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The Synonyms of *Fallen Woman* in the History of the English Language

On the Nature of Euphemism

1.1 Euphemism: In search of definition

In the beginning was the word (John 1:1). It may certainly seem somewhat unusual to commence any account of euphemism with a quotation from the Holy Writs. However, this clearly shows how significant what we say may turn out to be, and what power may actually be hidden behind verbal statements. Note that in the usual and natural course of events first we utter then we act, which simply means that words tend to precede our deeds, whether good, barely acceptable or bad. In other words, this is to say that words have the performative power of directing people's lives, or at least their actions. Power, as we know, should be subject to monitoring and control, and usually is, somehow – either overtly or covertly – regulated. Otherwise it may pose a certain threat to other members of a society.

1.1.1 Language restrictions

Somewhat obviously from the very beginning of human race, according to the Christian faith, words had to be kept under control. With the advent of Christianity Two of the Ten Commandments set early limitations on the use of language. As *Exodus*, 20[1] says, *You shall not take the name of the LORD, your God, in vain* and further *you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor*. Such restrictions as the ones formulated here, and many others besides, imposed on the users of language contribute greatly to the emergence or reinforcement of **taboo**. It is worth mentioning at this point that when Captain Cook introduced the word *taboo* (from Malayo-Polynesian, both Fijian *tabu* and Tongan *tapu*) into English in the late 18th century it referred, according to McArthur (1992:1019), to what may be qualified as *consecrated or limited to a special use, and therefore prohibited*. As McArthur (1992:1019) further clarifies, *in language terms, something taboo is not to be mentioned, because it is ineffably holy or unspeakably vulgar*. In turn, Polański (1995:545) stresses the importance of *the mystical identification of a word with a thing or a phenomenon the word refers to*.[2] Obviously, at that time nobody could possibly have predicted how overwhelming the career of the word *taboo* would be. It seems that we may

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1   *The New* American Bible. St. Joseph Medium Size Edition.
2   Translation mine.

search for the origins of taboo subjects in various religious denominations, whether Christian, Hindu, Muslim or Judaic. Since normally religion lies at the core of the majority of societies, taboo – enrooted in the faith of the people – becomes an integral part of social life and social conduct. As some linguists, such as Widłak (1968) and Dąbrowska (1992), argue, taboo that evolved from religion is to be viewed as primary taboo. More to the point, Danesi (2000:224) points out that, by extension, taboo refers to *any social prohibition or restriction that results from convention or tradition*. Taking on a more recent perspective, Chamizo Dominguez and Sánchez Benedito (2005:12) justifiably add that, *[…] however, in our society, the last great remaining taboo seems to be sex. And although this taboo was originally related to religious beliefs or superstitions, nowadays religious taboo does not seem to have much relevance*. This point of view goes hand in hand with Polański's (1995:545) comment on the areas that are tabooed in contemporary western societies, namely sex, effluvia, underwear, dangerous diseases and death.

What needs to be stressed at this point is the natural variability in the attitude towards sexual and/or religious taboo across temporal and cultural dimensions. Thus, debauchery or innuendo were subject to sheer opprobrium in the Victorian age, whereas today a number of western societies seem to show a growingly relaxed point of view on all matters which were either unspeakable or at least were held to be unspeakable in 18th- and 19th-century England. A telling illustration of how transient people's ideas are of the appropriateness of language is the story of Sir Walter Scott's great-aunt.[3] Being presented, on her own request, with a book by Alphra Behn, the aunt asked Scott to burn it as she was unable to read something which had been the source of great amusement and entertainment in upper class circles sixty years previously. What is even more intriguing is her own surprise at the reaction she experienced. On the other hand, under no circumstances could you hear a member of the Victorian upper class say anything but *unmentionables* or *ineffables* for 'trousers', *bosom* for 'breasts' and *past* instead of 'disreputable sexual history'.[4] These two cases seem to point unambiguously to the fact that what seems to be the greatest taboo for one generation may be simply a standard word or phrasing for another. Note that this seems to be a part of a much broader regularity that may be discerned in the realm of language development. In grammar the irregularity of today (for example irregular verbs) need not be irregularity of the past. In inflectional morphology the irregular plural (for example *datum*/*data*) of the early 20th century may

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3   Taken from Rawson (1989).
4   However, Ayto (2007:12) argues that this kind of "pathological reticence" might have existed only within the short margin of the society.

not be irregular in the next century when we find *data* used both for singular and plural. In sociolinguistics a colloquialism of today need not be a colloquialism of tomorrow. For example, in the middle of the 20th century *loo* was a colloquialism not to be used in polite circles, while it has since become a standard word in English without any hint of colloquialism or vulgarism.

