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Y1791583

**A STUDY OF CULTIVATING STUDENTS' EUPHEMISTIC
AWARENESS IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING**

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Submitted to School of Foreign Languages and Literature

Of Shandong University in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Arts

Shandong University

Jinan, China

Mar.28, 2010

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Abstract

Euphemism is a common phenomenon in human language. It is an important means to coordinate interpersonal relationship. Using euphemism is helpful for improving communication effect and obtaining harmonious interpersonal relationship. From the moment of its emergence, euphemism functions to avoid taboos, to show politeness and to conceal feelings. With the development of modern society, it has become an indispensable element in people's interactions. Euphemism has long been the interests of linguists and scholars. Researches on euphemism at home and abroad have been covered by such subjects as figures of speech, changes of word meanings, and most of them took the form of examples plus comments without a reasonable depth. So far, the history of real systematical studies which were promoted by contemporary sociolinguistics and semantics is about two decades. These researches study euphemism from different angles: linguistics, pragmatics, inter-culture and so on. However, the empirical studies on its applications in different areas are inefficient. For instance, there are few empirical researches on euphemism teaching in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). Hence, on the strength of existing research achievements in this field, this thesis surveys various sorts of definitions of euphemisms, deals with its classifications and the means of euphemisms. The thesis also analyzes the pragmatic functions and principles underlying the use of euphemism: the use of euphemism violates the Cooperative Principle, and obeys Face Theory and Politeness Principle. Since the study of euphemism plays an active role in facilitating the second language teaching, the thesis lays an emphasis on the study of application of euphemism in English language teaching and attempts to set up a kind of English euphemism teaching mode guided by pragmatic principles.

The author conducted a teaching experiment which lasted for a school year (Sep., 2008~Sep.,2009) aimed at enhancing students' euphemistic awareness. The subjects were two parallel classes, Grade 2007, in Shengli College China Petroleum University. The two classes were divided into an experimental class and a control class. This thesis put forward the concepts of implicit euphemism teaching and explicit euphemism teaching. The former

means teachers use euphemism as a kind of speaking style in teaching process to influence students imperceptibly; the latter means teachers teach students euphemism knowledge clearly and systematically. The mode “normal English teaching + implicit euphemism teaching + explicit euphemism teaching” was carried out in the experimental class, and the three parts were integrated together. The mode “normal English teaching + implicit euphemism teaching” was carried out in the control class without other experimental interferences. This experiment attempted to answer three problems. Why euphemism should be applied into English teaching? Can students’ euphemistic awareness be improved significantly only through implicit euphemism teaching? Can students’ euphemistic awareness be improved significantly if implicit and explicit euphemism teaching are adopted simultaneously? Statistical software SPSS13.0 was used to analyze the collected data and the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Nowadays students have strong face want. English teachers’ applying euphemisms into their teaching can protect students’ face and set good examples for students as well. This method is defined by the author as implicit euphemism teaching. Students can learn the tactful use of all kinds of euphemisms unconsciously.

2. English euphemism teaching can enrich students’ euphemism knowledge and enhance their ability to understand, appreciate and use euphemisms. Their euphemistic awareness can be improved considerably.

3. Euphemistic awareness is in nature a kind of cross-cultural awareness, so this teaching mode can improve students’ cross-cultural pragmatic competence.

4. Being too self-conscious or caring much about others’ comments on self is regarded as a sort of psychological obstacle in self-development. Through euphemism teaching, a kind of more optimistic and open-minded concept of face is accepted by students.

On the basis of the experiment, this research constructed a mode that consists of implicit teaching plus explicit teaching and provided meaningful theoretical and practical exploration on cultivating college students’ euphemistic awareness.

Key Words: euphemism; pragmatic principles; euphemistic awareness; euphemism teaching

摘 要

委婉语是人类社会中普遍存在的一种语言现象,是语言使用中人们协调人际关系的重要手段,使用委婉语有利于提高交际效果和保持和谐的人际关系,善于委婉是心灵美、修养高的表现。委婉语从产生之日起,就担负着“避讳”、“礼貌”、以及“掩饰”的功能。在人类文明日益发展和人际交往不断扩大的今天,委婉语更是有着其不可或缺的作用。委婉语一直是语言研究者的兴趣所在,中外对于委婉语的研究,历来都是散见于修辞格和词义变化的专题下,而且大多数都是例句加短评浅尝辄止。真正较系统的研究,还是在当代社会语言学和语义学热的推动下,至今才不过二十几年的历史。语言学者们从语言学、语用学、及跨文化等多个角度对委婉语进行了研究,但对其在具体应用领域的实证研究则比较少见。比如现阶段,面向英语教学,从委婉语教学角度出发的实证研究还比较少。有鉴于此,基于语言学者们的成就,本文简要介绍了委婉语的定义、起源,分类,探讨了委婉语的构成方式,并从语用学视角分析了委婉语违反合作原则,遵循礼貌原则、面子理论,同时探讨了委婉语与语境的关系。由于委婉语对语言教学起着极大的促进作用,本文重点探讨在语用原则下如何把委婉语这一独特的语言与文化现象纳入到英语教学的专项研究的范围内,试图构建一种适合大学生现状的委婉语教学模式。

研究者进行了为期一年的基于学生委婉意识培养的英语教学实验,研究对象为石油大学胜利学院 2007 级石油储运专业的两个平行班,分为实验班和对照班。本文提出了隐性委婉语教学与显性委婉语教学的概念:隐形委婉语教学指教师把委婉语作为自己教学的语言风格,以潜移默化的形式影响学生;显性委婉语教学指教师对学生进行明晰的、系统的委婉语知识教学。在实验班采用“常规英语教学+隐性委婉语教学+显性委婉语教学”的模式,三部分有机结合,相互渗透。对控制班进行“常规英语教学+隐性委婉语教学”的模式,不进行其它实验干预。本实验研究拟重点探讨以下三个问题:为什么要在英语教学中引入委婉语教学;仅通过隐形委婉语教学能否显著提高学生的委婉意识;同时采用隐性委婉语教学与显性委婉语教学能否显著提高学生的委婉意识。

运用统计软件 SPSS13.0 处理分析实验数据,经分析讨论,本研究得出以下结论:

1. 现代大学生面子需求强烈, 因此应当将委婉语引入英语教学从而满足学生的面子需求, 构建和谐师生关系。同时, 教师策略性地使用委婉语可以给学生树立良好榜样, 增强学生的委婉意识。

2. 英语委婉语教学可以丰富学生的委婉语知识, 显著提高其理解、欣赏并使用委婉语的水平, 也就是说其委婉意识显著增强。

3. 委婉意识实质上是一种跨文化意识, 该教学模式可以有效提高学生的跨文化语用能力, 减少语用失误。

4. 面子观念太强会影响学生的英语学习。通过英语委婉语教学, 一种更为乐观开放的面子观为学生所接受。

在实验研究的基础上, 本研究探讨了英语委婉语教学对于大学生委婉意识培养的必要性和有效性, 并构建了一种隐性委婉语教学与显性委婉语教学并施的教学模式, 为大学生委婉意识的培养提供了理论及实践上的有益尝试和探索。

关键词: 委婉语; 语用原则; 委婉意识; 委婉语教学

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Chapter One Introduction

With the rapid development of the world economy and frequent contacts between different countries, intercultural communication is getting more and more important. What's more, the development of Internet and the Worldwide Web is transforming the whole world into a "global village". This requires a smooth and convenient communication. However, most Chinese students with eight or more years of formal instruction of English still demonstrate a deficiency in effective communication with native speakers especially when it touches upon the special linguistic phenomenon, for example, euphemism.

Euphemism, is a universal linguistic phenomenon, which is widely used no matter in which era or which culture. From the moment it is coined, it plays an important role in people's daily communication. Like a kind of lubrication, it enables people to express what can't be uttered directly and ensures communication to be carried on successfully. As Robert Burchfield wrote in *Fair of Speech: The Uses of Euphemism* (1985), "a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication." In the more civilized modern world, the interpersonal and international communication without euphemisms is unimaginable. Euphemism has become one of the major subjects of intercultural studies as people come to realize the significance of euphemism. Thus, it is very important for us English teachers to cultivate students' competence of understanding, appropriating and using English euphemisms. However, influenced by the linguistic studies, most of which have been focused on the form of language or the construction of sentences, English teaching in China has always laid its stress on teaching the knowledge of language system, ignoring the language application. The linguistic study in the past decades insisted that languages in the world, though different in systems, share similar language functions. Fraser, Rintell and Walters (1980) point out that the users of different languages are able to use their native languages to express the same speech acts, for example, requesting, apologizing, stating, promising, etc. Therefore, such an incorrect viewpoint, which declared that learning a foreign language means learning its system, was

popular in foreign language teaching. It seemed that the better one masters language system, the easier he or she succeeds in intercultural communication. So, foreign language teaching is equal to teaching language system.

Greatly affected by this viewpoint, college English teaching in China highlights language structure, and ignores teaching how to apply it up to this day. The English class is flooded with mere exercises on linguistic skills and mechanic pattern drills. Although it has been enriched by exercises on communicative competence after the publication of *On Communicative Competence* (1972) by American sociolinguist, Hymes, there still exists the serious problem of neglecting social-cultural meaning, language functions, and the effect of context on the development of linguistic and pragmatic competence. As a result, many students, after amassing tremendous vocabulary and grammatical rules, get satisfying scores in various English examinations, but most of them fail to express themselves appropriately or reach their expected results due to their weak communicative competence. Many communication failures are caused by improper use of English, in which euphemism serves as an important component.

Here, the author defines the college students as non-English majors and euphemistic awareness as the ability to understand, appreciate, and tactfully use euphemisms in both native and cross-cultural contexts. Inspired by the potential contributions pragmatic principles will make to English euphemism teaching, stimulated by students' deficient knowledge scope cover euphemisms, the author of this thesis aims to propose a mode of English euphemism teaching for non-English majors in China. This mode is based on pragmatic principles and consists of two parts: implicit euphemism teaching and explicit euphemism teaching. Implicit euphemism teaching means teachers utilize euphemisms in their teaching process in order to satisfy students' strong face want and develop harmonious relationship with them. Besides, students can learn euphemisms from their teachers' demonstration unconsciously. This way of teaching is necessary but not sufficient. And another more efficient way of teaching euphemism is explicit euphemism teaching, which means teachers teach students euphemism knowledge clearly and systematically. These two ways of teaching are not separated but integrated into a whole unit. This mode is designed to fit the current unique situation of non-English majors, and is expected to

facilitate their euphemistic awareness significantly. Without any doubt the ultimate goal is to help students achieve a higher level of using language and benefit from the successful communication in the long run. In order to test the effects of the teaching mode, an empirical study is conducted in this thesis.

This thesis consists of six chapters:

Chapter 1 gives a brief introduction to the background of the study and states the significance of the research.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review so as to find the focus for this study.

Chapter 3 makes an investigation of euphemism and the pragmatic principles that will help lay a theoretical foundation for this study.

Chapter 4 is the methodology of the research and puts forward a teaching mode of euphemism for non-English majors and describes an empirical study which aims at testing the effect of the teaching mode.

Chapter 5 is the result analysis and discussion of the experiment.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the research findings and implications of the research.

Chapter Two Literature Review

Hugh Rawson (1981:1) stated "they (euphemism) are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plain-spoken, ever get through a day without using them ... Thus, euphemisms are society's basic lingua franca. As such, they are outward and visible signs of our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears and shames. They are like radioactive isotopes. By tracing them, it is possible to see what has been (and is) going on in our language, our minds and our culture." As a common linguistic phenomenon, as well as a socio-cultural phenomenon, euphemism has long been a topic of much interest. At the very beginning, researches into euphemisms could only be found in the studies of rhetoric and lexicology in which most of the researches into them were rather superficial. It was until recent decades that the researches into them became systematic and scientific. In different domains, such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, psychology, and pragmatics, there are detailed studies on euphemisms. Many scholars at home and abroad have had detailed description of euphemism from different perspectives, which have contributed a lot to the study of euphemism.

2.1 Major Studies in Western Countries

Historically, euphemism originated from the accounts of taboo by many adventurers and anthropologists. In the early 1580's, the British writer George Blunt first used the word "euphemism" and gave it a definition as "a good or favorable interpretation of a bad word" (Neaman et al, 1983: 4). Based on the historical and cultural background of American society, H. L. Menken carried on a rather detailed analysis of how and why several hundred euphemisms came into being and became vogue in his book *The American Language* in 1936, thus leaving behind a valuable legacy for euphemism study. In 1981, Hugh Rawson, a British linguist, compiled a dictionary named *A Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Double-talk*, a representative of the achievements made on the euphemism study over the decades, which gave a comprehensive discussion on the history,

definition, coverage, classification and characteristics of euphemisms in the preface. Rawson divided euphemisms into positive and negative euphemisms, and conscious and unconscious euphemisms, in addition to a thorough description of the meaning, etymology of each euphemism and its relation to other terms in his dictionary. Shu Dingfang regards this book as an invaluable classical work on euphemism and gives high appraisal to its preface to which he thinks that it is so far the most excellent one in all the articles written by scholars who study euphemism.

In 1983, American scholars J.S. Neaman and C.G. Silver published another masterpiece *Kind Words: A Thesaurus of Euphemisms* which supplied detailed description of the history, formation and motives of euphemism. It is of important value to the study of English euphemism.

In 1985, D.J. Enright published a book *Fair of speech, the Use of Euphemism* which was a collection of many pieces of essays concerning this topic, each only discussing the use of euphemism in one specific domain. This book provides some clues for the study of euphemism thoroughly. This book classified euphemism: "The employment of euphemisms can be viewed positively as the use of words of good omen, or negatively as the avoidance of unlucky or inauspicious words" (1985:13). More important, this book put forward that the history of euphemism should be studied within context. "It is impossible at present to write a definitive history of euphemisms. One major impediment is the alphabetical arrangement of dictionaries: no work exists at present in which all the synonyms of a given period of the past can be unscrambled and set side by side. Another lies in the area of contextual interpretation." (1985:15).

In 1991, Allan and Burridge published a book *Euphemism and Dysphemism*, which offers an analysis of the motivations, a classification, an occasional history and a functional account of the various expressions of euphemism and dysphemism. This book is very valuable to the study of English Euphemism from pragmatic perspective. It states that an interesting perspective on the human psyche is to be gained from the study of euphemism used "as a protective shield against the anger or disapproval of natural or supernatural beings"(1991:3). Euphemism is described as expression that seeks to avoid being offensive thus euphemism is defined by reference to concerns about face. This book further discusses

the correlation between euphemism and context.

