

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**



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**HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

GRADUATION PAPER

**A STUDY ON EUPHEMISM USED IN EXPRESSING
THE DEATH IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE**

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Class:

NA904

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HAI PHONG - 2009

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TR- ỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Sinh viên:Mã số:.....

Lớp:Ngành.....

Tên đề tài:
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NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp
(Về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ)

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp

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CÁN BỘ H- ỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Ng- ời h- ớng dẫn thứ nhất:

Họ và tên:.....

Học hàm, học vị:.....

Cơ quan công tác:.....

Nội dung h- ớng dẫn:.....

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Cơ quan công tác:.....

Nội dung h- ớng dẫn:.....

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Đề tài tốt nghiệp đ- ợc giao ngày tháng năm 2009

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong tr- ớc ngày tháng năm 2009

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Ng- ời h- ớng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2009

HIỆU TR- ỚNG

GS.TS.NGƯT *Trần Hữu Nghị*

PHẦN NHẬN XÉT TÓM TẮT CỦA CÁN BỘ H- ỚNG DẪN

1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp:

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2. Đánh giá chất l- ượng của khoá luận (So với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu):

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3. Cho điểm của cán bộ h- ớng dẫn (ghi cả số và chữ):

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Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2009
Cán bộ h- ớng dẫn
(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

**NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ CỦA NG- ỒI CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN
ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP**

1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu; giá trị lí luận và thực tiễn của đề tài.

2. Cho điểm của ng- ời chấm phản biện:

(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)

Ngày tháng năm 2009
Ng- ời chấm phản biện

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ABBREVIATIONS

P	Part
PP	Paper
SOB	Son of a bitch
Sb	Somebody
Ex	Example

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale of the study

Language is a system of characters which came into being from men's common labor, being developed and enriched with the development of men. With the development of our society, a fair number of words are labeled frivolous vulgar or at least inconsiderate, and some kinds of language as forbidden, as different religions, superstitious, believes, social customs and other reasons. Meanwhile, there were some other languages which are used to take place. In communication, for better maintaining social relationship and exchanging ideas, people have to resort to a new different kind of language, which can make distasteful ideas seem acceptable or even desirable. This type of language is defined as "Euphemism" in linguistics. It's considered as "polite words or expressions that you instead of a more direct one to avoid shocking or upsetting someone". Euphemism has been always played an important role in English and especially, it is chiefly the key point for man in daily communication. Hence, with the hope to help English learners understand more deeply about using Euphemism, I decided to choose the research titled: "A study on Euphemism expressing Death in English and Vietnamese".

2. Aims of the study

Euphemism is a cultural phenomenon as well as a linguistic concept, every language has its own euphemism, so does English. It's deeply rooted in social life and has a great influence on social communications.

This study aims at:

- Pointing out theoretical background including the definition of Euphemism, its characteristics, type of Euphemism, its feature, its function.
- Bringing about some useful knowledge about using Euphemism expressing death in English and Vietnamese and the comparison between them.
- Offering preliminary further studies about the study.

- Giving understanding on English “Death” Euphemism.
- Finding out the differences and similarities in the way of using Death Euphemism in English and Vietnamese.

3. Scope of the study

Due to the limitation of time and my own knowledge, this study focuses on giving:

- Understanding about English Euphemism and the Death Euphemism in English.
- Making clearly the similarities and difference about Death Euphemism in English and Vietnamese.

4. Methods of the study

- To distinguish similarities, and difference in using Death Euphemism between two languages, comparison is the most effective method. The result of comparison helps to make language learning and teaching easier. For that reason, I choose the contrastive analysis method in my study.

- Besides, this study is carried out by gathering and analyzing the reference materials, Internet researching which contains a huge, convenient scope of information as well as my personal knowledge day by day I learn from my teachers, books, internet and friends.

5. Design of the study

This study consists of three main parts:

Part1 is the “Introduction” which introduces Rationale, Aims of the study, Scope of the study, Methods of the study and Design of the study.

Part 2 is the “Development” which is divided into three main chapters:

Chapter 1 is the “Theoretical background” providing the definition, the characteristics, the feature and the function of the Euphemism.

Chapter 2 is the “The “Death “Euphemism in English”.

Chapter 3 is the “Comparison between the Similarities and Difference of Euphemism in expression of death in English and Vietnamese.

Part 3 is the “Conclusion” which summarizes the main points of the study

Part two: DEVELOPMENT

Chapter1

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

I. Definition

1. What is Euphemism?

There are words in every language which people instinctively because they are considered indecent, indelicate, rude, too direct or impolite. They are often described in a round-about way, by using substitutes called Euphemism.

1.1. Some definitions of English Euphemism

There are some definitions of English Euphemism I want to mention below:

- According to Collins Essential English Dictionary 2nd Edition (2006):

“A euphemism is a polite word or phrase, which is used to describe a controversial or indiscreet activity. A euphemism is a substitute word, which is often more politically correct. But, a euphemistic statement can also be funny, humorous, or witty depending on the context of the statement”.

(<http://www.thefreedictionary.com>)

- According to Neaman & Silver, 1983, pp. 1-2:

“Euphemisms are words we use to soften the reality of what we are communicating to a given listener or reader. They are a universal feature of language usage; all cultures typically use them to talk about things they find terrifying (*e.g., war, sickness, death*) because, anthropologically, "to speak a name was to evoke the divinity whose power then had to be confronted").

- American scholar Rawson (1983, p. 1) states:

“Euphemisms are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them. Euphemisms are pervasive in our society. It is essential we know some basic

meanings of the word “euphemism”. The word “euphemism” comes from ancient Greek. The prefix “eu” means well, easily; there are such words as “eulogize”, “eugenics”. The root “pheme” means speech or saying, and thus euphemism literally means to speak in a pleasant manner or with good words. A definition of euphemism given by *Oxford advanced learners’ dictionary of current English* (1989) is: “Example of the use of pleasant, mild or indirect words or phrases in place of more accurate or direct one”. Generally speaking, words that are subtle, indirect or nice are euphemisms.

▪ Euphemism is defined in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English(1978):

“The use of a pleasanter less direct name for something thought to be unpleasant. The new Edition of the Oxford Concise Dictionary (1976) defines euphemism as “Substitution of mild or vague or roundabout expression for harsh or direct one; expression that substitute.”

Euphemism is to use a polite or vague word or phrase used to replace another word or phrase that is thought of as too direct or rude.

1.2. Some examples about Euphemism in English

- When you love someone, and you want to talk to her your love, instead of using the direct sentence “ I love you”, you can say:
 - You waken up my days.
 - Things won’t be the same without you.
 - You are the apple of my eyes.
 - You make me feel light in the darkness.

(Nguyen Manh Hung, English lexicology, 2003: 82)

- For workers “ dismissed” is:
 - Dehired
 - Surplused
 - When a company has to reduce their staff, they say they have “workforce adjustment”.

- When they transfer workers to another factory or production lines, they say they have to apply “vocational relocation”.

2. Classification of Euphemism

Many euphemisms fall into one or more of these categories:

2.1. Terms of foreign and/or technical origin (derrière, copulation, perspire, urinate, security breach, mired de Toro, prophylactic, feces occur, shiest)

2.2. Abbreviations (SOB for son of a bitch, BS for bullshit, TS for tough shit, SOL for shit out of luck or PDQ for pretty damn(ed) quick, BFD for big fucking deal, STFU or STHU for shut the fuck/hell up, RTFM for read the fucking manual)

2.2.1. Abbreviations using a spelling alphabet, especially in military contexts (Charlie Foxtrot for "Cluster fuck", Whiskey Tango Foxtrot Oscar for "What the fuck, over?", Bravo Sierra for "bullshit" — See Military slang)

2.2.2. Plays on abbreviations (H-e-double hockey sticks for "hell", "a-double snakes" or "a-double-dollar-signs" for "ass", Sugar Honey Iced Tea for "shit", bee with an itch or witch with a capital B for "bitch", catch (or see) you next Tuesday (or Thursday) for "cunt")

2.2.3. Use in mostly clinical settings (PITA for "pain in the ass" patient).

2.2.4. Abbreviations for phrases that are not otherwise common (PEBKAC for "Problem Exists between Keyboard and Chair", ID Ten T Error or ID-10T Error for "Idiot", TOBAS for "Take out Back and Shoot")

2.3. Abstractions and ambiguities (it for excrement, the situation for pregnancy, going to the other side for death, do it or come together in reference a sexual act, tired and emotional for drunkenness.)

