Molodoi kommunar 12.10.2018).

The following observations can be find about the origin of such variants of euphemisms and society's awareness of the acute need for an acceptable replacement of the direct nomination "invalid" in modern journalism:

- *«Не говорите об инвалидах, как о людях, которые выживают. На Западе их называют людьми с “особыми потребностями”. В России – с “ограниченными возможностями”. Чувствуете разницу?..»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 15.06.2017);
- *«Директор института образования НИУ ВШЭ Ирина Абанкина считает, что подходящим новым определением может быть, например, выражение “люди со специальными потребностями”. По её словам, необходим нейтральный термин, который бы подчеркивал личность и достоинство человека»* (Gazeta.ru 27.09.2018).

In another group of euphemistic expressions, the unifying key element is the word "peculiarity," or rather, "with peculiarities": «люди с ментальными особенностями», «люди с психическими особенностями», «люди с особенностями здоровья или развития», «люди с особенностями развития».

- *«В Севастополе наградили победителей чемпионата среди профессионалов с особенностями здоровья»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 22.12.2020).
- *«По сути, она была почти Маугли. И обвинять некого – выросла в интернате для детей с ментальными особенностями»* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 01.10.2019).



- *«Вы учились в Италии, там люди с психическими особенностями живут на свободе, а не в ПНИ»* (Kommersant 17.07.2021).
- *«Для этого нет специального оборудования, преподаватели не проходят на регулярной основе подготовку, методические рекомендации рассчитаны на здоровых учеников со средней успеваемостью и выше, что не всегда подходит для детей с особенностями здоровья или развития»* (IA Rusnord 16.07.2021).
- *«Воспитывая ребенка с особенностями развития, родители не могут рассчитывать на то, что после 18 лет он станет самостоятельным: внимание человеку с инвалидностью будет требоваться всю жизнь»* (Gazeta.ru 25.08.2029).

Without an explanatory context, euphemistic expressions such as «люди с особенностями», «не такие как все», «редкие люди» and, in the highest degree, «особенные люди» can be misleading. The latter expression has a distinct tinge of complimentarity.

- *«Не такие, как все. Как особенные дети получают шанс на обычную жизнь»* (Argumenty i Fakty 14.07.2021).
- *«Полоса препятствий, лошади и спорт: особенные дети Челябинска приняли участие в “Гонке редких”»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 01.06.2023).
- *«Теперь мы видим, как выносят национальный флаг Японии. Его выносят шесть специально отобранных людей: четыре спортсмена, один человек с особенностями и медик-спасатель, профессионал, которых предваряют восемь детей»* (First Channel 23.07.2021).

The euphemistic expression «люди с безграничными возможностями» contains the utmost complimentarity. Such a euphemism is not simply a milder designation of the disabled, but also transfigures such people at the level of meaning. However, this expression has two significant disadvantages: it is not concise and cannot be correctly interpreted out of context:

- *«Это люди не с ограниченными, а с безграничными возможностями»* (TASS 30.11.2017).

The euphemism «“солнечные дети”» is isolated from all other variants, because it is used exclusively in relation to the category of people suffering from Down syndrome:

- *«Просто они особенные. Академик РАН Лейла Намазова-Баранова: У науки есть инструменты эффективного обучения “солнечных детей”»* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 12.03.2020).

An important clarification: the metaphor «солнечный человек» does not always act as a euphemism. In other contexts, the expression does not in any way indicate a person's state of health, but simply describes a cheerful and radiant person:

- *«Без ума от Кабаевой и чемпионка мира и Европы по художественной гимнастике белоруска Евгения Павлина: “<...> Она хорошая девчонка, солнечный ребёнок”»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 31.05.2002).

Media texts also use the expression «люди с проблемами со здоровьем» to replace the word "invalid," but such an expression should be recognized as unsuccessful for a number of reasons: 1) abstractness and lack of specificity that can mislead the addressee of the text, because not all health problems make a person disabled, 2) reduced emotional and expressive coloring, which the lexeme "problem" gives to the expression, 3) clumsiness of the expression; 4) cacophony because of the double use in a row of the instrumental case with the preposition "with":

- *«“Абилимпикс” признан одним из основных инструментов для мотивации, социализации и трудоустройства людей с проблемами со здоровьем»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 22.12.2020).

The expression «маломобильные люди» is often used as a euphemism for the direct nomination "invalid", even though the word «маломобильный» itself can be understood in another way, such as low mobility due to the lack of a personal means of transportation (car) or low mobility in the sense of being inactive.

- *«Очередной громкий авиаинцидент, когда на рейс отказались пускать двух **маломобильных** пассажиров, произошёл в Калининграде»* (Rossiya 1. Vesti 25.05.2021).

Separately, it is worth noting such expressions as «люди с инвалидностью». The question of whether this expression fulfills a euphemistic function is ambiguous. On the one hand, there is an indication of a direct nomination – "invalid"; on the other hand, the focus of attention is somewhat shifted, as it is no longer a direct reference to a person, but only an indication of his/her characteristic.

- *«Как оставаться человеком на вечной самоизоляции? Отвечают люди с инвалидностью»* (Novaya Gazeta\* 16.05.2020).

More than forty variants of euphemistic substitutions for the word "invalid", used in the texts of modern journalism, testify to the actual linguo-ecological problem caused by psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors. The uniformity and cumbersomeness of the prevailing majority of variants of euphemistic expressions, the active use in Russian publicistic texts of euphemisms, which are a tracing from Anglo-American equivalents, indicates a low level of linguistic creativity in searching for and creating a successful euphemism capable of tactfully and briefly naming the disabled, emphasizing their dignity and the value of their lives.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically represented in Figure 1.

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:  
"Novaya Gazeta" - undesirable organization (No. 92 in the List: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/872881>.

## Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "invalid"

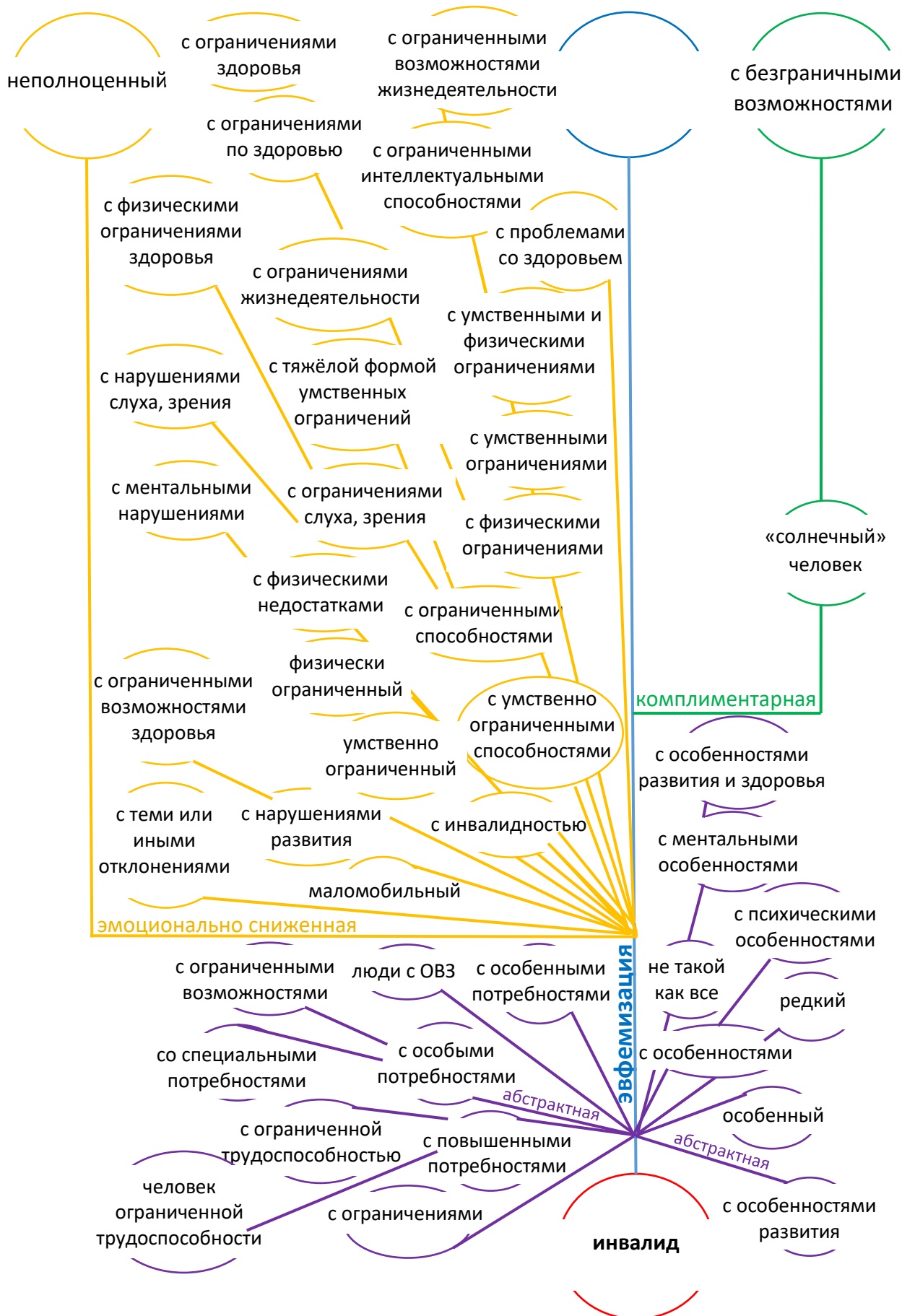


Fig. 1 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'invalid'".

### 2.1.2. Direct nomination *"fat person"*

To say directly about a person that he is fat is usually perceived by speakers of Russian as a manifestation of impoliteness, rudeness, tactlessness. In this regard, there is a need for euphemistic substitution when referring to a fat person.

The most common euphemism used instead of the direct nomination "fat person" is the word "полный", which is equally combined with the designations of men and women.

- *«Ученые придумали, как делать чёткую МРТ беременным и **полным** людям»* (Ren.TV 14.07.2021).

A number of euphemisms: «люди с лишним весом», «люди с избыточным весом», «люди с избыточной массой тела» contain a negative component of meaning contained in the word "лишний" or "избыточный". In addition, such euphemistic expressions are quite cumbersome and do not allow saving speech efforts.

- *«Её эффективность подтвердил эксперимент, в котором часть **людей с лишним весом** добавляли в еду в качестве приправы пасту твенджан, а другой части добровольцев досталось плацебо»* (Moskovsky Komsomolets 16.07.2021).
- *«Исследователи физико-технического мегафакультета Университета ИТМО придумали способ, позволяющий сделать четкий снимок МРТ **людям с избыточным весом**, а также беременным женщинам»* (Ren.TV 14.07.2021).
- *«Жара сказывается на каждом человеке. Но **люди с избыточной массой тела** относятся к группе лиц, наиболее сильно страдающих от высокой наружной температуры»* (Argumenty i Fakty 15.07.2021).

The next series of euphemisms, on the contrary, is aimed at causing pleasant associations and images: «“пышные” девушки», «дамы с пышными формами», «аппетитная фигура», «девушки с полными фигурами». Such expressions have limited possibilities of use, as they characterize representatives of the female sex.

- «Всё больше **“пышных”** девушек появляются на подиумах и на обложках изданий, в Москве открывается кафе для полных под названием **“Жиртрест”**, теперь не обязательно ходить в спортзал и изнурять себя диетами» (Cosmopolitan 22.01.2016).
- «Для меня важно, чтобы в шоу участвовали **девушки с пышными формами и полными фигурами...** <...> Помимо **аппетитных фигур**, её другим требованием стал естественный оттенок кожи моделей» (Express Newspaper 11.03.2012).

The expressions «имеет большой размер одежды» and «обладательница больших размеров» serve as euphemisms by shifting the focus of attention directly from the person to the size of his clothes.

- «Ранее Эвелина Хромченко дала совет полным женщинам. **“ФедералПресс”** писал, что лучше носить людям с **большим размером одежды**» (FederalPress 19.03.2021).
- «Другие компании тоже создают с нуля собственные модели для **обладательниц больших размеров**» (Vedomosti 15.12.2017).

The English expression «plus size» and its transliteration in Cyrillic, «плюс-сайз», also refer primarily to a person's clothing size, not to the word "fat".

- «Стилисты дали модные советы для женщин **plus size**» (Channel 5. News 31.03.2021).
- «**Плюс-сайз-манекеница** проишла по улицам Лондона полуобнажённой с целью разрушить стандарты красоты» (Lenta.Ru 15.07.2021).

The non-adaptation in Russian of these euphemisms of foreign origin gives grounds to assume that, after some time, they will fall out of use, especially out of use in the texts of the Russian media. A good reason for this is, in particular, the recent official amendment to the language policy of the Russian Federation stipulated in the Presidential Decree No. 809 dated 9 November 2022 "On Approving the Principles of State Policy for Preserving and Strengthening Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values" in the following formulation: "Protection and support of the Russian language as the language

of the state-forming people, ensuring compliance with the norms of modern Russian literary language (including the prevention of using obscene words), countering the excessive use of foreign vocabulary" [Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 809 of November 9, 2022]. In addition, on February 16, 2023, respective amendments were made to the Federal Law "On the State Language of the Russian Federation".

Instead of the direct nomination "fat", modern journalism also uses a fairly semantically neutral euphemism – «*“в теле”*» (quotation marks are often used when writing it, but not always):

- *«Тренды последних нескольких месяцев диктуют: “в теле” быть модно»* (Cosmopolitan 22.01.2016).

Laconic, but loaded with additional connotations, the euphemisms «упитанный» «пухлый», «тучный» are not complimentary when describing a subject:

- *«За судьбой девочек следили с особым интересом: умница Пуговка, готесса Даша, эрудит Галина Сергеевна и её **упитанный** кавалер Полежайкин»* (Woman.ru 22.04.2023);
- *«Родители умиляются **пухлому** ребенку, друзья не хотят обидеть словом. В моде бодипозитив и «плюс сайз» модели»* (NewTimes.kz 16.02.2023);
- *«Достаточно худой Гэри Олдман сумел так сыграть **тучного** Черчилля в фильме “Тёмные времена”, что получил за эту роль премию “Оскар”»* (Argumenty i Fakty 26.12.2021).

The word «дородный», though in many contexts it acts as a euphemism, but its main role is to create a vivid, picturesque image of both women and men:

- *«Отличный снимок — на нижней полке плацкарта при свете дня полулежа дремлет **дородная** женщина: снято с очень близкого расстояния, поэтому зритель будто втянут в эту сцену»* (Kommersant 04.06.2021);
- *«Впереди выступал круглолицый Аркадий Аверченко, **дородный мужчина**, очень плодовитый писатель, заполнявший своей юмористикой чуть ли не половину журнала»* (Parlamentskaya Gazeta 14.04.2020).

Such phrases as «крупные люди», «большие люди», «великие люди» have euphemistic properties due to their ambiguity, since the words «крупный» and «большой» can refer both to the evaluation of a person, his significance, social status, and body size; when the word «великий» is used similarly, a language game is realized, since in its original sense this word is not used in relation to the build, body size and, therefore, in the meaning of "fat".

- *«Целый ряд предпринимателей рассчитывают привлечь клиентов, предложив им модели, которые разработаны специально для больших размеров и выглядят более модными, чем то, что сейчас предлагает крупным женщинам рынок. <...> Не видят больших людей»* (Vedomosti 15.12.2017).
- *«Партнерами программы стали магазины: “Азбука мебели” (магазин мебели), “Великие люди” (магазин одежды больших размеров) и “Железное правило” (магазин инструментов)»* (IA PrimaMedia 28.06.2021).

The ironic phraseologism «хорошего человека должно быть много» is also used in the media in contexts about fat people and has a positive, complimentary meaning.

- *«Аборигены из эфиопского племени боди уверены: **хорошего человека должно быть много**»* (REN TV February 3.02.2023).

The overall large number of various, including relatively new variants of euphemisms, through which modern journalism seeks to avoid the direct nomination "fat person", indicates the intensification of speech creativity aimed at finding the most acceptable means of expressing such an idea. This is a positive phenomenon from the point of view of linguoecology. There are also prerequisites for the less successful variants (for example, the foreign-language «plus size», «плюс-сайз» and cumbersome, unsound, with reduced emotional and expressive coloring «люди с избыточной массой тела», «людям с избыточным весом») to come out of use over time.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically presented in Figure 2.



## Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "fat person"

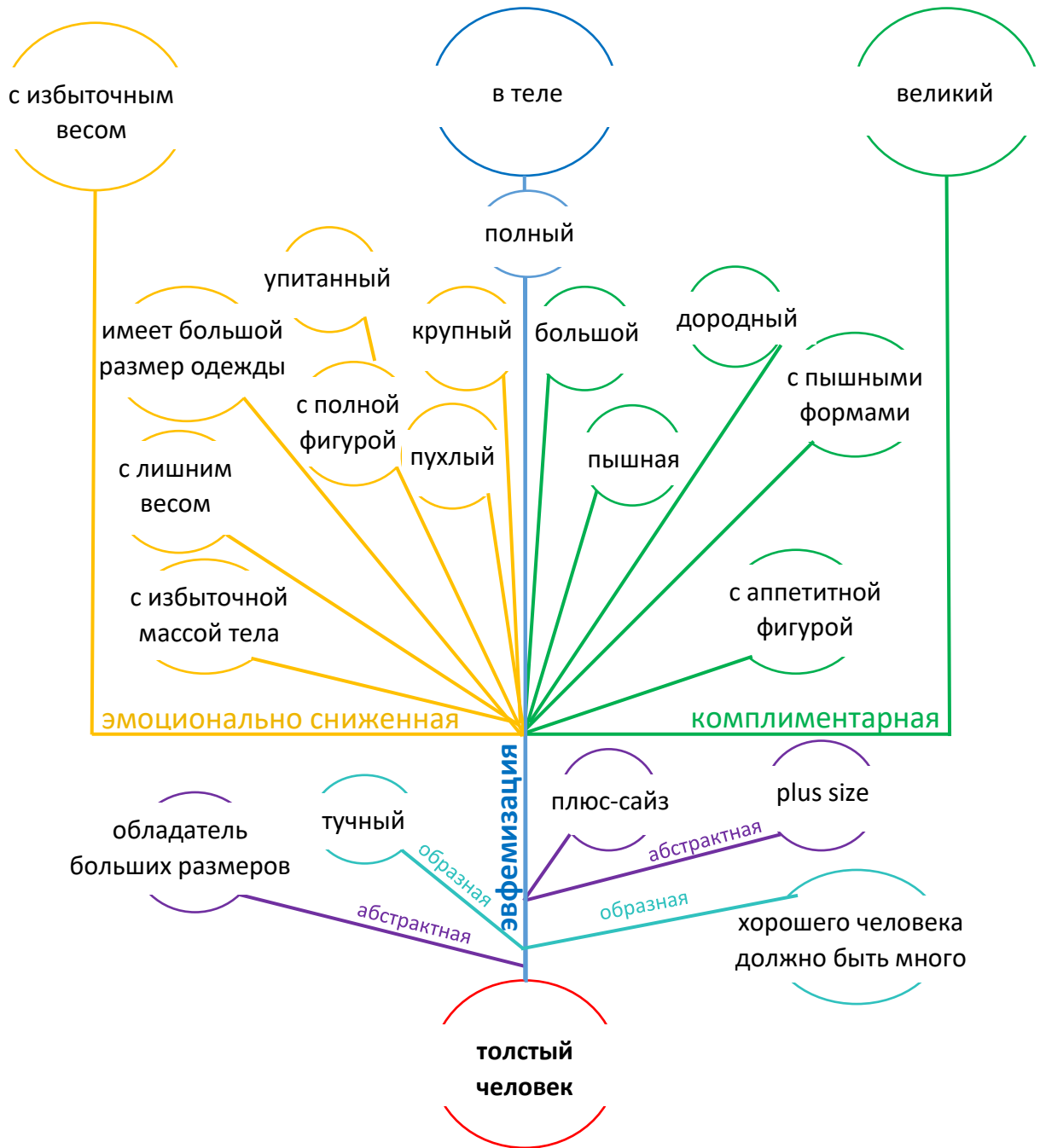


Fig. 2 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'fat person'".

### 2.1.3. Direct nomination "*old person*"

Modern society in most cases does not accept the expression "old person", even though etymologically "old" is "a common Slavic word of Indo-European nature (in Old Indian we find *sthira* – ‘strong’), goes back to the same base as the verb *to become*, literally means ‘having become’". [Etymological dictionary of the Russian language, p. 375]. However, nowadays "the cult of youth and beauty, active resistance to old age generate fear of aging and push the elderly into the zone of social isolation without the right to rehabilitation" [Borisov, p. 5]. In order to avoid direct nomination denoting people over 65<sup>11</sup> (and over 30, if a person is a professional athlete), the media uses more than two dozen variants of euphemisms. Below are examples and brief comments on these variants of euphemisms found in the texts of current journalism.

The euphemisms «пожилой человек» and «человек пожилого возраста» are used as widely as possible:

- «По сравнению с домами престарелых и стационарным уходом приёмная семья — наиболее приемлемый формат для **пожилого человека** и более дешёвый для государства» (Izvestia 27.08.2019);
- «Все больше людей **пожилого возраста** оперируется или им оказывается самая современная помощь без оглядки на возраст» (Gazeta.Ru 26.09.2019).

Despite the fact that these euphemisms have already become traditional and habitual for speakers of the Russian language, they are not the only and acceptable for everyone. And a possible reason is found in the structure of the word, which includes the component "lived", one of the associative links of which refers to the idea of the end of life.

The euphemisms «поздний возраст», «зрелый возраст», «преклонный возраст» are ambiguously perceived by native Russian speakers, apparently because they emphatically indicate a person's long life, although they do not call him old:

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<sup>11</sup> According to the 2017 World Health Organization classification, a person's age is defined as follows: 18-44 is young, 45-59 is average, 60-74 is old, 75-89 is senile, and 90 and over is the age of longevity.

- «Пенсионерка из Хабаровска застряла в лесной трясине и больше суток не могла выбраться. Несмотря на свой **преклонный возраст** – 83 года – женщина не растерялась. Даже когда к ней стали подбираться медведи. Их она отпугивала рыком» (Russia 24. 08.08.2019);
- «Со сцены звучат и стихи, и проза. В основном, декламируют горожане **зрелого возраста**» (Russia 1. Vesti 15.10.2014).

The following euphemisms: «человек старшего поколения», «старшие люди», «уже немолодой» contain the semantics of the age hierarchy and a small amount of abstractness, because it is not clear how "not young," how "older" the people:

- «В 1941 году он попал под бомбёжку и получил тяжёлую контузию. Это подорвало здоровье **немолодого уже мужчины** (65 years old - M.Z.'s note). За войну Бурденко перенес два кровоизлияния в мозг, но, невзирая на это, не переставал трудиться» (TASS 03.06.2021);
- «Повысить уровень жизни **людей старшего поколения** призваны изменения в пенсионное законодательство РФ» (Channel One 18.07.2018).

In the euphemisms «особый возраст», «люди в возрасте», «человек в годах», «люди третьего возраста», «люди третьего поколения» the age hierarchy, on the contrary, is intentionally blurred, and the proportion of abstractness is even more significant, which can sometimes lead to a communicative failure due to misunderstanding, and thus such euphemisms can harm the ecology of speech. Examples of such euphemisms in the newspaper context are given below:

- «Мы сотрудничаем с советами ветеранов, благотворительными организациями, поэтому к нам на спектакли часто приезжают ветераны, **люди в возрасте**, а также с ограниченными возможностями» (Izvestia 26.03.2014);
- «Сегодняшняя тема: нужно научить **людей третьего возраста**, старших людей, правильно питаться» (Metro St. Petersburg May 30, 2018);

- *«Интернет настолько охватил нашу жизнь, что им пользуются люди разных поколений: дети, молодежь и люди так называемого **“третьего поколения”**»* (IA BNK 15.10.2014).

It can be assumed that the euphemisms «люди третьего возраста», «люди третьего поколения» can not only mislead the recipient of communication, but also cause him specific associations. The first association may be associated with the expression "third world countries" (more often now denoting not states that were not involved in the "cold war" of the 20th century, but states with an underdeveloped economy). The second association is with the expression "third-rate product" (i.e. a product of low quality). The third association is with the expression "third generation technology (computers)", which emerged back in the 1960s, or with the expression "third generation (3G) mobile network", which emerged in 2002 and has already given way to 4G, 5G network. In this case it is not only the associations associated with the expression «человек третьего поколения» that can be misleading, but also ambiguity of the direction of generations counting: back to ancestors or forward to descendants.

The idea of "age is worthy of respect" became the basis for the euphemisms «почётный возраст» and «почтенный возраст», even though such euphemisms are used even in contexts where there is no hint of "special respect" at all. An example is an excerpt from the newspaper Izvestia:

- *«По словам же директора, молодой коллектив просто захотел начальника **“помоложе”** (в тексте регулярно указывается на **почтенный возраст** маэстро), однако вину за происходящее она возлагает на некие внешние силы»* (Izvestia 28.04.2014).

Due to their metaphorical nature, the euphemisms «серебряный возраст», «серебряный волонтер», which emerged in 2014, were at first sometimes perceived as means of expressive speech, but nowadays they mostly fulfill the main function of euphemisms in media texts:

- *«“В 60 лет жизнь только начинается”. И все радости этой жизни доступны людям **“серебряного возраста”**: хочешь — собственное дело*

*открывай, хочешь — путешествуй, танцуй до упаду, а хочешь и вовсе рожай»* (Novaya Gazeta\* 19.07.2018);

- *«Захотели стать добровольцами не только молодые люди: на фестиваль в Сочи из Петербурга отправляются и 11 “серебряных” волонтеров – самому старшему из них сейчас 75 лет»* (St. Petersburg Diary 10.10.2017).

Over a fairly long period of its existence, the euphemism «женщина бальзаковского возраста» (which in Russian language culture has long been unassociated with a woman in her 30s) has lost its "literary charm", but it continues to be in demand, although often with an ironic component of meaning:

- *«В этот момент смотрительница зала бальзаковского возраста с таким же pokerфейс заглядывает за колонну и не проронив ни звука исчезает»* (Zavtra 27.01.2019).

Now the euphemism with lost charm – «женщина бальзаковского возраста» – has been replaced by the elegant euphemism «(женщина) элегантного возраста», which, incidentally, is used in media texts not only in relation to women, because it mainly characterizes age. This is an example from an online newspaper:

- *«Большая часть посетителей — пары элегантного возраста, участники программы “Активное долголетие”»* (Gazeta.Ru 25.08.2019).

In addition to elegance, the building blocks of euphemisms for "age" are such qualities as "wisdom" as well as "rich life experience" - something that usually comes with age. The following text fragments will serve as examples:

- *«Конечно, знаний поначалу не хватало, поэтому училась. И до сих пор учусь – у коллег более **мудрого возраста**»* (Metro St. Petersburg 8.10.2019);
- *«Теперь эти люди с **богатым жизненным опытом** передали эстафету молодым и ушли на заслуженный отдых – занимаются спортом или*

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:  
 "Novaya Gazeta" - undesirable organization (No. 92 in the List: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/872881>.

*находят себя в творчестве: рисуют, поют, вяжут и вышивают, помогают воспитывать внуков» (Zvezda Altai 19.10.2021).*

A separate place among euphemisms denoting a person's age is occupied by the euphemism «возрастной», since it is mostly used in relation to people whose success in their profession is very dependent on their physical condition, on their youth. As a rule, this euphemism is used when referring to athletes over the age of 30-35. For example:

- *«По словам Макушина, искусственного омоложения команды не будет. “Ни от кого из **возрастных спортсменов** мы отказываться не собираемся. Вот сейчас на зимнем турнире (неофициальном чемпионате России в помещении) отлично себя проявили такие опытные мастера, как Максим Кузнецов и Кирилл Беляков”» (RIA Novosti 24.01.2022).*

The euphemisms listed here are not all possible euphemistic variants of softening or veiling the subject of age.

However, the simultaneous coexistence of so many euphemisms denoting the same denotation allows us to diagnose **an actual linguoecological problem**. This problem affects the ecology of speech to a lesser extent, because these euphemisms, as a rule, do not lead to failures in communication, do not present significant difficulties for understanding, decoding, correlation with the denotation (except for euphemisms «люди третьего поколения», «люди особого возраста», «возрастной человек», the correct understanding of which is possible only in context). This problem affects **the ecology of the language consciousness of speakers of the Russian language to a greater extent** and is caused by several factors.

First, it is a linguocultural factor, since native speakers of the Russian language are particularly sensitive to questions of age, this attitude borders on the taboo nature of this topic. After all, in particular, even the very question "how old?" addressed to a person of the female sex is considered contrary to the norms of decency in Russian linguoculture.

Secondly, it is a sociolinguistic factor, because in modern Russian society there is a shift of age boundaries, determining the periods of ability to work and active life of a person. This is caused by an increase in the quality of life of citizens, the increase in their

life expectancy, as well as by some other factors. In this regard, a person of 65 years is perceived as an energetic person who continues his or her work activities. And becoming a pensioner does not mean becoming an old person. And Russian journalism also reacts to such social processes: *«Возраст, который мы привыкли воспринимать как “возраст осени”, время итогов и угасания, сегодня, как никогда, требует изменения своего “социального портрета”»* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 01.10.2014: "New Old Russians"). This provokes both journalists and nonjournalists to choose correct words when referring to people over the age of 65 (and not even out of considerations of the propagated political correctness, but out of a desire to express themselves more accurately).

And, third, there is the psycholinguistic factor, because such a large number of euphemisms for age (*from the almost complimentary «элегантный возраст», semantically blurred «особый возраст» and to the hint of fading «преклонный возраст»*) indicates the dissatisfaction of native speakers and the impossibility of reducing the list of such euphemisms to three or five units, which would be perceived by most native speakers as psychologically comfortable and not requiring the expansion of the euphemistic synonymic series.

On the one hand, the above results of the research of euphemisms signal the existence of conflict in the language consciousness, which from the position of linguoecology is assessed as a negative phenomenon.

However, on the other hand, an activation of speech creativity aimed at finding the best means of expressing actual meanings is also noticeable. This is indicated by the ongoing dynamic processes in the layer of words and expressions associated with the designation of age. And we can clearly see the tendency to create qualitatively new euphemisms, excluding any hint at the number of years lived, fading, the hierarchy of generations by seniority. The main emphasis now shifts to the advantages of age, consisting in experience, wisdom, elegance. The process of search and adoption by the Russian language consciousness of the most successful such euphemism is constantly continuing.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically represented in Figure 3.

### Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "old person"

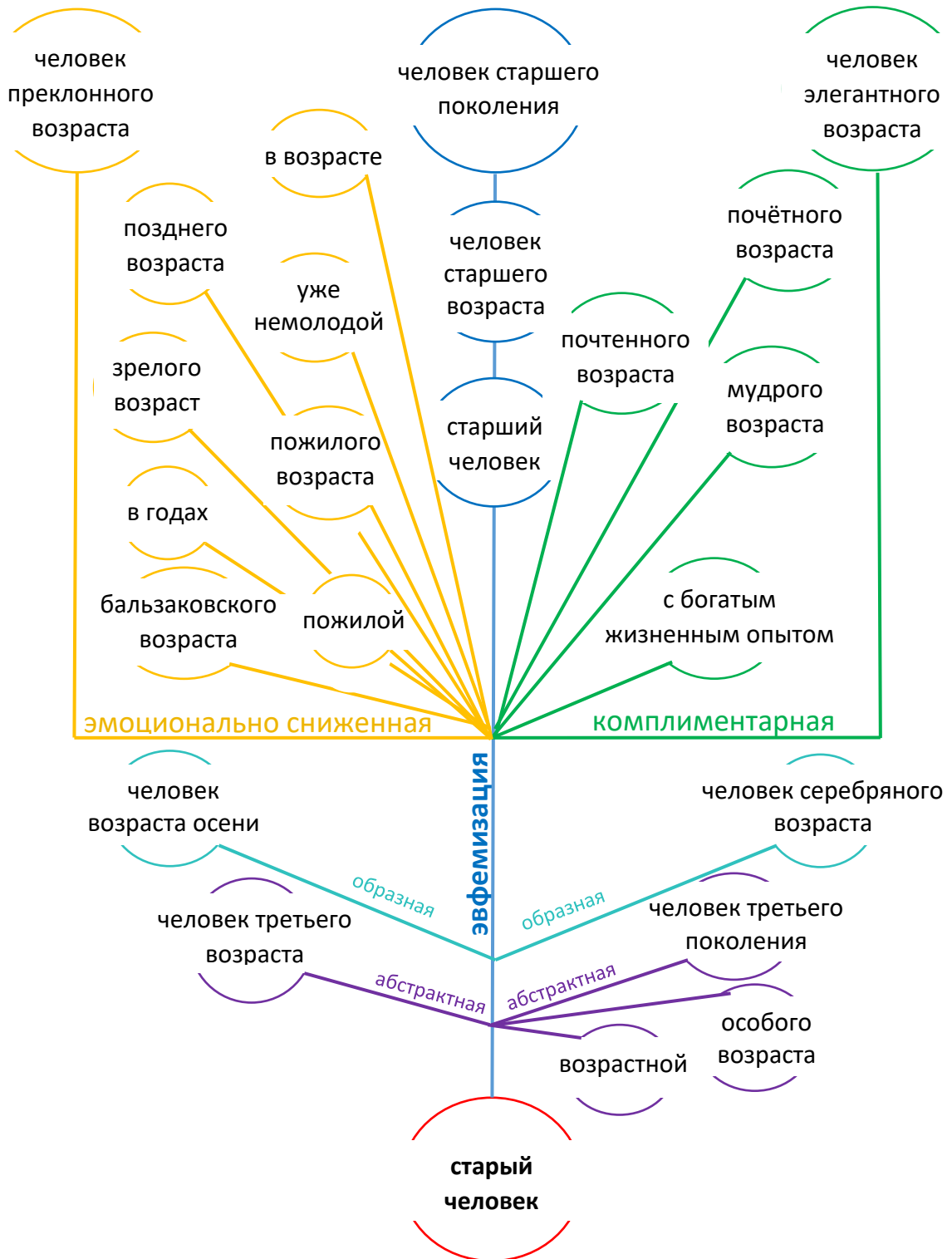


Fig. 3 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'old person'".