It was the 19th century that witnessed the implementation of laws which – as O'Donnell (1992:12) remarks – were to serve a guardian function. Among other pieces of legislation can be included the Obscene Publications Act and the Comstock Postal Act introduced in Great Britain in 1857 and in the United States of America in 1873 respectively. Such legal restrictions were in full force, and even more than a century later instances of charges on the basis of these laws were not at all infrequent. O'Donnell (1992:15) illustrates the point with the case of a shop-assistant who was taken to court and charged with the use of *obscene, vulgar or profane language*. Although the charge was subsequently dropped, such instances provide a body of unquestionable evidence that, as O'Donnell (1992:28) puts it, *some sort of restriction on language in any society is inevitable.* Yet, the restriction of today need not be the restriction of tomorrow.

1.1.2 Building euphemistic blocks over taboo

Regardless of the formal restrictions that are imposed on some languages or – at least – on some aspects of communicative activity, people in certain situations have a tendency to avoid mentioning anything that could be considered offensive, vulgar, disgusting or too straightforward. The term **euphemism**, as defined by McArthur (1992:387), is commonly understood to mean a word or an expression which is delicate and inoffensive and is used to replace or cover a term that seems to be either taboo, too harsh or simply inappropriate for a given conversational exchange. In literary studies euphemism is described by Głowiński et al. (2002:132) as *a word or expression used to replace a certain word which for some reasons (of, for example, aesthetics, ritual or censorship) cannot be directly employed in an utterance.*[5] In language studies, Allan and Burridge (1991:11) provide a customary, yet comprehensive, definition, which goes along the following lines:

> A euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offense, that of the audience, or of some third party.

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5   Translation mine.

As for the etymological roots of the term *euphemism*, the element *eu-* derives from Greek and means 'well, sounding good' and *-phēmē* means 'speaking'. Traditionally, both Pei and Gaynor (1954:68-69) and Danesi (2000:89) characterise euphemism as the substitution of a more pleasant or less direct word for unpleasant or distasteful one. Rawson (1981:1), in turn, remarks that euphemisms *[…] are so deeply embedded in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them*. The reason for this may be, as Polański (1995:138) and Gołąb at al. (1970:164) clarify, the neutral emotional load of euphemistic expressions which seems to attenuate the negative illocutionary force a taboo word or phrase has.

The omnipresence of euphemisms seems to be mirrored in the range of tabooed topics we face in our everyday communication. Thus, for instance, the death of a close person is euphemized to English *the loss* or *passing away* and to Polish *strata* 'loss' or *odejście* 'passing away' for the simple reason of sympathy, delicacy or fear. The second most deeply enrooted tabooed topic of today seems to be the sphere of sexual activity. Rather than talking bluntly about it with the use of four-letter words, though very common nowadays, most people prefer employing a whole range of words and expressions based on such conceptual metaphors as, for instance, SEX IS CONSUMPTION.[6] The main reason is the feeling of broadly-understood embarrassment as the ultimate outcome of a long-lasting and all-prevailing moral prudery which used to be, and, to a certain extent, continues to be, cultivated in some societies and in certain social circles. Yet another conspicuous area of euphemisation appears to be any topic related to racial or sexual otherness.[7] The already widespread and continually growing trend of political correctness makes people both more aware and more genteel towards various minorities from the white heterosexual perspective. Suffice to illustrate this with the preference for (in English) *dark-skinned*, (in Polish) *ciemnoskóry* 'dark-skinned' or, in Great Britain in the 1950s, simply *immigrant* for 'non-white person' or Polish *kochający inaczej* (lit. 'loving differently') and English *same gender oriented* instead of 'homosexual'.[8]

It seems that the omnipresence and figurative nature of euphemism constitute the core features of this linguistic mechanism which serves such a fundamental function in human communication. Undoubtedly, not many people fancy the idea of being labelled as either *rude* or *coarse*. Instead, in a typical *A↔B* act of communication, they would rather resort to some auspicious term in order to

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6   For more on sex-related metaphors see, Crespo Fernández (2008), Allan and Burridge (2006:190-202), Chamizo Dominguez and Sánchez Benedito (2005:22-25) and Allan and Burridge (1991:86-95) to name but a few.