2.4. Indirections (behind, unmentionables, privates, live together, go to the bathroom, sleep together, sub-navel activities).

2.5. Mispronunciation (goldarnit, dadgummit, efing (fucking cunt), freak in, be-atch, shoot — See minced oath).

Litotes or reserved understatement (not exactly thin for "fat", not completely truthful for "lied", not unlike cheating for "an instance of cheating").

Changing nouns to modifiers (makes her look slutty for "is a slut", right-wing element for "Right Wing").

2.6. Slang e.g.: pot for marijuana, laid for sex and so on.

There is some disagreement over whether certain terms are or are not euphemisms. For example, sometime the phrase *visually impaired* is labeled as a [politically correct](#) euphemism for *blind*. However, [visual impairment](#) can be a broader term, including, for example, people who have partial sight in one eye, or even those with uncorrected poor vision, a group that would be excluded by the word *blind*.

There are three [antonyms](#) of euphemism: [dysphemism](#), [cacophonies](#), and [power word](#). The first can be either offensive or merely humorously deprecating with the second one generally used more often in the sense of something deliberately offensive. The last is used mainly in arguments to make a point seem more correct.

II. Characteristics of English Euphemism

In every society there are many things or taboos cannot be spoken or mentioned directly, thus, people use some substitutions to express. They are called euphemism. Euphemism is deeply inserted in language, our daily life and work. Along with unceasingly enhancement of social civilization, speaking skill and good interpersonal relationship also more and more profoundly affect people's life; however, in language more and more euphemisms will be produced. Therefore, it has very important practice significance and practical significance to the euphemism research. But only carefully research the characteristics of euphemism can understand it more accurately, and use it properly.

1. Universality

Euphemizing generally exists in almost every nation all over the world, no matter how civilized it is. And in every natural language, both large families of languages and languages of minorities, using euphemism is a common phenomenon. Because almost all cultures seem to have certain notions or things that people try to avoid mentioning directly

2. Localization

The different regions have the differences naturally; the different customs, the different history, the different culture, and these differences embody the localization of language. Many euphemisms are related to the folklore, and its localization is clearly. (Xing hua, 1998: 145)

3. Contemporaneity

Language emerged in the process of communication, and it was developed, enriched and evolved continuously. In this process, in order to adjust to the specific environment, people should create different euphemism words on certain things, conduct and phenomenon and so on.

4. Language Territory

Words used in different places, or different sentences have different meanings. Because the language must be in certain environment, in different language environment or in the same language environment of different age, identity, status, or educating level, euphemism expressions are also different. Therefore, when euphemism is applied, we should pay attention to language environment, choosing the different words of features in type of writing, to make sentence more correct, more polite.

5. National Characteristic

A part euphemism words is general in most of national languages, but another part has the strong national characteristics. In Western culture, asking others' age, income, marital status, religious belief and political tendencies are considered to be infringement of privacy and discourteous behavior.

6. Having division of the sentimental color

Mentions approximately, euphemism some are lofty, some are affectionate and some are the vulgar bodies. For example, in the expression of death "to die" in meaning a series of euphemism words, a part has the lofty color; Like "to expire" "to pay the debt of nature", "to sleep" and so on, but has another part for the affectionate of spoken language, slang or vulgar body, like "to kick the buck ", "to go west" (Tran Binh, 1996: 451).

7. Having life

Some euphemisms having once completed its social intercourse mission would not be existence, but some then are given new life in the long-term usage, (its meanings) are accepted broadly and inherit to take over down, becoming fixed phrase language or direct expression synonym, and exist in vocabulary. Such as euphemism of the expression of liquor teases: "Medline", "high cap", "eye-opener" and so on; And also have some substitutions of trousers , "inexpressible", "unwhisperable", "unspeakable", "one-must-not-men", "indescribable" and so on.

8. Sociality

The language is a kind of social phenomenon; the different society could not exert a same expression method. Even if in identical society's different social class, social stratum, even different profession in the identical social class, the social stratum as well as the quantity of people under different culture background using the euphemism should be also different. For example the word "dead", in each society, in each culture has the different expression methods. According to concerned scholars statistics, in Chinese the expression of "dead" reaches more than 300, according to the incomplete statistics, in English it probably has more than 230. If in consideration of those tactful parlance of temporary, its amount

would be far over this data. Like person believing in Marxist will speak "to see a Marx". Person believing in Christianity will say "be with God".

9. Re-symbolism

From the definition of euphemism, we can know clearly that euphemism is using one expression to replace another. "That is to say, euphemism is a re-symbolizing of things, ideas, or events already symbolized with precision in mind. Therefore people can't randomly utilize an expression to euphemize the taboos. The re-symbolizing should provide clues to catch the intended meaning of the taboos and should sound indirect or pleasanter". Hence, euphemism is a kind of substitution in fact; it is a manifestation of re-symbolism.

10. Arbitration

Euphemisms come from daily life, and most of them come from ordinary people. Thus, arbitration is one of the most important characteristics of modern euphemism. Once a man was interviewed on a farm on the west of Canada, he called bull "he call" and "gentleman cow". He used euphemism very optional.

11. Relevance and Indirect

Don't need to dispute, this is the biggest characteristics of euphemism. Using euphemism just use its underlying way to express and avoid mentioning things or phenomenon directly which may make people unpleasant. It is the essence of euphemism. Therefore, indirect is one of euphemism main characteristics.

Relevance is that euphemism must enable the human to be associates with what it mentions. Euphemism is a substitution of taboo, but it could not substitute things freely. It substitute when is necessary and connection with the taboo. It is called relevance. This manifested the euphemism to avoid awkward case which is caused by people speaking without reservation. This is just the reason that euphemism enjoys the favor..

12. The English Euphemism of Idiom and Temporary

Many euphemisms in people's long time's use, have become the fixed expression, already become idiom, and entered English glossary. Some euphemisms are

temporary. Some identical meaning's content uses the different euphemisms to substitute in different unceasingly. Such as, mad which is instead by crazy, insane, lunatic, mentally deranged and so on.

13. Fuzziness

Fuzziness is a basic feature of euphemism. In order to avoid mentioning some notions, things or taboos directly, people always use semantic obscurity to take place of the precise words. The euphemism fuzziness could conceal the brutal reality. There are some examples. We do not say "blind" but say "visual retarded, sight-deprived"; we do not say "be old", but say "meet with the second childhood; reach one's golden age"; and we do not say "idiot", but say "totally dependent". To avoid mentioning the term death, people take pains to substitute it with the terms of pass away, be with God, go to a better world, etc. Moreover, when refers to disease, to avoid vulgarly, the people conceal the truth with the fuzzy words and expressions. For example, some diseases which cure with difficulties, such as pulmonary tuberculosis before the 1950s and the cancer of contemporary and AIDS, they are incurable illnesses which make people fear deeply. Once suffers, people just liked being sentenced to death. Therefore, massive euphemism words related to illness are formed in English. Like "falls ill" (be out of sorts), "scarlet" (fever), "disease" (disorder), "stroke" (accident), "disgusting", (stomach awareness), "vomit" (lose a meal), "diarrhea" (Mexican toothache), "pulmonary tuberculosis" (breast complaint), "syphilis" (bad blood), "gonorrhoea" (hat and cap), and "AIDS" (social disease),and so on.(2000:27)

Therefore, if there is no fuzziness euphemism will lose its euphemistic value.

