

SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC FUNCTIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL EUPHEMISMS IN EVERYDAY DISCOURSE

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Annotation: This article explores the phenomenon of occupational euphemisms in English and Uzbek, focusing on the social, cultural, and communicative functions of such linguistic practices. It examines how low-paid or labor-intensive professions are often linguistically “veiled” to preserve the dignity of workers and the social respect of their families. Drawing on examples from everyday discourse and comparative linguocultural analysis, the study highlights the role of euphemisms in maintaining conversational appropriateness, reflecting social hierarchies, and facilitating smoother interaction between speakers and listeners. The findings underscore the significance of occupational euphemisms as a mechanism for balancing social sensitivity with linguistic expression in diverse cultural contexts.

Key words: Occupational euphemisms, labor-intensive professions, social hierarchy, English linguoculture, Uzbek linguoculture, phraseological euphemisms, communicative politeness, socialization, low-paid work.

When an individual enters the world and seeks to establish their place within society, the profession or occupation they acquire constitutes one of the primary means through which this process occurs, serving as the basis for earning a livelihood through labor. Traditional wisdom emphasizes that nourishment is not the ultimate aim of human activity; rather, it is regarded as a necessary condition that sustains life and enables the continuation of purposeful activity.

An individual’s choice of profession is intrinsically linked to their personal interests, psychological aptitudes, and internal self-concept (the “I”), and it is shaped through the interaction of these factors. Moreover, within society, labor is conventionally categorized into intellectual and physical forms. In everyday discourse, there are occasions when it becomes necessary to communicate information tactfully about individuals engaged in physical occupations as a means of subsistence. While a physician may express pride in their professional identity, a day laborer, porter, or cleaner may be inclined to refer to their occupation with a degree of hesitation or embarrassment.

This phenomenon is closely associated with the level of remuneration attached to these occupations as well as with the social status they occupy within the community. Within the framework of the present discussion, it is also important to note that euphemisms related to particular professions warrant independent scholarly investigation, a fact that attests to the breadth and complexity of this research domain.

In speech culture, as noted above, euphemisms play an indispensable role in the “elevation” and more refined expression of certain professions. Occupations that involve arduous labor and are often viewed with disdain, occasionally subjected to discrimination, and in some cases even provoke negative attitudes among the relatives of those engaged in such work, tend to be “veiled” in every society. Such linguistic masking serves to mitigate social stigma and preserve communicative politeness.

English linguoculture similarly demonstrates a tendency to euphemize labor-intensive occupations. In this context, the term engineer is frequently appended to designations of physically demanding jobs, functioning as a euphemistic marker. The table below examines how occupations situated at the lower strata of the social hierarchy in English-speaking society are represented and employed in everyday spoken discourse.

Table 1

Euphemistic Naming of Occupations Involving Physical Labor in British English



№	Occupational Euphemisms and Phraseological Euphemisms in English	Which profession it is used in reference to	Uzbek meaning
1	<i>Cleaning operative</i>	Road sweeper or dustman	Tozalik xodimi –ko‘cha supuruvchi yoki chang tozalovchiga nisbatan
2	<i>Sanitation engineer or Sanitation worker</i>	Garbageman	Sanitariya muhandisi – axlat tozalovchiga nisbatan
3	<i>Meat technologist</i>	Butcher	Go‘sh tashuvchi – qassobga nisbatan
4	<i>Beautician</i>	Hairdresser	Kosmetolog – ayollar sartaroshiga nisbatan
5	<i>Exterminating engineer</i>	A rat-catcher	Yo‘q qilish muhandisi – kalamush ovlovchi
6	<i>Footwear maintenance engineer</i>	The person who cleans shoes	Oyoq kiyimlarni ta‘mirlash bo‘yicha muhandis – Oyoq kiyimlarni tozalovchi kishi
7	<i>Technician</i>	Applied jobs that require a remarkably low level of technical expertise	Texnik – texnik tajribaning sezilarli darajada pastligini talab qiladigan amaliy ishlar
8	<i>Waste-reduction manager or Waste manager, waste management worker</i>	Dustman	Chiqindilarni kamaytirish bo‘yicha menejer yoki chiqindilarni boshqaruvchi, chiqindilarni boshqarish bo‘yicha ishchi – chang tashuvchi / chiqindi yig‘uvchi
9	<i>Refuse collector</i>	Garbageman	Arzimagan deb tashlangan yoki rad etilgan narsalarni yig‘uvchi-chiqindi yig‘uvchi
10	<i>Garbologist</i>	Garbageman	Garbolog – chiqindi yig‘uvchi
11	<i>Sanitary warden or sanitary man</i>	Public lavatory attendant	Sanitariya nazoratchisi yoki sanitariya xodimi- jamoat hojatxona xizmatchisi
12	<i>A sanitary inspector or public health inspector</i>	Public lavatory attendant	Sanitariya inspektori yoki sog‘liqni saqlash inspektori – jamoat hojatxona xizmatchisi
13	<i>Staff</i>	Servant	Xodim-xizmatkor
14	<i>Domestic helper, domestic operative, domestic worker</i>	Servant	Uy yordamchisi, uy ishchisi – xizmatkor
15	<i>Help</i>	Servant	Yordamchi- xizmatkor
16	<i>Daily woman (daily)</i>	Servant	Kundalik ayol (kundalik) – xizmatkor
17	<i>Cleaning lady</i>	The person charged with cleaning	Tozalovchi ayol – tozalash vazifasi yuklangan shaxs