In 1993, John Ayto published a book *Euphemisms*. This book consists of many pieces of essays which discuss the application of euphemism in different field. Its introduction supplies more ways to form euphemism. This book averts its attention to the correlation between euphemism and context. It points out "the euphemistic force of a word is often heavily dependent on its context". (1993:6)

Studies in foreign countries mainly focus on the definition, formation, history and classification. Enright, Allan&Burridge and Ayto paid their attention to the correlation between euphemism and context: context influence the interpretation of euphemism and restrict the application of euphemism.

2.2 Major studies in China

Euphemism has also been an interesting topic among Chinese linguists and scholars. The content of the study of euphemism of ancient Chinese scholars can be divided into two divisions: one is the study of taboo; the other is the study of folkways. Since euphemism has a close relation with taboo, the study of taboo usually has much to do with the study of taboo. The study of taboo of past ages can be found mainly in each dynasty's critical interpretation of ancient works. The systematic study of euphemism was done by Qian Daxin in Qing Dynasty. He not only comprehensively investigated the objects that should be tabooed, but also recovered the true colors of some ancient books by offering the deleted and changed words or characters (Shu Dingfang, 1995:17). The earliest description of Chinese folkways is found in *Miscellanies of Beans Garden* (《菽园杂记》) written by Lu Rong in Ming Dynasty.

In the contemporary age of China, for a long time, the study of euphemism mainly focuses on the rhetoric aspect of euphemism. Nowadays when researchers study the figure of speech, they definitely will include euphemism, since it is one of the most important figures of speech. Chen Wangdao is one of the earliest scholars who gave the definition to euphemism in his book *《修辞学发凡》* from rhetoric perspective. The definition reads, "one kind of figures of speech, saying something indirectly, but connoting and substituting with

roundabout and implicit words or even metaphorical expression."(委婉是修辞的一种,即说话不直白本意,只用委婉含蓄的话来烘托暗示).(1979:11) Euphemism is also called 婉曲 and 婉转 in rhetoric. His contribution to the research of euphemism is his statement that euphemism is found not only in lexical items but also in sentences or even discourse.

In the 1970s and 1980s, as western theories on sociolinguistics were introduced into China in succession, some scholars showed much interest to the special social functions of euphemism. Chen Yuan (1983) discussed the historical, social and psychological background of euphemism in his book *Sociolinguistics*; by analyzing a series of examples of euphemism, he explained the formation of euphemism and its use in different situations.

In 1989, Shu Dingfang published his *New Investigation on Euphemism in Foreign Languages*, the third issue of 1989. In this paper he enlarged the study scope of euphemism by applying pragmatic theories and proposed three constructing principles (distant principle, relevant principle and sweet-sounding principle) and "self-protective principle", one more principle of the application of euphemism in addition to Politeness principle and Cooperative principle.

In 1990, Li Zixiu and Cong Laiting published their *Euphemisms: A Dictionary of English Euphemism* and Liu Chunbao published *A Dictionary of English Euphemism* in 1993. The dictionary written by Liu Chunbao supplied detailed interpretation about different classifications for euphemisms, different ways to construct euphemisms and two laws.

Tian Jiusheng (2001) argues that when using euphemism people should follow two principles, namely, tact principle and self-protective principle. According to Tian, the tact principle requires the speaker to take the following factors into consideration when using euphemism: when, where, to whom, in what situation, what relation the interlocutors have, and what status the interlocutors have, etc. In defining the self-protective principle, Tian follows Shu's definition.

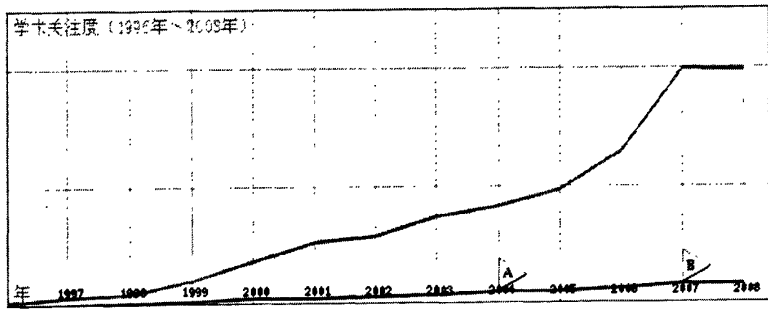
Shu Dingfang (2004) views that people should follow tact principle when using euphemism. She analyzes the uses of euphemisms in both English and Chinese from the perspectives of communication context and their pragmatic functions. She holds that "euphemism is one of the most important strategies to achieve tactful effect in

communication.”

In the past twenty years, scholars in China have published many books, papers and essays concerning the topic of euphemism in both English and Chinese. They have studied euphemism from different perspectives of rhetoric (Wu Liquan/吴礼权, 1994; 1997), sociolinguistics (Wang Songnian/王松年, 1993; Peng Wenzhao/彭文钊, 1999), sociopsychological linguistics (Wang Dechun/王德春, 1995; Shi Li/史莉, 2002), fuzzy Linguistics (Wu Tieping/伍铁平, 1979) and pragmatics (Chang Jinyu/常敬宇, 2000; Liang lujin/梁鲁晋, 2004),etc.

In order to know the current situation of the study of euphemism, the author investigated the articles on line and found the academic trend in this field illustrated by the following figure.

Figure2.1 The academia concern on euphemism from 1996 to 2008.



The author also found about 548 articles on euphemism, which were published during the years from 1996 to 2008 in China. There are 379 articles written from rhetoric and semantic perspectives and 169 from pragmatic perspective. Among 169 articles, 92% was written after 2000.The study of euphemism from pragmatic perspective is mainly in several aspects as shown in the following table:

Table2.1 Major works on euphemism from 1996 to 2008(169 articles)

content	A	B		C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
		a	b								
articles	53	13	2	8	7	29	3	4	5	16	29

- A. communicative function of euphemism
- B. relation between context and euphemism
- C. principles of euphemism
 - a. tact principle
 - b. politeness principle, cooperative principle and self-protective principle
- D. euphemism and translation
- E. euphemism and cross-cultural communication
- F. motivation of euphemism
- G. strategy of euphemism
- H psychological base of euphemism
- I sociolinguistic
- J English teaching, vagueness, effect, etc

Work by the scholars at home and abroad is quite valuable to further studies on euphemism.

2.3 The Problem

Generally speaking, the researches on euphemism are mainly restricted to three areas: rhetoric, semantic and dictionary compiling. The rhetorical view treats euphemism as a figure of speech, closely related to linguistic taboos. It reveals in detail the formation and classification of euphemisms and their relation to taboos, while mentioning social influence only in passing. The semantic point of view regards euphemism as an "associative engineering", mostly replacing a word having offensive connotation with another expression, which makes no overt reference to the unpleasant side of the subject. This approach explores the origin and formation of euphemisms in terms of their semantic features. It largely focuses on the semantic causes of euphemisms while neglecting their socio-cultural causes. The lexicographical approach mainly deals with the meaning, etymology of each euphemism and its relation to other terms and pays little attention to socio-cultural aspects of euphemism.

As to English teaching or TEFL, which is an important area that euphemism can be applied to, some research has been done. There are a few papers concerning euphemism teaching(巩鹏,2000;范思勇, 2002;韩玲, 2003;朱华, 2004). However these works refer mainly to the significance of English euphemism teaching. They do not provide us with specific teaching approaches to deal with euphemism teaching and learning. There are still some papers on English euphemism teaching(王晓滨, 2006; 王音, 2007) that have put forward a certain kind of teaching mode, but some key concepts, such as what is euphemistic awareness, haven't been discussed clearly. What's more, the relationship between teachers' using euphemisms themselves and teaching euphemisms is neglected.曲莉(2005) has made survey on students' face want. But there is still room in improving her statistical method. In a word, the empirical studies of the English euphemism teaching are really inadequate. On the basis of former scholars' valuable research, this thesis aims at furthering empirical study of English euphemism teaching to cultivate college students' euphemistic awareness.

Chapter Three Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

Since this research mainly studies the application of English euphemism in education and approaches of encouraging students to use euphemism tactfully, both theories in linguistics and pragmatics are needed. In the part of euphemism, the author mainly discusses the definitions made by different linguists, the classifications made by different linguistic theories, the characteristics and pragmatic functions of euphemism; in the part of English euphemism, the major concern is the formation of euphemism; from the pragmatic view, we can get to know the principles obeyed or violated by euphemisms.

3.2 Euphemism

3.2.1 The definitions of euphemism

English word "euphemism" originates from the Greek word "euphemismos", which means "fair speech". The prefix "eu---" means "good well", and "pheme" means "saying" or "speech". So the literal meaning of "euphemism" is "to speak with good words or in a pleasant manner." There have been various kinds of definitions of euphemism used up to this point. Some are cited as below:

- 1) "substitution, restraint, softened expression, mock modesty, metaphorical speech, verbal extenuation word in verbal good taste, over delicacy of speech, affected refinement of language" (Webster's *New Word Thesaurus*, 1971)
- 2) "substitution of mild or vague or roundabout expression for harsh or direct one" (*New Edition of the Oxford Concise Dictionary*, 1976)
- 3) "A mild or vague periphrastic expression as a substitute for blunt precision of disagreeable truth. (Hugh Rawson, 1981)
- 4) "Substitute an inoffensive or pleasant term for a more explicit, offensive one, thereby veneering the truth by using in words " (Neaman and Silver, 1983.)

- 5) "A euphemism is an attempt to modify an unpleasant thought by substituting mild or polite words or phrases for the exact words." (Fromkin, V&Rodman, 1983.)
- 6) "Euphemism is a language strategy in civilized society for avoiding 'taboo'". (彭文钊, 1999)
- 7) "rhetorical trope: a pleasant replacement for an objectionable word that has pejorative connotations" (Bussmann, 2000).

Although these definitions may be different in wording, most of them share the common points: euphemism is a polite, indirect, mild, tactful word or expression that is used as a substitution to enhance successful social communication for people talking about something that is embarrassing, unpleasant, harsh, offensive, painful, etc. It's mainly for the need of politeness that people prefer to adopt it in daily communication.

3.2.2 The classifications of euphemism

It can be divided into many types from different perspectives. The followings are some of the representative classifications:

1) Positive and negative euphemism. According to Hugh Rawson(1985), euphemism can be divided into two general types—positive and negative from the angle of semantics. The positive euphemisms inflate and magnify, making the euphemized items seem grander and more important than they really are. Positive ones include many occupational titles, which save the egos of workers by elevating their job status: "access controller" for "doorman", "associate" for "salesclerk", "help" for "servant" (itself an old euphemism for slave). The negative euphemisms deflate and diminish. They are defensive in nature, offsetting the power of tabooed terms and eradicating from language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly. In many cultures, it is forbidden to pronounce the name of God (hence, pious Jews say Adonai) or of Satan (giving rise to the deuce, the good man, the great fellow, the generalized Devil, and many other roundabouts).

2) Conscious and unconscious euphemisms. All euphemisms whether positive or negative may be used either consciously or unconsciously, so euphemisms can be divided into "conscious" and "unconscious" by Hugh Rawson(1981). The unconscious ones refer to those of which original denotations have been forgotten by people for a long time. For instance, the word "cemetery" serves as "graveyard", and "indisposition" is used as a

euphemistic expression for "disease". Speakers are not conscious of the above two words because of their long-time use and their original meanings. While the conscious ones are those euphemisms that people not only know their original meanings, but also understand the referred meanings. For instance, in the situation of dinner party, a lady stood up and said that she wanted to powder her nose. Everyone knows that her meaning is going to the "ladies' room". It is true that such euphemisms stand for "something else", and people understand both the original and referred meaning.

3) From the contents of euphemisms, they include death euphemisms, sex euphemisms, war euphemisms, profession euphemisms, etc.

4) From the decade during which euphemisms are used, there are middle age euphemisms, Victorian euphemisms, 20th century euphemisms and modern euphemisms.

5) From the angle of users, such euphemisms can be divided into policeman euphemism, criminal euphemisms, teacher euphemisms, student euphemisms and soldier euphemisms.

6) From the length of time they are used, euphemisms can fall into instantaneous euphemisms and continuous euphemisms.

7) From the point of functions of English euphemisms, there are evasive euphemisms, humorous euphemisms and cosmetic euphemisms, etc.

3.2.3 The characteristics of euphemism

Euphemism has many characteristics, and the followings are introduced in four aspects.

1) Indirectness The main characteristic of euphemism is indirectness. Generally speaking, the more direct the sentence is, the harsher the communicative effect is, and the more indirect, the milder the communicative effect is.

2) Changeability Language is a social phenomenon. The society changes and so do euphemisms as an organic part of language. Our vocabulary gets some new blood and loses some out-dated ones with the development of the society. English euphemism vocabulary, of course, is in accordance with this tendency.

3) Generality Euphemistic phenomenon exists in every nation of the world from highly civilized society to primal tribe. The generality of euphemisms reflects that

politeness prevails in almost any place and any time that communication occurs.

4) Nation Character Although euphemism is a general language phenomenon, the differences of culture and language exist in certain degree among nationalities.

3.2.4 The laws of euphemisms

Euphemism is "in a constant state of flux". Almost everyday, new euphemisms are created. The change of euphemisms is governed, to a large extent, by two basic rules: Gresham's Law (Law of Exclusion) and the Law of Succession.

According to Rawson, Gresham's Law can be defined as "bad money drives out good", meaning "debased or underweight coins will drive good, full-weight coins out of circulation". (Rawson, 1981) In fact, a euphemism often degenerates into a taboo term through contamination by the taboo topic. That could easily be understood for expressions may be seen as responses to stimulus. After an expression has been associated for a long period of time with the stimulus that provokes it, the expression itself picks up aspects of the response elicited by the stimulus object. When unpleasant elements of response attach themselves strongly to an expression, the expression is contaminated and possesses a bad connotation, and it is the bad connotation of the expression that tends to drive its competing good connotations out of circulation.

Gresham's Law is the engine that powers the second of the two euphemistic rules: the Law of Succession. After a euphemism is used for a period, the distance between the euphemism and its referent will shorten gradually. That is to say, when a certain euphemism loses its euphemistic effect it has to be replaced by new euphemisms. Then the second will become tainted and a third will appear. The continuous change of euphemism results in the Law of Succession.