14. Humorous

In communication, humor is one kind perfect way to please others. The euphemistic expression is always likely more pleasant than the direct expression, others also easy to accept. Because it can manifest the humorous effect, the humorous euphemism can help the people facing the reality with ease. People use “push up daisies” to substitute “be buried” so as to ease people’s fear of death. People changing “be sent into prison” into “live at government’s expenses”, can be obviously reduce one’s pressure.

15. Accuracy

Stemming from human communication’s need, people do not state the matter directly, but uses the relatively tactful express —the usage of euphemism, thus, an identical matter has the different expression methods. When using different expression methods should be according to the different linguistic environment, the goal and the request, each expression in the specific linguistic environment is most accurate. For example, there is many words means “to die”, such as “go depart”, “decease”, “pass away”, “breathe one’s debt to nature”, “be in heaven”, “be with God” and so on. In the daily life, people are often not willing to say some kind of misfortune, particularly “the death”, so usually change to express with euphemism. The expression concerning about the die which enumerates up above compare to say "die" directly to be more tactful, and make the person accept the fact of this misery easily.

III. The major functions of English Euphemism

There are many functions of English euphemism, such as social function, communicative function.

1. The social function of English euphemism

From the perspective of language communication, euphemism functions to avoid taboos, to show politeness and conceal feelings. Thanks to euphemism, it is easy for people to accept the things that are likely to make others feel embarrassed or unhappy. It is people’s general character to express their ideas as mildly and tactfully as possible. Euphemism helps people to reach this goal. From the moment

euphemism came into existence, it has played a very important role in our daily communication, and help establish a good relationship between human beings and even strengthen the social stability. Euphemism is motivated by the desire not to be offensive. People use them to show their politeness, to avoid being offensive and to meet the psychological and beneficial needs of both speakers and hearers in communication. But sometimes they are used to conceal or cover something. Accordingly, euphemism serves three basic communicative functions: *evasive function, polite function and cosmetic function*.

1.1. The evasive function of English euphemism

The evasive function of euphemism is to evade using taboos, enabling the speaker to talk about tabooed things freely. These tabooed things are believed to be dangerous to certain individuals, or to the society as a whole, or to be disgusting and unpleasant, and cause fear. Such tabooed things include: *disease, disabilities, death, sex, body excretion and body elimination process, etc.* People can use euphemisms to talk about what cannot be talked directly. Especially, in terms of death, Death is an inevitable stage at the end of life's journey. It is common experience of human beings. Yet it has been the source of fear—fear of the loss of loved ones; fear of the end of one's life; fear of the actual process of dying. Therefore, all these fears, worries, and unpleasant feelings combined lead to verbal taboo of death. Euphemisms concerning death are extremely rich. In English, there are more than seventy euphemisms for “death”, including *“to be gone, to be gone to a better world, to be with God, to breath one's last, to close one's day, to depart from the world forever, to depart to God, to fall asleep, join the great majority, pass away, etc.* No matter why this word is used in a certain language, people always tend to use less harsh words.

1.2. The polite function of English euphemism

Politeness is another important function that euphemisms serve in the social life. Politeness is the symbol of human's civilization and one of the important principles guiding people's activities. When we have to talk about something unpleasant, we should choose euphemistic way to express in order not to hurt others. Being polite is a reasonable action that anyone who is keen on face-saving will take. The polite function of euphemism is tried to avoid being harsh or impolite in the communication. In other words, euphemisms are to minimize impolite expressions and maximize polite expressions. For instance, when a teacher comments on a student's moral conducts and school work in front of the student or his or her parent, he or she should report the fact on one hand, and on the other hand should take into consideration the student's psychological endurance and the parent's face. So the euphemistic way to express might be *"The student is a bit slow for his or her age"* instead of *"The student is stupid"*. So euphemism's polite function can save people's face in their process of communication. It is so important that we cannot neglect it.

1.3. The cosmetic function of English euphemism

Besides the evasive and polite function, euphemism has the cosmetic function. This kind of euphemism is usually used in the government, military, politics and commerce. It refers to using good words to beautify things, which are not beautiful in reality and make the thing be more persuaded and acceptable. Because euphemism has the nature of vagueness, to some extent, it is deceptive. Traditionally speaking, euphemism plays a positive role in social life. Using it, people can avoid some embarrassed and ungracious occasion. But just as every coin has two sides, euphemism has no exception. Using it suitably can coordinate social relationships, but abusing it will mislead the public, will cover up the essence of things.

In short, euphemism of this kind may make an idea more palatable, but they inflate language, reduce precision and often tamper with truth. Some people condemn euphemism as demoralizing because of its hypocrisy, which other consider them useful in the aspect of coordinating social relationships. However, the fact remains

that euphemisms are very much a part of the language and what's more important for us is not to debate their merits or demerits, but rather to be able to realize that English euphemism can serve for the special social activities under certain circumstance.

2. The communicative function of English Euphemism

There are four functions: avoidance of taboo, politeness, avoidance of vulgarity and covering up.

2.1. Avoidance of taboo

Death is an awful word for both Asians and the western people. In Chinese, “chang mian le”, “sheng tian le”, “jian ma ke si le”, “an xi le”, and “qu jiu quan le” are fair words for death, while in English, the speeches are “to go, to go west, to pass away, to be no more, to breathe one's last, to fall asleep, to west, to see Marx, to have the last rest, to be at rest, to be in Heaven, to shake the dew off lily, to return to dust, and so on.”

EX: go/be gone, go west, pass away, be at rest, be in/ go to Heaven, go to sleep forever, leave this world, to fall asleep, breathe one's last, be in Abraham's bosom, have the curse, go to a better place, depart, decease be with God, be no more, be no longer with us yield up the ghost, be at peace, return to dust, etc. (Tang Wenjun. Brief Discussion of English Euphemism and Its Communicative Functions [J], Sichuan Stationary College Journal. 2007 ;)

Also here are some sentences to state the one died in an indirect way.

- 1) His father passed away when he was only five.
- 2) He worked until he breathed his last.
- 3) The boy is now in Abraham's bosom.

From these sentences, we cannot find any noticeable words showed “death” directly, however, we can easily read the sad message related to death. Of course, we can figure out some other information about the one it displays in the sentences. Maybe the little five-year-old boy will lead an unhappy life in his childhood.

Maybe the man “worded until he breathed his last” is a real workaholic, and the boy is an innocent and a miserable child, or something else.

“Disease” is another example. With a purpose of not mentioning those depressed and terrible disease-related words, there are many fair speeches. For example, if someone is sick, we use “under the weather” to take the place of illness or something else. “Heart attack” or “have a heart condition” are employed to substitute for “heart disease”; “social disease” for “venereal disease”. In this way, people can naturally receive the bad truth of disease and think up the solutions of them, rather than lost in despair or giving up the precious life or even committing suicide.

2.2. Politeness

In socio- communication, it is very necessary to be polite and gracious in the course of exchanging information or ideas.

For instance, in Chinese “ce suo”, in English language, there are many words related to it :WC, Powder room, bathroom, washing room, restroom, ladies’, gents’, the John, Mrs. Jones, women’s/ men’s lavatory, etc. For the phrase, in Chinese “qu ce suo”, there are still many items connected. (Discuss the Communicative Functions of Euphemism, 2007)

Another example comes into the phrase “old people”. Neither Americans nor Chinese nowadays mind the words about “growing old”, although the situation is quite different in ancient China—in that times, old people would like to compare with each other to work out that which one is the oldest among the group. However, today, we are likely to use senior citizen or the longer-lived or seasoned men or the men in mature golden age to describe those ole-aged persons in western culture, instead of calling them immediately, without thinking.

