

EUPHEMISMS AND MILITARY TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract

When we want to avoid words that have unpleasant, awkward or tabooed associations, and thus avoid possible misunderstandings, conflicts and embarrassing situations, we resort to euphemisms. The more formal the situation and/or the more unfamiliar the audience, we tend to be more observant of the words we choose. Contemporary politics and their constant companion, the military, tend to blur distinctions between war and peace, violence and humanity, and this provides a good opportunity to employ linguistic creativity, to find new evasive and non-violent expressions which mask or alleviate violent and unpleasant nature of their referents. Within the whole range of different linguistic tools, euphemisms have become increasingly used, adding new value to the already existing words and ideas. They serve the practical needs of particular military groups but also support the ideological role of the military, particularly in global affairs around the world. Consequently, they contribute to the ever changing perception of modern reality.