This rule could be testified from the following examples:

She has cancelled all her social engagement. (1856)

She is in an interesting condition. (1880)

She is in a delicate condition. (1895)

She is knitting little booties. (1910)

She is in a family way. (1920)

She is expecting. (1935)

She is pregnant. (1956)

(陈原, 1983:82)

We can clearly see the changing of attitude toward sex and its consequence in different era, as exemplified above in the chain of euphemisms for pregnancy. As people's attitude toward pregnancy seemingly unpleasant topic, varied, we could mention it directly instead of employing some other words.

To draw a conclusion, euphemistic terms themselves have short lives because of the frequent and continuous "contamination" by their connotations. For this reason, euphemism turnover is quite high (Marsh 1998). This phenomenon to some extent explains why we should study the pragmatic principles of euphemism: to see through the essence of euphemism under its constant changing forms.

3.2.5 The formation of English euphemism

From the linguistic way, English euphemism can be formed in the following aspects.

1) Forming Euphemisms in Semantic Method: Euphemisms can be made by a semantic process called widening. When a term becomes too painful or vivid, we may use abstraction way to express it. In this way cancer becomes "a growth" and a girdle becomes "a foundation". Sometimes, in addition to widening, we divide the negative connotations of a single direct term to two or more words. Instead of saying "syphilis" openly, we speak of a "social disease".

Allied to the phenomenon of widening is that of semantic shift. This is the substitution of the whole, or a similar generality, for the specific part we do not choose to discuss. We may create such metonymies (substitutions of the whole for the part) as FEAR END for "buttocks."

Euphemisms may be made by a process called metaphorical transfer, the comparison of things of one order to things of another. The euphemism BLOSSOM for a "pimple" compares one flowering to another more acceptable variety. The euphemisms chosen are often romanticizing, poeticizing and softening of the original word.

2) Forming Euphemisms in Phonetic Method: Euphemisms may be created by phonetic distortion. When we encounter words that dare not speak their names, we abbreviate, initial, convert, backform and reduplicate them.

Abbreviation is the shortening of a word and may be seen in the use of the British expression "ladies" for "ladies' room". Initialing is the use of acronyms instead of their component parts, as in "J" for "Jesus Christ." Backforming is the substitution of one part of speech (used in shortened form) for another, as in "burgle", which is derived from "burglar." Phonetic distortion is the changing of a sound in a word. It is audible in such terms as "GRIPEs" for "Christ" and "GAD" for "God". A blend word is a form of phonetic distortion in which two or more words are squeezed together both orthographically and phonetically. An example of this is "Gezunda" for "a chamber pot", a term derived from the fact that this object "goes under" the bed. Reduplication is the repetition of a syllable or letter of a word. Particularly common in children's bathroom vocabulary, it substitutes "pee-pee" for "piss". A diminutive is the formation of a new term by nicking or shortening a name and adding a suffix indicating affection or smallness. "Heinie", for example, is the diminutive of "hind end" and refers to the "buttocks".

3) Forming euphemisms in grammatical method: An American linguist Dwight Bolinger once pointed out: "euphemism is not restricted to the lexicon; there are grammatical ways of toning something without actually changing the content of the message"(Bolinger & Sears 1981). We know that the expression in the definition of euphemism not only mean words or phrases, but also sentences or even discourses. The grammatical device of English euphemism consists mainly of the following aspects:

Using subjunctive mood: In English the subjunctive mood can strengthen the implicit of euphemisms, so a teacher can say to his students like that: "You should have fulfilled the task last week." Actually the intention is "It was your duty to fulfill the task last week, but you failed to do so."

Using conditional clause: A typical example is "If only the good die young, he should live to a ripe old age." It seems to be praising him, but the real meaning of the above sentence is "He is not a good man."

Using negation: Euphemisms often consist in substituting for a positive word as well as a denial of a sentence of the opposite idea. The negation of the positive words or expressions sounds polite than the negative ones. Therefore, "Wouldn't it be better for us to start off a little earlier tomorrow morning." sounds milder than "I think it would better for

us to start off a little earlier tomorrow morning."

Using progressive tense and past tense: Progressive tense usually describes an action that is happening. For instance, "He is being polite." The genuine meaning of the sentence is "He is usually impolite and pretends to be polite now."

The past tense can be used to indicate the past action or state, also can be used to express mild request, or give some implication carefully, so the extra communicative effects are obtained. Here are some sentences:

a) Could you help me?

b) I wanted to borrow your dictionary.

All of these two sentences express the speaker's demand or opinions directly and politely, which, to a certain extent, lead to the easy acceptance and comfortable situation for the hearer.

Using exclamation sentence: The exclamatory tone has the function of helping express something that the speaker doesn't want to say. When you hear "God knows where he went!" you can imagine the speaker's anger by using "he". Moreover, exclamatory sentences formed by "if only" can also express euphemistic meaning. For instance: If only the letter had arrived in time!

Using passive voice: Passive voice is seldom used in English expression, except in English for science and technology. For the sake of being politeness and indirectness, passive voice can be used to avoid mentioning the reason of the action, especially when criticizing should be conveyed. For example: "This paper was not well written."

Using the first plural person: Under some circumstance, the first single person and the second person may be replaced by the first plural person. For instance, "Maybe we could do something more about it." Sometimes, a doctor may ask his patient like this: "How do we feel today?" In the above examples, "we" takes the place of "you", thus to make the expression sound pleasant and gentle. What's more, the close relationship is established by this way, which might get the communicative effect.

Using parenthesis: There is a lot of parenthesis in English, such as "I think, I guess, I am afraid, I wonder, it seems, it is said" and so on. Those parentheses can be used to express euphemistic meaning. For instance:

This time, it seems, is better done than the last time.

Without the parenthesis "it seems", the first sentence may be understood as a criticism by the listener.

Using tag question: Tag question has the function of consultation, which could soften the tone. By applying it, we can avoid directness and stiffness, thus achieving the purpose of politeness. For instance: "He can't do it, can he?" "The article was poorly written, don't you think?"

4) Forming euphemisms in figurative method: Metonymy is a figure of speech in which "we name something by one of its attributes". It is also a very popular way of forming euphemisms. For instance, instead of saying, "He is fond of wine", we may say, "He is fond of the bottle".

Metaphor is a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another. Many euphemisms are vivid metaphors. In people's daily life, people are reluctant to mention the word "die", so they use a lot of metaphors to beautify it. Thus, "to die" becomes "to go to sleep", "to go to his long home" "to be gathered to one's fathers", etc.

Other figurative methods include personification, analogy, understatement and periphrasis.

3.3 Pragmatic views on euphemism

Euphemisms do exist not only in lexical level, pragmatic levels, but also in semantic phrases, or sentences, They often take the forms of word, sometimes even discourses in a certain context.

3.3.1 The cooperative principle

Grice once said, "our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction (Grice, 1975) . " Having established the cooperative nature of most talk exchanges, Grice

posits the "Cooperative Principle (short for CP)", which he describes as a "rough general principle which participants will be expected to observe..." This CP, in turn, is described in terms of a set of conversational maxims. They are as follows:

1) The Maxim of Quantity:

- a) make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange;
- b) do not make your contribution more informative than required.

2) The Maxim of Quality: try to make your contribution one that is true.

- a) do not say what you believe to be false;
- b) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3) The Maxim of Relation: make your contribution relevant.

4) The Maxim of Manner: be perspicuous, and specifically.

- a) avoid obscurity;
- b) avoid ambiguity; be brief;
- c) be orderly.

(Grice, 1975:45-47)

To do so, these maxims specify what participants have to do in order to conduct communication in a maximally efficient, rational, and cooperative way. As a result, they should speak sincerely, relatively and clearly, and provide sufficient information.

3.3.2 Violating the Cooperative Principle

Generally speaking, people are required to observe the CP in communication. But to achieve a certain communicative goal, no one actually speaks by faithfully observing these maxims. The use of euphemism is a case of violating the Cooperative Principle. That is to say it is possible for euphemism to express conversational implicature-the meaning beyond what is literally expressed which could be figured out by the hearers by violating some maxims. In the following examples we may see how each maxim is being violated by euphemism. In correspondence with the four categories defined by Grice, we can classify the examples into four groups.

1) Euphemisms violating Quantity Maxim

Quantity Maxim requires the contribution is as informative as is required. The

violation is by providing non-informative information or by either providing less or more information than needed. Many euphemisms are created by contributing less information and violating Quantity Maxim in order to make taboos, unpleasant and rude words sound pleasant, polite and elegant.

For instance, an ordinary student applies for a job. He asks his supervisor to write a recommended letter. To avoiding hurting the student's self-esteem and at the same time reflect his real achievement, the professor writes his comments euphemistically:

Dear Sir:

Mr. X's command of English is excellent and his attendance to my tutorials has been regular.

(Grice: 2002)

The professor apparently violates QM, for he didn't provide sufficient information about student X, especially his study condition and research ability. The professor conveyed his idea but not hurt the student's face. It can infer that the student is not suitable for the job.

2) Euphemisms violating Quality Maxim

According to the Maxim of Quality, we expect our conversation partners will contribute the truth, and we fully expect that a conversation will not be expressed with untruths. Euphemisms have a tendency to violate the MQ in order to express taboos or unpleasant things in an indirect, mild and pleasant way. As a result, if the hearer wants to understand the real meaning of euphemism, he has to infer the conversational implicature from the illocutionary meaning and the context.

Take appearance for example, in most cultures, the topic about one's appearance is very sensitive. In English, there are beautiful words which are used to describe people's appearance, such as "good-looking, handsome, pretty, attractive and charming," etc. These words express speaker's praise or compliments to the hearers. There are some people who are very common or even ugly, but people usually avoid using the words "ugly", or "awful" directly in order not to hurt other people's self-respect. Therefore, people use some euphemisms such as "plain, ordinary" to express the common people. When talking about the appearance like "fat", people also like to use euphemisms such as "plump, put on weight". These euphemisms violate Quality Maxim, and they don't tell the truth, but they

are rather polite and acceptable.

Anyway, by violating the Maxim of Quality, euphemism can protect people's face and self-esteem from being hurt. It can prettify the conditions people have to face so that they will not feel discouraged. Therefore, telling the lies is telling friendly lies. This maxim is frequently used by teachers in their teaching process.

3) Euphemisms violating Relevant Maxim

Euphemism is to use irrelevant utterances on the surface to express what the speakers want to say and cannot say. In tact, the implied meaning of the utterances is relevant. Take the following one for example:

- a) The hostess is an awful woman, don't you think?
- b) The roses are lovely, aren't they?"

The above example is a very one that violates Relevant Maxim. B does not provide any information that is relevant to the topic that A is talking about. We are clear that it is impossible for B to know nothing about the hostess. B answers irrelevantly because what A speaks is just her own opinion, which implies that B doesn't want to cooperate with the topic that A arises. The meaning of B is perhaps that he doesn't want to talk about the topic now.

4) Euphemisms violating Manner Maxim

Violation of Manner Maxim means giving obscure and ambiguous information. Sometimes the speaker in communication avoids mentioning some taboo, unpleasant, embarrassing things, so he says in an obscure and ambiguous way. Then the hearer should carefully infer the conversational implicature of the speaker according to the context.

For example, the first way is to express the general for specific by using the fuzzy expression. According to the educationists, both clever and non-clever children are the exceptional children, not the abnormal children. Therefore, teachers in class often use euphemisms strategy in criticizing students. There are some instances as follows:

He needs help in learning to adherer to rules and standards of play. He has difficulty in distinguishing between the imaginary and factual information. He needs help in learning to respect the property rights of others.

The second way is to make use of ambiguity to produce an illusion, resulting in a

certain misjudgment. For example, "sanitation engineer" is used to take place for "garbage collector", "to wash one's hands" for "go to the toilet", "to swim to the bottom" for "drown". This kind of euphemisms may have at least two different meanings: the denotation and the euphemistic sense.

The third way is to make use of prolixity to indicate the necessary implicature. For example, one-way-ticket can be used to replace "die", but it carries an implicated meaning which reflects the speaker's experience of life: life is like a journey, holding the one-way-ticket. We begin our journey for death; reaching the destination means we will never be back alive. So we can say that this expression holds more information than it does on the surface.

From the above analysis, it is easy to find that there are overlapping parts between the maxims. If the expression violates the Quality Maxim, it will more or less violate the Quantity Maxim. Euphemism as a variation of normal way of speech is a result of violation. Most of time, euphemisms tend to violate the Cooperative Principle.

3.3.3 The Politeness Principles

Leech says that the CP itself has problems or troubles (Leech, 1983). It cannot explain (a) why people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean; (b) what is the relation between sense and force when non-declaration types of sentence are being considered. He is trying to remedy Grice's theory of conversational implicature.

Leech intends to provide a principle of pragmatics, so he at last proposed the Politeness Principle (the PP). In his proposal, he gives six maxims and each maxim consists of two sub-maxims. He suggests that politeness concerns a relationship between two participants whom we may call self and other, in conversation, "self" will be identified with a speaker, and "other" will be identified with a hearer. In conversation, a speaker shows his politeness both to the hearer as well as to a third person who may or may not be present in the conversation. In his sense, "other" applies not only to addressees but also to a third person(s). The PP may be formulated in a general way from two aspects: to minimize the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize the expression of polite beliefs.

The Politeness Principles tend to appear in pairs as follows:

1) Tact Maxim

a) Minimize the cost to others

b) Maximize the benefit to others

2) Generosity Maxim

a) Minimize the benefit to self

b) Maximize the cost to self

3) Approbation (or flattering) Maxim

a) Minimize the dispraise of others

b) Maximize the praise to others

4) Modesty Maxim

a) Minimize praise of self

b) Maximize dispraise of self

5) Agreement Maxim

a) Minimize disagreement between self and others

b) Maximize agreement between self and others

6) Sympathy Maxim

a) Minimize antipathy between self and others

b) Maximize sympathy between self and others

We can conclude that politeness is focused more strongly on "other" than on "self"; moreover, within each maxim, sub-maxim seems to be less important than politeness towards oneself.

3.3.4 Observing the Politeness Principles

The politeness principle mainly talks about the equal status and friendly relation among the participants in communication. Politeness is the symbol of the civilization and an important standard, which restricts the social activities of human beings, such as the use of language. For a long period, English euphemism originally deriving from taboos has been regarded as a sign of politeness owing to avoid violating the social morality in public. With the development and the change of society, the purpose of euphemisms is not only for evading taboos, but also for the need of glorification. Hence, when people are compelled by circumstances to involve something unpleasant or inconvenient, people often intentionally violate the Cooperative Principle to choose obscure and indirect euphemism,

conforming to the Politeness Principle in order to satisfy the self-esteem of the addressees, not to hurt others or even to show sympathy.