7   On the issue of otherness, see Kudła (2010), among others.

8   For more examples, see Kleparski and Martynuska (2002).

be perceived as politically correct or so as not to hurt someone's feelings. Accordingly, as Chamizo Dominguez and Sánchez Benedito (2005:8) argue, the mechanism of euphemism – apart from its main function of concealing or veiling something unpleasant or apparently unpleasant – serves several other functions that may be itemised as follows:

1. the politeness or respect function,
2. the dignifying function,
3. the function of attenuating a painful evocation,
4. the function of naming the taboo object.

To venture a generalisation one may say that normally all the functions are jointly at work to a varied degree, depending on the social context of a speaker and the level of their delicacy and/or their involvement in a given situation. It is an undeniable fact that one may use the verb *depart* in English or Polish *odejść* on one occasion and – on other occasions – resort to the much idiomatic phrasing *kick the bucket* or *kopnąć w kalendarz* (in Polish lit. 'kick the calendar'), and in both cases reference is made to the same concept, namely DEATH. The questions that inevitably arise in this context are why people tend to choose one and not the other language tool and whether both can, and indeed do, convey the same functions.

1.1.3 The category of X-phemism: Pizza or the melting pot?

To put it bluntly, the answer to this seemingly simple question is neither obvious nor straightforward. Allan and Burridge (2006:29-34) draw a fine distinction between **euphemism**, which they refer to as 'sweet-talking'; the mechanism of **dysphemism**, or, in other words, 'speaking offensively', and **orthophemism**, which derives from the Greek root *ortho-* meaning 'proper, straight, normal'. McArthur (1992:328) defines dysphemism as *the use of a negative or disparaging expression to describe something or someone* with a note that its special subtype, which is cruel and offensive, is **cacophemism**,[9] which derives from Greek *kakós* 'bad'. Additionally, in the works of Allan and Burridge (1991, 2006), the term **X-phemism** is postulated to encompass any and every type of cover terms regardless of its illocutionary force.

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9   For the sake of not offending the innocent ear the inside marking of the quoted cacophemisms in the form of an asterisk inserted after the first letter, for example *f*uck* shall be employed throughout this work.

It appears that the sole factor determining the choice of one against another is the intention of the speaker; a classic example being the polite *poo* used mainly by and to children, the offensive *s*hit*, especially employed as an interjection, and the bookish or neutral *faeces*. Yet another case in point is the group of words in which *toilet* is treated as standard,[10] *loo* is a genteel form and *s*hithouse* is reserved for those who do not mind being either impolite or downright vulgar.[11] Such trios that, generally speaking, refer to one and the same denotatum can be multiplied in any natural language.[12] However, as Chamizo Dominguez and Sánchez Benedito (2005:7) put it:

> […] in many cases the dividing line between euphemism and dysphemism can be clearly drawn, in many other cases that line is so utterly blurred that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to establish the boundaries between the two figures of speech.

One has grounds to say that it is the contextual environment in which the person speaks that plays a crucial role in distinguishing between the cases of euphemism and dysphemism. Taking *s*hithouse* as an example, the compound is incontestably vulgar and impolite when employed in a social, formal or semiformal, verbal interaction among strangers. When we change the scenario, for example, in an army squad context never would this word be treated dysphemistically. Allan and Burridge (2006:32) go as far as to argue that among a group of soldiers *loo* may be perceived as a dysphemism because of its insulting load, as if someone was talking to them with baby talk.

It seems that the justification for the problem of determining the thin line of distinction between euphemism and dysphemism may be sought in **diachronic semantics**. As Kröll (1984:12) accurately points out *what today is a euphemism, may tomorrow be a dysphemism*, which doubtless works the other way round as well. Suffice it to mention the story of *gay*, which – according to the *OED* – started its drift in the 14th century in the positively loaded adjectival sense 'lighthearted, exuberantly cheerful, sportive, merry' (1310 Heo is… Graciouse, stout, ant *Gay*, Gentil jolyf so the jay. > 1880 I knew he was *gay* and careless.). The

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10   It is worth noting at this point that *toilet*, which is linked to the concept WASHING, used to be employed as a euphemism for *lavatory* which was considered too impolite for the society. With the passage of time it lost its euphemistic power and needed other terms to replace it in a 'sweet-talking' way (Enright 2005:10-11).