18	<i>Dining-room attendant</i>	People who serve at eating places	Ovqatlanish xonasi xizmatchisi – Ovqatlanish joylarida xizmat qiladigan odam
19	<i>Catering service personnel</i>	People who serve at eating places	Umumiy ovqatlanish xizmati xodimlari-Ovqatlanish joylarida xizmat qiladigan odamlar
20	<i>Commercial traveller (traveler)</i>	A person who travel around trying to sell things	Tijoratchi savdogar – Narsalarni sotishga urinib sayohat qiladigan odam
21	<i>Area representative</i>	Someone who works a particular patch	Hudud vakili – Muayyan yamoq bilan ishlaydigan kishi
22	<i>Pharmaceutical representative or medical representative</i>	Someone who sells medicinal drugs	Farmatsevtika vakili yoki tibbiy vakil – Dori vositalarini sotadigan kishi
23	<i>A part-time merchandizer</i>	Someone who sells things (such as cosmetics) part-time from door to door	Qisqa muddatli (vaqtinchalik) savdogar – Narsalarni (masalan, atir-upalarni) uyma-uy sotadigan kishi
24	<i>Personal assistant (usually PA for short) (Br)</i>	Secretary	Shaxsiy yordamchi (odatda qisqacha PA ishlatiladi) – kotib(a)
25	<i>Administrative assistant (AE)</i>	Secretary	Ma'muriy yordamchi – kotib(a)
26	<i>Road mender</i>	A person who works in road construction	Yo'l ta'mirchisi – yo'l qurilishida ishlaydigan shaxs
27	<i>Guest worker</i>	Migrant worker	Mehmon ishchi – Migrant ishchi
28	<i>Seasonal employee or seasonal worker</i>	A person who works temporary during a particular season	Mavsumiy xodim yoki mavsumiy ishchi – Muayyan mavsumda vaqtincha ishlaydigan shaxs
29	<i>Patron</i>	Customer	Homiy – xaridor
30	<i>Clothes doctor</i>	A launderer – a person whose job is washing, drying, and ironing clothes, sheets, etc.	Kiyimlar shifokori-Yuvuvchi – ishi kiyim, choyshab va hokazolarni yuvish, quritish va dazmollash bilan shug'ullanadigan shaxs.

It can be observed that in English, nearly every low-paid occupation has its own distinct designation. Such naming is closely linked to the specific type of work performed by individuals in these jobs. However, despite the existence of these specialized terms, in everyday spoken language they are often referred to simply as “**worker**”.

An analogous situation can be observed with the term *mardikor* (day laborer). In Uzbek,

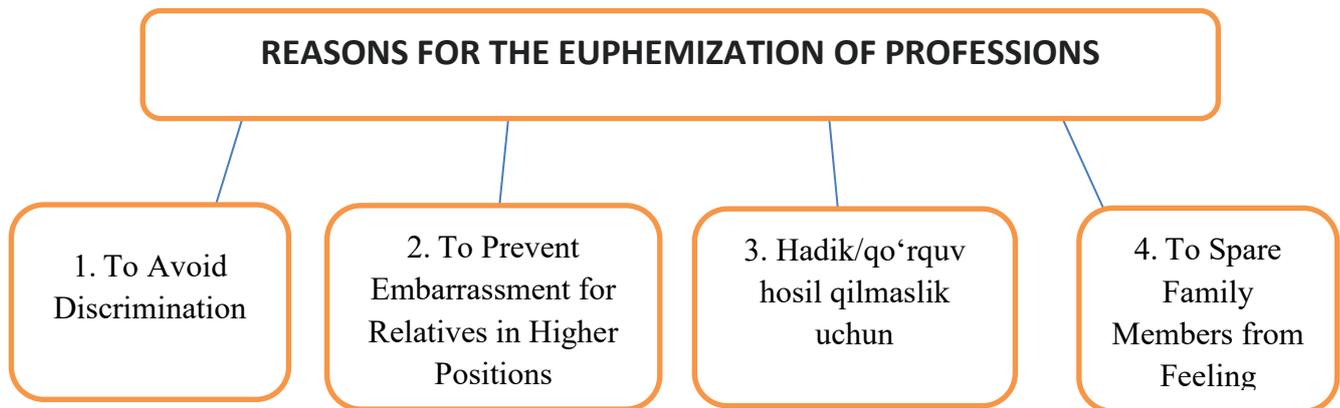


this notion is euphemistically expressed through the term “mavsumiy ishchi” (“seasonal worker”), while in English it is rendered by the phraseological euphemisms “daily wage earner” (literally, “a person who earns a daily wage”) and “temporary worker” (“a worker employed on a temporary basis”).

At this point, a question naturally arises: why is it that we cannot always use the names of such professions and occupations directly in explicit discourse, and why do we feel the need to replace them with alternative words or expressions?

Based on the sources consulted in this study and on observations of everyday conversations among speakers, the reasons underlying this phenomenon can be summarized as follows

Table 2



From this illustration, it can be inferred that in the process of socialization, members of society not only consider their own social positions but also take into account the social standing of their close relatives, striving to communicate in a manner that preserves their respect.

In conclusion, it can be stated that every society possesses a hierarchical structure of occupations. Individuals engaged in lower-tier professions do not always wish for their occupations to be mentioned directly; alternatively, interlocutors may employ euphemisms to maintain the appropriateness and balance of conversation. Occupational euphemisms thus serve as a mechanism that enhances the communicative process and facilitates smoother interactions between speakers and listeners.

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