1) Observe Tact Maxim

One of the purposes of using euphemisms is to keep face or not lose face. When you say something, you must consider not only yourself but also the reaction of your partner after hearing it.

Excretion is one of the unpleasant facts of life people feel ashamed of and disgusted with because it offends people's tastes of cleanness and purity, which are common desires of all rational people. Mentioning these unpleasant topics in social interaction would lead to the embarrassment of both speakers and hearers. There are some ways to express the places where people need to go.

—Where is the restroom?

—May I wash hands?

Such euphemisms employ people's desire to extricate them from barbarism and become civilized creatures, which observe Tact Maxim.

2) Observe Generosity Maxim

In the classroom, students usually would like to say, "I have a question to ask." This sentence is always liked by Chinese students in English class for we are influenced by Chinese culture. Actually, seldom is this structure found in the use of English-spoken countries. The speakers usually like to avoid using the direct and harsh expressions so as to show the requirement politely. Euphemistic Expressing is preferred here. For example:

—Could I ask you a question?

—Would you mind my asking a question?

The two sentences are in agreement with Generosity Maxim: minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self. The speaker never forces the hearer to answer the question but employ an indirect way to obtain the goal of asking the question.

3) Observe Approbation Maxim

The wants of being praised is rather natural for human beings. Many euphemisms are to minimize dispraise of other and maximize praise of other. When a teacher comments a student's conducts and school performance in front of the student and his or her parents,

she or he have to report the fact politely and mildly, considering the face of both the student and the parents and the teacher's social position of a well-educated person. As a result, the euphemistic expressions are often employed under such circumstance.

"The student is a little bit slow for his age." instead of "The student is stupid." "I am sorry to find your son to be an underachiever for some major courses." instead of "Your son failed many major courses."

These euphemistic expressions above conform to Approbation Maxim of the Politeness Principle. The speaker manages to express his or her ideas indirectly to make it easier for the hearer to accept. These euphemisms really help the speaker achieve his or her communicative goal, as well as being very reasonable.

4) Observe Modesty Maxim

According to Chinese culture, we usually try to be modest to show our respect and politeness to others. There is a kind of euphemisms called anti-euphemism, which is used to minimize praise to self and maximize dispraise to self. For example: a person sometimes calls himself "your humble servant". The euphemism is hearer-oriented, which is used to belittle speaker in order to please the hearer.

Moreover, there is a type of pattern in English, which seems to negate the main clause, but actually negate the subordinate clause. For instance, as to the question "Have you ever met my father?" is not in accordance with English custom when you reply: "No, I haven't." or "I think I haven't." instead, the proper expressions are:

a) "I don't think I have."

b) "I'm afraid not."

These answers sound more natural and polite. These are typical euphemistic expressions of English negation. And also like phrases "Thanks/Thanks a lot." "Excuse me." They apply to westerners' psychological and cultural awareness.

5) Observe Agreement Maxim

When we are to express the purpose of denial in the communication, people in most cases will not express their ideas straightly, but will employ certain indirect or euphemistic methods to agree them vaguely, or generalize them to meet the agreement maxim. For example:

- a) A: How do you like this shirt?
- b) B: It's good but I prefer that one.
- a) A: Could you help me with the washing, Maggie?
- b) B: Mary will do it better.

In the above examples, neither do the speakers violate the Agreement Maxim nor do they completely hide their real meaning. As a result, the hearer should understand the indirect meaning and not feel embarrassed or offended.

6) Observe Sympathy Maxim

Sometimes, using the plural form of the first person to replace the singular form of the first person and the second person can also attain the euphemistic effect. For example:

A nurse could say to a patient in the hospital like this: shall WE take the medicine now?

Similarly the doctor would say: how do WE feel today? The teacher says in the class like this: today WE take up lesson x.

In all these two sentences, I was replaced by WE. As a result, all these expressing shows a kind of intimation euphemistically and reduce the distance between the patient and the doctor, as well as the teacher and the students. These kinds of linguistic strategies are in line with Sympathy Maxim: minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between self and other.

Euphemisms are usually used to talk about sensitive topics, including death, illness, weight, wealth, career and suicide. As a result, euphemisms appear to show our sympathy when we encounter unpleasant situations. We try to increase the sympathy of each other so as to obtain communicative goal. From the above analysis, it seems that politeness must be a major motivation behind euphemism, which aims to avoid offence and aims to be respectful to the audience.

3.3.5 Face Theory

The face theory is presented by Brown and Levinson in 1978, which is based on the face notion put forwarded by Goffman in the 1950s. In Goffman's opinion, "face" is a sacred thing for every human being and essential factor all the communicators have to pay attention to. Then Brown and Levinson specify the general notion of "face" proposed by

Goffman. They claim that the problem for any social group is to control its internal aggression while retaining the potential for aggression in both internal social control and in external competitive relations with other groups. Brown & Levinson (1978) characterize two types of faces in terms of participant wants rather than social norms: 1) Positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others...the perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values) resulting from them should be thought of as desirable. 2) Negative face: the want of every "competent adult member" that his action be unimpeded by their...the want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded.

Face is something that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and any threat to face must be continually monitored during an interaction. Since face is so vulnerable, and since most participants will defend their faces if threatened, everyone's intention is to maintain each other's face. "Those participating in conversational encounters have to have a care for the preservation of good relations by promoting the other's self-image, by avoiding offense..." (Widdowson 1990). The sentence encompasses both the motivation behind euphemism, the idea behind Face Theory, the preservation of good relations, and concerns the preservation of self-image. It is simple to see why euphemism is encountered in everyday language with every utterance there are possibilities of damaging the face value of the audience or one's self. Therefore, Face Theory claims that people are required to make concessions during communication. If the face value of one party is threatened, the aim may not be fulfilled, and the communicative act will be a failure. The use of euphemism can help to avoid offence or use soft language to avoid embarrassment. According to Brown and Levinson, face is "the public self image that every member of society wants to claim for himself." Everyone needs to keep face in communication. Such "mutual self-interest requires that conversational participants maintain both their own and their interactors' face." Therefore, the communicators manage to weaken face threatening through a series of strategies including euphemism.

From the analysis of the principles, euphemism is a variant of conventionalized language. It has a close relationship with Pragmatics: It is produced by violating the Cooperative Principle; On the other hand, it is the need of Politeness Principle, and Face

Theory. Meanwhile, its choices and comprehension largely depends on the context.

Taking English teaching into consideration, students usually are afraid of losing faces when failing to answer teacher's questions, being criticized by teachers because of making mistakes. So teachers should avoid using harsh and direct words in such cases. In other words, teachers should have a good mast of euphemism knowledge and also know how to use them tactfully in their teaching process.

Chapter Four Methodology

4.1 Research purpose and hypotheses

4.1.1 Purpose

During years of English teaching practice and related theoretical research, the author found that most students have strong desire and motive to learn English well but they usually neglect the study of target language's culture. Their failures in examination or communication have a lot to do with a lack of cross-cultural competence than a lack of linguistic competence. They know little about English euphemism which can mirrors English culture. So they tend to understand euphemism literally. For instance, they put a sign —“Restroom for Foreign Faculty” on the door of the lounge for foreign teachers to have a rest or have a cup of tea or water (restroom is an euphemism for toilet in American English). They think “garden of rest(安息的园地)” and “memorial park(纪念园)” are the equivalent of “graveyard(坟场, 墓地)”, “We have unfortunately to reduce staff levels(裁员).”is the same as “Sorry, we must give you the sack(卷铺盖, 炒鱿鱼).” But actually, these expressions have differences between crudeness and refinement or elegance and vulgarity. Therefore, to get familiar with English euphemism can help students enhance the ability of reading comprehension, know something about English countries' social psychology and customs, and improve the capacity to appreciate and use English.

The author is intended to design a kind of clear and practical English euphemism teaching mode which is suitable for nowadays college students. The mode consists of two parts: implicit teaching and explicit teaching. Implicit teaching means the teacher apply suitable euphemisms in his or her communication with students in class or after class. In other words, he or she sets a good example of using euphemisms tactfully for students. Explicit teaching means the teacher adopts some approaches to teach students the knowledge about euphemism. The students can get clear and systematical instructions from teachers. Through an experimental case, the efficiency and validity of this mode will be tested. With the joint influence of teachers' using euphemisms in their teaching and

teaching students key euphemistic knowledge clearly and systematically, students' euphemistic awareness, namely the ability to understand, appreciate, and use euphemisms can be enhanced to a satisfactory level. They will cross the cultural gap more easily in English learning, and on the other hand they will become more confident and skillful in their daily communication.

In order to testify the influence of the teaching mode, the author would like to put forward the following hypotheses.

4.1.2 Hypotheses

- 1) Nowadays college students have strong face want.
- 2) College students' euphemistic awareness level is rather low.
- 3) Through the training, students' euphemistic awareness level can be improved significantly.
- 4) Through the training, students can improve their interpersonal relationship tactfully.

An experiment is designed to testify the above hypotheses.

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Experiment design

The experiment was carried out in Shengli College of China Petroleum University from September, 2008 to September, 2009. Two parallel classes were adopted as experimental class and control class respectively. The implicit and explicit teaching were carried out simultaneously in the experimental class while only implicit teaching was adopted in the control class. Although sharper contrast between the two classes can be obtained if both implicit teaching and explicit teaching were rejected in the control class, but the author prefers the former design.

4.2.2 Experimental variables

In this experiment, the independent variable is English euphemism teaching which is divided into two levels: explicit combined with implicit teaching and implicit teaching only.

The dependent variable is the scores of the examination related to euphemisms.

The following measures were taken to control the irrelevant variables:

1) The experimental class and the control class were parallel, so there were no significant differences in their basic English skills (listening , reading, writing and translating), euphemistic awareness (the ability to understand, appreciate and use euphemisms) and face want degree before the experiment.

2) Except that the explicit euphemism teaching was permeated through the usual teaching in the experimental class, the same teaching contents, teaching hours and homework amount were the same in the two classes.

3) The two classes were given lessons by the same teacher.

4.2.3 Subjects

The subjects of this research were two parallel classes majoring in Oil Storage and Transportation in Shengli College of China Petroleum University. I was their English teacher since September, 2007 to September, 2009. The experimental period was their second school year. There were 45 students in the experimental class or experimental group (EG) and 46 students in the control class or control group (CG). The two classes have never been trained in euphemisms. The pretest results showed that there no significant differences in their euphemistic awareness and face want degree.

4.2.4 Instruments

1) Questionnaire on students' face want degree

This questionnaire (See Appendix I) was designed on the basis of the eleven typical situations the author collected and summarized by interviewing and observing students during the daily teaching practice. These situations are all supposed to connect with students' English learning in the face of the whole class. The data obtained through the investigation are helpful in finding out students' face want degree and guide the teachers to tactfully use euphemisms in their teaching.

2) Test on students' euphemistic awareness level

The author employed the use of a one-hour examination paper (See Appendix II) .The questionnaire is borrowed from the master's dissertation of Pan Zizheng from Anhui University (2005). A slight alteration was made because the subjects' alteration. So a

test-retest reliability of the paper was made. It was carried out in the control class, the interval between the two tests was four months. The correlation coefficient was 0.851, which showed that the coefficient of stability, namely the test-retest reliability was above normal.

The papers consist of four parts. The first part focuses on listening comprehension. The euphemism in each question is given in context. Students are required to choose the best answer to the question. For example:

W: You look cold and tired, Jack. How about a cup of coffee?

M: Well, my doctor says coffee-drinking is harmful to my stomach.

Q: What does the man mean?

- A. The doctor advised him not to drink coffee.
- B. The doctor wants to have some coffee.
- C. He'll bring some coffee to the doctor.
- D. He really wants some tea. (Appendix II . I .6)

In the second and third parts, each euphemism is given as the best or correct answer within each group of four choices to convey the appropriate meaning. For example:

A journalist reports that there are still many children in Africa who are ____.

- A. starving
- B. hungry
- C. nutritionally deficient
- D. suffering from hunger (Appendix II . II .5)

Another example:

"I need a domestic—," said the landlord.

- A. help
- B. servant
- C. slave
- D. master (Appendix II . II .8)

The fourth part is also multiple choices. The students should choose the answer which they think could best express the meaning of the underlined part of each sentence from four given choices. For example:

Where did you buy this new dress? It is so smart.

Rose: Thank you. I am glad you like it.

Jill: It must be expensive.

Rose: Yes, it costs me \$88.

A: Can you tell me how much is it?

B: It is not fit for you.

C: I think it is too expensive for you to buy.

D: It is so beautiful that it looks expensive. (Appendix II . IV.1)

The total number of the items in the questionnaire is 40. And the score for each question in each part is 1 point. The highest possible score based on four parts is 40. The materials of the examination questions were carefully selected from CET4 and *Diction of English Euphemisms*(刘纯豹,2001), so they were authentic and typical.

3). Interview

Ten students from the experimental class and ten from the control class were randomly chosen as interviewees. An outline was made before the interview which involved such questions as obstacles they have encountered in their daily communication, difficulties they have met in understanding the implied meanings of some questions in CET4 or other forms of examinations, their attitudes towards euphemism study, etc. The interviews were carried out in the two classes respectively and notes were taken down carefully. After the experiment, the interviews were done again according to the same procedures.

4.3 Experiment

4.3.1 Experiment procedures

Step1. Pretest. Questionnaire on students' face want and examination papers on students' euphemistic awareness level were handed out in the two classes. The author herself read the direction to students. After the test, the questionnaire and the examination papers were collected.

Step2. Intervention. This experiment took the form of group intervention. During one

school year, the teaching mode “normal teaching + implicit euphemism teaching + explicit euphemism teaching” was carried out in experimental class; the teaching mode “normal teaching + implicit euphemism teaching” was carried out in control class.

Step3. Posttest. At the end of the experiment, the euphemistic awareness level was tested again in the two classes and the same examination papers were utilized. The reason why the author used the same questionnaire was that after the first test, students were not told the answers to the questionnaire, and the time span between the two tests was almost two terms. This helped to exclude the recall effect and motivation effect according to language testing theory. Thus, the same questionnaire should be considered reliable and effective.