#### 2.1.4. Direct nomination "*beggar/poor person*"

In order to avoid direct nomination, denoting a person who does not have enough money to maintain normal living conditions, approximately three dozen variants of euphemisms are used in the media studied. Below are examples and brief comments on the euphemisms found in the texts of modern journalism.

Among the most neutral variants are such expressions «человек со скромным доходом», «со скромным достатком», «со скромным уровнем достатка», «со скромным бюджетом». In Russian language culture, "modesty" is perceived as a positive quality - it is due to this that the effect of softening the uncomfortable meanings of the implied direct nomination is achieved. At the same time, such euphemistic word combinations are extremely unspecific and vague about the size of income, wealth, and budget:

- *«В ведомстве придумали, как простимулировать спрос на российскую продукцию и поддержать людей со скромными доходами»* (Channel 5 24.01.2022);
- *«В Минпромторге нашли способ одновременно простимулировать спрос на отечественную продукцию, и поддержать семьи со скромным уровнем достатка»* (HandyNews 24.01.2022);
- *«Как делать сбережения при скромном бюджете?»* (Fontanka.ru 05.10.2012).

Similar in structure are the euphemistic expressions «человек с низким доходом», «с низким уровнем дохода», «с низкой зарплатой», but the word "low" naturally reduces the euphemistic potential of such word combinations:

- *«Однако в докризисном 2019 году доля людей с низкими доходами была выше — 10,2%. В Росстате эти данные подтвердили, но отметили, что в последние пять лет число граждан с низкими доходами уменьшается»* (Gazeta.RU 01.07.2021).

- *«Наименьшее желание вакцинироваться отмечено среди людей с **низким уровнем доходов** и сторонников оппозиции»* (Gazeta.fi 06.02.2021).
- *«Чем сильнее средняя зарплата отличается от медианы, тем сильнее неравенство в оплате труда и выше доля людей с **низкой зарплатой**»* (RBC July 18, 2019).

Noteworthy and quite common in the media are euphemistic expressions that include a reference to the universal criterion adopted at the legislative level - it is the subsistence level, i.e. "the minimum amount of income necessary to ensure the livelihood of a citizen" [Federal Law No. 473-FZ of December 29, 2020]. Such euphemisms are quite cumbersome: «люди с доходом ниже прожиточного минимума», «с доходом ниже величины прожиточного минимума»:

- *«Сейчас число людей с **доходами ниже величины прожиточного минимума** составляет 17% (год назад - 18%)»* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 08.07.2021).
- *«Доля людей, имеющих **доходы ниже прожиточного минимума**, по данным Росстата, колеблется в пределах 10-13% уже 15 лет»* (IA Krasnaya Vesna 28.01.2022).

The next large group of euphemistic expressions contains the words "ситуация" and "положение", which bring to the euphemisms a component of meaning, indicating the "temporality" of poverty, which is only now, and then everything will change. Probably, it is due to this component of meaning that the overall negative semantics of the word combination, replacing the direct nomination, is softened, and hence the euphemization of the entire context, although insignificant, is made. The following variants were found in the media: person «в трудной финансовой ситуации», «испытывающий финансовые трудности», «в нестабильном материальном положении», «в непростом материальном положении», «в нелёгком материальном положении», «в затруднительном материальном положении», «с затруднительным материальным положением», «в трудном материальном положении», «в тяжёлом материальном положении», «в непростом финансовом положении», «в

затруднительном финансовом положении», «в трудном финансовом положении». A few examples of contexts from newspaper, online and television journalism are given below.

- *«Путин выдвинул инициативу о выплатах беременным, испытывающим **финансовые трудности**»* (PolitRussia 21.04.2021).
- *«Ныне государством выстроена целая система поддержки семей в **трудной финансовой ситуации** с детьми от нуля до семи лет»* (First Channel. News 30.06.2021).
- *«В условиях эпидемии и **нестабильного материального положения** многие граждане видят выход из ситуации в регистрации фиктивного брака»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 22.12.2020).

In this case, in such expressions, the word "ситуация" is subjectively perceived as something more temporary and rapidly changing than the word "положение".

Another remark regarding the expressions of this large group of euphemisms is related to the observed alternation of the words "финансовый" and "материальный" in them:

- *«Половина населения находится в **“непростом финансовом положении”**»* (Nezavisimaya Gazeta 08.12.2017);
- *«Во время послания Путин также подчеркнул, что государство должно предоставлять прямую поддержку семьям с детьми, которые находятся в **непростом материальном положении**»* (PolitRossiya 21.04.2021);
- *«На аборт она решилась из-за **тяжёлого материального положения**»* (Moskovsky Komsomolets 12.07.2021).

According to our observations, more variations of euphemisms were found with the word "материальный".

Another observation regarding euphemistic expressions in this group is related to the slight variability in grammatical structure, which imposes its own shades of meaning and very subtly affects perception: when the preposition "in," the subject seems to be

immersed in this difficult financial situation, and when the preposition "with," this difficult financial situation is one of the characteristic definitions of the subject (a similar grammar-semantic variation is found in euphemistic expressions used instead of a direct nomination "invalid").

- *«Но у людей бывают разные ситуации, и нынешний порядок оплаты подразумевает (особенно для лиц, находящихся в затруднительном материальном положении), что штраф можно отсрочить, выплатить частями»* (Parlamentskaya Gazeta 13.11.2018).
- *«Злоумышленники подыскивали людей с затруднительным материальным положением и предлагали продать почку за 15 тысяч долларов»* (Argumenty i Fakty 14.04.2017).

Despite the significant prevalence of euphemistic expressions in the texts of modern journalism, which replace the direct nomination "beggar/poor", several compact versions of euphemisms were nevertheless recorded: «малообеспеченный», «малоимущий», «неимущий». However, they also do not contain any hint of complementarity – the negative semantics is immediately apparent in the components "мало-" "не-".

- *«Министерство труда разработало правила предоставления новых выплат для малообеспеченных семей»* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 25.05.2021).
- *«Минтруд подготовил поправки в закон “О государственной социальной помощи”, в котором предложил привлечь ФНС к участию в господдержке малоимущих граждан, а также ввести оценку движимого и недвижимого имущества россиянина или его семьи»* (TASS 07.07.2021).
- *«Неимущие граждане смогут обанкротиться»* (Parlamentskaya Gazeta 20.11.2018).

The euphemistic potential of the expression «за чертой бедности» is debatable. On the one hand, such an expression does not directly ascribe to a person the characteristic of "beggar/poor," but only defines his or her "place" in the semantic space of the financial

situation. On the other hand, the expression «за чертой бедности» may be perceived with a share of hopelessness from the fact that a person has crossed a certain line, is over it, by analogy with the phraseologism «за бортом».

- «По данным ведомства, всего за **чертой бедности** оказались 13,5% жителей страны» (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 18.09.2020).

A variant of the euphemism, such as «человек / семья с невысокими доходами», is not sufficiently precise or specific in meaning.

- «С 1 апреля вводится новая мера поддержки — пособие на детей от восьми до 16 лет включительно для семей с **невысокими доходами**» (TASS 01.04.2022).

The euphemistic expression «человек в трудных условиях» contains the least amount of specificity, since it contains no reference to the economic component - it is possible to relate such a euphemism to the supposed direct nomination "beggar/poor person" only in context:

- «Российский президент Владимир Путин предложил дополнительно выплачивать беременным, оказавшимся **в трудных условиях**, по 6350 рублей в месяц» (PolitRossiya 21.04.2021).

For the same reason – the lack of reference to the economic component – the euphemism «нуждающийся гражданин» is quite abstract in meaning, and the less semantic specificity, the more difficult it is to correctly interpret the euphemism, and the more room for possible manipulation.

- «**Нуждающиеся граждане** могут получить продовольственную поддержку от государства» (Nezavisimaya Gazeta 02.02.2021).

The euphemism «небогатый» has an increased manipulative potential. Such a euphemism is capable of misleading the addressee.

- «Ленобласть готова предложить **небогатым** гражданам льготы на оплату взносов по капремонту» (IA REGNUM 15.08.2014).

Considering the indicated variants of euphemisms used in the texts of the media and news agencies to replace the direct nomination "beggar/poor," we can draw the following conclusion in relation to the ecology of language.

First, there is a topical linguoecological problem. On the one hand, the language consciousness of native Russian speakers does not accept the regular use of the direct nomination "beggar / poor" in communication (including mass communication) - it causes psychological discomfort among its participants when referring to a person in this way. On the other hand, the number of variants of euphemistic substitutions for this direct nomination only in the media is several dozens, which is undoubtedly a lot and which indicates, in turn, the unsatisfactory quality of such euphemistic substitutions. The unsatisfactory quality manifests itself, first and foremost, in its unwieldiness (*«человек с доходом ниже величины прожиточного минимума»* etc.), which does not meet the natural desire to save speech efforts. Less verbose euphemistic expressions are characterized either by a clearly reduced emotional and expressive coloration (*«человек с низким доходом», «малоимущий»*) or by excessive unspecificness, which generates inaccuracy of interpretation (*«небогатый»*).

Second, the Russian language consciousness is actively searching for the most successful euphemism for the nomination "beggar/poor".

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically represented in Figure 4.

**Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "beggar/poor person"**

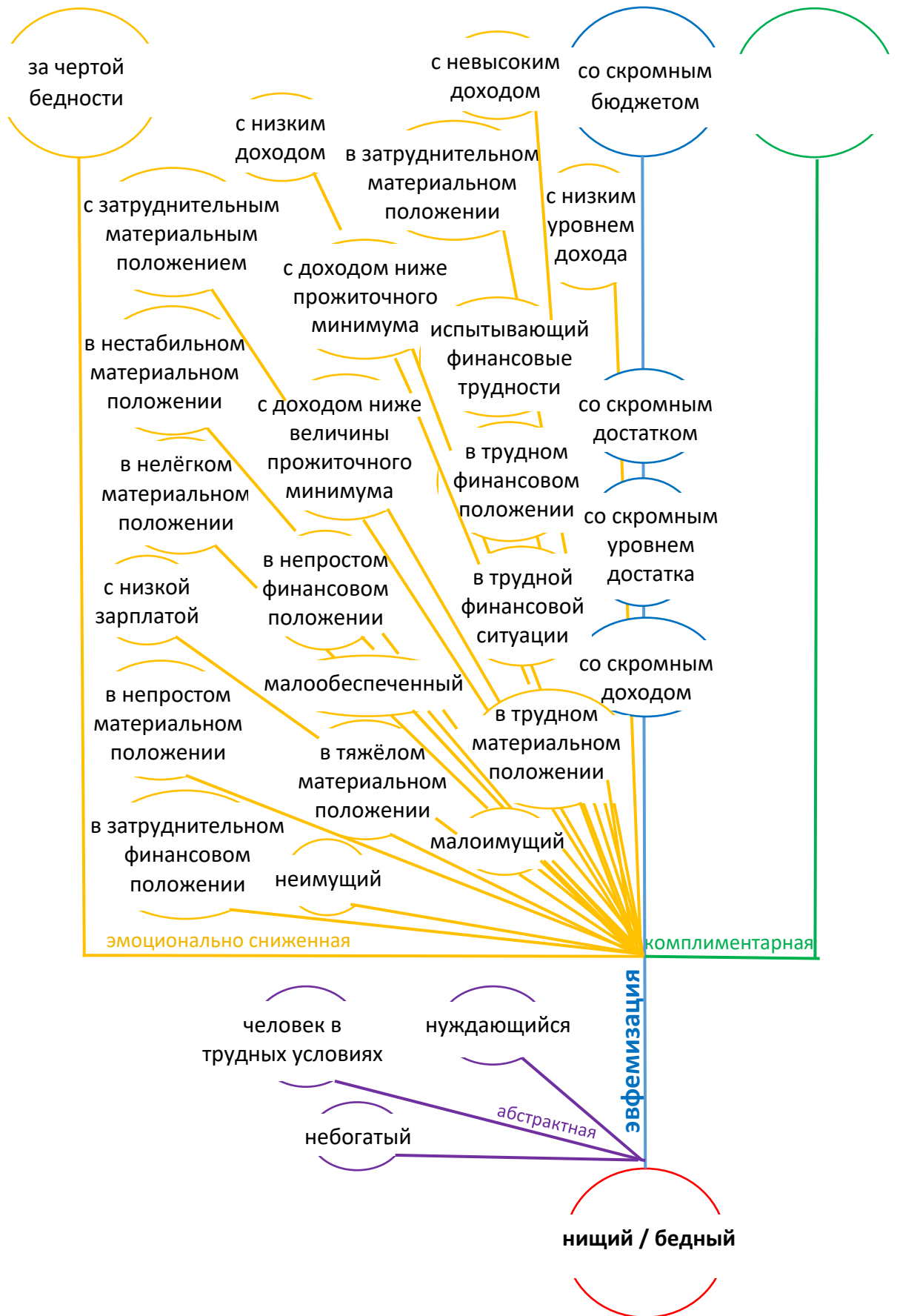


Fig. 4 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'beggar/poor person'".

### 2.1.5. Direct nomination "to die"

The specifics of euphemisms replacing the direct nomination "to die" is expressed in the fact that the emergence and use of such euphemisms is provoked, as a rule, not by a sense of unease or dislike, but by a sense of mental pain and a sense of fear associated with superstition. N. A. Borisov writes: "it has become habitual within the framework of research of the phenomenon of death in the field of social philosophy and socio-humanitarian science initially to speak of the vices of civilization and to confirm this position by changes in the perception of death, its silencing - tabooing of the subject of death". [Borisov, p. 3]. Such perception is observed both in the silencing of words and expressions directly related to the subject of death (for example, the verb "to die"), and in the nonuse of certain words that can hint at death.

One well-known example is the non-use of the word "last" by people whose professions or hobbies involve risks to life, especially pilots, astronauts, divers, and mountain climbers, and its replacement with the word "крайний" in any context, even in cases where such a replacement is semantically equivalent and inappropriate. However, it is not only the superstitious notion of an alleged allusion to death that prompts many native speakers to avoid the word "последний". This word has many meanings, and along with the meanings: "one that is not followed by another, final, being at the very end of something", "final, irrevocable, decisive" [Ushakov's Dictionary] – there is a definition, which characterizes an object or a person negatively: "the lowest among others, the most insignificant of all, bad" [Ibid]. One can assume that someone does not want to call another person *последний* out of a desire not to offend him, but this evaluative meaning of the word manifests itself only in some expressions (for example, *последний негодяй*). At the same time, among the interpretations there is also a rather positive version of the meaning: "the newest, freshest, just appeared" [Ibid]. The word "крайний" also has many meanings: "being at the edge; very distant (extreme north)", "extreme (mostly about negative notions: *крайнее возмущение*, etc.)", "most radical in convictions" [Ibid]. Understanding the meaning of a word taking into account the specific context allows not



to violate the lexical norms of language and accurately express thoughts, superstitions and prejudices only hinder this.

In an effort to avoid using the verb "to die," journalists use a wide variety of euphemistic substitutes.

Among the most common and frequently used euphemisms in today's journalistic texts are: «не стало», «уйти из жизни», «уйти от нас», «покинуть мир / нас», «скончаться»:

- *«Менее часа назад пришла печальная новость — **не стало** Валентина Гафта»* (First Channel. News 12.12.2020);
- *«**Ушёл из жизни** один из первооткрывателей гравитационных волн»* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 06.07.2021);
- *«А я захотела сделать посвящение всем тем, кто выходил на лёд до нас и с нами, всем тем, кто **ушёл от нас**»* (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 13.02.2023);
- *«По традиции, Вести.Ru вспоминают тех, кто **покинул этот мир** в уходящем году»* (Russia 1. Vesti 25.12.2020);
- *«Обвиняемый в убийстве россиянин **скончался** по пути в суд»* (Izvestia 13.07.2021).