2.3. Avoidance of vulgarism

In daily life, some words or phrases needed to avoid mentioning, such as sex, pregnant, menstruation, foolish, and so forth.

One example is that pregnant relates to sex, so people tend to hide or avoid mentioning them directly. So here are some sayings to describe them

euphemistically: Pregnant—a lady-in-waiting to be in a delicate condition ; eating for two; full of heir have one on the way have one’s watermelon on the vine an expectant mother; in an interesting condition; She is knitting little booties.

For another instance, “a liar” comes into this point. In private I should merely call him a liar; in the Press you should use the words “Reckless disregard for truth” and in Parliament—that you regret he “should have been so misinformed”.

2.4. Covering up

Due to the indirectness and implicitness characteristics of English euphemism, we can cover up some unpleasant expressions, particularly in the field of politics and military.

In the international political affairs, especially in the military part, euphemisms are widely used to cover up the truth. Nowadays, people tend to use the term “engineer” to cover up some inferior occupations. The uplifting words related to jobs with a purpose to beautify those under-the-average occupations add up to 2,000 types. For example, optician call them as vision engineer; bedding manufacturer as mattress engineer or sleep engineer; School principal as educational engineer. And some others are easily found: advertising engineer = advertising man, sales engineer = sale person (P.40; 13).

(Donglin Feng. Euphemism—A mirrors of social life US-China Foreign Language [J]. 2006 ;)

Besides, in the economic circle, there are still lots of fair speeches to hold back the cruel competition or reality. Economic crisis is substituted for depression, which is the typical example in it. Such as “economic recession” is another word for economic depressions, which lighten the seriousness of the economic decline and can be accepted in a natural tone. In business negotiations, English euphemisms are also employed wildly to hold back some impolite terms or frustrating issues in order to arrive at a win-win agreement.

Chapter 2: THE “DEATH” EUPHEMISM IN ENGLISH

1.

Understanding English “Death” Euphemism

1.1. Introduction

English euphemism, we know, is a language phenomenon from the Greek word “Euphemismos” meaning “good time” or “good speech” to substitute the mild or vague or roundabout expression for harsh or direct one that exists popularly in English people’s lives and the “death” euphemism is just one of the most important parts in euphemistic culture. During the process of communication, in English culture, people create a great majority of euphemistic expression about “death” in order to reduce the tear of “death”. Of course, the “death” euphemism is both a language phenomenon and cultural phenomenon, which helps people avoid this terrible and mysterious word directly, and expresses their missing and respect, their sympathy and comfort more effectively in order not to impose on the hearers. Death is an unfortunate thing; even no one in the world can resist the natural law of birth, age and death. People merely use other words as substitutes of “death” for its linguistic taboo. People, from social man’s psychology, consider that talking about the death is unlucky, because in the mind of tradition, people refer to death and misfortune would occur. Therefore, many euphemisms in the English language are used to cover up “death”. For instance, Charles Dickens wrote in “David Copperfield”, “and, it being lower water, he went out with the tide.” “He went out with the tide” is a euphemism that expresses “he died”. To master this kind of euphemism cultures is good for social communication. This paper provides more detailed analysis from English “death” euphemism, its origin, development, metaphor, age and relationship, before or after death with dead cause, oral expression with slang. Meanwhile, it studies the culture on English “death” euphemism even deeply and helps the English learners understand the language’s inner relations as well as how to improve the ability of using euphemistic language effectively.

1.2. English “Death” Euphemism and Culture

Culture, in a broad sense, includes customs, ideas, objects, techniques, language, civilization, art and literature, etc. of a particular society or group of people. (Wehmeier, 2001: 227). The English “death” euphemism is a special language. As we all know, England is a hometown of prevailing euphemism. People there are inclined to apply a lot of euphemistic words to express some terrible things. As a story, a guest from Paris was travelling and living in England, one day, his landlord told him with grief on face, “ my husband has just passed to the other side.” .This Paris man looked toward the other side of the garden, but he saw nobody and was puzzled at that time. So his landlord explained further to him: “I mean he is kicked the bucket.” He comforted her and said: “I hope his foot will be better soon”. But landlord did not understand what her guest said, and she explained, “No, he wasn’t here, he snuffed ityou know.” Still the Paris man couldn’t get what his landlord wanted to express. He blurted out suddenly, “But you’ve got electricity here. (Le, 2000: 24). We can know from story why the Paris man answered this woman with other things that were out lying when she talked about one thing. Because the Paris man was not aware of euphemisms that the landlord used, even he did not understand “Conversational implication” of euphemism. As a matter of fact, what she said means that her husband *passed away*. In other words, her husband *died*. “Passed to the other side, kick the bucket, and snuffed it” these phrases in the story are all “death” euphemisms. Usually, alive, people do not want to say the word “die” directly when someone acquainted has passed away. This language phenomenon in society is quite common, and in a sense, it is also an application of language. English “death” euphemism, at the same time, reflects some custom, social value and belief, etc. Therefore, it cannot exist alone without social culture. In order to analyze its inner cultural meanings, we now study the origins of English “death” euphemism first.

1.3. The main origin of “Death” Euphemism

Long time ago, many phenomenon could not be explained clearly, just like “die”. People did not know why a man would die, but they believed it was a mysterious power. “Death” is a terrible word that reminds people of dark and cold things. People avoid talking about it, because they are afraid of losing their families or friends. Consequently, a lot of euphemisms are used, such as: “be asleep forever” is taken to substitute “death” as well as the “to be brought to one’s long home”. In different cultures, it needs to use the different euphemisms to express “death”. Namely, the origins of English “death” euphemism are so wide and different.

1.3.1. Christianity Belief

The first origin of “death” euphemism is Christianity belief. A large number of the euphemisms originate from the stories or allusions of Christianity. Moreover, Christianity has explained the death and described the world after death in order to help people get rid of angst and trepidation about death. To the world beyond death, Christianity has had great effects on people’s mind and obviously emerges in the language. Christianity is focused on the salvation of the world beyond death, and there are many “death” euphemisms are found in Bible, Hymns and preached documents, etc. Accordingly, a part of English “death” euphemisms originate from Christianity. In the Medieval Century, Christianity unified the whole Europe, and Bible was unique and supreme truth. The “death” euphemisms from Bible have embodied life value and explained people’s death. Just as God creates human beings with clay, and after death, they would “*return to dust*”. In Bible, God created Adam, human beings’ ancestor, with clay. One day, God said to him: “*Thou come from dust, and shale returns to dust.*” The notion that people have sins with birth, they must atone for it, and after their death, they would “*pay the debt of nature*”. God is a master of everything in the universe. When people die, they “*are called to God*”. Death means “*go the way of all flesh*”. People alive, they must keep noble mind and helping others, they would “*go to heaven*” in the future. And then, they can “*be with God, be asleep in the arms of God / in Jesus / lie in Abraham’s bosom*” and “*be at peace*”. This makes life “*go to one’s final reward*”. People’s death just is “*yield up the ghost*”, but the soul is “*launch into eternity*” and “*have*

one's name inscribed in the book of life". (Đôi Vệ Bõnh&Cao Bằng, 2004 : 15)

According to the Christianity, human beings are all created by God. They are God's sons and daughters. God loves his children, and human also love God. But human have sins with birth, they must believe in and obey God, and God would absolve their sins. It can help them go to heaven after their death. By means of the influence of this mind, English "death" euphemisms, their original meanings are mostly about God and heaven. Some words like: "*to answer the final summons, to depart to God, to join the heaven host, to join the angels, to be called to the great beyond and to be taken to paradise*", etc. These euphemisms are used to express the world after death and make people alive have a spiritual dependence, living quietly, and leaving with smile in the end.

1.3.2. Funeral Way

The second origin of English "death" euphemism is its funeral way. In English culture, funeral way also has produced some "death" euphemisms, just as daisies. It is a kind of flower that usually grows in the place around a tomb. It symbolizes a man who died and has been buried into earth.