4.3.2 The teaching mode of cultivating students' euphemistic awareness

According to different method of conducting the euphemism teaching, the author classifies the mode into two types: implicit euphemism teaching and explicit euphemism teaching.

4.3.2.1 Implicit euphemism teaching

Implicit euphemism teaching means euphemism is used as a kind of teaching style. The teacher uses euphemism tactfully in terms of different contexts in education. Students are imperceptibly influenced by their teacher's role model and then learn some strategies of applying euphemisms into their daily life. As a teacher, it's a kind of obligation to do so which embodies his or her care and love to the students.

1. Introduction

The individual conditions of students in any class may be quite complex. Such as the family background (rich or poor), parents' status (officials or peasants, alive or die, divorced or not), students' status (clever or dull, tall or short, fat or thin, beautiful or ugly), etc. Teachers should be cautious at word choice in case they hurt students' feelings. In other words, teachers should try not to threat students' faces. Lin Yutang said in his signature work *My Country and My people*, face is the most powerful one among the three goddesses who governs China. And he regarded 'face' as “the most exquisite standard in Chinese society”. Chinese college students who were born in the 80s and after care their 'faces' particularly. They grew up with the earth-shaking changes of China and were

exposed to great amount of information from home and abroad. Hence, they have broad horizon, active mind and intense motivation of being praised and success. In other words, they have strong face want. The application of euphemisms in English teaching can well satisfy students' face want.

Face want, from another angle, is a matter belonging to affective domain. Affective domain plays a significant role in the second language acquisition. Affect refers to emotion or feeling. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior, and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side. The development of affective states or feelings involves a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact. Therefore, personality factors within a person contribute in some way to the success of language learning.

There are three important personality factors: self-esteem, inhibition and anxiety—which closely relate to the second language learning. Self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual hold towards himself. The higher self-esteem and language success interact with each other. It is the teacher who can provide the students some opportunities to build higher self-esteem by specific teaching method through the communication with them in the class. So teachers really have a positive effect on both the linguistic performance and the emotional well-being of the students. We should give enough attention to both linguistic goals and the personhood of our students.

Inhibition enables people to build sets of defenses to protect the human ego which encompasses what Guiora called the language ego to refer to the very personal, egoistic nature of second language acquisition. An adaptive language ego enables learners to lower the inhibitions that may impede success. As we all know, making mistakes is rather unavoidable in the language learning and we usually make progress through making mistakes. However, mistakes can be viewed as both internal and external threats to our ego. Teachers should create teaching situations in which inhibition and ego barriers are lowered so that free communication can take place.

Language anxiety can be distinguished from other types of anxiety, which is the fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign

language. Language anxiety can have a negative effect on the language learning process and ranks high among factors influencing language learning. This anxiety is linked directly to performing in the target language, so it is just a general performance anxiety. After discussion of the various factors that may lead to anxiety, we found that a teacher's teaching style may increase or reduce the students' language anxiety to a certain extent. Teachers' polite language, special behaviors even mild attitude toward different individuals can help the students remove language anxiety.

Can we make use of the relationship between the self-esteem and the language success? Can we help students build higher self-esteem to achieve better learning result? Can we lower the learners' inhibition and ego barriers to set up free communicative environment in the class? Can we remove, to some extent, speech anxiety, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment and communication apprehension in our teaching course by the application of euphemisms in language teaching? Can the application of euphemisms facilitate language—teaching methodology? The answers to these questions are definitely positive. Applying English euphemisms in the teaching and learning process is a constructive method, which helps us to find the solutions to these problems.

From the pragmatic perspective, English euphemisms violate the Cooperative Principle, while observe the Politeness Principle with the occurrence of conversational implicature. English euphemisms realize the function of concealment and obscurity. The vagueness avoids hurting the students' self-esteem meanwhile reflects the real condition indirectly even when they make some mistakes. In fact, these mild expressions provide the students a relaxing situation to confess and correct their errors and face the problems more bravely in the future. At the same time, English euphemisms observe the Politeness Principle and the Face Theory. Of course, teachers' language in the class should be polite, which is needed by the very profession. A euphemism is a good favorable interpretation of a bad word, which can remove the threat to the vulnerable faces of the students; therefore, the self-image will be defended during the interaction. The application of English euphemisms in the teaching process will establish a harmonious relationship between the teacher and the students. When a student's self-image is defended by a teacher's mild expression in front of all the other classmates, the language anxiety and inhibition of

learning a new language may disappear gradually, while the confidence and interest may arise. What's more, the teacher's polite and kind attitude toward one individual student will release the others, thus a good example is set up successfully. The intense class atmosphere will be reduced and the teacher can perform better under this kind of cooperative situation. Therefore, the expected teaching result is obtained by extra communicative effect of applying the indirect, mild and pleasant expressions--euphemisms.

2 .Apply euphemisms in different contexts

In communication participants should choose proper euphemisms with variation of context so that the communication can be carried on successfully. In other word, euphemisms are contextually bound. To foster good relationship and create a pleasant atmosphere in teaching process, euphemistic expressions can be employed in the following contexts:

1) Posing Questions

For one thing, Language is an important tool in communication. Participation in class activities involves the input and output of information. How to arouse the students' interests and create a relaxing atmosphere is a question frequently asked by teachers themselves. In teaching activities, teachers tend to ensure the interaction between teachers and students through the activities of asking and answering some questions. Some foreign language learners believe that they should be able to speak with great accuracy and an excellent accent, that language learning consists mainly of translation from English, and that two years is long enough to become fluent, and some people could learn languages more easily than others. At this time, the student's self-esteem is vulnerable when the learner perceives himself or herself as very competent in the native language and totally inadequate or limited in the target language. Foreign language learning can cause a threat to self-esteem by depriving learners of her normal means of communication, their freedom to make errors and their ability to behave like normal person. Some of these beliefs were extremely unrealistic and led to language anxiety. Of course, these beliefs may be some obstacles in language learning.

Many Chinese students prefer to be silent in classroom activities, so the art of asking

questions is of great significance, because that, to a certain extent, ensures successful teaching activities. The application of euphemistic expressions can arouse students' interests and create a sense of trust in the teachers, which helps the students feel at ease and relaxed in the classroom. What's more, it enables the students to answer the questions willingly. Thus it is essential for the teachers to have some ideas of how to pose a question and whether it is acceptable as far as the students are concerned. Here are some examples for teachers to raise questions in classroom teaching euphemistically: when a teacher wants to encourage one shy student to answer the question. Instead of saying "Answer this question." directly, she or he might say in this way: "Could you tell us your idea about this question? Just have a try. I am sure that you have something to say." This euphemistic expressing may, to some extent, shorten the distance between the teacher and the student and remove the fright of showing one's own opinion in the public place. Other examples are listed below:

What do you think of the question?

Would you mind voicing out your opinion?

Is there anyone who would like to say more about this topic?

2) Commenting on Students' Performance

Students' performance includes many aspects, such as how well they answer the questions raised by the teacher, whether or not they behave themselves in class, whether or not they have finished their homework duly and seriously, how well they performed in the exams etc. It is important for teachers to comment on student's performance properly. On the one hand, teachers are supposed to tell the truth objectively; on the other hand, they should take into account the psychology and self-esteem of the students. The main concern of the research being done on the TEFL is to arouse students' interest in their studies. In doing so, it is necessary for us to pay attention to students' psychological feelings. Generally speaking, students do care the appreciations and encouragement from the teachers. Therefore, it is of great use for teachers to know some skills of commenting on students' performance. To achieve this goal, teachers may resort to euphemistic expression for help. The questions lie in how to save the faces of the students, and how to reduce their anxiety in learning English. Teachers should encourage the students; meanwhile they

should indirectly tell the students that there is much room for them to improve. For example:

Euphemisms for "lazy":

Probably he/she has to devote himself /herself more diligently to his/her studies.

He/she is sure to go far if he/she can use his/her resources fully.

He/she needs ample supervision in order to work well.

He/she has to devote himself/herself more diligently to his/her study.

He/she had better take his/her lessons more seriously.

He/she is sure to go far if he/she is highly motivated.

Euphemisms for "noisy":

He/she needs to develop quieter habits of communication

Euphemisms for "disliked by other children":

He/she needs help in learning to form lasting friendship.

Euphemisms for "fails/flunks many major courses":

I am sorry to find he/she is an underachiever for some major courses.

Euphemisms for "lies":

He is likely to embroider the truth a bit.

He has difficulty distinguishing between imaginary and factual information.

Euphemisms for "cheat":

He needs help in learning to adhere to rules and standards of fair play.

(Roberts, C.J., Owen, p., 1983)

The teacher's comment may have great influence on students' psychology. Words of milder meaning are frequently used by the teachers, as is shown in the examples mentioned above; surely they serve to achieve better euphemistic effect and save the face of the students. It's of great significance to save the face of people. Failure to save the face, to

some extent, might destroy a person even though we are absolutely right.

3) Correcting students' mistakes

It's unavoidable for students to make some mistakes in carrying out series of activities of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Faced with constant serious criticism, students may become more and more passive because they are afraid of losing face. So, teachers should correct students' mistakes skillfully. It is the answer not the students that to be corrected. "I don't think this answer is right" is acceptable while "Michelle, you are wrong" is not. Emphasis should be paid on the thinking process not on the answer itself. "This is a tuff concept, let's do it step by step." "You are right on this part, let's figure out the rest together." All these expressions are euphemistic. More euphemistic expressions are as follows:

It would be better if you take...

I'm afraid your last essay was not quite up to standard.

Your written work has really improved, but you still have a bit of problems with your spelling.

I am afraid that you didn't pay enough attention to tense.

Maybe we could do something more to improve it.

This sentence, I suppose, contains one grammar mistake.

You are on the right track, but no exact.

I'm sorry, but...anyway, you have worked hard.

Well, your answer is OK. But it would be better if...

There is something reasonable in your answer. But...

Correction helps students to clarify their understanding of the meaning and construction of language. Explaining to the students that they have made a mistake is one of the most perilous encounters in the classroom. It is a vital part of the teacher's role, and something that the teacher is uniquely able to provide, but precisely because it involves pointing out people's mistake, we have to be careful when correcting since, if we do it in an insensitive way, we can upset our students and dent their confidence. The teacher has to

measure what is appropriate for a particular student in a particular situation. They should be able to correct the mistake without offending the student. Euphemisms just meet these needs. The indirect, polite and mild way can not only point out the mistakes, but also not hurt the student's face.

It's inevitable for teachers to pose some questions, comment on students' performance and correct students' mistakes in language teaching process. What we should bear in mind is that if such activities are somewhat carried out in a euphemistic way, effective and successful teaching activities can be achieved to a certain degree, which is beneficial for both the teacher and the students.

3. Key factors related to the effect

Two key factors should be taken into consideration when conducting the implicit euphemism teaching.

1). Teachers themselves should have strong and apparent euphemistic awareness. They should keep learning euphemism knowledge theoretically and practically. Students' euphemistic awareness will be enhanced under the influence of their teachers.

2). Every student is unique, so teachers should know more about students' psychological status and use euphemisms in their education in terms of "when, where and whom".

4.3.2.2 Explicit euphemism teaching

Explicit euphemism teaching means teachers resort to suitable teaching strategies to teach students euphemism knowledge clearly and systematically. In order to get satisfied results, this work must be well arranged. In this experiment, the teaching process is divided into four modules which are shown in the following figure:

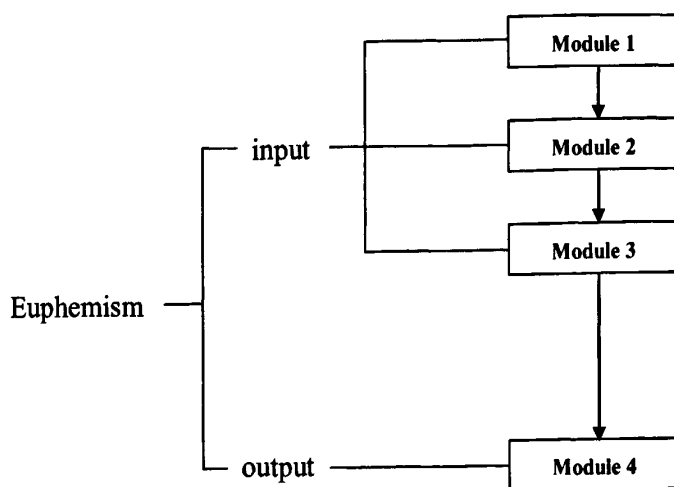


Figure 4.1 Explicit euphemism teaching mode

Note:

Module1: lecture

Module2: words network

Module3: appreciation

Module4: practice

1. Lecture

This is the first module in the whole procedure that aims at introducing the definition, the origin, the classifications, the characteristics and the functions of euphemism to the students. Then, they can have a general idea about this interesting linguistic and cultural phenomenon-euphemism. Comparison is a good method in this phase.

Comparison has long been regarded as an effective way of learning. As Engels said, you could really understand your language only when you compared it with other languages (何善芬, 2002). Accordingly, only when you compare the foreign language with your mother language, then you can understand and master better the foreign language. For learners, comparison can help them to reduce blindness in learning process, increase awareness, and exclude negative transfer of mother language's habit, thereby achieving the aim of using the foreign language correctly (何善芬, 2002). Thus, the author chose the way of comparison to teach euphemism. There were three ways to compare: compare euphemisms with straightforward expressions, compare the different euphemisms in English for the same content, and compare English euphemisms with Chinese euphemisms. They were of great help in our euphemism teaching and learning and resulted in a better

understanding of the effects and the function of euphemisms.

1) Comparison between Euphemisms and Straightforward Expressions

First, we helped our students to compare the different linguistic effects between taboos or straightforward expressions and euphemisms, thus students could see the power of euphemism. Let's take the following as examples (Yang Cuiyan, 2004: 55):

Straightforward expression	Euphemistic expression
theft	hook/borrow / liberate / expropriate/remove
breasts	mountains/teacups/apples / buds of beauty/globes
divorce	dissolve/great divide/break up / holy deadlock
abortion	illegal operation/termination of pregnancy
dirty words	four-letter words/pardon my French
the poor	the have-nots/man of modest means/the deprived
blindness	sight-deprived/visually retarded/ visually impaired
.....	

It becomes more obvious if we put these expressions in specific context. Compare the following statements:

- "He's done time on several occasions, but it was usually for *very small and unimportant crimes*."
- "I'll *give him a piece of my mind* for telling such a lie."
- "A sweet girl, a fine girl, a tender girl is Mary, and *a willing*."

