

# ON EUPHEMISM

In “Column II, The Encyclopedia Britain”, euphemism was defined as “Figure of speech in which something of unpleasant ,distressing or indelicate nature is described in less offensive term”.

The term “euphemism” is originated from Greek “emphemos”.

There are several types of euphemisms.

## 1. Professional Designations Euphemisms

In western culture, brainwork was regarded as very noble profession, while labor work was considered as humble profession.

Thus, people use euphemisms to make it look better.

For example:

“road-sweeper or dustman” is called “cleaning operative”.

“garbage man” is called “sanitation engineer”.

“butcher” is called “meat technologist”.

“dishwasher” is called “utensil maintenance man”.

You may have heard of them a lot of times before. But when you meet with “cleaning operative” or something similar, you need to know what it really means.

## 1.2. Disease Euphemisms

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In all ages, disease or illness is always a taboo to people.

So, in order to make the patients release and feel better, and enhance their confidence to overcome the illness, euphemisms come in handy.

“big C” take the place of “long illness or cancer”.

“social disease” replaces “syphilis” or “AIDs”.

“hard of hearing” for “the deaf”.

“the old man’s friend” for “pneumonia”.

“a little confused” for “the mad”.

### 1. 3. Euphemisms for Death

People would turn pale at the mention of “death”.

Thus, there are lots of euphemisms invented for death.

to pass away/pass-out/pass-over

□2□to go to heaven

□3□to go west

□4□to kick the bucket

□5□to go to a better world

□6□ to pop off

□7□ to be at peace

□8□ to be brought to one’s last home

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□9□ to be no longer with us

□10□to return the dust

□11□to be gathered to one's father

#### 1. 4. Criminal Euphemisms

Criminal Euphemisms were created by criminals themselves, in order to beautify themselves and cover their ugly behaviors.

For example:

“pickpocket” have been said as “a five fingers”.

“robber” have been called as “a gentlemen of the road”.

“heroin” was called “hero of underground”.

“drug pusher” was called “the candy man”.

“fence” was called “a shifter”.

Euphemisms are so important in our daily life, so they are commonly used, here and where. When we meet such words or phrases similar with euphemisms, we have to judge by the context and circumstances, to find out its real meaning behinds the words. Then we can get what the writer means.

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