Also common in media texts are the euphemistic expressions «потерять человека» and «не удалось спасти», «ценой жизни (сделать что-то)». However, the choice of the second and third expressions is influenced by the specific circumstance of death, in which someone fought for someone's life, saved it. In this case, the second euphemism indicates the death of the one who was saved, and the third euphemism indicates the death of the one who saved.

- *«Год только начался, а **потери** уже велики: 11 звёзд, которых мы **потеряли** в 2021»* (FB.ru 2.18.2021).
- *«Сообщившего о распространении коронавируса врача **спаси не удалось**»* (Russia 1. Vesti 07.02.2020).
- *В Бабаевском районе родственники спасли 8-летнюю внучку из пожара **ценой своей жизни**»* (Moskovsky Komsomolets 09.01.2023).

The euphemisms «погибнуть» and «жертва» are used both to replace the direct nomination "to die" and instead of "to be killed". In addition, the word «жертва» may be used in the sense of "not dead, but injured" – the third example in the following block of examples will serve as a confirmation.

- *«По последним данным, в Турции в результате разрушений, вызванных подземными толчками, **погибли** 43 556 человек»* (Kommersant 23.02.2023).
- *«Число **жертв** пожара в ковид-больнице в Ираке выросло до 54»* (RENTV 13.07.2021).
- *«В ночь с 25 на 26 февраля 1992 года была совершена страшная резня в Ходжалы, о которой он узнал из турецких источников и принял решение помочь выжившим **жертвам** этих событий»* (Media.Az 26.02.2023).

The medically accepted term «летальный исход» in the media also serves a euphemistic function, avoiding the direct nomination "to die".

- *«С начала распространения коронавируса количество **летальных исходов** достигло 162 509, выздоровели 5 700 212 человек»* (Izvestia 05.08.2021).

Indirectly about the fact of death are the euphemistic expressions «стал последним годом жизни», «год (коронавирус и т. п.) унёс».

- *«Сейчас — вновь к событиям года — сложного и полного потерь. Мы провожаем его с надеждой, что наступающий будет лучше. А ещё с болью и грустью о тех, для кого 2020 стал **последним годом в жизни**»* (First Channel. News 27.12.2020).
- *«2020 **год унёс** множество жизней, в том числе из-за пандемии коронавируса»* (Russia 1. Vesti 25.12.2020).

Euphemistic expressions such as: «сердце перестало биться», «скорбный список» – are less commonly used in the media.

- *«По традиции “Экспресс газета” вспоминает выдающихся людей, сердца которых перестали биться в уходящем году»* (Express Gazette 22.12.2020).
- *«В скорбном списке имена, которые значат так много — и для близких людей, и для миллионов сердец»* (First Channel. News 27.12.2020).

Another euphemism found, which is also less frequently used in media texts – «неживой» – is formed by the negation of the antonym, and, accordingly, it is softened by this:

- *«Наталья долго не выходила непосредственно на поиск, говорит, боялась найти пропавшего... **неживым**»* (Argumenty i Fakty 05.12.2022).

A special construction [present tense verb + ellipsis + the same past tense verb] also acts as a euphemism, replacing the direct nomination "to die". Such a construction gives the context a touch of drama, in addition, the contrast of the tense forms of one verb, reinforced by the ellipsis, is very likely to cause the reader or listener to think about the eternity, the finitude of life:

- *«Он **любит**... любил играть с молодыми актёрами в такой словесный пинг-понг и смотреть, как ты “мячики” его отбиваешь»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 31.05.2002).

Vivid imagery is contained in the euphemistic expressions «небо забрало», «небеса забрали», «улететь от нас». The use of such euphemisms implies the expression of a special emotional attitude towards the one who died, moreover, this attitude is distinguished by warmth, good-heartedness, as well as the belief of the author of the words in the immortality of the soul, the idea of the existence of Paradise in heaven.

- *«Малиновского **забрало небо**, которое он очень сильно любил»* (Sport24.ru 18.07.2022).
- *«**Забрали небеса. Улетел от нас самый светлый, жизнелюбивый, талантливый и смелый Боренька**»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 19.10.2022).

In a brief linguoecological commentary, first, it is important to state that euphemistic replacements of the direct nomination "die" are justified and in certain speech situations are necessary, since the direct nomination can cause psychological discomfort to the participants of communication. Secondly, the existing and actively used in modern publicist texts euphemisms referring to the word "die" demonstrate the richness of the language, as they are diverse in structure and accompanying meanings, allow to denote the fact of death more softly, in some cases - figuratively express the idea of it (for example, using the expressions «небеса забрали», «небо забрало»).

Among the euphemistic units examined, only a few require clarification in context: «жертва», «улететь от нас», «уйти от нас», «покинуть нас», «потерять» – the rest are interpreted unambiguously and do not mislead the recipient of the text.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically presented in Figure 5.

**Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "to die"**

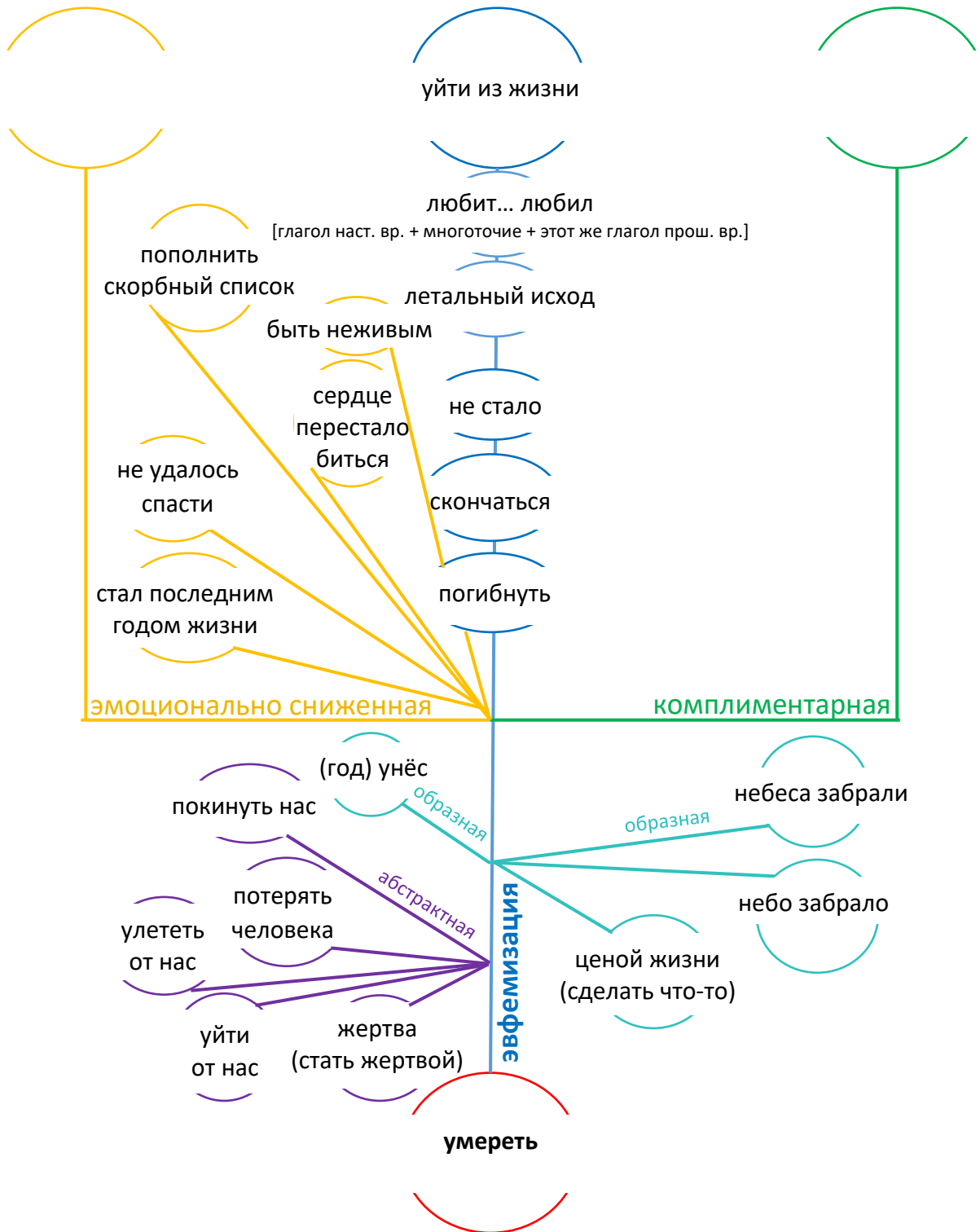


Fig. 5 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'to die'".

### 2.1.6. Direct nomination "to kill"

The direct nomination "to kill" also evokes negative emotions in the participants of communication and is subconsciously tabooed by them. At the same time, unlike the verb "to die", which allows the idea of non-violence, the verb "to kill" does not simply exclude non-violence, but directly points to it, making it even more gloomy. That is why the use of this verb is quite often avoided in the texts of the media - instead, various euphemisms are actively used. This is confirmed by a fragment of a news item on central television, replete with variants of euphemisms, replacing the direct nomination "to kill".

- *«В Назрани ликвидировали участников банды, которая совершала теракты на Северном Кавказе. Боевики оказали ожесточенное сопротивление. Их обезвредили, но, увы, ценой жизни двоих сотрудников спецназа ФСБ. <...> В результате боестолкновения двое бандитов нейтрализованы. <...> И, уничтожив бандитов, силовики предотвратили жертвы среди мирного населения» (First Channel. News 24.11.2016).*

In this context, six variants of euphemisms are highlighted at once, and the expressions «ценой жизни» and «жертвы», considered in the previous paragraph, are more correctly interpreted here not through the concept of "death", but precisely through the concept of violent death. In this news fragment, the variability of euphemistic expressions makes it possible to avoid not only direct nomination, but also tautology.

Among all the euphemisms found in the texts of modern journalism, the euphemism «нейтрализовать» stands out as a substitute for the direct nomination "kill":

- *«Две недели назад в Грозном в рамках контртеррористической операции нейтрализовали четырёх боевиков. Злоумышленники, блокированные в частном доме, оказывали сопротивление» (Internovosti.ru 27.10.2020).*

Such a euphemism is the most neutral in its emotional and expressive coloring, but it cannot always be understood correctly («нейтрализован» means killed or only due to someone's actions became non-dangerous?), so it requires clarification through the context, otherwise it may become a means of manipulating the recipient's consciousness.

In this aspect, another euphemism «обезвредить» is similar. This verb in its dictionary meaning - "to deprive the ability to cause harm, to make harmless" [Ushakov's Dictionary] - is also used as a euphemism to replace the word "kill". At the same time, given its original semantics, as in the case of the verb "neutralize," such a euphemism can be properly understood only in the context in which it is used, or more broadly, in a general information-events context, i.e. when comparing information about the incident from different sources, for example:

- *«В Чечне **обезвредили** четверых боевиков в ходе антитеррористической операции»* (Interesnaya Rossiya 13.10.2020);
- *«Убитые в Грозном боевики приехали из-за рубежа. Господин Кадыров рассказал, что в ходе операции были **уничтожены** четыре боевика, которые “планировали ряд террористических актов на территории региона”»* (Коммерсантъ 13.10.2020).

For comparison, the following example in which the verb «обезвредить» is not a euphemism for the direct nomination "kill":

- *Агентам удалось проникнуть в дом через чёрный вход и **обезвредить** преступника. Злоумышленника приговорили к девяти годам тюрьмы за покушение на убийство»* (Noticia.ru 22.10.2020).

The contextual meaning of the verbs «убрать» and «устранить» can also correlate with the verb "kill" - in these cases they play the role of euphemisms:

- *«“Заказали тебя **убрать**”: в сети появился новый вид мошенничества»* (Rambler. News 16.02.2017);
- *«Высказывались предположения, что группа туристов встретила в горах беглых заключённых, которые решили **устранить** свидетелей. Премьера “Перевала Дятлова” состоится 16 ноября в 22:00 на телеканале ТНТ»* (Public Service News 29.10.2020).

Other noteworthy euphemisms are «зачистить (местность)» and «очистить (местность)». These euphemisms are united not only by the fact that they entered journalism from the police slang of the 1990s [Dictionary of Modern Slang of Russian

Politicians and Journalists], but also by the shift in focus from "object" to "place" through the construction «очистили, зачистили что от кого». A correct understanding of such euphemisms is also possible only in context.

- *«Также в провинции Дейр эз-Зор ВКС РФ помогли САА **“очистить”** от ИГИЛ<sup>×</sup> северо-западный берег реки Евфрат. Как сообщает ФАН, **зачистка** местности от террористов идёт не только в окрестностях Акробата»* (Politpazl 23.09.2017).

One of the frequent euphemisms used in the media instead of the direct nomination "to kill" is the euphemism «ликвидировать». The advantage of such a euphemism is, first of all, that it is interpreted unambiguously not only in context, but also within the word combination, does not mislead the recipient, is not stylistically marked, and is almost neutral in its emotional and expressive coloring.

- *«По данным Avia.pro, ссылающегося на информированный источник, было **ликвидировано** 140 боевиков, еще 70 получили ранения различной степени тяжести»* (Novye Izvestiya \* 27.10.2020);
- *«В октябре в зоне проведения контртеррористической операции в Октябрьском районе Грозного были **ликвидированы** четверо боевиков, также **погибли** двое сотрудников Росгвардии»* (Vzglyad.ru 27.10.2020).

It is no coincidence that the word «погибли» is additionally highlighted in the second example, since in this context it also acts as a euphemism instead of the direct nomination «были убиты (боевиками)». This arrangement of euphemisms is indicative: «ликвидированы» in relation to the militants, and «погибли» in relation to Rosgvardiya personnel.

The following series of words and phrases are characterized by their common feature – a reduced emotional and expressive coloring: «лишить жизни», «замучить»,

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<sup>×</sup> Terrorist organization. The organization's activities are banned on the territory of the Russian Federation by decision of the Supreme Court: <http://www.fsb.ru/fsb/npd/terror.htm> (in List No. 22).

<sup>\*</sup> This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:  
 "Novye Izvestiya" - source blocked in 2022: <https://ria.ru/20220316/roskomnadzor-1778449564.html?ysclid=in2ufyn6jh175019113>.



«расправиться с / над кем-либо», «уничтожить». The euphemistic potential of such words is low because of the negative component of meaning they contain, referring to "deprivation", to "torment", to implied cruelty. Some of these euphemisms of them (in particular «замучить» and «расправиться») clarify the text, indicating the nature of the action.

- *«Как доказали следователи, с девушкой **расправился** её ревнивый жених»* (Russia 1. Vesti. Duty part 14.02.2023).
- *«Генерал Дмитрий Карбышев, **замученный** нацистами в концлагере, но не перешедший на сторону врага, является примером мужества и чести советского военачальника»* (TASS 26.10.2020).
- *«Он **лишил** мальчика **жизни** с помощью самурайского меча из-за плохой успеваемости в школе, об этом сообщает South China Morning Post»* (Tsargrad 17.02.2023).
- *«В результате был **уничтожен** 21 боевик, включая двух командиров радикалов. Еще пятеро получили ранения»* (IA Krasnaya Vesna 23.10.2020).

Professional expressions such as «стрелять на поражение» and «открыть огонь на поражение» are also euphemistic, implying the verb "to kill":

- *«Около часа ранее судимого налётчика уговаривали сдаться, но тот всё-таки ранил одну из женщин, и сотрудникам полиции пришлось **стрелять на поражение**. Тело грабителя прошили пять пуль»* (Komsomolskaya Pravda 29.09.2020).

Similarly, such an expression as «высшая мера наказания» acts as a euphemism. However, here we should make the following clarification: such an expression is indirectly related to the verb "to kill", because a direct nomination for it would be "death penalty". The best example would be two fragments similar in content:

- *«Президент США Дональд Трамп дал Минюсту указание разработать меры по введению смертной казни за массовые убийства на почве ненависти»* (RBC 05.08.2019);

- «Президент США Дональд Трамп ранее заявил о необходимости **применять высшую меру наказания** в отношении виновных в преступлениях на почве ненависти и массовых убийствах» (Izvestia 17.01.2020).

The phrase «методы усиленного допроса» in the following news fragment also acts as a euphemism, but such euphemism is narrowly contextual.

- «Я поддерживаю такие методы, когда у разведки есть достаточно информации по тому или иному кадру, по отношению к которому применяются так называемые **методы усиленного допроса**. <...> В докладе говорится, что минимум 26 человек были **замучены ошибочно**» (Izvestia 13.12.2014).