If we substitute "jail", "blame" and "prostitute" for the italicized parts in each statement respectively, the statements will sound too sharp and offensive. As in an old joke, a mother referred her son as one "helping the police with their inquiries" instead of using the term "suspected criminals". No one could deny the power of euphemism after learning this.

By comparison, we may learn that the use of euphemisms create cosmetic and softening expressions that couldn't have been done otherwise. This way of talking eliminates the unpleasant, invasive, or obscure sense out of one's utterance, and contributes a more decent and acceptable speech. Ultimately this makes the communication smooth or releases the listeners' suffering.

2) Comparison of the Different Euphemisms in English for the Same Content

Another way was to compare the different euphemisms in English for the same content. Normally, there are some different euphemistic expressions for one thing or opinion in English owing to the functions, formation, or natures of euphemisms

From the function point of view, the evasive function, the politeness function and the cosmetic function are three basic communicative functions of euphemisms. When we talk about some sensitive topics, such as diseases and disabilities, appearance, occupation, poverty, old age, social status, etc, we will usually employ euphemisms to avoid referring, to show politeness, or to disguise. For example, to get the effect of evasiveness, people always use "to go to a better world", "to go to heaven", or "to be with God" instead of "to die", while to get the effect of disguise, people use "to pass away", "to depart" or "to go to sleep".

From the angle of formation, different euphemistic expressions will be developed for people's different cognitions to the same concept. For example, people use "smallest room" to express "lavatory" for the place is very small. And people also created the expression of "the fourth" for it was located at the fourth yard in St. John's College.

Euphemisms have the nature of time variation, register variation, and region variation. Still take "lavatory" for example. The word "lavatory" was a euphemistic expression itself, originated from the Latin word "Lavatorium" which means "washing-place". When it came to Elizabeth's age, people employed "Jakes" instead of it. And with the development of the ages, the euphemisms for "lavatory" is renewed to "water-closes", "cloakroom", "comfort station", etc. And in the term of "lavatory", British people use "Jakes" while Americans use "John"; British people use "public comfort station" while Americans use "public convenience station". And British ladies use "to powder my nose" while American ladies use "powder my puff".

As an effective way of learning, comparison helped the students comprehend euphemisms in the TL, distinguish the differences, and recognize the similarities between euphemisms in both source and target languages. It also presented students with more options to express euphemistic ideas, thus making proper role-shift in the cross-cultural communication.

3) Comparison between English Euphemisms and Chinese Euphemisms

The third way was to make comparison between English and Chinese euphemisms. Formed in different cultures, they share some similarities as well as differences. It was necessary for the author to make an introduction to the similarities as well as differences between Chinese and English euphemisms.

Chinese euphemisms and English euphemisms are, in general, similar to each other in terms of their definition, formation, nature and classification. This is true in spite of the fact that they are greatly different in formation owing to their formation from two quite unique cultures.

Though the two language systems are quite different, English and Chinese euphemisms have much in common. For example, both systems utilize euphemized topics about misfortunes like disease, death, and physical deficiency, as well as contents about some body organs, sex, excretions, and so on. This reveals a common feature of people from the two cultures: for many ages, people have used an indirect, evasive or roundabout way of speaking towards some unmentionable topics in their speech in order to satisfy their different needs.

A good case in point is the expressions about "defecation and ruination". In Chinese, we have the following euphemism: 出恭, 净手, 如厕, 水火, 解手, 登东, 方便一下, 上一号, 去洗手间, 去打个电话, so on and so forth. In English, we have "go to the restroom, use the bathroom, do one's need, ease oneself, answer nature's calling, do one's business and fix one's face, etc."

People try to avoid mentioning the topic of some private parts concerning people's body and sex. For example, in Chinese, we create the following expressions so as to avoid the embarrassment when mentioning them: 下身, 羞处, 阴部, 过夫妻生活, 同房, 云雨, 发生关系, etc. Corresponding English expressions are as follow "secret part, bottom, box; make love, sleep together, go to bed, sleep with, and have relations, etc.

Another example is about the topic of "death". There are over one hundred different euphemisms for the word "death" in English. Similarly, Chinese people also have created a lot of euphemistic expressions for the same topic. They are listed as follows respectively:

English euphemistic expressions related to death(Yang Cuiyan, 2004: 56-57):

Answer the final summons, be asleep in the Arms of God, be asleep in the valley, be at peace, be at rest, be brought to one's last/long home, be called to the beyond, be gathered to one's Father, be home and free, be taken to paradise, cross over to the River Jordan! the great divide, depart this life, depart to God, demise, go home, go to heaven, go to meet one's maker, go to one's grass, to west, kick the bucket, pay Saint Peter a visit, return to dust, (to go to)sleep, lay down one's life, make the ultimate sacrifice (death in terms of military terminology), mercy killing, pull the plug (death in terms of medical terminology), and lay down one's pen (death of writer), etc.

Chinese euphemistic expressions related to death (Yang Cuiyan, 2004: 57):

驾崩, 曹, 去世, 谢/辞/逝/弃世, 与世长辞, 长眠, 亡故, 瞩目, 作古, 去/老了, 归/升天了归西, 去西天极乐世界了, 见老祖宗去了, 咽气, 断气, 蹬腿了, 完蛋了, 牺牲, 阵亡, 献身, 光荣了, 失去知觉, 见海龙王去了(航海术语)。

Through comparison, we may find that in both English and Chinese languages, expressions about "death" are both related to certain religious views. In the West it is "Christianity", while in Chinese it is "Buddhism". In addition, different fields produce different euphemisms for "death", such as death expressions in terms of military, medical, and also in terms of navigation field, etc. On the other hand, in both languages, some of the euphemisms are used in rather formal or written situations (such as demise, lay down one's life, make the ultimate sacrifice in English; 驾崩, 曹, 与世长辞, 作古, 献身, 光荣了 in Chinese), while some others convey certain slang connotation (such as kick the bucket, pay Saint Peter a visit in English, and 断气, 蹬腿了, 翘辫子了, 完蛋了 in Chinese).

Similar euphemisms in both languages contain different connotations. Though similar in superficial meanings as they are, the expression of "go west" in English originates from a popular slang by the American Expedition troops in World War I, when the bodies of the KIA (killed in action) in European battles were shipped west to their hometown, USA; whereas "归西" in Chinese is related to Buddhism. "西" refers to the Pure Land, a place for those with holy spirits go after their death. From this we can see that if we interpret the target language (TL) with our native language, we may cause misunderstanding and failure in communication in the long run.

Another difference is that in terms of similar content, one adopts euphemistic

expressions, while the other prefers straightforwardness. For example, in western culture, "Privacy" counts a lot. Both of the two sayings "A man's home is his castle." and "Mind your own business." reflect the importance of "privacy rights" to them. As a result, any abrupt mentioning about their age, income, marriage, belief, weight, and prices of their possessions, etc. will cause an offense and are to be avoided. But in China, these topics are not considered taboo ones in daily conversation. On the other hand, when it comes to appellation, Western people are more casual than Chinese ones. Deeply influenced by Chinese Confucianism, Chinese people value "Li 礼" or politeness very much and regard the mention of the given names of their parents, ancestors, teachers, officials, and even kings as an offense or disrespect, thus contributing to the formation of euphemistic expressions for them. Whereas in English speaking countries, where "all men are created equal," they call each other's given name directly to show their friendliness, equality and intimacy.

2. Words network

This is the second module in the whole procedure that aims at helping students build euphemistic words network in their minds.

Words reflect objective things in the world, while meaning of words explains human's cognition of the objective things and the complex feelings. This determines the rich and varied feature of words and meaning. Each word has its conceptual meaning and associative meaning. Conceptual meaning is the meaning given in the dictionary and forms the core of word meaning. Being constant and relatively stable, conceptual meaning forms the basis for communication as the same word has the same conceptual meaning to all the speakers of the same language. Associative meaning is the secondary meaning supplemented to the conceptual meaning. It differs from the conceptual meaning in that it is open-ended and indeterminate. It is liable to the influence of such factors as culture, experience, religion, geographical region, class background, education, etc. Associative meaning comprises four types: connotative, stylistic, affective, and collocative (Leech, 1981).

The whole lexical system is an extremely complicated semantic system. Euphemism is a sub-system of the lexical system, so it also has the feature of network. In a sense,

euphemism is a kind of semantic network which is built around a prototype semantic item. Those euphemisms which have the same or similar meaning can constitute a semantic field. Euphemisms in the same semantic field are incompatible. Though they have family similarities, there is no one euphemism is totally identical with the other one. These euphemisms in the same semantic field have their own independent position and features but they are interrelated in many ways. Hence, we can conclude that euphemisms are not rambling but have inherent laws. Psychologists point out that words are stored in our mind in the form of network. Nodes on the net stand for the word concept, while the longitude and latitude circles on the net symbols the interrelation among word meanings. The effective strategy of teaching vocabulary is just like weaving this huge and complex network in students' minds. Therefore, in order to enlarge students' euphemistic vocabulary, the key is not to make the glossary longer, but to help students systematically master the inner rules of euphemisms and put them into practice. For example, there are many euphemisms respectively related to death, sex, old age, occupation, excretion, etc. If we learn them one by one, they will become isolated from each other and can not be easily resorted to when needed. So, teachers should classify these euphemisms that have similar connotative meanings into different groups and make some comparisons to help students remember them as a whole.

3. Appreciation

The above two methods of lecture and words network are aimed at establishing students' concepts of euphemisms and experiencing using euphemisms. The author also employed appreciation method such as audio-visual as a way to aid in the development of students' cognition to euphemisms.

As we know, learning English through movies is one of the best ways to grasp the language. English movies offer some of the best materials for our Chinese learners of English to acquire the language. So, the author looked for some good English movies and let students watch some sections concerning euphemistic expressions.

Here, let's take the famous British movie—*Forrest Gump* for example. There are many euphemistic expressions in this movie such as:

a) She said they were my magic shoes.

(They were my shape-righting shoes.)

b) Your boy's...different, Mrs. Gump.

(His I. Q. is rather low.)

c) Her momma had gone up to heaven when she was five...

(Her momma had died.)

d) Have you ever been with a girl, Forrest?

(Have you ever have sexual intercourse with a girl?)

e) I wanna go home.

(I'm dying.)

Another example is the popular American drama — *Desperate Housewives*, there are many euphemisms which embody the features of middle-class' language style. For instance:

a). I was laid to rest on Monday (season1, episode1).

(I was buried on Monday)

b). That means he's good in the sack (season3, episode1).

(That means he's good at sex)

c). I even kept the dirty magazine that he hid under his mattress

(I even kept the pornographic magazine that he hid under his mattress)

d). I'm a woman of a certain age in a business that values youth above all else
(season2, episode10).

(I'm a woman who is getting old in a business that values youth above all else)

e). What's the issue about, senior Olympics (season5, episode10)?

(What's the issue about, old people Olympics?)

f). I know she's a kind of chubby (season5, episode1).

(I know she's fat.)

.....

Learning English by watching movies or reading literature works made the learning process natural, educational and enjoyable. They therefore understood better the euphemisms' power. Therefore, they got much more proficient in understanding and using euphemisms. Appreciation module was done after the previous two modules. This step is

to let them feel euphemisms again and consolidate what they have learned in relatively real situations.

4. Practice

This is the fourth module in the whole procedure. It takes the form of group work and cooperative exploration and aims at inspiring students' motivation of exploring euphemisms on their own. The first three modules can be regarded as the information input period and this is the output stage which requires students to apply what they have learnt on euphemisms into practice and explore this interesting phenomenon further.

The method of group work and cooperative learning is highly recommended in this period. Students usually can get the best result when they take actively part in the study process. Researchers in this field reported that students can learn more and remember the content longer in a group than they can in other forms of education, no matter what kind of subject or even the same content they are faced. What's more, those students who have been involved in cooperative study will become more satisfied with the course (Beckman, 1990). In general, group work can be classified into three categories: informal study group, formal study group and study team.

Informal study group refers to the one which is organized temporarily in class. A teacher can ask students to form temporary study groups with their desk neighbors or with several other students, then they can discuss the questions raised by teacher for a couple of minutes. Regardless of the class size, a teacher can form such kind of study groups under any circumstances to check how well students have understood the contents, to create an opportunity for students to use what they have learnt, or just for the teacher to adjust the rhythm of teaching.

Formal study group refers to the one which is organized in order to finish a specific task. Such as doing experiments, writing reports, doing projects or writing papers to express some viewpoint. These groups may finish their task in a class or they have to keep working for several weeks. Normally, the cooperative relationship last until they finish the task and receive the teacher's evaluation.

Study team refers to the long-term team which has regular members (usually lasting for a term). The main responsibilities of the members are to help, support and encourage

each other in the process of attaining course requirements and finishing assignments. The bigger the class is, the more complicated the content is, then the more necessary the study team is.

In terms of euphemism teaching, the method of informal study group can be used into the first three modules, and the fourth module can turn to formal study group to carry out. Take a class that has 36 students for example, a teacher can do the job in three steps: organizing study group and assigning tasks, carrying out the tasks, class reports and evaluation.

Step One Organizing Study Groups and Assigning Tasks

1) Clarifying the Tasks Considering students' different interests and the class size, six tasks are prepared as follows:

- (1) How to utilize euphemism knowledge to improve CET4 listening comprehension (suitable for students who are preparing for CET4) .
- (2) Exploration on Internet euphemisms (suitable for students who are crazy about Internet) .
- (3) An investigation on euphemisms used in traffic warnings and cautions (suitable for students who are fond of outdoor activities)
- (4) Can euphemisms help you raise your sails achievements (suitable for student who are doing part-time jobs in sails territory) ?
- (5) How to create harmonious dorm atmosphere with the help of euphemisms (suitable for students who are a little bit introverted) ?
- (6) How to make campus public sighs more euphemistic (suitable for students who are enthusiastic for campus activities) ?

The teacher should clarify in detail the reasons and purposes of the tasks, stressing that group work and cooperative exploration can not only put euphemism knowledge into practice but also can cultivate students' team spirit and creativity. Evaluation system is explained at the same time, which can arouse students' strong enthusiasm to participate.