The "death" euphemisms about daisies are "*to count daisies, to grin at the daisy-roots, to hide one's name under some daisies to kick up daisies, to push up the daisies and to turn up one's toes to daisies*", etc. (liuzhongde, 2006: 438)

"Pushing up daisies" conjures up a pleasant picture of green grass and pretty flowers above the dearly departed. This expression gives us the title of the new TV show, and is referenced in the darkly humorous lyrics of "Poor Jud Is Dead" from the musical Oklahoma:

Poor Jud is dead...

The daisies in the dell

will give out a different smell

because poor Jud is underneath the ground.

Certainly, the funeral way in different situations has different euphemistic expressions.

1.3.3. Professional Language

“Professional language” is a third origin of English “death” euphemism. In many different professions of society, they have their own languages, and language expressions are endowed with the great professional characteristics.

Firstly, Looking back upon the past history, many soldiers lost their young lives in the wars. People, for the sake of remembering and expressing their respect to those who died for the nation, they used many “death” euphemisms. For example, President Lincoln gave an address in Gettysburg, “*we have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that nation might live.*” (Bao Nam, 2001: 184). In this sentence, Lincoln used the “*final resting place*” that is a “death” euphemism of burial ground, and “*gave their lives*” is a euphemism of sacrifice. These two “death” euphemisms greatly expressed Lincoln’s respect and love to these martyrs. Generally speaking, the “death” euphemisms about soldiery are expressed as “*sb bit the dust, sb bought the farm, sb fell in battle, sb gave his life to his country / laid down his life for his country, do one’s bit for one’s country and fire one’s last shot*”, etc.

Secondly, reverend is also a profession whose task is to miss ionizes and persuades people to accept God. They believe that people would be taken to paradise after their death. As a result, there are many “death” euphemisms about God or heaven, Such as: “to be called to God, to be gathered to one’s fathers, to go to meet one’s maker, to be in heaven, to be asleep in the arms of God and to depart to God”, etc. Consequently, these euphemisms emerge in religious language.

Thirdly, doctor is a profession that they usually help the patients. Their duty is to cure diseases that have fallen on people. But sometimes, some patients died of diseases that cannot be treated. As doctors, they have responsibilities to comfort these patients’ families or friends. They often say: “*We have tried our best; we think she is going home*” (Maovinhquydeng, 2005 : 148) *he expired, he breathe his last and he have gone out, etc*”.

Fourthly, seaman is a profession that they work on the sea. But this work is rather dangerous. No matter the fishermen or sailors, many of them died in the sea for some reasons. People called their death as “*be lost at sea, etc*”.

Fifthly, lawyer is a profession that they use law to help or protect others' benefits. When someone died of being killed without any evidences, lawyers often present at this occasion. They always say that “*the deceased man left no will, the old man deceased without leaving an heir, the deceased was a well- know engineer*”. Actually, “The deceased” means a dead man. It is an elegant, formal euphemism from Latin.

Finally, net player is a kind of people who like the plays on the internet. In the developed modern society, internet is getting more popular and has become the part of people's life. Thus, so many new words on the net are spoken by players. As for “death”, they call it “game over”. The “Game over” is just the “death” euphemism in network culture.

1.4. The Development of “Death” Euphemism

Everything's development has a process. So is with the Euphemism. In the time of religion popularity, people believed in God, because the so-called good life would be given under the blessing and protection of God. For this, euphemisms were endowed with religion meaning. On the contrary, in the days of advanced science and technology, people gradually open the natural mysteries, and the religion is neglected bit by bit. The new euphemisms without religion meaning can get development in the coming day. In terms of social consciousness' progress, it promotes the increase of euphemisms. In the 20th century, especially after World War II, many new euphemisms were created when the civil situation changed, (Heshanfen, 2002: 369-70). English “death” euphemisms also followed when euphemisms developed. In the Medieval Century, because of the famine and plague year after year, “Grim Reaper” became the substitute of “death” in that time. And in the Renaissance, people called the “death” as *nap, sleep, and gave it human nature*. As a result, the effigies of dead men were sculptured on tombs. From the Medieval Century to now, people have considered the “death” as a master

gamesman. All of them want to defeat it, but eventually, they are failed. People's life is like a gamble, if you fail, and your life will end at once. Hence, there are many "death" euphemisms about this aspect, such as "*cached in / handed in his chips and jumped the last hurdle, etc*". (Đôi Vê Bõnh&Cao Bằg, 2004 : 19)

With the development of science and technology, some English "death" euphemisms have hardly been used, because they have been the old phrases and been displaced by the new ones. Some new expressions like "*mercy killing / stroke, pull the plug, pass out of the picture, and be grounded for good and run one's race*". "Death" is regarded as the beginning of new life that is always expressed in several words, such as "*go to a better place, be called to a higher life, etc*", which today are used widely by public.

2. Why we use the "Death" Euphemism?

2.1. English "death" Euphemism and Metaphor

Twenty-first-century human beings live in a culture in which "dead" is a four-letter word. Because four-letter words have a reputation for being obscene, death is obscene to modern sensibilities; that is, to those in modern death-defying cultures who rarely have firsthand experiences with the dying and the dead. Modernity has afforded people the ability to hide the dying process from public view; and often people see the dead body of a loved one to be so polluting that they pay strangers to dispose of "it" properly. The modern mind can abstract death, further buffering itself from death's horror, through the use of metaphor and euphemism when describing the dead. In daily conversations the deceased tend to pass or fade away, embark on a desired trip to meet their eternal reward or loved ones ("Grandpa is back with Grandma"), or merely fall asleep ("She earned her rest"). Some scholars argue that our circumlocutions should be understood as evidence of death denial, as should such colorful expressions as "buying the farm," "pushing up daisies," or "kicking the bucket." On the other hand, euphemism has a long tradition of use when dealing with the topic of death, and the use of metaphor is often inevitable when trying to explain certain facets of the human condition, particularly death.

Metaphor is a way of describing something by comparing it to something else

which has the same qualities (but without using the words “as” or “like”). (Wehmeier, 2001: 582-83). In English culture, people’s concept that “when talking to the death, and the misfortune would happen”, is rooted in their mind deeply. Using the way of metaphor to express the “Death” is not mentioning it.

It must be noted that the majority of metaphors view death as a positive event, as a sort of reward in Heaven after a virtuous life on earth, including:

➤ **Death metaphor about a journey**

The vast majority of the metaphorical substitutes observed *depart/departure- together with their variants depart this life and departure out of this world- leave, pass from the sorrows of Earth....* focus on the fact of leaving, on the journey, itself, rather than on its conclusion. The final destination of the journey, that is, the encounter with God in Heaven, is based on the Christian belief of a journey meeting the Savior, a notion which provides the euphemistic support of expression such as draw to God and go to one’s eternal rest.

For example:

1. *We are saying farewell to a really dear friend.*
2. *He passed away.*
3. *May she find peace in the place where she now rests?*

Greek legends emphasize this part of the DEATH IS A JOURNEY metaphor with images of the dead being transported across the river [Styx](#) to the afterlife. The greatest distance between the living and the dead is created if the journey's destination is allocated to the source domain: "*May she find peace in the place where she now rests*". In this example, the deceased exists in the end of the journey, arrival in the space of death.

➤ **Death metaphor about a joyful life**

The Christian ideal of a joyful life, is, a peaceful and everlasting existence with God in Heaven. So, the metaphors of hope and consolation arise from the transferring the attributes from the domain of a joyful life to a domain of death, such as eternal rest, abode of peace, better world, joyful expectation of the

resurrection of the just, happiness...which religion inspired a positive view of death and a negative view of earthly life scene of wretchedness.

They will only find consolation in contemplating the purity and virtues of the being that has left them...in the pious and firmly grounded hope, that their darling has gone to the eternal life- and that in the fullness of time, when it shall please God to call them from scene of wretchedness, they will join her in that abode of peace, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest (TCJ, November 27).

