

## EUPHEMISM IN MANIPURI

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to discuss the “euphemism in Manipuri”. A euphemism is a metaphorical or metonymic use of an expression in place of another expression that is disagreeable or offensive. Euphemism are an important part of every language In Manipuri culture, a number of euphemisms are used in conversation. It deals with polite, softening, inoffensive, pleasant types of euphemism, according to its situation. It also analyses semantically as synonymous and polysemous euphemism. It shows the sameness of meaning and the multiple meaning.

**Key words:** metaphorical, polite, softening, inoffensive, synonymous and polysemous

### Introduction

Manipuri is a member of the Kuki- Chin sub group of languages that belong to the Burmese branches of the Tibeto-Burman, one of the co - ordinate members of the vast Sino-Tibetan language family. Manipuri is the only medium of communication among the speakers of the different tribal dialects inhabiting in and around the hilly areas of Manipur. Almost all the speakers of different tribal dialects of Manipur understand and speak Manipuri.

### Methodology

In studying the euphemism in Manipuri, primary and secondary data are required. The data for this study largely collected from actual speech and written materials, newspaper etc. so both primary and secondary sources of data will be used in this study. However emphasis will be given on the present spoken language.

A euphemism is a word or expression that is used when people want to find a polite or less direct way of talking about difficult or embarrassing topics such as death or bodily functions etc. Euphemisms are an important part of every language. The non-native speaker not only has to make sense of the euphemism he hears, he also has to learn which euphemisms are appropriate in any particular situation.

The deliberate or polite use of a pleasant or neutral word or expression to avoid the emotional implications of a plain term.

A euphemism is a metaphorical or metonymic use of an expression in place of another expression that is disagreeable or offensive. (Beekman and Callow 1974). The existence of taboo words and ideas stimulates the creation of euphemisms. A euphemism is a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening or unpleasant subject. (Victoria Fromkin, 2003).

In Manipuri culture, a number of euphemisms are used in conversation, according to its situation. It can be analysed as:

- a) Polite oriented euphemism,
- b) Softening oriented euphemism and
- c) In offensive, pleasant oriented euphemism.

#### a) Polite oriented euphemism

People use politeness for the purpose of expressing their superior status and authority. Respect is typically extended to persons higher in status, to the older from the younger, to men from women according to the situation. Expression can be used to serve the purpose of the speaker.

Politeness in brief, may be defined as the verbal strategies for keeping social interaction friction free i.e. it is a strategy to be maintaining to keep up the conversational contract view of Fraser (1990). Polite in Meitei society is a form of social contrast prevailing between groups as whole and individual members of the groups. As per the notion of politeness one who is polite in Meitei society is considered a culture person. People use the polite form of speech to show his/her cultural refinement i.e. his intention on being polite is a means of letting people to evaluate him positively and to show that he is being respectful to the superiors.

1) pukniṅ	-	paimə, unbi, k <sup>h</sup> oijji, k <sup>h</sup> oibuṅ	“soul”
2) nuṅsit	-	maləṅbə, namibə, humlel	“wind”
3) mənai	-	mədairem	“servant”
4) ləm	-	poirəi, ləmdəm	“place”
5) hi	-	wakəi	“boat”
6) lai	-	ciṅṅu, k <sup>h</sup> oijum	“god”
7) ləi	-	ləiraṅ, siṅṅel	“flower”
8) ləmbi	-	jaṅdəu	“road”
9) məcanupi	-	məmom, laṅlen	“daughter”
10) məi	-	k <sup>h</sup> ambi	“fire”
11) məwa	-	manjə, məpuroibə	“husband/lover”
12) nupi	-	nuja, nura	“women”
13) niṅṅol	-	cənu, cənura	“daughter”
14) ciṅ	-	loibi	“hill”
15) jum	-	səṅgai	“house”

16) həi	-	taoɟiŋ, həiraŋ	“fruit”
17) ucek	-	ponbi, cekla	“bird”
18) kətpa	-	kujəbə	“offer”
19) t <sup>h</sup> əwai	-	jaibi	“soul”
20) k <sup>h</sup> urumbə	-	punembə	“pray”
21) t <sup>h</sup> əwaimi	-	mirel	“soul”
22) t <sup>h</sup> oŋgal	-	k <sup>h</sup> ərai	“gate”
23) wasək	-	səri	“oat”
24) jahəubə	-	jakaibə	“awake”
25) ipa	-	pənt <sup>h</sup> əu	“father”
26) ima	-	pəlem	“mother”
27) mit	-	mitsəna	“eye”
28) mətəm	-	təŋləu	“time”
29) məpək	-	laŋon	“another birth”
30) məcanupa	-	pari	“son”
31) nupa	-	təmbə	“male”