2) Organizing Study Groups Firstly, the teacher explains clearly what the six tasks are to the students; then asks them to sigh up freely according to their own interests; after that, the teacher can readjust the group members on the basis of their enrollments. The

class is divided into six groups. The group size should not be too large in case that individual's opportunity should be reduced. A group leader is nominated by the teacher or recommended by the members, any volunteers are also welcome. Till now, study groups are set up and each group understands its task. All groups must finish their tasks in two weeks and all members in the same group should be aware that they have to be responsible for other members of the group and interdependent. They can succeed only through everyone's efforts. If students can recognize that their partners cannot succeed without their support, they can be greatly motivated to take part in group study.

Step Two Carrying out the Tasks

Firstly, the teacher should help every group make proper working plan: each member's responsibility about when and how to do their job is specified. Secondly, the teacher has to inspect their going regularly. Measures aiming at uncooperative members are also needed. Only all members contribute their own share of efforts can the group achieves the common goal. (Conney, 1988)

Step Three Class Reports and Evaluation

The first two steps are mainly finished after class. Because the third step is the time for students to enjoy the fruit of hardwork, one or two classes can be spared for students to do class reports in a multimedia classroom. All groups can show themselves and learn from each other. The teacher can make some comments on the strength of his or her tracing observation and students' class presentations. The detailed evaluation and scores can be declared later.

It has been proved that encouraging students to explore in the form of group work and cooperation can get satisfactory results in euphemism teaching. Through the above four modules, students' knowledge on euphemisms become richer and their euphemistic awareness is enhanced, which means they can communicate in a more euphemistic way.

Chapter Five Result Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Result analysis

5.1.1 Pretest results analysis

All the data of this experiment were processed by using SPSS13.0.

Table 5-1 Pretest comparison of face want between EG and CG

group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
EG	45	40.87	10.042	0.100	0.921
CG	46	40.65	10.492		

Table 5-1 shows that there is no significant difference between the pretest scores of the face want questionnaire ($t=0.100, p>0.05$), which means the face want degrees of the two classes are at the same level before the experiment .

The face want questionnaire consists of 11 questions and 1-4 scoring system is adopted. The total score is between 11-44. In order to know the face want degree more intuitively, the total score is divided into 4 numerical ranges to represent different face want degree: low degree(=11), mild degree (12-23), moderate degree(24-33), high degree(=34). Case one (low degree) didn't happen in the test, so it was neglected while doing statistical analysis. The number and its percentage of the students who were at different face want degree were gotten after the statistical analysis and then took the chi-square test.

Table 5-2 Pretest analysis of face want degree between EG and CG

group	<i>N</i>	Mild		Moderate		High		χ^2	<i>p</i>
		<i>N</i>	percent	<i>N</i>	percent	<i>N</i>	percent		
EG	45	3	6.67%	7	15.56%	35	77.77%	0.032	0.984
CG	46	3	6.52%	8	17.39%	35	76.09%		

The table 5-2 shows that the percentage of students with high face want in the two

classes are 77.77% and 76.09% respectively, which means that most students in the two classes have high face want degree. This test proves the first hypothesis: nowadays college students have strong face want. The Chi-square test shows that there is no significant difference in the two classes' face want degree ($p>0.05$).

An euphemism examination was carried out in the experimental class and the control class in order to find whether or not there is difference between the two classes' euphemistic awareness before the experiment. The total score of the test paper is 40. The results of the two classes were tested by independent sample t test (See table 5-3).

Table 5-3 Comparison of pretest euphemism examination results

group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
EG	45	17.44	3.31	0.770	0.443
CG	46	16.87	3.79		

The results of the questionnaire are not positive. The highest possible score is 40. Of the 91 subjects, the highest score achieved was 28, the lowest was 8. The means for the two classes were as follows: $M_1=17.44$, $M_2=16.87$. We would have to say that the students achieved low scores. The low average scores indicate that the students found the questionnaire rather difficult and that they are not proficient in understanding and using of euphemisms. This test proved the second hypothesis: college students' euphemistic awareness level is rather low. Table 5-3 also shows that there is no significant difference in the two classes' pretest results ($p>0.05$), which means that the students' euphemistic awareness levels in the two classes have no statistical difference and are at the same level.

The above analyses prove that there are no significant differences in face want degree and euphemistic awareness level in the two classes, which means the two classes are comparable in every index.

5.1.2 Difference analysis of the posttest euphemism examination results

At the end of the experiment, the euphemism examination was done again in experimental class and control class. The posttest results of the two classes received independent sample t test. The pretest result and the posttest result of the experimental

class received paired samples *t* test. The paired samples *t* test was also done in the control class. The aim of the two tests was to investigate the changes of the students' euphemistic awareness level before and after the experiment so that the influence of the author's euphemism teaching mode can be tested.

Table 5-4 Comparison of posttest euphemism examination results

group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
EG	45	30.48	2.78	8.088***	0.000
CG	46	18.37	3.09		

Note: *: $p<0.05$; **: $p<0.01$; ***: $p<0.001$, the same below

Table 5-5 Paired *t* test between pretest and posttest euphemistic awareness level of the two classes

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
EG pretest	45	17.44	3.31	15.491***	0.000
EG posttest	45	30.48	2.78		
CG pretest	46	16.87	3.79	1.942	0.058
CG posttest	46	18.87	3.09		

Table5-4 shows that there is significant difference in posttest results of the two classes— $M_1=30.48$, $M_2=18.87(t=8.088, p<0.001)$. This result shows that differentiation took place between the two classes that have the same original euphemistic awareness level. The result of the experimental class is much better than that of the control class and then proves that the effect of the author's euphemism teaching is positive.

Table5-5 shows that the pretest result is 17.44 and posttest result is 30.48 in the experimental class. The posttest result is higher than the pretest one by 13.04 points. There is significant difference between the two tests ($t=15.491, p<0.001$), which means that the euphemistic awareness of the experimental class has been improved greatly. There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest results of the control class. But the posttest result is a bit higher than the pretest one and shows a marginal significance

($p=0.058$). During the experimental period, the control class also received the implicit euphemism teaching, so the improvement in students' euphemistic awareness is reasonable.

The above analysis proves the third hypothesis: through the training, students' euphemistic awareness level can be improved significantly.

5.2 Qualitative analysis of the teaching effect

The qualitative analysis of this research is mainly on the basis of interviews before and after the experiment in the two classes.

1. The contents and analysis of the interviews

Some students are randomly chosen from the two classes before and after the experiment to do the interviews. An outline was prepared which concerns face-threat experiences in English learning, attitudes towards euphemism study, etc. and the interviews were recorded by digital recording pen. The interview outline is as follows:

- 1) Have you ever met any face-threat situation in your English learning? What are your feelings then?
- 2) Have you ever hurt someone's feelings because of your straightforward words?
- 3) Have you ever heard of English euphemism learning? Have you ever received any training in this field?
- 4) Do you think learning English euphemisms can improve your euphemistic awareness, namely, your ability in understanding, appreciating and using English euphemisms? Are you willing to accept training in euphemism?

Here are some excerpts from the record. (A1 stands for student A's idea during the interview before the experiment. A2 stands for student A's idea during the interview after the experiment. The rest can be done in the same way.)

(experimental class)

—I felt losing face when I was not able to answer questions, and I felt even awkward if the teacher criticized me for my mistake or silence. (A1)

—I'm a bit of straightforward, and sometime I hurt other's feelings unconsciously. (B1)

—I have never heard of English euphemism learning and I also have not ever received training in this field. (C1)

—I will be very glad if I have opportunity to learn English euphemisms because we lack such knowledge as euphemisms. (D1)

(control class)

—I feel embarrassed to be corrected again and again about my pronunciation in the face of so many classmates.

—I often find it difficult to find the suitable words to express myself while communicating with foreigners. I'm so shallow in English euphemisms and I don't know clearly what topics are avoided by them and how to talk tactfully.

—I don't have any training in English euphemisms. I'm not sure about this kind of training.

—When I do some CET4 examination questions, I often make mistakes when the speakers say something indirectly and I can't infer the real meaning of the words. Maybe, it's due to my lack of euphemism knowledge.

These interviews showed that before the experiment, students in the two classes had not received any training in English euphemisms learning; the face want degree and their attitudes toward euphemism learning were almost the same.

After the experiment, the interviews were done again among those students with the same outline. The interviews in the control class were omitted here because of their similarity with the former ones and only some interviews in the experimental class were excerpted as follows:

—I think we should not be afraid of losing face if we want to learn English well. It's a kind of good personality for college students to face their weakness and treat others' comments optimistically. But if teachers point out my mistakes euphemistically, I'd be willingly to accept and correct my mistakes accordingly. After all, everyone wants to be respected. (A2)

—I become more confident to speak with foreigners now and become more aware of words and tone. I owe this to the study of English euphemisms. (B2)

—I become more sensitive to euphemisms in some films and literature works and I'm

interested in analyzing them with the knowledge the teacher has taught. I find this way of learning really fruitful! (C2)

—During the training year, we have learnt rich euphemism knowledge and the ways of using them. This training is indeed practical and most of us think that our reading and listening comprehension ability have been improved greatly. What's more, our interpersonal relationship become more harmonious. (D2)

The comparative analysis between the two group interviews of the experimental class showed that students gave positive comments on the effect of English euphemism teaching.

5.3 Result discussion

5.3.1 Implicit euphemism teaching's influence on students' euphemistic awareness

Before the experiment, an examination on students' euphemistic awareness was conducted in the experimental class and the control class. The result of the examination showed that there was no significant euphemistic awareness difference between the two classes. But significant difference was shown at the end of the experiment which lasted for one school year. The result of the experimental class was much better than the control class. That means the teaching mode put forward by the author has produced positive result in enhancing students' euphemistic awareness. But it should be noticed that the posttest result of the control class was a little bit improved compared with its pretest result. Why? There are two main reasons contributing to this. Firstly, during the one-year period, students picked up some English euphemisms here and there in the normal English learning process. Secondly, teacher's euphemistically speaking style has exerted certain influence on them. In this way, however, students just imitated their teacher's speaking style unconsciously. Therefore, their euphemistic awareness is improved but their improvement is not so obvious as it is in the experimental class. So, it's not sufficient to rely on implicit euphemism teaching only. But it is the foundation of the normal English teaching, we can not omit it in order to achieve the most apparent experiment result.

5.3.2 Explicit euphemism teaching's influence on students' euphemistic awareness

College students have matured brains and considerable reasoning ability. If they are

motivated by teachers or their real needs, they are willing to study new knowledge. The typical character of this teaching mode is that the author's explaining, demonstration of euphemisms is integrated with students' drill, evaluation and exploration. Students become active participants rather than passive accepters. In this way, students can obtain a large amount of euphemisms in one year. What's more, they get the ability to explore the topic further.

In short, implicit euphemism teaching is the precondition of the experiment, while explicit teaching is the vital part of the whole teaching mode. The experiment result proves that there is close connection between euphemism teaching and euphemistic awareness level and this teaching mode has achieved good effect.

5.3.3 Key factors that decide the efficiency of the teaching mode

This paper creatively puts forward a kind of modularized teaching mode targeting euphemism. Three key factors decide the efficiency of it. First, the order of the four modules should be followed because it accords with the sequence of language acquisition—from input to output. Module one(lecture) and module two(words network)are the foundation of the whole mode, students get to know the definition, classification, laws, formation and functions step by step in this period. Module three(appreciation) is the stage of ability developing—Students find euphemisms and taste them through appreciating classic works. Core knowledge about English euphemisms are input into students' memory bank through these three modules. Following those, is module four (practice) that aims at solving real problems with euphemism-related knowledge. This is the period of information output and is a sort of test on the efficiency of this teaching mode. Second, the implicit euphemism teaching and the explicit euphemism teaching are integrated into the regular English teaching rather than taking place of it. Third, periodic tests are necessary to control the efficiency of each module.

Chapter Six Conclusion

Euphemism is a common linguistic phenomenon in all cultures and it is also a very important device to coordinate interpersonal relationship and eventually achieve the communication goals. The nowadays college students have strong desire to develop harmonious relationship with people around them. But their poor euphemistic awareness hinders them. Therefore it is worth attention to make a research into this issue.

6.1 Major findings

This research involved enhancing college students' English euphemistic awareness into English teaching and put forward a kind of English euphemism teaching mode. This research has drawn such key conclusions as follows:

1) Nowadays students have strong face want. English teachers' applying euphemisms into their teaching can protect students' face, self-esteem and reduce the degree of anxiety, and then harmonious relationship between teachers and students can be formed. At the same time, students can learn to use euphemisms through imitating their teacher's example. This method is defined by the author as implicit euphemism teaching. But the effect of applying this method only is not so satisfactory.

2) Explicit English euphemism teaching can significantly enrich students' euphemism knowledge and enhance their ability to understand, appreciate and use euphemisms. That is to say, their euphemistic awareness can be improved considerably. Explicit English euphemism teaching is the effective way to cultivate students' euphemistic awareness.

3) Euphemistic awareness is in nature a kind of cross-cultural awareness, so this teaching mode can improve students' cross-cultural pragmatic competence. Their cross-cultural communication failures reduce because of their appropriate language.

4) Being too self-conscious or caring too much about others' comments on self is regarded as a sort of psychological obstacle in self-development. Through euphemism

teaching, a kind of more optimistic and open-minded concept of face is accepted by students. That is to say, one should try his or her best not to hurt others' face in communication but not let the concern of face prevent self-development.

6.2 Revelations on TEFL

1) Entering college, students' communication scope and contents become more rich and colorful than that of high school, so their interpersonal relationships become more complicated and socialized. They have strong face want and eager to acquire others' approval. But they often encounter pragmatic failures because of the lack of euphemism knowledge. It is necessary and efficient to involve English euphemism teaching into the regular TEFL.

2) Since euphemism is culture-specific, the analysis of it suggests that cultural factors be a matter of concern in language teaching and learning. So it is important for the teachers to cultivate students' cultural awareness. What's more, the teaching of euphemism should be integrated with pragmatics, including requiring students to be familiar with the adaptability of euphemism and some pragmatic principles. As English learners, students should read widely and get knowledge of euphemism from various channels. Lastly, euphemism should be coped with from a dynamic point of view because euphemism is in a constant state of flux.

3) Teachers should bear in mind that cultivating students' euphemistic is a sustained work and can not reach the goal in one step. It needs the joint efforts and cooperation of teachers and students.

4) It is also should be noticed that one type of teaching mode is not possible to suit every student. Teachers should know the diversities of students and design the teaching mode more nichetargeting.