The variability of euphemistic units presented in the media, replacing the direct nomination "to kill", is justified and even necessary from the point of view of linguoecology. First of all, it is due to the psycholinguistic factor, because the topic of murder and death causes not only dislike, but also fear, including unconscious fear, therefore, comfortable communication requires other words that do not directly refer to the concept of death and murder. In addition, the choice of variants makes it possible to avoid tautology, to make a clarification about the committed act, although some euphemisms without a full-fledged context can mislead the addressee.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically presented in Figure 6.

**Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "to kill"**

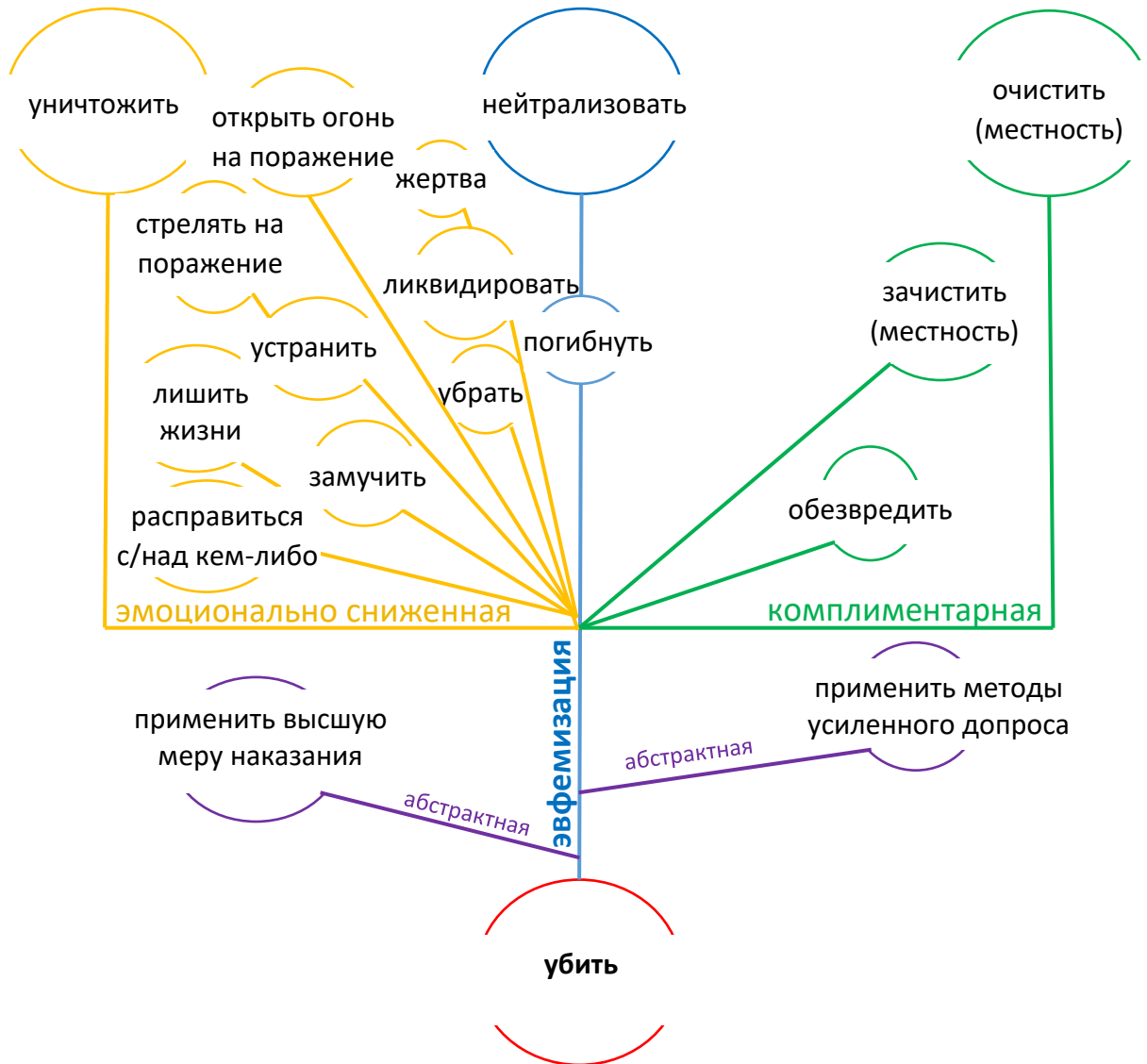


Fig. 6 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'to kill'".

### 2.1.7. Direct nomination "to dismiss"

From 2014 to 2021 (the period available for analysis in the system of the National Corpus of the Russian language), in the central and regional media there are recorded 14901 examples of the use of the direct nomination "to dismiss" in 11472 texts. Nevertheless, the fact that labor relations do not end by the employee's initiative contains negative semantics, so the media also use more than twenty variants of euphemisms instead of the direct nomination "to dismiss".

Such euphemisms as «освободить от должности» and «предложить написать заявление “по собственному желанию”» are among the most neutral in terms of their emotional and expressive coloring. The positive semantics of "freedom", "release" and "own wish" they contain, supplemented in some cases by the idea of "offer", allows us to speak more mildly about someone's dismissal. At the same time, the expression «попросить освободить кресло» does not sound as soft as the previous expressions.

- «Путин **освободил от должностей** ряд генералов-“силовиков”» (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 06.02.2020).
- «Что делать, если начальник предлагает неоднозначный выбор – вакцинироваться от ковида или **писать заявление “по собственному желанию”**» (Metro Gazette 19.07.2021).
- «Гудим-Левковича **попросили освободить кресло** руководителя пресс-службы мэрии Архангельска» (Moskovsky Komsomolets 03.02.2016).

The euphemism «оптимизация» // «оптимизировать» produces the most positive effect due to the reference to the semantically positive concept "optimal", as well as due to the consonance with the word "optimism". The euphemism's brightly positive charge explains some of the facts of writing such a word in quotation marks or with an explanation through direct nomination. Of course, the presence in one context of a direct nomination and its euphemistic replacement depreciates the softening property of the latter.

- «**Оптимизация** = массовые увольнения. **Оптимизировать** Twitter Илон Маск также обещал заранее. Но так же публично убеждал

*общественность, что слухи о масштабных сокращениях – это всего лишь слухи» (INC-News 04.11.2022);*

- *«“**Оптимизация**” затягивается: увольнения в мэрии Ярославля закончатся к концу марта. На первом этапе, который должен был закончиться до 20 декабря, под “**оптимизацию**” попадали 30% штата» (Yarnovosti \* 20.01.2023);*
- *«Мишустин анонсировал “**оптимизацию**” системы госуправления. Она подразумевает сокращение штата чиновников на 10%» (Novaya Gazeta \* 16.11.2020).*

The euphemisms «сократить» and «попасть под сокращение», on the one hand, contain negative connotations associated with the idea of reduction rather than increase and growth, but, on the other hand, the unexpressed subject of the action creates the impression of the involuntary nature of the action - due to this the effect of mitigating the negative meaning of the implied direct nomination is achieved.

- *«В Туркмении **сокращают** сотрудников госпредприятий и задерживают зарплаты. Согласно имеющейся информации, **под сокращение попадают** в том числе проводники пассажирских составов и работники инженерно-технических служб» (REGNUM 26.09.2016).*

An ambiguous euphemistic effect characterizes the group of expressions with such verbs, which either by themselves or in the word combination contain a negative meaning, although the direct nomination remains unspoken: «заставить освободить место», «отправить в отставку», «снять с должности», «расторгнуть трудовой договор с сотрудником», «расторгнуть трудовые отношения», «прекратить трудовые отношения с работником».

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:

"Yarnovosti" - foreign agent (in the Register № 614: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/activity/directions/998/>);

"Novaya Gazeta" - undesirable organization (No. 92 in the List: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/872881>.

- «Заместитель руководителя фракции “Яблоко” Борис Вишневский со ссылкой на господина Лавленцева сообщил, что того **заставили освободить место** для экс-министра» (Kommersant 12.11.2014).
- «Премьер-министр Туниса Хишам Машиши во вторник **отправил в отставку** министра здравоохранения страны Фаузи Мехди в условиях ухудшающейся обстановки с пандемией коронавируса» (TASS 20.07.2021).
- «Отсутствие прибыли у компании, пострадавшей из-за коронавируса, ещё не повод для **расторжения трудового договора с сотрудниками**» (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 08.04.2020).
- «Во время пандемии работодатель вправе **расторгнуть трудовые отношения с работником** из-за грубого нарушения дисциплины и ещё ряда моментов» (Gazeta.SPb 08.04.2020).
- «Владимир Путин **снял с должностей** нескольких руководителей региональных управлений МВД, Следственного комитета и МЧС» (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 06.02.2020).

The following group of euphemistic expressions is united, on the one hand, by the presence of the sense of "forced action", on the other hand, it shows a certain abstractness, vagueness, i.e. it does not specify what the reason for dismissal is and who has the initiative for such forced action: «вынужден уйти», «вынужденно покинуть кресло», «вынужденно покинуть пост», «вынужденно освободить кресло», «вынужденно освободить место»:

- «Британское издание *The Guardian* сообщило о том, что эпидемиолог Имперского колледжа в Лондоне Нил Фергюсон **вынужденно покинул пост** правительственного советника из-за нарушения режима самоизоляции» (Pravda.Ru 06.05.2020);
- «В начале октября свои тёплые **кресла вынужденно освободили** министр управления финансами региона Сергей Кандеев и вице-

*губернатор, руководитель департамента правопорядка и противодействия коррупции» (Stolitsa S. 16.20.2017);*

- *«После неудачи клуба “Гамбург” в поединке с “Баварией” (0:1) руководство приняло решение об увольнении тренера Бруно Лаббадиа. Вместе с ним будут **вынуждены уйти** также его помощники» (VladTime 25.09.2016).*

The euphemisms «расстаться с сотрудником» and «потерять кресло» soften the negative meaning of the direct nomination they replace, thanks to the connotation of "regret" that naturally accompany "parting" and "loss.

- *«Работодатель сможет **расстаться с сотрудником**, который не выходит на связь» (Izvestia 24.09.2020).*
- *«В числе **потерявших свои кресла** – уличённый во взятке министр внутренних дел Коми» (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 06.02.2020).*

The ironic or, in some cases, sarcastic tone of the context is given by variants of euphemisms with the word «попросили», and in contemporary journalism we can observe variants of writing this verb both in quotation marks, clearly signaling the presence of ironic connotations, hint, but also writing without quotation marks: «попросили с поста», «“попросили” с должности», «“попросили” освободить должность», «“попросили” уйти».

- *«Храпачый возглавлял Приволжскую ЖД с 2003 года, когда его **попросили с поста** замминистра путей сообщения РФ» (Astrakhanskie Novosti 13.09.2016).*
- *«За все эти “подвиги” Юрия Восканяна пока только **“попросили” с должности**» (SevNews.info 06.09.2016).*
- *«“Хорошей” для России причиной отставки Авакова Марков считает тот факт, что главу МВД **“попросили” освободить должность** из-за постоянных помех в выполнении Минских договорённостей» (Yuzhnyy Fedny 16.07.2021).*

- «...мэра *Шахт Сергея Пономаренко, которого уйти “попросили”*» (Kommersant. Rostov-on-Don 24.12.2015).

As a result of the language game realized in the euphemism «его “ушли” с поста», the context not only receives a mitigation of the negative meaning of the implied direct nomination, but also acquires a pronounced ironic character. At the same time, the colloquial stylistic coloring of such a euphemism significantly affects the possibilities of its use.

- «...*Вашингтон решил наконец-то дать отмашку на выполнение соглашения, поэтому Авакова и “ушли” с поста*» (Southern Federal 16.07.2021).

Abstract variants of euphemisms: «кадровые перестановки», «кадровые изменения», «изменить трудовые отношения» – usually require additional explanation in context through another variant of euphemism or through direct nomination. In the second case, the euphemistic potential of such an expression is lost. Without an additional explanation it is problematic or impossible to correctly interpret the essence of the context.

- «*Зеленский после отставки Арестовича анонсировал **кадровые перестановки** на Украине. <...> Владимир Зеленский в своём телеграм-канале написал, что сегодня-завтра на Украине произойдут **кадровые изменения***» (Tsargrad 24.01.2023).
- «*Напомним, что в недавнем времени в правительстве Украины произошли **крупные кадровые изменения**. Некоторые чиновники, занимающие должности на различных уровнях, были уволены*» (TUT News 01.02.2023).

In the light of linguoecology, the euphemisms used in modern journalism instead of the direct nomination "to dismiss" reflect a generally positive state of ecology of language and language consciousness of Russian speakers in the aspect of this topic, because, despite the existing large number of euphemistic units (about thirty), the use of the direct nomination "to dismiss" is numerous in media texts, i.e. often everything is



called by its name. This can be explained by the fact that, first, unlike the direct nominations discussed in the previous two paragraphs of this paragraph, the topic of dismissal has never been taboo, like, for example, the topic of death; and, second, dismissal is perceived by society, although as an unpleasant phenomenon, but not as something vicious, shameful, humiliating or terrible.

Another positive point is that the euphemistic expressions identified in the modern media are diverse in structure, emotional and expressive coloring, different in stylistic coloring. Consequently, by means of such euphemisms not only the negative meaning of the text is softened, which allows reducing the possible psychological discomfort of a person perceiving such information, but it also allows avoiding tautology and introducing additional connotations through certain options of euphemisms, changing the stylistics of the text.

Some euphemisms with high manipulative potential, i.e. those that blur the meaning of the text and may mislead the addressee (e.g., *«кадровые перестановки»*, *«кадровые изменения»*, *«изменить трудовые отношения»* in the meaning of "to dismiss") have a negative impact on the ecology of the language. In addition, certain variants of euphemisms are cumbersome (in particular for media news texts), which does not meet the desire to save speech efforts and unnecessarily increases the volume of the text, while not in terms of content.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically represented in Figure 7.

**Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "to dismiss"**

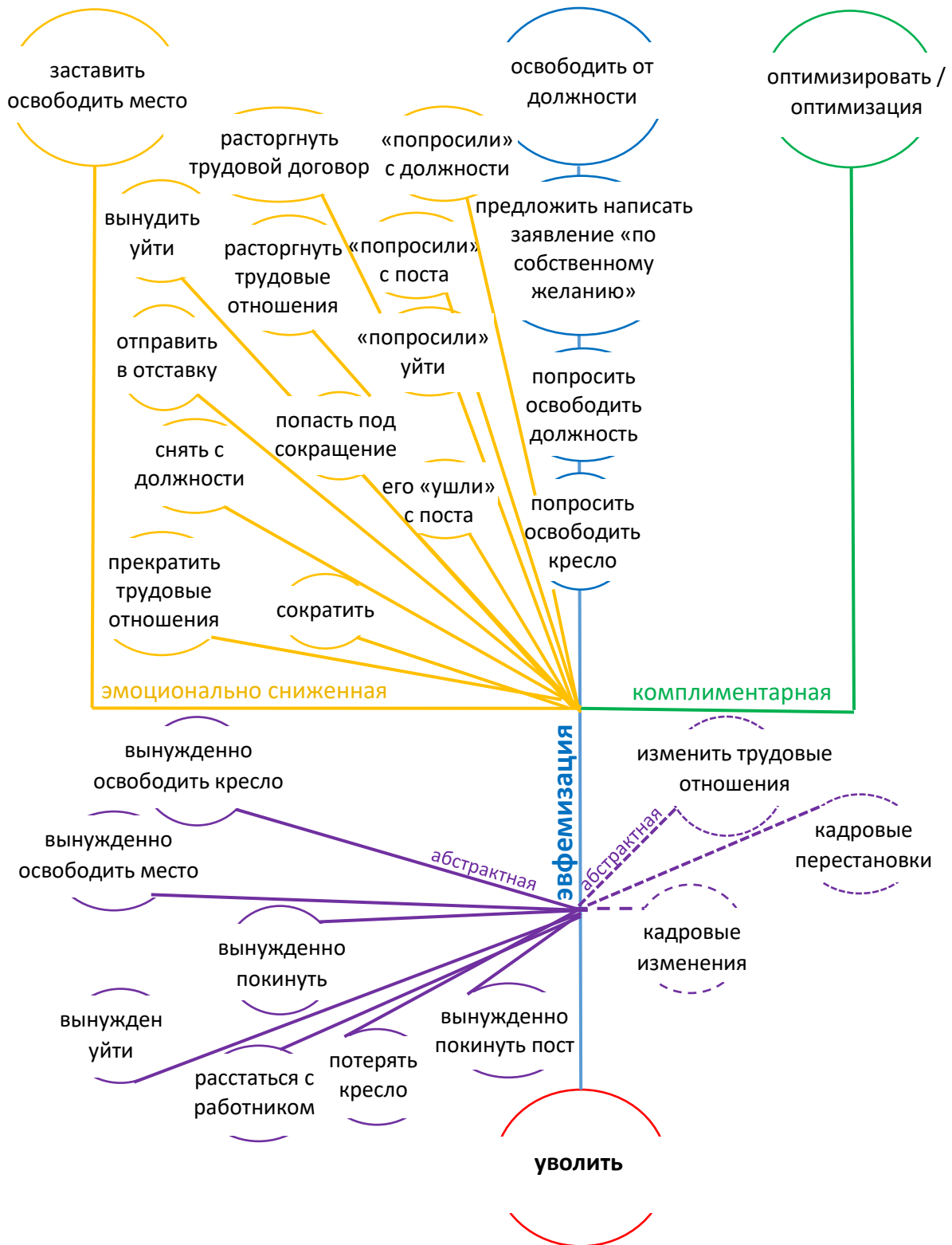


Fig. 7 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'to dismiss'".

