

Political euphemization as the means of disguise of reality in German political discourse

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Abstract

© Medwell Journals, 2016. The study is devoted to the phenomenon of euphemization in German political discourse. Political discourse is regarded here as the unique system marked by its specific linguistic means, speech strategies and tactics alongside with the manipulative techniques, the main aim of which is the indirect formation of public opinion. Being broadly used and not always recognized by the recipient, euphemisms represent one of such techniques. They allow a politician "to veil" the negative sides of unbiased reality and to diffuse the reaction of the audience to the outlined problems. Thus the current research is aimed to reveal the linguistic means of euphemistic disguise in German political texts and is based on the data of public speeches and interviews of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel which were published on the official administrative websites. Our primary task is to reveal the mechanisms of semantic influence of political euphemism on the mass audience. In the framework of our research we are particularly interested in the problem of manipulative capacity of euphemisms. The research of the phenomenon of euphemization in discursive light allowed us to reveal highly productive means of reduction of negative connotation on different linguistic levels in German political texts (for instance the application of semantically diffusive lexemes, diplomatic clichés and set phrases, the introduction of lexemes with positive connotation) and to outline general tendencies in political euphemization. As a result of the analysis made it was revealed that the influential force of different means of euphemization is variable and the frequency of euphemistic markers on different levels is significantly different as well. It may be noted here that the euphemization of the political discourse on the one hand enables easing of the reception of factual information but on the other allows its distortion being adjacent to disinformation. The results of the research (mechanisms of euphemization) can be applied in the further studies of cognitive and pragmatic aspects of formation of the political discourse, theoretical issues of political rhetoric and methods of creation of manipulative techniques.

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Keywords

Euphemistic disguise, Manipulative techniques, Political discourse, Political euphemisms, Political strategies and tactics, Reduction of the negative values