➤ **Death metaphor about the end**

The life can be understood as a process with a starting, an ending point and a time span, so death is a final stage of our lifespan. Expression containing the adjective last such as last struggling moments of existence and last agonies help us to understand human death in terms of finality (Bultnick, 1998: 59). In this case, metonymic expressions related to the physiological effects of death like breathe one's last breath and put a period to one's earthly sufferings can be considered to present the same metaphorical basis.

➤ **The death metaphor about home**

“To be called home, to be home and free, to go home, to go to one’s own place and to be brought to one’s last/ long home”.

For example: “George, I say to my apprentice, shut shop up. My old friend John Baines is going to his long home today”.

➤ **The death metaphor about sleep**

“To sleep, be asleep forever, final sleep, to be asleep in the arms of God and to have fallen asleep...”

For example: in “Hamlet”, Shakespeare wrote: “To die, to sleep. No more; and by a sleep to say we end the heartache, and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to”. (Luo Jinguo, 1996: 144)

➤ **The death metaphor about rest**

The rest of death euphemism is a term of a peaceful rest after an earthly existence, observed in phrases such as *eternal rest, rest in Him and rest in peace, together with the more elaborate euphemism rest from the labors of a well spent life and rest on the merits of one’s Savior*. Furthermore, rest includes “*go to rest, to have found rest, to rest in peace, to go to one’s resting place and to take one’s rest*”.

➤ **The death metaphor about going away**

“To pass away, to fade away, to come to an end, to go off, to be gone and to lose...”

➤ **The death metaphor about time:** “one’s time is at hand”.

➤ **The death metaphor about west:** “to the west”. East is a place that is considered as the sun rise and life birth. West, is a place the Sun set and life end?

These expressions are all the euphemistic metaphor of “death”.

2.2. English “Death” Euphemism and Age, Relationship

2.2.1. Age

According to the different death ages, it is divided into four groups of people, “The old”, “The Mid-aged”, “The young” and “infancy”. Their expressions, base on the “death” euphemism, are different in English culture:

- **The old:** “In English culture, people do not describe others as or to be described as “old” because the old, who no longer work, are ignored by society. Therefore, people create “the second childhood golden years, senior citizen, gray hair, mature golden age” when they refer to “old age” in which it attempts to conceal the fact of becoming old and avoid arousing old people’s sad feeling of aging” their death is expressed as: “to end one’s day, depart out of this world and curtains”, etc.
- **The Mid-aged:** “to be part from one’s life”.
- **The young:** “be taken in one prime”.
- **Infancy:** “come to or meet an untimely end and asleep in Jesus”. For example: “Fallen asleep, not dead but sleeping, asleep in Jesus”. (A common child’s epitaph in the 19th century).

(Bào Nam, 2004: 232)

2.2.2. Relationship

Likewise, Relationship is divided into six aspects. Such as: “friend, colleague, leader, kinsfolk, seniority and celebrity”.

- **The “death” euphemism about friend:** “join the great majority”.
- **Colleague:** for example, “My king has cancelled his account, which is a great loss to us “. (Maovinhquydeng, 2005: 148)
- **Leader:** “depart from the world forever, to quit it”, etc.
- **Kinsfolk:** “the loved one, fell away, fell asleep and pass away / pass on (upon), etc. e.g. “I don’t know what I shall do when he comes to go”. (Ló Thiệu Toàn, 2007: 88)

- **Seniority:** “be gone away, late, poor, curtains and to quit it”, e.g. “How wonderful”, she said: “My late husband love good music”. (Ló Thiệu Toàn, 2007: 88)

- **Celebrity:** F. Engels wrote for Marx’s death: “On the 14th of March, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest living thinker ceased to think. He had been left alone for scarcely two minutes, and when we came back we found him in his armchair, peacefully gone to sleep- but forever”. (Bào Nam, 2001: 184)

We can see in this sentence, “ceased to think” and “gone to sleep- but forever”, they are all euphemisms of “died”. Engels used these two euphemisms was to completely express his esteem and miss feeling to Marx.

2.3. English “Death” Euphemism and before or after death, Dead Cause

2.3.1. Before Death

Death is classified into two parts, “before death” and “after death”. Before death means somebody is dying or approach to death. Some euphemisms about before death just like: “to be on one’s last leg, for example, “It is Dopy, Mike,” said one, “park bum for twenty years. On his last leg, I guess.”(Trần Bõnh, 2003: 73). “To have one foot in the grave”, e.g. “The young lady has married that old bookseller who has one foot in the grave. (Trần Bõnh, 2003: 73). “Be sinking fast” and “to receive notice to quit”, e.g. “I wonder why he can be so cheerful when he knows he has notice to quit”. (Trần Bõnh, 2003 : 74)

2.3.2. After Death

Some about after death: “he left us, he lost his life, he gave up the ghost, he began the world and he met his end”, etc.

- “*To give up/ yield up the ghost*” means to die- In this sense, ghost is the obsolete word for “Soul” or “spirit” and the fact that it is given up implies that it has an existence separate from and outliving the human body. The phrase is found frequently in the Bible to mean “die”, though in modern use it is jocularly applied to a piece of equipment, occasionally to a person, that ceases to function.

(<http://sers.tinyonline.co.uk/gswithenbank/saying.htm>).

2.3.3. Dead Cause

Why a man would die? And what reasons make people die? These questions attribute to three causes: “killing”, “be killed” and “suicide”. In the first place, euphemisms about “killing”, such as “to finish sb, do for sb, knock off sb, slay sb, take one’s life and put away sb”, etc. (huanghengtian, 2001 : 91). In the second place, about “be killed” as “take one’s own life, be taken off, be knocked off and be done” (Huanghengtian, 2001: 91). In the third place, about “suicide”: “destroy oneself” and “make away with oneself”, etc.

2.4. English “Death” Euphemism and Oral expression, Slang

2.4.1. Oral Expression

Not only does the English “death” euphemism appear in written forms, but also spoken forms. Thus, it has oral expressions and slangs. The oral expressions usually are : “be gone, be no more, breathe one’s last, close one’s eyes, join the majority and go to glory- go to the Heaven”, etc. These euphemisms are still popular today, but it also reflects people’s old concept.

E.g.: “The next day, his parents were flown to New Mexico by special Army plane, and they stayed at their son’s bedside, until he breathed his last”.

(R.Lapp. “Atoms and People”)

- As Ch.Beard and M.Beard in “The Rise of American Civilization”, “*Patrick Henry has already gone to his long home; Samuel Adams was soon to follow*”.

- “*you think I’m going to join the majority.*’ ‘...*Well, put it that way if you like*”.

(J.Galsworthy, 2004: 45)

2.4.2. Slang

Slang, at the same time, such as “bump off sb, kick off shoes, cashed in one’s chips / checks, went off the hooks, handed in one’s dinner pail and received notice to quit, to join the majority, to go west, to check out, to take a ride, to hop the twig”, etc. These expressions, their original meaning is not about death. But in the latter English culture, they develop and become the “death” euphemism in order to meet the need of social communication.

- “to buy the farm” - this one may have originated as soldiers’ slang, the idea being that soldiers dreamed of surviving the war and going home to a peaceful existence, perhaps on a farm. However, there was an earlier expression, “fetch the farm,” which was prisoner slang for being “sent to the infirmary.”

- “to kick the bucket” – Ex: *When I kick the bucket, you can have the Harley. So, the old coot finally kicked the bucket!* Popular etymology links this term to the idea of committing suicide by standing on a bucket and then kicking it away. More likely, the expression originates from the practice of hoisting animals to be slaughtered to a beam or pulley arrangement called a “bouquet.” In English this French word came to be pronounced like “bucket.” The animals were hoisted by their heels and could therefore be said to be “kicking the bouquet/bucket” as their throats were slashed.