6.3 Limitations of the paper and suggestions for future study

It should be admitted that there are some constraints and limitations in this dissertation. One crucial limitation of this study is data collection. Though the recorded

data from the daily communication are appropriate for a qualitative study, it is really hard work to cover every aspects of it. The data collection in this thesis is limited by both time and district, so many examples are second-used or not so typical. To some extent it delimits the requirements of the objectiveness and universality of the collected data. So to have a more thorough analysis, it is suggested that more quantitative data from different aspects of life should be collected. What's more, though some real-life examples are provided, a major weakness with this research is the lack of strong empirical support for some of the interpretations and analyses of the data. Other limitations of this paper include:

- 1) The results and effects of the teaching method are based on a small number of subjects.
- 2) The experimental period lasted only for one school year and is not long enough for a scientific empirical research.
- 3) This teaching mode took the form of group training and didn't give enough attention to students' diversities.
- 4) The experiment discussion was only based on the comparison between the pretest and posttest scores and did not conduct further study on the relevance between students' euphemistic awareness and the English euphemism teaching.

It is true that the scope of research on euphemisms is broadened to a wider range. Due to the limited sources, the complexity of this issue and the poor theoretical ability of the author, however, the present study is not perfect and exhaustive yet and further improvement and exploration are still necessary. The author sincerely hopes that this humble paper can arouse further research in this field.

The euphemism teaching model addressed in this study is a convincing model to help to enhance students' euphemistic awareness. The author does hope that the present study can present a more comprehensive and systematic picture of this specific linguistic phenomenon and can offer useful information and methods that can be employed by TEFL and cross-cultural communication purpose.

Appendix I Face Want Degree Questionnaire

Age: _____ Gender: _____
 Date: _____ Department: _____
 Examination Results: Total: _____

Directions: You will find statements about face-threatening situations in English learning. All these situations are supposed to happen in the face of the whole class. Please read each statement and cross out the response (1,2,3,4) that tells to what degree the situation makes you feel losing face.

1. Never or almost never makes me feel losing face.
2. Not very often makes me feel losing face.
3. Usually makes me feel losing face.
4. Always makes me feel losing face.

Answer in terms of "how well the statement describes you". Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please don't make any mark on the items. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. If you have any questions, let the instructor know immediately.

Answer the items now:

1. When I can't answer the teacher's questions, the teacher criticizes me with such words as: poor, stupid etc.

(1 2 3 4)

2. If I can't answer the teacher's question in the front of the class, the teacher says: "You can't go back to your seat until you answer my question."

(1 2 3 4)

3. If I answer the teacher's question wrongly, the teacher says: "What an easy question, why can't you answer it."

(1 2 3 4)

4. The teacher refuses to repeat the question he or she has explained.

(1 2 3 4)

5. The tone of the teacher is harsh, unfriendly or ironic.

(1 2 3 4)

6. If I fail in the exam, teacher announces it in the face of my classmates

(1 2 3 4)

7. The teacher asks me to correct my mistakes in the tone of order.

(1 2 3 4)

8. When I read the words wrongly, the teacher corrects me again and again.

(1 2 3 4)

9. If I am the last student to hand in the test paper, the teacher says: "You're always the last one".

(1 2 3 4)

10. If I cheated in the exam, the teacher announces it in public and calls it "cheat".

(1 2 3 4)

11. When I'm late for class, the teacher criticizes me with such words as: lazy, idle, etc.

(1 2 3 4)

Appendix II Euphemistic Awareness Level Examination

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Date: _____ Department: _____

Examination Results: Total: _____

I will appreciate it if you fill up this questionnaire with adequate attention and patience. Please return it in time so that I can continue my research without delay. The results of this questionnaire will just be used for academic analysis and will be kept in secret. So I hope you are kind enough to help me by finishing all the listed items carefully. Thank you!

I. Listening Comprehension. Directions: You will hear ten short conversations between two speakers. At the end of each conversation a question will be asked about what was said. Listen carefully and choose the best answer to the question you have heard.

1. M: What would you like for dessert? I think I'll have apple pie and ice cream.

W: The chocolate cake looks great, but I have to watch my weight. You go ahead and get yours.

Q: What would the woman most probably do?

A. She will have some chocolate cake.

B. She'll take a look at the menu.

C. She'll go without dessert.

D. She'll prepare the dinner.

2. W: How do you like the book Professor Brown recommended to us?

M: It's not easy but it's well worth reading.

Q: What does the man say about the book?

A. It's too difficult to read

B. It's easy enough to understand.

C. Difficult books are especially worth reading.

D. They should read the book even though it's difficult.

3. M: Laura is getting a part-time job next week.

W: Shouldn't she concentrate on her homework instead?

Q: What does the woman suggest?

- A. Laura should spend more time studying
- B. Laura should need a full-time job.
- C. Laura should do more homework at home.
- D. Laura shouldn't study too hard.

4. W: Having visited so many countries, you must be able to speak different languages.

M: I wish I could. But Japanese and, of course English are the only languages I can speak.

Q: What do we learn from the conversation?

- A. The man can speak a foreign language.
- B. The woman hopes to improve her English.
- C. The woman knows many different languages.
- D. The man wishes to visit many more countries.

5. M: Do you mind if I open the window?

W: As a matter of fact, I'm feeling a little bit chilly.

Q: What does the woman want the man to do?

- A. Open the window a little bit.
- B. Leave the window closed.
- C. Tell him how she is feeling.
- D. Get her some chili.

6. W: You look cold and tired, Jack. How about a cup of coffee?

M: Well, my doctor says coffee-drinking is harmful to my stomach.

Q: What does the man mean?

- A. The doctor advised him not to drink coffee.
- B. The doctor wants to have some coffee.
- C. He'll bring some coffee to the doctor.
- D. He really wants some tea.

7. W: Good morning, Professor Davis. I wonder if I could enroll in your advanced

biology course.

M: Have you completed the general biology course?

Q: What does Professor Davis mean?

A. He doesn't intend to offer the course.

B. He refuses the woman.

C. He thinks the woman has not studied biology before.

D. He requires that his students pass an introductory course on biology.

8. W: Could I borrow your bike for a while, Bob?

M: You can if you can find the key.

Q: What's the man's problem?

A. He'll lend his bike to the woman.

B. He can't lend his bike to the woman.

C. He doesn't want to lend his bike to the woman.

D. He wants the woman to find the key.

9. M: Do you like Professor Zhang's classes?

W: I never miss her class, do you?

Q: What do you learn from the conversation?

A. Professor Zhang is not a successful teacher.

B. The woman likes Professor Zhang's class very much.

C. Professor Zhang must be very popular among her students.

D. The woman is one of Professor Zhang's favorite students.

10. M: Would you like to go swimming with me?

W: I'd love to, but I've caught a cold.

Q: What does the woman mean?

A. She will not go swimming with the man.

B. She will go swimming with the man.

C. She's too tired to go swimming.

D. She doesn't like swimming

II Choose A, B, C or D which is the most appropriate in the given context.

1. On the first day in the new term, your teacher forgets to introduce herself, you stand up saying ____.

- A. What's your name?
- B. Please tell your name.
- C. May I know your name?
- D. You'd better tell me your name.

2. It's cold and the window is open. You want your friend to close the window by saying ____.

- A. Help me close the window.
- B. Close the window.
- C. I beg you to close the window.
- D. Would you please close the window?

3. When you first talk with your foreign friends, the most appropriate topic you think is ____.

- A. Their name
- B. Their trip
- C. Their family life
- D. Their ages.

4. An official said to an old colleague of his, "As ____, you know much more about our country than I".

- A. An old person
- B. An old adult
- C. An elder citizen
- D. A senior citizen

5. A journalist reports that there are still many children in Africa who are ____.

- A. starving
- B. hungry
- C. nutritionally deficient
- D. suffering from hunger.

6. The boy looked so fresh and pink and ____.

- A. fat
 - B. heavy
 - C. chubby
 - D. full
7. He got many ____ for his speech against the government.
- A. black looks
 - B. white looks
 - C. green looks
 - D. red looks
8. "I need a domestic—", said the landlord
- A. help
 - B. servant
 - C. slave
 - D. master
9. Susan is the teacher's pet because she always ____.
- A. polishes the apple
 - B. polishes table
 - C. polishes the handle
 - D. polishes the floor.
10. Oliver said sadly, "My father is gone. My mother is _____. So I must take care of my younger sisters".
- A. mad
 - B. crazy
 - C. insane
 - D. a little confused

III: What will you do under following circumstances?

1. You go shopping with your friend. He says, "Oh, it's hard for a big woman to find clothes. It seems there are no clothes for my mother anywhere." You may say "____" as not to hurt him.

- A. Well, she certainly is old.
- B. Well, she certainly is fat.
- C. Well, she certainly is hard to please.
- D. Well, she certainly is chubby.
2. When you meet a grieving classmate whose father died a few days ago, you will say, "____"
- A. I'm sorry. Your father is dead.
- B. I'm sorry for your father's passing away.
- C. Don't be sad anymore. A dead person can not come into life again.
- D. Did your father really die?
3. Your grandfather has difficulty in hearing anything. You tell this case to a guest who tries to greet him by saying, "____"
- A. my grandfather is hard of hearing.
- B. my grandfather is deaf.
- C. my grandfather can not hear you.
- D. my grandfather is behind his ears.
4. If you want to go to toilet in class, you will say to the teacher, "____"
- A. Sorry, I want to go to the toilet.
- B. Sorry, I want to go to the water closet.
- C. Sorry, I have to do my business.
- D. Sorry, may I be excused for a few minutes?
5. You are not too sure whether Mr. White is an undertaker or not, so you ask him "Are you ____ Mr. White?"
- A. an undertaker
- B. a mortician
- C. a funeral director
- D. a grief reliever
6. You have dinner at your friend's. She says, "Have more pudding, dear?" You will answer, "I'm willing, but ____ isn't."
- A. my stomach

B. my belly

C. my tummy

D. little Mary

7. At a party, someone offers you a drink, but you won't take it, you refuse politely,

“ _____ ”

A. Sorry, I don't drink.

B. I happen to be full, I'm afraid.

C. I actually dislike any drink.

D. No, thanks.

8. Your father is a school principal and you are proud of him. You tell your new friend,

“ _____ ”

A. My father is a teacher.

B. My father is a pedagogue.

C. My father is an educational engineer.

D. My father is a headmaster.

9. You are a teacher. A parent of one of your students asks you about the kid's state in study. You know quite well that the student is lazy, but you say, “ _____ ”

A. Probably he has to devote himself more diligently to his studies.

B. He doesn't work hard.

C. He is absent-minded.

D. He is a bit lazy.

10. You have to correct some serious mistakes of your senior, you begin with “ _____ ”

A. Please don't get mad with me, if I point out your errors

B. Please don't take it amiss, if I point out your errors.

C. Please don't be angry, if I point out your errors.

D. Please don't take it seriously, if I point out your errors.

IV: Choose one answer from A, B, C and D, which you think best expresses the meaning of the underlined part of the sentence.

1. Jill: Where did you buy this new dress? It's so smart.

Rose: Thank you. I'm very glad you like it.

Jill: It must be expensive. Rose: Yes, it cost me \$78

- A. Can you tell me how much it is?
- B. It is not fit for you.
- C. I think it is too expensive for you to buy.
- D. It is so beautiful that it looks expensive.

2. The policeman caught the two urchins(顽童)bathing in the canal in a state of nature.

- A. naturally
- B. in the United States
- C. nakedly
- D. not being shy

3. The naughty child received several slaps on his seat.

- A. behind B. bench C. back D. neck

4. A: What's the matter with you?

B: Sorry, I've got to leave a moment to answer the call of the nature.

- A. to answer a phone call
- B. to go to the toilet room
- C. to answer the door
- D. to play in the nature

5. There is a rumor that she is having an affair with the statesman.

- A. doing business with
- B. having a quarrel with
- C. having sex relationship with
- D. having discussion with

6. Her husband, she said, had been involuntarily leisured six times since the late 1980's.

- A. being unemployment
- B. retiring
- C. hired
- D. promoted

7. A: We really should pay a visit to Sarah and find out how she is doing.

B: I saw her on the street yesterday. You know what? You are not going to believe that she is expecting again.

- A. she is full of hope
- B. she is getting married
- C. she is pregnant
- D. she is free

8. With the help of the local community, the charity(慈善, 慈善团体) has raised more than £10 million for the people suffering from the big C since its foundation in 1980.

- A. heart attack
- B. stroke
- C. cold
- D. cancer

9. The disgraced minister admitted to another love child.

- A. lovely child
- B. illegitimate child
- C. naughty child
- D. lonely child

10. A: Oh, my goodness! It is so hot outside!

B: Yes, I am glad that I wore a T-shirt.

- A. my good friend
- B. damn it
- C. my God
- D. shut up

Key

- I 1.C 2.D 3.A 4.A 5.B 6.A 7.D 8.B 9.B 10.A
II 1.C 2.D 3.B 4.D 5.C 6.C 7.A 8.A 9.A 10.D
III.D 2.B 3.A 4.D 5.C 6.D 7.B 8.C 9.A 10.B
IV 1.A 2.C 3.A 4.B 5.C 6.A 7.C 8.D 9.B 10.C

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Acknowledgements

It would be impossible to thank all the people who have contributed in one way or another to the completion of this thesis.

My deepest gratitude goes first and foremost to Professor Ma Wen, my supervisor, for his constant encouragement and timely guidance. He has walked me through all the stages of my project. Without his consistent and illuminating instruction, this thesis could not have reached its present form.

Second, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the professors and teachers at the School of Foreign Languages and Literature, Shandong University who have been instructing and encouraging me during my three years' study.

I also owe my sincere gratitude to my fellow classmates who gave me their help and time in listening to me and helping me work out my problems during the difficult course of the thesis. I should give many thanks to my students and my colleagues from Shengli College, China Petroleum University for lending me some valuable reference materials, for helping me make experiments.

Last I am also greatly indebted to my beloved family for their loving considerations and great confidence in me all through these years.

Published Papers during Study of MA

1. 《英语词组对理解句意的影响》发表于《中国石油大学胜利学院学报》2006 年第 4 期，第 61-62 页。独立作者。
2. 《外籍教师在高职英语教学中的作用》发表于《胜利油田职工大学学报》2007 年第 4 期，第 24-25 页。独立作者。

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	生文		副教授	是	山大		
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	委 员						
答辩委员会对论文的 总体评价※			B	答辩秘书	刘新	答辩日期	2010.5.22
备注							

※优秀为“A”；良好为“B”；合格为“C”；不合格为“D”。