11   Note, however, that from the diachronic point of view *loo* was, 30 years ago or so, still considered a vulgar slang term that has – with the passage of time – lost its offensive stylistic stigmata.

12   In Polish the counterparts of the trios mentioned would be *kupa* for 'poo', *g*ówno* for 'shit' and *odchody* for 'faeces' or *toaleta* for 'loo', *s*ralnia* for 'shithouse' and *WC* for 'toilet'.

early 17th century brought a euphemistic extension to 'of loose or immoral life' (1637 You'le not be angry, Madam. *Cel*. Nor rude, though *gay* men have a priviledge. > 1910 He felt rather a *gay* dog.). Subsequently, a euphemism developed into a sexual dysphemism when in the 19th century the lexical item *gay* acquired the negatively loaded sense 'leading an immoral life, living by prostitution' (1825 Two sisters – both *gay*. > 1885 She was leading a *gay* life.) with reference to woman kind. Rawson (1981:120) justifiably observes that the further development of *gay* must have been – at least to a considerable extent – inspired by the specifics of the Victorian, both homo- and heterosexual, underworld of the 19th century. At that time the greatest overtly tabooed topic of all was sex, along with anything connected directly or indirectly with the human body and body functions that – among other uses – served the purpose of having sex. Not surprisingly, the dysphemistic load remained with the lexical item *gay*, the semantics of which may be said to have undergone a shift from the conceptual category **FEMALE HUMAN BEING** to **MALE HUMAN BEING** in the early 20th century. As a vulgar and offensive item, *gay* continued well into the 1970s when it slowly began to neutralize its dysphemistic nature and finally entered the standard lexicon, washing off the 'dirt' that had clung for so long.

Grygiel and Kleparski (2007:88-90) observe that both *[…] taboo and euphemisms are linguistic mechanisms, which are influenced or – to put it more adequately – are created by the working of both overt and covert social and psychological factors*. True as it is, the generalisation seems to apply fully to all three mechanisms topical here, that is euphemism, dysphemism and orthophemism. The first two – as opposed to the last one – must be treated as figurative in nature, and should be viewed as kinds of conceptual metaphors in accordance with the theoretical framework proposed in the monumental work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). A particularly intriguing instance of the working of metaphorical mappings in the formation of cover terms is, as observed by Kiełtyka (2008:137-139), the process of animal metaphorisation, also known as **zoosemy**.[13] This may be instanced with the zoosemic development of such lexical items as *alley cat* used in the sense 'prostitute' or *bitch* applied in the sense 'peevish, wrangling woman' in English or *ropucha* 'toad' meaning 'old fat and ugly woman' in Polish. It is worth pointing out that, for example, *filly*[14] developed its 17th-century metaphorical meaning 'young lively girl', and shortly afterwards came to be used euphemistically to refer to wanton woman.[15] Once the

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13   On this issue see Kleparski (1990), Grygiel and Kleparski (2007).

14   For more examples, see Kleparski (1997) and Kiełtyka (2008).

15   Consider the following *OED* contexts: 1668 I believe nobody will be very fond of a Hide-Park *Filly* for a Wife.

euphemistic meaning of *filly* became lexicalized two centuries later (1849 Kath-erine's a young *filly* that will neither be led nor driven. > 1881 You are but a *filly* yet.), it lost its function of covering a dispreferred term, thus retaining merely a neutral sense 'young lively girl'.

Taking a lexicographic perspective on the way the three mechanisms in question are presented in dictionaries, it is befitting to quote Osuchowska (2010:30), who says that:

> The treatment of euphemisms and dysphemisms is yet another grey area. Whereas in the case of the latter, one may safely conclude that users' needs should be satisfied by having the meaning explained and a warning to avoid the word being defined, en-tries for euphemisms (such as social exclusion) should probably supply the level of detail needed for encoding, not just decoding.