### 2.1.8. Direct nomination "to lose (in sports)"

In the texts of modern journalism on sports topics, in order to avoid the direct nomination "to lose," a number of euphemisms are used, which are conventionally grouped as follows.

The euphemistic expressions of the first group combine the most positive connotations inherent in them, thanks to such components as "good luck", "smile" and the generous "give way" (*уступить*). These euphemisms effectively soften the negative semantics of the implied direct nomination: «удача улыбнулась сопернику», «уступить другой команде», while being characterized not as complimentary but as apologetic-softening.

- «*“Тем не менее, мы сумели сравнять счёт, а в концовке **удача улыбнулась сопернику**”, – заявил Касильяс в послематчевом комментарии прессе*» (Euro-Football 18.04.2012).
- «*Пока Италия праздновала триумф своей сборной на чемпионате Европы, Англия, чья команда **уступила ей в финальном матче, разбиралась со своими болельщиками***» (Kommersant 13.07.2021).

The second group of euphemisms is characterized by their restrained assessment of the losing situation: «удача была на стороне соперника», «удача была на стороне противника», «игра не в нашу пользу».

- «*У нас были шансы забить ещё, но **удача была на стороне ЦСКА. Хочется поздравить соперника с победой***» (Rossiyskaya Gazeta 15.08.2015).
- «*Другое дело, что **игра сложилась не в нашу пользу. Надо посмотреть спокойно матч и делать определённые выводы***» (Gazeta.RU 22.06.2021).

The third group is euphemistic expressions, in which the positive semantics of the noun is leveled by the negative semantics of the verb, nevertheless, they perform the function of softening the meaning of direct nomination: «упустить победу», «удача отвернулась».

- «Евро-2020. Сборная Швеции упустила победу над Испанией» (Vesti. Russia 24. 15.10.2019).
- «Проблема в том, что “Лацио” выглядит очень неплохо. Да, в последнем туре **удача отвернулась**, но до этого разгромили “Милан”, не пропускали на протяжении трёх встреч» (Championship 02.02.2023).

The fourth group are euphemisms containing the concept of "failure". Such euphemisms are characterized by a reduced emotional and expressive coloring, thus they fulfill their euphemistic function not so much by softening the negative meaning of the signifier, as by blurring this meaning and avoiding specifics: «неудача», «неудачное выступление команды», «игра завершилась неудачей», «неудачно сыграть», «потерпеть неудачу».

- «**Неудача** в поединке с красно-синими стала для команды девятой подряд» (Lenta.Ru 25.01.2027).
- «Пилот “Альфа Таури” Пьер Гасли прокомментировал **неудачное выступление** команды на Гран-при Турции» (Championship 16.11.2020).
- «Итальянцы в решающем матче Евро играли в четвертый раз. Две предыдущие попытки одержать верх – в 2000 и 2012 годах – **завершились неудачей**. До этого трофей Италии удалось завоевать лишь один раз – в 1968 году» (Deutsche Welle - Russian\* 12.07.2021).
- «Уфимский “Кировец” **неудачно сыграл** в Нижнем Новгороде» (Argumenty i Fakty 02.02.2023).
- «В конечном счёте Англия **потерпела неудачу**. Они **потерпели неудачу** на поле» (Kommersant 12.07.2021).

The next group are euphemistic expressions that indirectly - through a soft reference to the fans' feelings - indicate a loss: «не оправдать надежд болельщиков», «не оправдать ожиданий болельщиков».

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:  
 "Deutsche Welle" - foreign agent (in the Register No. 340: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/activity/directions/998/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/826249>.

- *«Волгоградская команда не оправдала надежд болельщиков, хотя и показала живую игру, а игроки пытались реабилитироваться за прошлые неудачи и добиться долгожданной победы» (Vysota 102.27.11.2021).*
- *«“МЮ” не оправдал ожиданий болельщиков, – цитирует BBC Невилла-младшего» (Sport-Express 18.04.2014).*

The latter group includes euphemistic expressions that initially contain negative connotations («не смогли добиться победы», «разочаровать болельщиков») and do not increase the emotional tone of the context.

- *«Они не смогли добиться первой победы на крупном турнире за 55 лет. Они не смогли вернуть футбол на родину» (Kommersant 12.07.2021).*
- *«И результат, и игра команды разочаровали и болельщиков, и спортивных функционеров» (First Channel. News 08.07.2021).*

In the linguoecological assessment of the euphemisms used here instead of the direct nomination "to lose (in sports)", two observations are important: 1) in general, the coexistence of a relatively small number of euphemisms, different in structure and emotional and expressive coloring, with their characteristic bright metaphoricity, is positive for the communication process, participants in communication, language, language consciousness of its speakers; 2) one of the main goals of journalistic texts on sports topics is to review the competitions and reports on the results of the competition. On the one hand, journalists in most cases strive to mark these results as fact, clearly and unambiguously, i.e. avoiding the manipulation of such information. On the other hand, they also try to present information about the loss in a correct, soft and psychologically comfortable way for those who are upset by such an outcome of a game or competition. Many of the euphemisms mentioned in this paragraph are aimed at solving both problems, which is favorable from the position of language ecology.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically represented in Figure 8.

**Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "to lose (in sports)"**

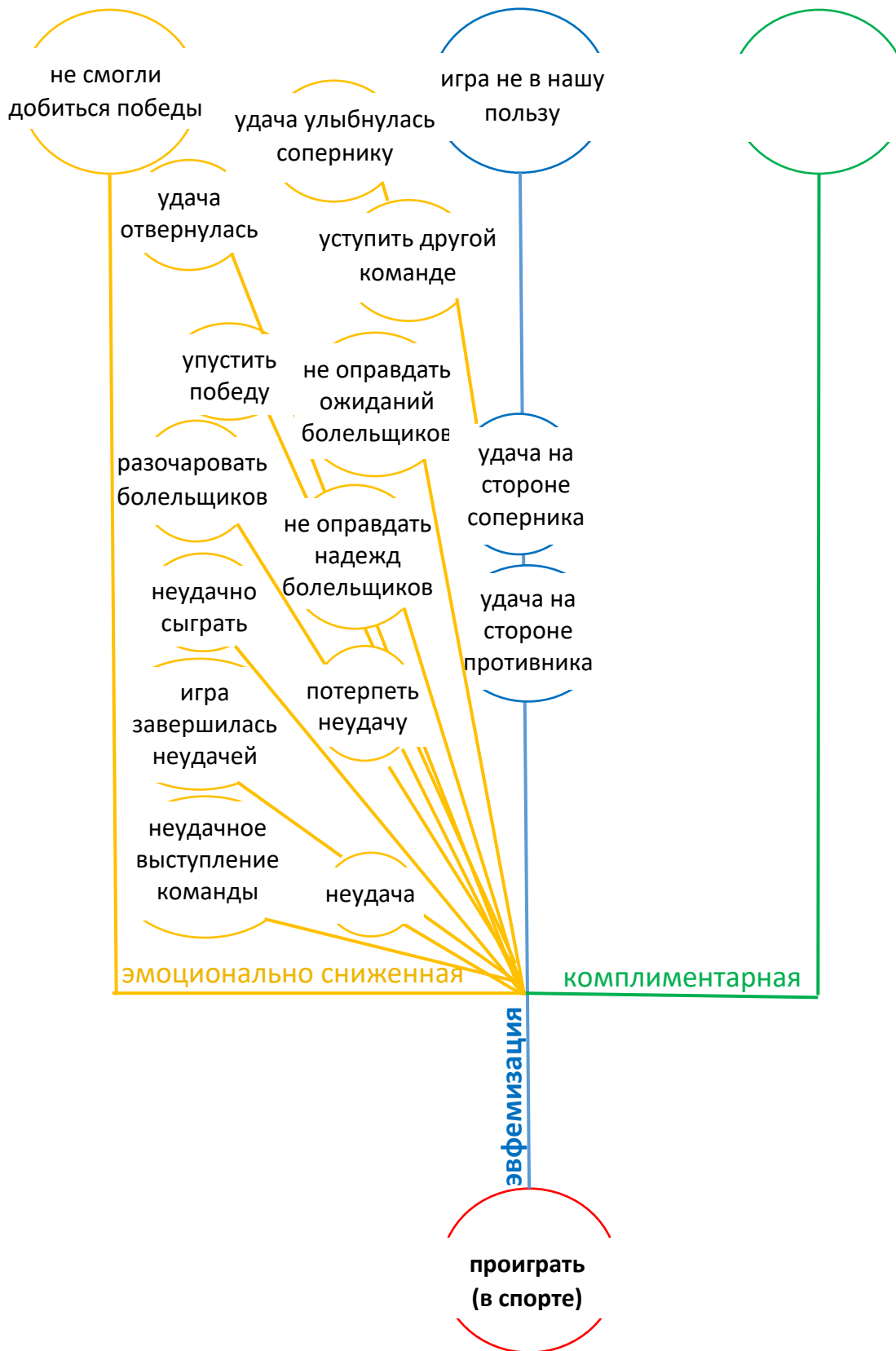


Fig. 8 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'to lose (in sports)'".

### 2.1.9. Direct nomination "*illegal finances*"

The direct nomination, or more precisely, the concept of «незаконные финансы» in this research refers to money concealed by an entity from the state, i.e. money are outside of state control and accounting. Such capital or such wages are outside the legal framework and are therefore perceived as an illegal negative phenomenon, to denote which the media resort to euphemistic substitutions. At the same time, the expression «незаконные финансы» itself is probably the result of prior euphemization, a hyperonym for money obtained through the abuse of law in the application of financial schemes.

A small number of euphemistic substitutions for the phrase "illegal finances" were found in contemporary news journalism texts, and they do not differ significantly in form and meaning: «нелегальный капитал», «теневого капитал», «серый капитал», «"серый" капитал», «серая зарплата», «зарплата "в конверте"».

Examples of contexts with these euphemisms and brief comments will follow.

The expression «нелегальный капитал» is the absolute equivalent of the expression «незаконный капитал» only with the difference that its basis is not the Proto-Slavic root "*\*kon*" («связано с кон, исконі, нача́ть, начну́; первоначальное значение "начало"» [Fasmer, p. 75]), but the Latin – "*leg*". Since this form of foreign origin has long been customary for speakers of the Russian language, the question of whether this expression performs the function of euphemism is debatable:

– «В Россию зовут *нелегальный капитал*» (Gazeta.ru 25.12.2000).

The euphemism «теневого капитал» has a pronounced figurativeness, due to which there is a "blurring" of the original meaning of the implied direct nomination. At the same time, such a euphemism, created on the associative connection of illicit capital with the capital, which has remained in the shadows, does not sufficiently neutralize the negative meaning – the emotional and expressive coloring of the euphemistic expression remains reduced.

- *«Центробанк России обнаружил в 2020 году рекордный за шесть лет приток **теневого капитала** из-за границы, сообщает Finanz.ru»* (Rambler. News 26.01.2021).

Euphemisms with the word «серый» are formed on the same principle as euphemisms with the word «теневогой». The associative connection may be made both with the same shadow by the parameter of color similarity or its property of making something less obvious, hidden, or directly with the gray color itself in opposition, for example, to the white color, which symbolizes clarity, honesty, purity in these situations. Note also that in the first case the word «серый» is written in quotation marks, which emphasize that the word is used in a figurative sense, that it is a hint to the direct nomination «незаконный капитал». In the second and third contexts there are no quotation marks for the word «серый» – the reader's attention is not accentuated on the fact that there is a hint in front of him. It may also indicate a different degree of terminologization, which in this case is due to metaphorization. In the expression where the word «серый» is written in quotation marks, the signs of the term are less evident.

- *«Попробуй отними: Лондон объявил войну **“серым”** капиталам. Жену осуждённого банкира из Азербайджана обязали отчитаться о происхождении средств»* (Izvestia 09.02.2020).
- *«Доля **серого капитала** в структуре оттока капитала из России в 2012-2013 годах достигала 20-40%, заявил премьер Дмитрий Медведев»* (RIA Novosti 22.04.2014).
- *«**Серую зарплату** хотят приравнять ко взятке»* (Kommersant 21.05.2020).

The next euphemism – «зарплата “в конверте”» – is neutral in its emotional and expressive coloring, motivated by the way in which part of the salary is transferred to the employee unofficially (in excess of the amount specified in the employment contract) in violation of the law in order to reduce the tax burden on the organization, as well as to influence the employee's behavior. The quotation marks in such a euphemistic phrase



indicate a hint contained in it, signaling the need for a non-literal understanding of the expression «в конверте».

- *«Число согласных на зарплату “в конверте” россиян достигло минимума за 12 лет» (Gazeta.ru 13.04.2021).*

Variants of euphemisms of this quality and in this quantity do not pose a threat to the ecology of the Russian language. There is no tendency to increase the layer of words and expressions acting as euphemistic substitutes for the concept of «незаконные финансы» in the media texts for 2014 – 2023. There is no manipulative influence on the reader or listener through the euphemisms found, because all the euphemistic expressions mentioned are interpreted unambiguously, being euphemistic phraseological expressions. At the same time, it is noticeable that journalists tend to avoid direct nomination - the concept of «незаконные финансы» – and the existing variants of euphemisms satisfy their need for replacement.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically presented in Figure 9.

## Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "illegal finances"

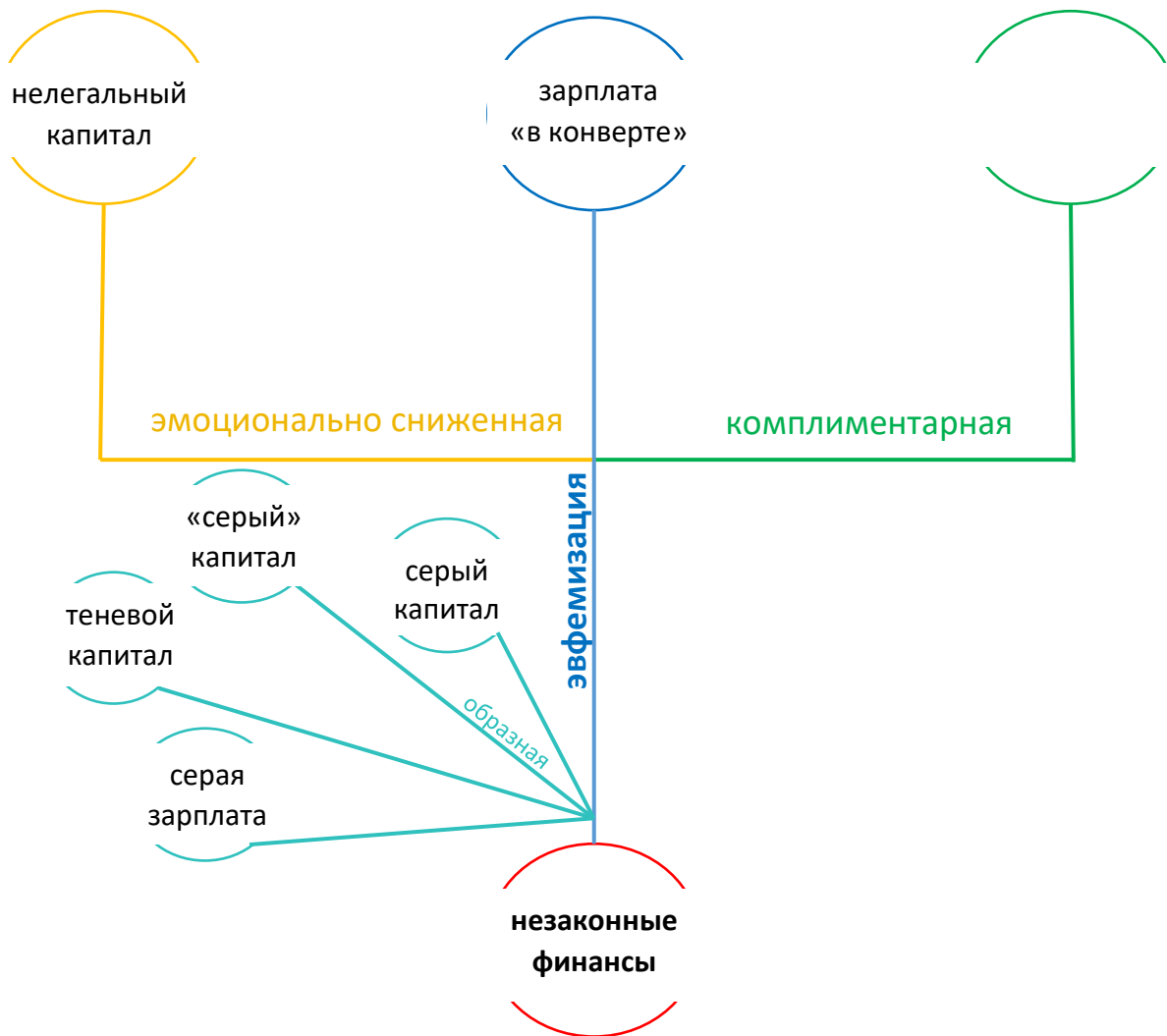


Fig. 9 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'illegal finances'".