#### b) Softening oriented euphemism

1) məton jəubə	-	pəndon lombə	“reaching top”
2) manəbə	-	paŋk <sup>h</sup> ək oibə	“same”
3) luhəŋbə	-	punsi ləipul oibə	“marriage”
4) wakətpə	-	həŋgətəbə	“complaint”
5) pi-tabə	-	təraŋ laiɟa sint <sup>h</sup> əbə	“falling tears”
6) tumbə	-	tumk <sup>h</sup> un hunbə	“sleep”
7) saobə	-	k <sup>h</sup> oirəŋ k <sup>h</sup> oisəonəbə	“angry”
8) nuŋsibə	-	nuŋsi ik <sup>h</sup> əu laŋbə	“love with passion”
9) t <sup>h</sup> əuoidəbə	-	t <sup>h</sup> əwa sadəbə	“careless”
10) ciŋ-təm mi	-	ciŋburoi-təmburoi	“hill and plane people”
11) ciŋnəbə wak <sup>h</sup> ən	-	ciŋnə pərəi	“doubt”
12) əp <sup>h</sup> a-əpun-nəŋbə	-	turəi-irəi cənbə	“obstacle”
13) sibə	-	əmən jait <sup>h</sup> oŋ kumbə/ k <sup>h</sup> əmnəŋ səwa tanbə	“death”
14) noŋŋanbə	-	inuŋ-sora təibə	“sunrise”
15) irujəbə	-	ipal laŋbə, iru sadəŋbə	“bath”
16) insəŋ mət <sup>h</sup> el	-	mət <sup>h</sup> el lukko	“different dishes”
17) əmənbə ləi	-	ləimən cənbə	“withering flower”

#### c) In offensive, pleasant oriented euphemism

1) həudəŋ	-	juŋləima	“cat”
2) məwa naibə	-	məjum paŋbə	“marriage”
3) məbuk kəŋbə	-	t <sup>h</sup> abum təra naupəbə,	

4) əŋaŋ k <sup>h</sup> ao	-	k <sup>h</sup> oiji mihun təmbə	“pregnant”
5) məca pokpə	-	sijomnuŋ	“womb”
		məmit-məmai paŋbə/ əŋaŋ unəbə	“birth”

Again, Euphemism in Manipuri can be analysed in two ways semantically as:

- (a) Synonymous Euphemism
- (b) Polysemous Euphemism

a) **Synonymous Euphemism:** It has the sameness of meaning.

1) əŋaŋ pokpə	‘to give birth’	–	(a) əŋaŋ unəbə (b) məmit məmai paŋbə
2) sibə	‘death’	–	(a) əməŋ jait <sup>h</sup> oŋ kumbə (b) korəu noŋgabə (c) k <sup>h</sup> əmnuŋ səwa tanbə (d) lai k <sup>h</sup> uja tanbə (e) noŋməlləbə
3) pukəŋbi	‘pregnant woman’	–	(a) mironbi (b) taojiŋ həiru panbə (c) məsa wai səŋdəbə (d) gərb <sup>h</sup> a ləibə (e) t <sup>h</sup> abum təra naupubə (f) k <sup>h</sup> oiji mihun təmbə
4) nəpa	‘father’	–	(a) əpokpə (b) pənt <sup>h</sup> əu (c) pabuŋ (d) paŋi (e) pabə

In the above example (1) əŋaŋ unəbə, məmit məmai paŋbə are all denoting the same act to give birth a child. Example (2) əməŋ jait<sup>h</sup>oŋ kumba, korəu noŋgaba, k<sup>h</sup>əmnuŋ səwa tanba, lai k<sup>h</sup>uja tanba, noŋməlləbə are denoting the same word ‘death’. Likewise example (3) and (4) also having the similar words these are all Synonymous Euphemism.

b) **Polysemous Euphemism:** It has the multiple meanings.

1) kəi	‘tiger’	–	ibud <sup>h</sup> əu	‘great grandfather’
	(restricted at the night time)			
2) jaiŋaŋ	‘turmeric’	–	məcu	‘colour’
	(restricted at the night time)			
3) lin	‘snake’	–	napi	‘grass’
	(restricted at the night time and as well to the jungle)			

In the above example (1) **kəi** 'tiger' is restricted to utter at the night time or to utter in a forest. It is replaced by the word '**ibud<sup>h</sup>əu**' which literal meaning is 'great grandfather'. In example (2) the word **jaiŋaŋ** 'turmeric' is restricted to utter at night. It is replaced by the word '**məcu**' which literal meaning is 'colour'. In example (3) the word **lin** 'snake' is restricted to say in jungle. It is replaced by "**napi**" which literal meaning is 'grass'. Therefore the above examples show that one word is replaced by another word, such word carries different meanings according to time and circumstances. These can be termed as Polysemous Euphemism.

From the above analysis euphemism in Meiteilon can be analysed into three types – polite oriented euphemism, softening euphemism and inoffensive, pleasant oriented euphemism besides this it can be classified into two ways- semantically as synonymous and polysemous euphemism. They are outward and visible signs of our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears and shames. By tracing them it is possible to see what has been going in our language, minds and culture.

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