Among other causes and conditionings, the problem lies – as observed by Burchfield (1986:15) – in the alphabetical organization of dictionaries. It seems to be a fact of life that there is a general lack of lexicographic works which would account for the synonymic strings from a given period of time with all the necessary information about their evaluative sociolinguistic load. Suffice it to consider the following O.E. synonyms of present-day *prostitute*:

> *bepǣcestre* 'seducer',
> *cifes* 'concubine',
> *cwene* (survived as, now archaic, *quean*),
> *firenhicgend* 'harlot, adulteress',
> *forlig(n)is* (cf. *forlicgan* 'to fornicate'),
> *hōre* (survived as *whore*),
> *portcwene* 'town whore',
> *scand* (also 'shame, scandal'),
> *scrætte* (from Latin *scratta*),
> *synnecgei* (used of Mary Magdalene).

To compile a list of synonyms like the one provided by Burchfield (1986:23), of any synonymic strings from a given period of time, one would hardly be able to make use of just one lexicographic source. This may be a consequence of the involved difficulty in unscrambling fully and explicitly the context of the writers of the past, as well as understanding and interpreting correctly the complex na-ture of the long-gone social arrangements and attitudes. Yet, what seems to be an attractive solution to all the aforementioned doubts is – propounded by Allan and Burridge (1991, 2006) – the compilation of all major features and functions of both euphemism and dysphemism in one and the same lexical item. Acting on their advice, let us now direct our attention to this issue.

On various communicative occasions people are bound emotionally by dif-ferent circumstances and factors, and tend to choose either 'sweet-talking'

terms, or offensive ones or – alternately, circumstances and emotional composi-
tion permitting – they try to remain neutral. There are, however, situations when
feelings are mixed and the locution chosen for communicative purposes stands
in direct opposition to the illocutionary force. Such is the case with acts of
swearing using modified lexical items. To say that the lexical item *S*hit!* is a
clear example of dysphemism is relatively obvious, but the exclamations *Sugar!*
or *Shoot!* are in no way vulgar, and many would agree that only very choosy
people would feel offended on hearing them. That is the reason why they are
called **euphemistic dysphemisms**.

An analogous motivation, this time of the earlier mentioned biblical re-
striction which forbids us to call the name of God in vain, leads to phonological,
thus euphemistic, modifications of such names as *God*, *Jesus*, *Christ* or *Jesus
Christ* into *Gosh!*, *Geeze!*, *Chrissake!*, *cripes!*. The act of uttering them in the
original form may bring about the opprobrium of those that treat such violations
of the second of the Ten Commandments as a case of blasphemy. As Allan and
Burridge (2006:39) observe *a euphemistic dysphemism exists to cause less face-
loss or offence than an out-and-out dysphemism (although it will not always
succeed in doing so)*. Similarly, as Kleparski and Grygiel (2003:19) argue, Puri-
tans used legislation to censor the use of the name of God, which led to the em-
ployment of the so-called apostrophised forms in oaths or exclamations, such as
'zounds for *God's wounds* or *'slid* for *God's lid*.

Quite the reverse is the case with impolite, vulgar or flippant forms that
serve to refer to a neutral or, sometimes, serious situation. When the illocution-
ary force is neutral or calling for euphemistic treatment and the locution is either
jocular or offensive, then we are justified to speak about **dysphemistic euphe-
misms**. One overwhelming tabooed issue that has always provoked fear or, at
least, unease is death and its inevitability. As Enright (2005:29) observes, hu-
mans' long-lasting avoidance of the topic seems to function as a kind of a trigger
for a wealth of X-phemisms used with reference to various aspects of death and
dying. A puzzling story, for example, is hidden behind one of the classic expres-
sions referring to dying, namely *kick the bucket*.[16] The origin of the idiomatic
formation is disputable since the *OED* suggests two possible ways of develop-
ment of the lexical item. Presumably, the word *bucket* was adopted from O.Fr.
buquet 'balance, beam' or *buket* 'washing tub, milk-pail'. As for the former, its
connection with the concept DEATH seems to be strictly bound with a slaugh-
tered animal hanging from a beam and twitching. The latter supposedly comes
from the idea of an execution or suicide by hanging. In either case a person

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16 The Polish equivalent *kopnąć w kalendarz* (lit. 'kick the calendar') also seems to con-
    tain the element of degrading the concept DEATH with a dose of jocular note.

about to die has to kick something he or she stands on: either a bucket or a stool (Ayto 2007:241). Whatever the ultimate origin, the locution in this case fulfils the function of degrading the concept DEATH and making it seem less frightening. The illocutionary force, on the other hand, is euphemistic.