### 2.1.10. Direct nomination "*bribe*"

The word "взятка" in media texts is usually used directly, without euphemistic substitutions. According to the National Corpus of the Russian language, in the entire newspaper subcorpus of the central and regional media (texts from 08.1983 to 12.2021) 45,633 words of direct nomination "взятка" were recorded in 22,376 sources. Limiting the results of the search to the time frame of this dissertation research, we find 17,269 uses of the direct nomination "bribe" in 8,600 sources.

Cases of euphemistic substitutions for the word "взятка" are infrequent. The rarity of the use of euphemisms instead of the direct nomination "взятка" also explains their low variety, in other words: if a direct nomination denoting some unpleasant or unacceptable phenomenon for society is often used, it usually, though not always, has few euphemism variants at this point in history.

The following variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "взятка" were identified: «спасибо», «благодарность», «подарок» and a variant with characteristic imagery – «на чай». Examples of their use in context are presented below in a row.

- *«Среди тех, кто обращался в течение последнего года в государственные медицинские учреждения, 17% попали в ситуацию, когда для получения медицинской помощи необходимо было передать персоналу **подарок** <...>. При этом сумма, которую в среднем тратят россияне на **“благодарность”** медикам, составляет 4,2 тыс. рублей. В 2013 году **подарки** были почти в два раза дешевле — 2643 рубля» (Izvestia 12.12.2014).*
- *«Когда **спасибо в карман не положишь**... В обиходе у нас порой в ответ на слова благодарности можно услышать, что **из спасибо ни шубу не сошьешь, ни щей не сваришь**. В чиновничьих кабинетах так не говорят, но, бывает, отвечают: “Не стоит благодарности”, намекая на явно противоположное» (Argumenty Nedeli Vladivostok 14-21.07.2021).*
- *«“**Это от души на чай**”: водитель из Таджикистана пытался подкупить красноярского гаишника взяткой в 500 рублей» (NewsLab 13.11.2019).*

Here the expression «на чай» is not used in its original meaning: "remuneration, usually monetary, for minor services; tips" [Modern Dictionary], but exactly as a euphemism - a replacement for the word "взятка". Similar euphemisms are also found in other languages with the only difference that instead of *tea* in Portuguese, for example, in Angola and Mozambique - *gasosa (soda)*, in French, for example, in France, Niger, Cameroon, Republic of Congo - *pot de vin (glass of wine)*, in Turkish - *çorba parası (money for soup)*.

It is noteworthy that none of the detected variants of euphemistic substitutions for the word "bribe" has a reduced emotional and expressive coloring. Among other things, such variants often have an ironic connotation, which gives a humorous character to the whole context. At the same time, these variants of euphemisms definitely fulfill their function of softening the negative meanings of the direct nomination, and are not used to manipulate the consciousness of the recipient, because they are interpreted quite unambiguously, which, as a rule, is achieved by specifying the amount of the bribe in the publicist text.

From the point of view of language ecology, these facts testify, first of all, to the healthy attitude of society, in particular journalists, to bribes and corruption as a condemned phenomenon, which is confirmed by the maximum frequency of the use of direct nomination, as well as there is no tendency to search for and continuously create new variants of euphemistic substitutions, due to which the synonymic range of euphemisms used instead of the word "bribe" is record short, the manipulative potential of such euphemistic substitutions is not shown in the texts of media and news agencies.

Generalized variants of euphemisms detected are graphically represented in Figure 10.

## Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination "bribe"

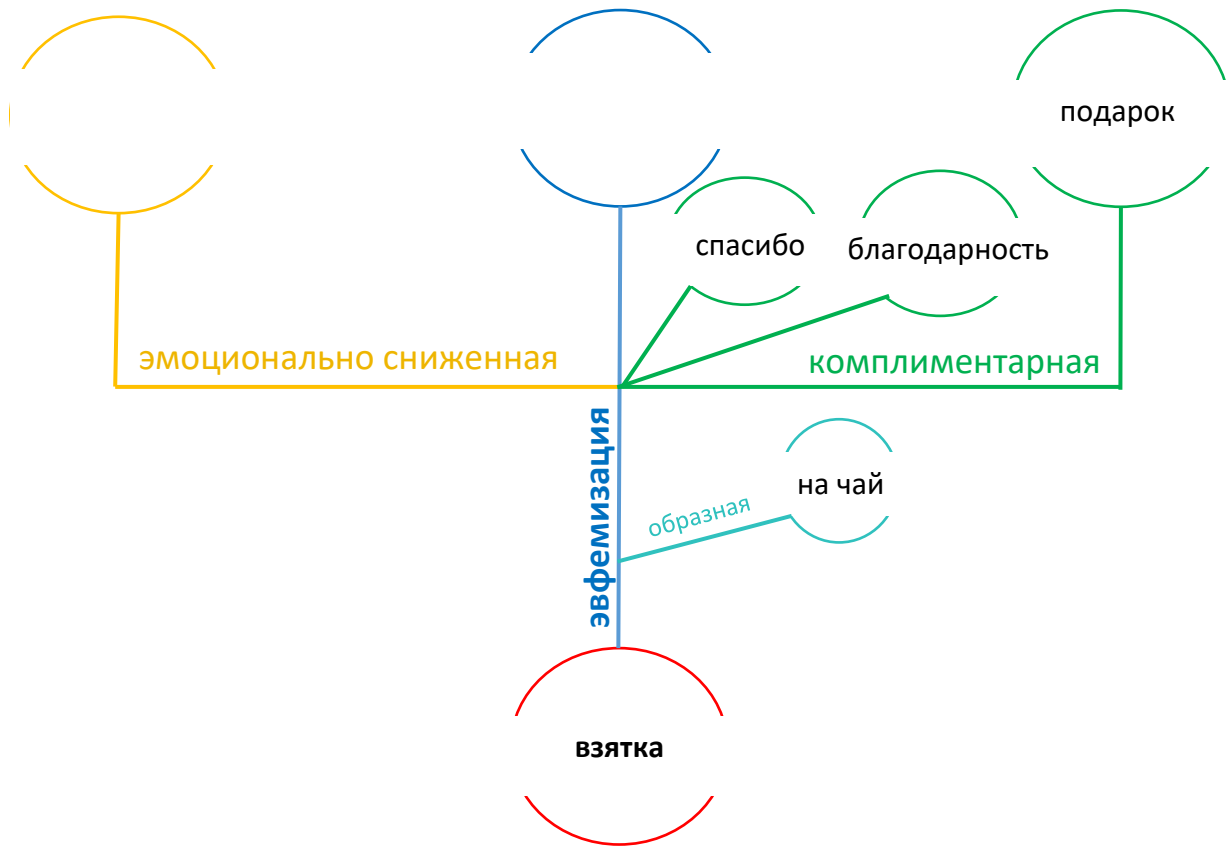
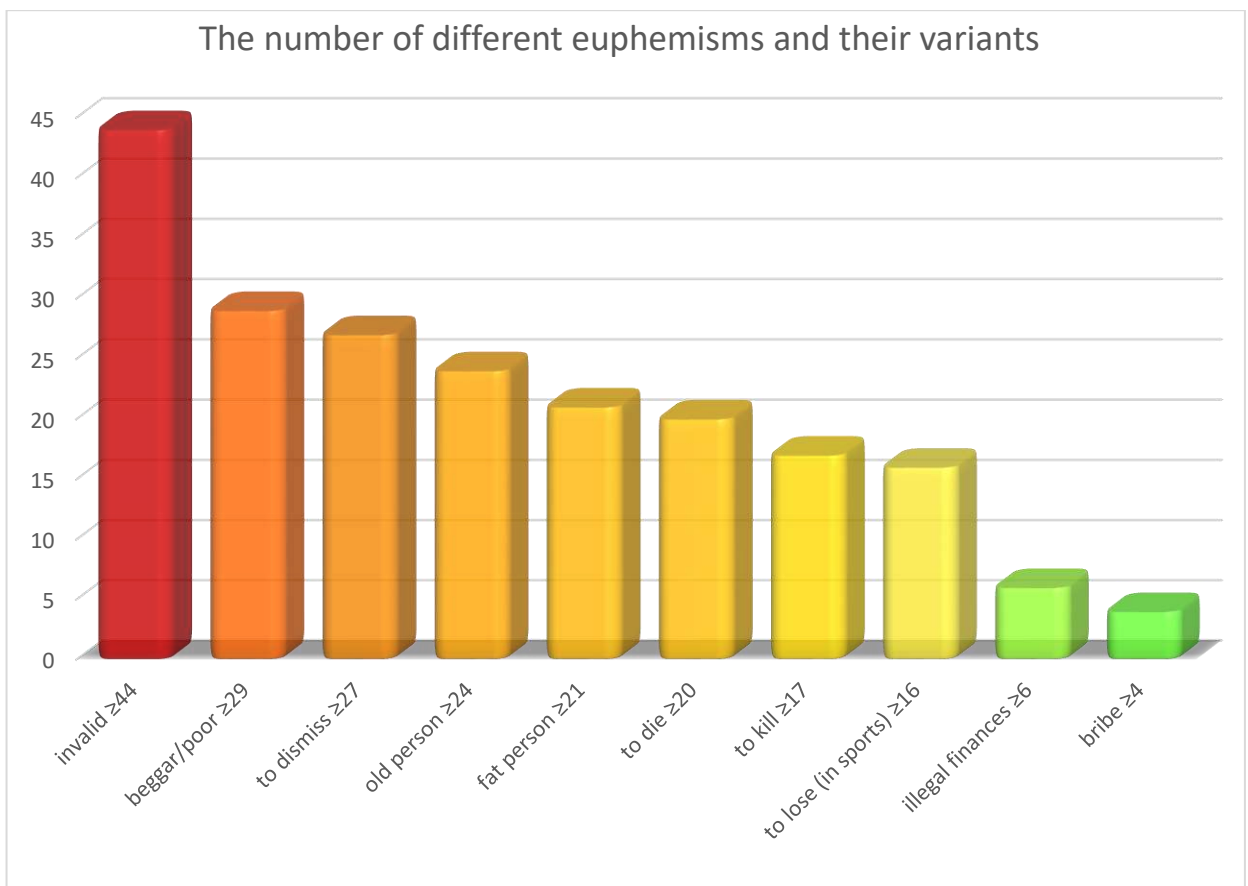


Fig. 10 "Variants of euphemisms for the direct nomination 'bribe'".

## 2.2. Actual Additions to the Dictionary of Euphemisms of the Russian Language

Contemporary journalism is an accessible collection of topical euphemistic units, whose facets of meaning are vividly illuminated by the context. For the analyzed ten direct nominations (invalid, beggar/poor, old person, fat person, to dismiss, to die, to kill, to lose in sports, illegal finances, bribe), 208 euphemisms and their variants were found in the texts of the media and news agencies for the period from 2014 to 2023. At the same time, the detected number should be defined as "minimal", is limited to the material of the reviewed information sources listed in the Introduction section. The distribution of euphemisms and their variants in relation to the direct nominations, which they replace, is clearly shown in histogram 1. "The number of different euphemisms and their variants".



*Histogram 1. "The number of different euphemisms and their variants".*

The euphemisms revealed in the course of the dissertation research can serve as a supplement to the existing dictionaries of euphemisms of the Russian language (for example, "Brief thematic dictionary of modern Russian euphemisms" by M. L. Kovshova or "Dictionary of euphemisms of the Russian language" by E. P. Senichkina) or represent an independent brief glossary of euphemistic variants, organized according to the principle: direct nomination – possible variants of euphemistic substitutions.

Table 1. "A brief glossary of euphemistic variants".

**A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF EUPHEMISTIC VARIANTS**  
found in the texts of modern journalism from 2014 to 2023

№	Direct nomination	Possible variants of euphemistic substitutions (numbers of euphemisms that have not been previously recorded in the relevant dictionaries are highlighted in gray)	
1	взятка <i>bribe</i>	1	благодарность
		2	спасибо
		3	подарок
		4	на чай
2	незаконные финансы <i>illegal finances</i>	1	нелегальный капитал
		2	теневого капитал
		3	серый капитал
		4	«серый капитал»
		5	серая зарплата
		6	зарплата «в конверте»
3	проиграть (в спорте) <i>to lose (in sports)</i>	1	упустить победу
		2	уступить другой команде
		3	не оправдать надежд болельщиков
		4	не оправдать ожиданий болельщиков
		5	разочаровать болельщиков
		6	потерпеть неудачу
		7	неудачно сыграть
		8	неудача
		9	неудачное выступление команды
		10	игра завершилась неудачей для...
		11	игра не в нашу пользу

		<b>12</b>	не смогли добиться победы
		<b>13</b>	удача отвернулась
		<b>14</b>	удача была на стороне противника
		<b>15</b>	удача была на стороне соперника
		<b>16</b>	удача улыбнулась сопернику
4	убить <i>to kill</i>	1	обезвредить
		2	нейтрализовать
		3	ликвидировать
		4	устранить
		5	убрать человека
		<b>6</b>	уничтожить
		7	лишить жизни
		<b>8</b>	открыть огонь на поражение
		<b>9</b>	стрелять на поражение
		10	зачистить ( <i>местность</i> )
		11	очистить ( <i>местность</i> )
		12	применить высшую меру наказания
		<b>13</b>	применить методы усиленного допроса
		<b>14</b>	замучить
		<b>15</b>	расправиться с / над кем-либо
		<b>16</b>	погибнуть
		<b>17</b>	стать жертвой / жертва
5	умереть <i>to die</i>	1	скончаться
		2	уйти из жизни
		3	уйти от нас
		<b>4</b>	улететь от нас
		5	покинуть мир / нас
		<b>6</b>	погибнуть
		<b>7</b>	стать жертвой / жертва ( <i>пожара и т. п.</i> )
		8	быть неживым
		<b>9</b>	( <i>сделать что-то</i> ) ценой жизни
		<b>10</b>	пополнить скорбный список
		11	потерять человека
		<b>12</b>	не удалось спасти
		<b>13</b>	небо забрало
		<b>14</b>	небеса забрали
		<b>15</b>	год ( <i>коронавирус и т. п.</i> ) унёс
		16	не стало
		<b>17</b>	сердце перестало биться
		<b>18</b>	стал последним годом жизни
		19	летальный исход
		<b>20</b>	любит... любил



			[глагол настоящего времени + многоточие + этот же глагол прошедшего времени]
6	толстый человек <i>fat person</i>	1	полный
		2	крупный
		3	большой
		4	великий
		5	упитанный
		6	пухлый
		7	дородный
		8	тучный
		9	пышная девушка
		10	с пышными формами ( <i>женщина</i> )
		11	с аппетитной фигурой
		12	с полной фигурой
		13	с лишним весом
		14	с избыточным весом
		15	с избыточной массой тела
		16	обладатель больших размеров
		17	человек имеет большой размер одежды
		18	plus size
		19	плюс-сайз
		20	«в теле»
		21	хорошего человека должно быть много
7	старый человек <i>old person</i>	1	пожилой
		2	уже немолодой
		3	старший
		4	возрастной ( <i>спортсмен</i> )
		5	серебряный ( <i>волонтёр</i> )
		6	человек серебряного возраста
		7	человек элегантного возраста
		8	человек бальзаковского возраста
		9	человек особого возраста
		10	человек мудрого возраста
		11	человек зрелого возраста
		12	человек позднего возраста
		13	человек преклонного возраста
		14	человек почтенного возраста
		15	человек почётного возраста
		16	человек пожилого возраста
		17	человек старшего возраста
		18	человек третьего возраста
		19	человек старшего поколения
		20	человек третьего поколения