- “Take sb a ride” (American) - take sb to go somewhere by car to kill.

- “To hop the twig” means to die suddenly.

- “To go west”: be lost or destroyed, die- This phrase was popularized by the First World War, because the Western Front generally ran north/ south, with British troops facing east, a dead or injured soldier who was transferred from the scene of fighting to behind the lines would go west. But the idea is older than that and is based on a common literary comparison between death and the setting of the sun in the West.

(<http://users.tinyonline.co.uk/gswithenbank/saying.htm>).

- “Kiss the dust/ bite the dust/ bite the dust”: To die; to be slain; to fall dead especially in battle; to be killed, come to an end.

He did not talk to them; they had already been told exactly what each of them was to do, and who was to do what in case the first-choice man kicked the bucket or was otherwise out.

(S.Heym “The Crusaders”)

He pardoned us off-hand, and allowed us something to live on till he went the way of all flesh.

(Ch.Dickens. “Sketches by Boz”, “Mr. Watkins Tottle”)

2.5. Summary

The “Death” euphemism in English culture is a most popular language phenomenon. The notion: “who refers to death and misfortune would fall on him”, has great effects on human cultural life. The English “death” euphemism, its rich cultural communication manifests the trait of culture so lively and deeply, and have enriched people’s treasure house of languages with unique expression manner. Therefore, English “death” euphemisms are still worthy of doing further research and exploration. So long as we know the origin, the development, the occasions of English euphemism usage, we can partly avoid communication conflicts and communication breakdown.

Chapter 3: ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE “DEATH” EUPHEMISM IN COMPARISON

1. Some examples about “Death” Euphemism in English and Vietnamese

1.1. “Death” Euphemism and Metaphor

English	Vietnamese
<p>1. “George, I say to my apprentice, shut shop up. My old friend John Baines is going to his long home today”.</p> <p>2. In “Hamlet”, Shakespeare wrote: “<i>To die, to sleep. No more; and by a sleep to say we end the heartache, and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to”.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Luo Jinguo, 1996: 144)</p>	<p>1. Bỏ Dương thụi đố thụi rồi.</p> <p>Nước mõi man mõi ngậm ngùi lũng tụi.</p> <p>(Nguyễn Khuyến, Khúc Dương Khuờ)</p> <p>2. Thuyền tỡnh vừa ghộ tới nơi</p> <p>Thỡ đố trỡm gớy bỡnh rơi bao giờ.</p> <p>(Nguyễn Du, Truyện Kiều)</p>

1.2. “Death” Euphemism and Age

English	Vietnamese
<p>1. “<i>Fallen asleep, not dead but sleeping, asleep in Jesus”.</i></p> <p>(A common child’s epitaph in the 19th century).</p>	<p>1. Cỏc anh nằm bòn nhũng ngó ba.</p> <p>Nơi bom dội khụng cũn ngọn cỏ. (Xuõn Quỳnh)</p> <p>2...Lóo Hạc ơi! Lóo hóy yòn lũng nhắm mắt...</p> <p>(Lóo Hạc- Nam Cao)</p>

1.3. “Death” Euphemism and Relationship

English	Vietnamese
<p>1. “<i>My king has cancelled his account, which is a great loss to us”.</i> (Maovinhquydeng, 2005: 148)</p> <p>2. “<i>I don’t know what I shall do when he comes to go”.</i> (LuJieQuan, 2007: 88)</p>	<p>2. Bõng lũe chóp nhỏ Thụi rồi Luợm ơi!</p> <p>Chỳ ãồng chớ nhỏ Một ãung mủu tũoi. (Luợm- Tổ Hũu)</p>

1.4. “Death” Euphemism and Before death

English	Vietnamese
<p>1. <i>“It is Dopy, Mike,” said one, “park bum for twenty years. On his last leg, I guess.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Trần Bõnh, 2003: 73)</p> <p>2. <i>“I wonder why he can be so cheerful when he knows he has notice to quit”.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Trần Bõnh, 2003: 74)</p>	<p>.....Lóo Hạc đang vật vó tròn giuờng, đầu túc rũ rụi, quần ỏ xộc xệch, hai mắt long sững sọc. Lóo tru trộ, bọt mộp sụi ra, khắp người chốc chốc lại bị giật mạnh một cỏi, nẩy lòn...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Lóo Hạc - Nam Cao)</p>

1.5. “Death” Euphemism and After death, Dead cause

English	Vietnamese
<p>1.<i>he gave up the ghost.</i></p> <p>2. ...<i>He began the world...</i></p> <p>(http://sers.tinyonline.co.uk/gswithenbank/saying.htm).</p>	<p>1...gương mặt nú xỏm nhọt...Bõnh nhẹ vuốt mỏ nú, da thị t nú giở ngắt...Bõnh thấy nú chỉ cũn là cỏi xỏc chết lạnh như đồng...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Bỉ Vỗ- Nguyễn Hồng)</p> <p>2...Và thầy tụi lụn lụn nhõn tụi, đụi mắt vẫn mỗi mệt lờ đờ, thỉ nh thoảng lại cũn cười với tụi, nhưng nụ cười chúng tàn quỏ tròn cặp mụi nhọt nhọt...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Trụỵ lạc- Nguyễn Hồng)</p>

1.6. “Death” Euphemism and Oral expression

English	Vietnamese
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<p>1. <i>The next day, his parents were flown to New Mexico by special Army plane, and they stayed at their son's bedside, until he breathed his last.</i></p> <p>(R.Lapp. "Atoms and People")</p> <p>2. <i>Patrick Henry has already gone to his long home; Samuel Adams was soon to follow.</i></p> <p>(Ch.Beard and M Beard. "The Rise of American Civilization")</p>	<p>1. Vỡ vậ, tụi để sẵn mấy lời này, phững khi tụi sẽ đi gặp cụ Cỏ Mỏ, cụ Lò-nin và cỏ vị cỏch mạng đân anh khỏc, thờ đờng bào cả nước, đờng chó trong Đảng và bầu bạn khắp nơi đều khỏ cảm thấy đột ngột.</p> <p>(HỒ Chớ Minh, Di Chỳc).</p> <p>2. Luợng, con ụng ĐỘ ấy mà...Rừ tội nghiệp, về đến nhà thờ bố mẹ chảng cũn.</p> <p>(HỒ PHƯƠNG, Thư Nhà).</p>
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1.7. "Death" Euphemism and Slang

English	Vietnamese
<p>1. <i>"He did not talk to them; they had already been told exactly what each of them was to do, and who was to do what in case the first-chicer man kicked the bucket or was otherwise out".</i></p> <p>(S.Heym. "The Crusaders")</p> <p>2. <i>"He pardoned us off-hand, and allowed us something to live on till he went the way of all flesh".</i></p> <p>(Ch.Dickens. "Sketches by Boz", "Mr. Watkins Tottle").</p>	<p>1. Cậu Vàng đi đờ rồi ụng Giỏo ạ.</p> <p>(Lóo Hạc- Nam Cao).</p> <p>2. ...giàu cú như ụng phú Thuởng cũng lăn cỏ chết sau con đẩu bụng đi ngoài.</p> <p>(Bỉ vớ- Nguyễn HỒng)</p>

2. The Similarities in using "Death" Euphemism in English and Vietnamese

- In both English and Vietnamese, "Dead" has become a four-letter obscene word, one that is not to be used when talking to people in normal daily polite conversation. In an attempt to find more socially acceptable terms and also to keep death at arm's length by masking its reality, people may use various euphemisms-

mild, indirect or vague terms. The aim of those euphemistic words is to lessen the pain and sorrow of the deceased's family, relatives and friends and to show sympathy to them. Therefore, when dealing with the topics related to death or dying, people go to great lengths to avoid using the words die, or dying, dead, death.