Yet another instance of a basically neutral concept expressed with a whole array of dysphemistic or semi-dysphemistic terms is menstruation; classic examples being *have the curse*, *off the roof* or *flying the red flag* in English, *mieć ciotkę* (lit. 'have an aunt') in Polish. For some, however, as argued by Allan and Burridge (2006:39), expressions such as *bleeding like a stuck pig* or *riding/surfing the red wave* are pure instances of dysphemisms because of their – sociolinguistically determined – strong vulgar load. Cockney Rhyming Slang undoubtedly deserves a mention at this point, as well. A whole wealth of rhyming expressions, such as *Bristols* (from *Bristol cities* 'titties') or *nellie dean* (for *queen* 'homosexual'),[17] offer substantial evidence that the jocular locution may, and in fact frequently does, cover a euphemistic illocutionary point.

1.1.4 Concluding remarks

Although the authority of Apostle Paul (Ephesians 4:29) warns against the foul use of language, the truth – as Oscar Wilde[18] puts it – *is rarely pure, and never simple*. The main aim set to this section was to make a case-marked search for a boundary line between the category of euphemisms and the category of dysphemisms, the functions of which are by no means identical. In short, euphemisms serve to dignify or express politeness and/or respect. The elements which are clearly absent from the scope of dysphemisms which serve to offend, insult or name a taboo object.

It was hinted long ago by such giants of European structuralism as Saussure (1916), Ullmann (1957) and, more recently, by Kardela and Kleparski (1990) and Kleparski (1997) that the explanation of many language phenomena must be aided by assuming a panchronic standpoint. It was not accidental that in the foregoing sections many cases of euphemisms and dysphemisms from various historical epochs were given and discussed. This was intended to show the universality of both mechanisms and, secondly, that the immediate conclusion emerging from our discussion is that the explanation of synchronic states must be sought in language history. More to the point, although the boundary line between the processes of euphemisation and dysphemisation is not always clear-

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17 For more on sociolinguistic factors in word-formation and morphological processes, see, among others, Körtvélyessy (2010).

18 *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act I.

cut synchronically, historical evidence may help one to find arguments that make it possible to classify individual cases of these mechanisms in one of the two relevant categories. Finally, despite the apparently clear, albeit subtle, distinction between the types of X-phemisms, it is vital to point out the indispensable role of the context and the intentions of the speakers in their choice of expressions.

1.2 Mechanisms behind X-phemisms

Having considered the theoretical background and the various dilemmas connected with defining the concept of euphemism and dysphemism let us now pass on to the subject of mechanisms that are employed in their formation. It needs to be stressed at the outset that the tools employed for the formation of X-phemisms are of varied nature, from structural to semantic and rhetorical devices. The question that may be formulated here is that of whether the processes to be discussed are equally operative in the formation of euphemisms and dysphemisms.

Not infrequently the mechanisms employed are mixed and mingled and the novel formation is hardly attributable only to a single category of formative tools. Such cases as the Polish compound *edzio-pedzio* 'homosexual' are the result of the mixture of several word-formation processes, namely eponymy *edzio* formed from the proper name *Edward*, which, together with the second constitutive element *pedzio < pedał* (a dysphemism for 'male homosexual'), are clipped, phonologically modified and compounded to form a nominal compound *edzio-pedzio*.

As for classifications of the mechanisms operative in the formation of X-phemisms, a number of linguists have offered partial discussions[19] without, however, attempting any transparent all-encompassing classification, if indeed such a typology is altogether possible. And so, Warren (1992) proposes a rather detailed taxonomic schema of the mechanisms in question, according to which the body of euphemistic processes fall into two main categories, namely semantic and formal innovations. The latter are further subclassified into word-formation devices, phonemic modification and loan words. In turn, word-formation devices include such processes as compounding, derivation, blends, acronyms and onomatopoeia whereas phonemic modification comprises back slang, rhyming slang, phoneme replacement and abbreviation. In what follows

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19   See Crespo Fernández (2008), Chamizo Dominguez (2005), Allan and Burridge (1991) and Burchfield (1986), to name but a few.