		21	человек возраста осени
		22	человек в возрасте
		23	человек в годах
		24	человек с богатым жизненным опытом
8	уволить <i>to dismiss</i>	1	отправить в отставку
		2	снять с должности
		3	освободить от должности
		4	попросить освободить кресло
		5	попросить с поста
		6	«попросить» с должности
		7	«попросить» освободить должность
		8	«попросить» уйти
		9	заставить освободить место
		10	расторгнуть трудовой договор с работником
		11	расторгнуть трудовые отношения с работником
		12	прекратить трудовые отношения с работником
		13	изменить трудовые отношения с работником
		14	расстаться с работником
		15	предложить написать заявление «по собственному желанию»
		16	оптимизировать / оптимизация
		17	сократить
		18	попасть под сокращение
		19	потерять кресло
		20	вынужденно покинуть пост
		21	вынужденно покинуть кресло
		22	вынужденно освободить кресло
		23	вынужденно освободить место
		24	вынужден уйти
		25	его «ушли» с поста
		26	кадровые изменения
		27	кадровые перестановки
9	нищий, бедный <i>beggar, poor</i>	1	небогатый
		2	нуждающийся
		3	малообеспеченный
		4	малоимущий
		5	неимущий
		6	испытывающие финансовые трудности
		7	в трудной финансовой ситуации
		8	в трудном финансовом положении
		9	в трудном материальном положении
		10	в трудных условиях
		11	в тяжёлом материальном положении

		<b>12</b>	в непростом финансовом положении
		<b>13</b>	в непростом материальном положении
		<b>14</b>	в нелёгком материальном положении
		<b>15</b>	в нестабильном материальном положении
		<b>16</b>	в затруднительном финансовом положении
		<b>17</b>	в затруднительном материальном положении
		<b>18</b>	с затруднительным материальным положением
		<b>19</b>	с невысоким доходом
		<b>20</b>	с низким уровнем дохода
		<b>21</b>	с низким доходом
		<b>22</b>	с низкой зарплатой
		<b>23</b>	со скромным бюджетом
		<b>24</b>	со скромным доходом
		<b>25</b>	со скромным достатком
		<b>26</b>	со скромным уровнем достатка
		<b>27</b>	с доходом ниже прожиточного минимума
		<b>28</b>	с доходом ниже величины прожиточного минимума
		<b>29</b>	за чертой бедности
<b>10</b>	инвалид <i>invalid</i>	<b>1</b>	человек с инвалидностью
		<b>2</b>	человек с ограниченными возможностями
		<b>3</b>	человек с ограниченными возможностями здоровья
		<b>4</b>	человек с ОВЗ
		<b>5</b>	человек с ограниченными возможностями жизнедеятельности
		<b>6</b>	человек с ограничениями жизнедеятельности
		<b>7</b>	человек с ограничениями по здоровью
		<b>8</b>	человек с ограничениями здоровья
		<b>9</b>	человек с физическими ограничениями здоровья
		<b>10</b>	человек с физическими ограничениями
		<b>11</b>	человек с умственными ограничениями
		<b>12</b>	человек с умственными и физическими ограничениями
		<b>13</b>	человек с ограничениями слуха, зрения
		<b>14</b>	человек с ограниченной трудоспособностью
		<b>15</b>	человек ограниченной трудоспособности
		<b>16</b>	человек с ограниченными способностями
		<b>17</b>	человек с ограниченными интеллектуальными способностями
		<b>18</b>	человек с умственно ограниченными способностями
		<b>19</b>	человек с тяжёлой формой умственных ограничений
		<b>20</b>	человек с ограничениями

<b>21</b>	человек с особенностями развития
<b>22</b>	человек с особенностями развития
<b>23</b>	человек с особенностями развития или здоровья
<b>24</b>	человек с ментальными особенностями
<b>25</b>	человек с психическими особенностями
<b>26</b>	человек с особыми потребностями
<b>27</b>	человек с особенными потребностями
<b>28</b>	человек со специальными потребностями
<b>29</b>	человек с повышенными потребностями
<b>30</b>	человек с нарушениями развития
<b>31</b>	человек с ментальными нарушениями
<b>32</b>	человек с нарушениями слуха, зрения
<b>33</b>	человек с физическими недостатками
<b>34</b>	человек с теми или иными отклонениями в развитии
<b>35</b>	человек с проблемами со здоровьем
<b>36</b>	физически ограниченный человек
<b>37</b>	умственно ограниченный человек
<b>38</b>	маломобильный человек
<b>39</b>	неполноценный
<b>40</b>	редкий человек
<b>41</b>	особенный человек
<b>42</b>	«солнечный» человек
<b>43</b>	не такой как все
<b>44</b>	человек с безграничными возможностями

## CHAPTER 2 CONCLUSIONS

In the texts of the media and news agencies for the period from 2014 to 2023, 208 different euphemisms and their variants were found (this is the minimum quantity) for the analyzed 10 direct nominations: invalid – 44 variants of euphemisms, beggar/poor – 29 variants, to dismiss – 27 variants, old person – 24 variants, fat person – 21 variants, to die – 20 variants, to kill – 17 variants, to lose in sports – 16 variants, illegal finances – 6 variants, bribe – 4 variants.

The variants of euphemisms found refer to 8 topics. The percentage of euphemisms by topic: "Health status" – 21%; "Death" – 18%; "The financial situation of man" – 14%; "Termination of employment relations" – 13%; "Age of a person" – 11%; "Body type" – 10%; "The result of the game" – 8%; "Corruption and financial fraud" – 5%.

The number and quality of euphemistic variants related to one direct nomination, as an indicator, indicates the presence or absence of an actual problem of language ecology. Such a problem is found in the analysis of existing euphemistic substitutions for 3 of the 10 direct nominations studied: "invalid", "beggar/poor", "old person". The diagnosed problem is mainly caused by psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors, as well as linguocultural factor in the case of the direct nomination "old person".

The variability of euphemistic words and expressions is reflected both negatively and positively in the language environment. The main negative effects arise from the cumbersomeness of euphemistic substitutions, as well as their blurred connection with the denotation, as a result of which outside of the specifying context such euphemisms can mislead the addressee of the text, be a means of speech manipulation. Positive effects are associated with the function of euphemisms to soften unpleasant, unacceptable meanings, with the possibility of avoiding tautology, with giving additional shades of meaning and stylistic coloring to the text.

## CONCLUSION

Euphemisms, as a phenomenon, have rightly aroused interest for millennia. The belief in the power of forbidden words - taboos, as well as the flowering of rhetoric in ancient Greek culture and in the culture of Ancient Rome are the first main stimuli that launched the process of active creation, and with it the comprehension of words and expressions to replace what should not be called directly. Another stimulus was notions of propriety and rudeness. *Now the dominant impetus for the creation of new euphemistic substitutions is the propagated focus on political correctness.*

Since the first dictionary fixation of the term "euphemism" in 1656 - in Thomas Blount's "Glossographia: Or, A Dictionary Interpreting All Such Hard Words Of Any Language, Now Used In Our Refined English Tongue" - until now the very first definition: "euphemism is a good or beneficial interpretation of a bad word" - has been repeatedly supplemented by clarifications. The working definition of the concept within this dissertation research is as follows: *a euphemism is a milder expression instead of a crude one, it is a word or phrase that replaces an untactful designation of something unacceptable to the speaker and/or to the listener.*

An important characteristic of euphemisms is a certain semantic structure in which the basic "-" and contextual "+" meanings of the euphemistic expression (word) do not coincide or coincide only partially.

The main feature of euphemisms is their *key function: to soften or neutralize negative, unpleasant meanings in a text.* This function is the main criterion for identifying a word or expression as a euphemism. Additional, often related, functions include: manipulation through blurring, concealment of meaning; expression of political correctness; creation of comic effect - humorous function; linguocultural function - reflection of features of a particular linguoculture; expression of evaluation; creation of a certain speech image.

Taking into account the specificity of the semantic structure, as well as the key function and general characteristic is the essence of the principle of terminological distinction of related concepts. Reliance on this principle allowed us to make a number of significant clarifications. It has been established that: *"euphemism is not identical to the concepts of "euphemization", "euphemia", "antiphrasis", "meiosis", "litote," "hyperbole", "pronomination", "metaphor", "metonymy", "synecdoche", "periphrasis", "Aesop language", "taboo", "political correctness", but in some cases it is the same as a "synonym", which performs the function of mitigating the negative, unpleasant meaning of direct nomination and is contextually insulated from it. Euphemism correlates with euphemization and euphemia, as a technique with a process (tactic) and a phenomenon (realized strategy). Antiphrasis, litote, meiosis, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, pronomination can be as the basis for the formation of euphemisms, unlike hyperbole, by which euphemisms are not created. Euphemism is a type of periphrasis (logical periphrasis) with a special functional orientation. Periphrasis (and euphemism in particular), antiphrasis, litote, meiosis, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, pronomination, hyperbole can be means to create a special style of presentation – Aesopian language. A euphemism replaces a taboo word.*

*Euphemisms are an indicator of the state of the language environment. "Flooding" of journalistic texts with the same type and cumbersome euphemisms, as a rule, indicates that, on the one hand, native speakers for a long time remain in urgent need to replace the unacceptable for any reason direct nomination, and, on the other hand, the language environment lacks or has not yet spread the optimal euphemism option. The number and quality of euphemistic variants relating to one direct nomination indicates the presence or absence of the actual problem, due to linguocultural, sociolinguistic, psychological and other factors.*

In journalistic texts (texts of the media and news agencies) for the period from 2014 to 2023 at least 208 euphemisms and their variants are used to replace 10 direct nominations, according to the number unevenly distributed between these ten direct nominations: invalid – 44 variants of euphemisms, beggar/poor – 29 variants, to dismiss – 27 variants, old person – 24 variants, fat person – 21 variants, to die – 20 variants, to

kill – 17 variants, to lose in sports – 16 variants, illegal finances – 6 variants, bribe – 4 variants.

The euphemisms found refer to 8 topics. The percentage of euphemisms by topic is as follows: "Health status" – 21%; "Death" – 18%; "The financial situation of man" – 14%; "Termination of employment relations" – 13%; "Age of a person" – 11%; "Body type" – 10%; "The result of the game" – 8%; "Corruption and financial fraud" – 5%. *The largest block of euphemisms on different topics is related to the sphere "Person".*

Such indicators show the different attitude of native speakers to the existing euphemisms: the most *satisfactory* - to the euphemisms that replace the direct nominations "bribe" and "illegal finances" (4 and 6 euphemisms each), and the most *unsatisfactory* - to the euphemisms used instead of "beggar/poor" and "invalid" (29 and 44 euphemisms each). In addition, the large number of variants indicates the perception of the direct nominations "beggar/poor" and "invalid" as psychologically uncomfortable, and also indicates a great need for their correct and concise euphemistic substitutions, not causing conflict in the Russian language consciousness.

The language environment is like a Universe in which the more euphemisms form a cluster around what they replace, the brighter this denotation is illuminated, drawing attention to itself, signaling *a lack of means of designation acceptable in modern conditions or - more deeply - the problem of its adequate perception by native speakers*. Both in the first and in the second cases, as a consequence, speech creativity is activated, and other euphemisms are created according to the type and structure of existing ones, or qualitatively new, successful euphemisms.

The process of updating euphemisms, among other things, is also influenced politically, for example, through Presidential Decree No. 809 of November 9, 2022 "On Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values", which also touches on the Russian language as the language of the state-forming people, in particular the regulation of the use of foreign language loanwords (hence, there is a possibility that such euphemisms as "plus size" and "плюс-сайз" will not be reproduced by the central and regional media over time, and this may stimulate the appearance of a new link in the chain of euphemisms



relating to direct nomination "fat person", especially since at the moment the search for an acceptable euphemistic designation continues).

The role of euphemisms in today's information reality is *a compromise* between the need to name something and the desire to avoid direct naming for reasons of political correctness, ethics, fear or ordinary hesitation to express oneself precisely and unambiguously.

Further study of euphemisms as indicators of the state of the language environment has a great prospect and will be relevant in evaluating the language policy pursued in the state. Also of practical value, including in the improvement of the possibilities of neural machine translation – the training of artificial intelligence – will be studies of comparative orientation, allowing to identify nationally specific and international euphemisms in different languages.

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### **Normative and Legal Documents**

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2. *Federal`ny`j zakon ot 01.06.2005 g. № 53-FZ «O gosudarstvennom yazy`ke Rossijskoj Federacii»*
3. *Federal`ny`j zakon ot 24.11.1995 g. № 181-FZ (red. ot 28 aprelya 2023 g.) «O social`noj zashhite invalidov v Rossijskoj Federacii»*
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**List of Sources of Material for the Analysis  
(Print Media and News Agencies)**

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|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1.«Advokatskaya gazeta» | 23.«Interesnaya Rossiya»              |
| 2.«Argumenty` i Fakty`» | 24.«Internovosti.Ru»                  |
| 3.«Argumenty` nedeli»   | 25.«Kommersant`»                      |
| 4.«Biznes-online»       | 26.«Komsomol`skaya pravda»            |
| 5.«Vedomosti»           | 27.«Krasnoe znamya»                   |
| 6.«Versiya»             | 28.«Miloserdie. Novosti»              |
| 7.«Vzglyad.ru»          | 29.«Molodoj kommunar»                 |
| 8.«VladTajm»            | 30.«Moskovskij komsomolecz»           |
| 9.«Vy`sota 102»         | 31.«Moya Gazeta+»                     |
| 10.«Gazeta.RU»          | 32.«Nezavisimaya gazeta»              |
| 11.«Glas naroda»        | 33.«Novaya gazeta»*                   |
| 12.«Evro-futbol»        | 34.«Novy`e Izvestiya»*                |
| 13.«Zavtra»             | 35.«Obshhestvennaya sluzhba novostej» |
| 14.«IA IslamNews»       | 36.«Parlamentskaya gazeta»            |
| 15.«IA PrimaMedia»      | 37.«Peterburgskij dnevnik»            |
| 16.«IA REGNUM»          | 38.«Politpazl»                        |
| 17.«IA Rusnord»         | 39.«PolitRossiya»                     |
| 18.«IA Bel.RU»          | 40.«Rambler. Novosti»                 |
| 19.«IA BNK»             | 41.«RBK»                              |
| 20.«IA Krasnaya Vesna»  | 42.«RIA Novosti»                      |
| 21.«Izvestiya»          | 43.«Rossijskaya gazeta»               |
| 22.«InoTV»              | 44.«Rossijskij Dialog»                |

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:

"Novaya Gazeta" - undesirable organization (No. 92 in the List: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/872881>;

"Novye Izvestiya" - source blocked in 2022: <https://ria.ru/20220316/roskomnadzor-1778449564.html?ysclid=in2ufyn6jh175019113>.



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|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 45. «Sovetskij sport»               | 63. «Deutsche Welle – Russian»* |
| 46. «Sport-e`kspres»                | 64. «FB.ru»                     |
| 47. «Stolicza S»                    | 65. «Gazeta.fi»                 |
| 48. «TASS»                          | 66. «Gazeta.SPb»                |
| 49. «Teleinform»                    | 67. «HandyNews»                 |
| 50. «TUT N`YuS»                     | 68. «INC-News»                  |
| 51. «FederalPress»                  | 69. «Lenta.Ru»                  |
| 52. «Finansovaya gazeta»            | 70. «Life.ru»                   |
| 53. «Fontanka»                      | 71. «Media.Az»                  |
| 54. «Czar`grad»                     | 72. «Metro»                     |
| 55. «Central`naya Sluzhba Novostej» | 73. «NewTimes.kz»               |
| 56. «Chempionat»                    | 74. «Noticia.ru»                |
| 57. «E`kspert»                      | 75. «Pravda.Ru»                 |
| 58. «E`kspres gazeta»               | 76. «Rayon72.ru»                |
| 59. «Yuzhny`j Federal`ny`j»         | 77. «RuNews24»                  |
| 60. «Yarnovosti»*                   | 78. «Sport24.ru»                |
| 61. «7 novostej»                    | 79. «Sputnik»                   |
| 62. «Cosmopolitan»                  | 80. «Woman.ru»                  |

### (Television Media)

81. «Pervy`j kanal»
82. «Rossiya 1»
83. «Rossiya 24»
84. «Ren.TV»
85. «5 kanal»
86. «Telekanal Sankt-Peterburg»

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\* This marker indicates organizations (mass media and news agencies) that are under foreign influence and violate current Russian legislation:

"Yarnovosti" - foreign agent (in the Register № 614: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/activity/directions/998/>);

"Deutsche Welle" - foreign agent (in the Register No. 340: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/activity/directions/998/>), source blocked in 2022: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/826249>.

## **Search Engines**

**(to verify contexts and obtain statistical data)**

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2. Yandex. Novosti. URL: [https://dzen.ru/news/search?issue\\_tld=ru&text](https://dzen.ru/news/search?issue_tld=ru&text)