There are equivalences of euphemistic expressions in daily life conversation between English and Vietnamese language:

English	Vietnamese
○ Pass away.	○ Mất.
○ No more.	○ Qua đời.
○ Loss his breath.	○ Khụng cùn nữa.
○ To be gone.	○ Ngừng thở.
○ Close one's eye.	○ Ra đi.
○ Breath one's last.	○ Nhắm mắt.
○ Asleep forever loss.	○ Trýt hơi thở cuối cùng.
○ Go to glory.	○ Yòn nghỉ .
○ Pay one's debt to nature.	○ Châu trời.
○ Lost one's life.	○ Trở về cõi bụi.
○ Close one's eye.	○ Từ trần.
○ Go to one's place.	○ Nhắm mắt xuôi tay.
○ Kiss the dust.	○ Rời bỏ chýng ta.
○ No more.	○ Nằm xuống.
	○ Khụng cùn bờn chýng ta nữa.
	○ Khuất nýi.
	○ Tạ thế.
	○ Ngàn thu tiễn biệt.

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- In English speaking countries, Christianity is the most popular religion. It is believed that when Jesus died on the Cross, he was giving up his life for other people's sins and demonstration the love of God. When Jesus rose again, he proved that it was possible to overcome death and live with God for all eternity. Christians were free from the burden of original sins if they followed Jesus' teachings and examples and believed in him as the Son of God. Therefore, for them, death is regarded as being reunited with the Father God or simply going home. And in Vietnamese, such words are often among Vietnamese Christians:

English	Vietnamese
○ Asleep with Jesus/Christ	○ Về với ch÷a.
○ Fall asleep in the arms of Jesus.	○ ̄ gặp cõc thion thàn.
○ Gone to his heavenly Father.	○ Ngủ trong vũng tay của Ch÷a.
○ In the arm of Father.	○ Lòn thion ðàng.
○ Come to Jesus.	○ Gặp ðấng sống tạo.
○ Departed to God.	○ Sang thế giới bên kia.
○ Met his/her Maker.	○ Rõi bỏ thế giới này.
○ Go home.	○ Nằm trong vũng tay của ch÷a.
○ Called home.	
○ Answer the last home.	
○ Go to one's last home.	

3. The Difference in using "Death" Euphemism in English and Vietnamese

Language is the symbol of culture, while culture is the track of language (Xing Fuyi, 1990), the culture of a nation can be reflected in its language and religion is not out of the case.

3.1. In English

After death, the soul of a dead man will, in some shape or form, go to the land of death, which is sometimes considered a happy place, but sometimes a place of sadness. Often, the land of death seems to be a continuation of this current life but in another type of existence. Thus, people are less apt to die and more apt to pass on or pass away or depart this life. It could be Heaven, a wonderful garden of paradise where he/she will live forever with God and Jesus. Or it could be Hell which is believed to be a real place where people suffer eternal torment and punishment for his/her deeds on earth. In short, the good will goes to Heaven and the wicked one goes to Hell. Both Heaven and Hell are everlasting. Therefore, Christians say, ' *someone has gone to an everlasting or eternal place*', they mean, ' *someone died*'. However, people always wish that the soul of the dead, not regarding what he/she has done on earth will be allowed to go to Heaven (the Kingdom of God).

There are such euphemisms: *Gone to Heaven; join the angels; pass over Jordan; climb the Golden Stair; cross the Great Divide; kneel at the Big gate; knock on Heaven's door; cross on the Stygian; singing with angels; left this world; gone to a better world; pass over to other side;.....*

Some people also refer to the departed as a sleeping person who is enjoying a very long sleep by using such euphemisms as: *Fall asleep with Jesus; a full/big sleep; close one's day; gone to one's rest; laid to rest; be at rest;.....*

People in English-speaking countries also have non-religious euphemisms to deal with the subject of death, such as: *No longer with us; be no more; cease to breathe; cease to live; close one's eyes; left us; lost; breathe one's last;*

3.2. In Vietnamese

In Vietnam, the national religion is Buddhism, which also has great influence on its population as well as on its language. There are view points on death for Buddhists.

Experiencing the death of a loved one, or witnessing the death of others, can be one of the most profound events in one's life. Because death is usually unexpected, it often leaves family members and friends with unfinished business with the deceased. Since filial responsibilities are weighed heavily in the Vietnamese culture, and proper death rituals according to one's abilities are important, death rituals give the bereaved a final chance to make it right by the deceased and thus provide a sense of continuity as well as final closure. Buddha says life is suffering, caused by desires. To end the suffering, one must end desires. From a greater perspective, death causes pain because of one's desires for life. People fear death because they hold onto life. Here, the folly of attachment is brought into the sharpest relief; because one knows the body is sure to die as it was born. Death is all around. People will die. Understood this way, the only sensible course of action seems to be to seek that state where death cannot follow: Nirvana, the state of being awake. To Buddhism, however, death is not the end of life, it is merely the end of the body one inhabit in this life, but the spirit will still remain and seek out through the need a attachment, to a new body and a new life. Hence, the goal is to obtain release, to achieve Nirvana. Thus, Vietnamese people often use such euphemistic expressions: *khụng cũn cảm thấy đau đón nữa, hết đau đón, thoát khỏi bể khổ, được giải thoát, rời bỏ thế giới này, chۆm vào giấc ngủ đựng, giấc ngàn thu, về nơi chốn suối, xuống suối vàng, về nơi cực lạc, về Tۆy phương, về với Phật.*

People may have heard of the story of a woman who came to Buddha in great anguish, carrying her dead child pleading him to bring the child back to life. Buddha said: Bring me a mustard seed from any household where no one had ever died and I will fulfill your wish. The woman's attempt to search for such seed was in vain, she could not find any and suddenly she realized the universality of death. Realizing that death is inevitable for a person who is caught up in worldly pleasures and attitudes, Buddha resolved to renounce the world and devoted himself to finding a solution to this most basic of existential dilemmas. Buddhism asserts that all beings live beyond the various fluctuations of this life. Death is merely a passage to rebirth in another realm such as the human world, a pure land or the flowering of the ultimate nature of the mind.

Beside, Vietnamese people also have the custom of worshipping one's ancestors who have still live in another world. Therefore, death only means: *Về với tổ tiên, về với ụng bà, thăm cỏ cụ*In Vietnamese, there are some other different euphemisms for death and dying, used in different context. For examples, the King's death, Vietnamese say: *băng hà*..... A Buddhist follower's death, they say: *viễn tị ch, thu thần nhập tị ch, về với Đức Phật, về cù niết bàn, lòn đài sen*. In the past, the word '*Khuất nỳ*' was often used. It may refer to the image of the sun setting in the west, behind the mountain. For some tribes, '*Go West*' means died because in their view point, west is something bad, unhappy.

Part three: CONCLUSION

1. The summary

Euphemism is a polite or taboo word. It is used to substitute the direct or unpleasant word which can make unpleasant feeling in our daily communication. It keeps a very important role in our language of life and so the study on euphemism is unavoidable.

Thanks to this study, I have a chance to learn and understand more about euphemism by giving the definitions, classification, characterizes as well as its function remarks on them.

This study has also focused mainly on the euphemistic culture of “death” euphemism in English culture during the process of our communication, provided more detailed analysis from English “death” euphemism, its origin, development, metaphor, age and relationship, before or after death & cause death, oral expression and slang.

The study also discussed the differences and similarities in the way of using “death” euphemism in English and Vietnamese, helps us compare the equivalence, contrast clearly about the differences in using euphemism in English and Vietnamese in daily life conversations.

2. Suggestions for further study

The study gives an analysis of “death” euphemism in English as well as the differences and similarities in using “death” euphemism between the Americans and Vietnamese. Hopefully, in the near future, I could deal with this problem at a higher and deeper level.

However, due to the limitation of time, knowledge and reference resources, mistakes are unavoidable. The recommendations comments and contribution are warmly welcome.

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