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## FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EUPHEMISMS IN BUSINESS DISCOURSE (BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATIONS)

**Abstract:** *In recent years, the business community has acknowledged that negotiations should be built upon mutual respect and collaboration with a focus on interests rather than positions. This has set an updated standard against which successful negotiation criteria should be measured and analysed. This research paper examines the effectiveness of euphemisms in business negotiation discourse within the framework of principled negotiation (developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project). One of the key components of principled negotiation is BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement). With the introduction of BATNA, the culture of conducting negotiations and the perception of trade-offs have immensely altered. It has now become a prevalent practice to concentrate on shared interests rather than positions, separate people from the problem, and constantly work on the process itself. In this research, the following methods have been applied: linguostylistic analysis, pragmalinguistic analysis, discourse analysis, and case study. The results of the analysis have shown that the use of euphemisms substantially fosters the efficiency of advancing core values of principled negotiations while reducing tension. As linguistic tools, they allow parties to avoid unnecessary directness, enhancing a constructive and collaborative atmosphere, even under challenging circumstances.*

**Key words:** *euphemism, discourse, business discourse, business negotiations, principled negotiations, BATNA.*

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## 1. Introduction

People have long recognized the importance of mastering persuasion and communication skills to avoid conflicts; advance political, economic, business interests; and improve their welfare. Possessing such skills empowers negotiating parties, thus facilitating the oftentimes complicated and intricate process of business negotiations. Various contemporary approaches and strategies designed to increase the efficiency of business negotiations have a common ground for executing the intended negotiation goal – business discourse. Today's business community realizes that the skilful implementation of linguistic devices contributes to a conflict-free resolution of issues acceptable to both parties.

The foundations of contemporary business discourse trace back to classical rhetoric developed by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in the 4th century BC. In his fundamental work *Rhetoric*, Aristotle identifies three important components of persuasion: 1) ethos - authority, character of the speaker, 2) pathos - emotion, and 3) logos - arguments and logical reasoning. According to Aristotle, the task of rhetoric is not to persuade but to find relevant and appropriate ways of persuasion for each problem (Aristotle, 2011).

Rhetoric as a subject of study has been, and continues to be, pervasive in modern linguistic analyses. *Rhetoric and Politics – The Power of Words in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar* emphasizes the central role rhetoric has played in literature from ancient Greece and Rome to the Renaissance and highlights the fact that persuasive language is not only a literary device, but also an influential political tool that can have an immense impact on the processes and overall outcomes of various situations (Dumitrašković, 2023). Lopatiuk and Yakimchuk (2024) examine how speakers build logical arguments (logos), appeal to emotions (pathos), and establish trustworthiness (ethos) to maximize their impact and engage the audience. As these examples illustrate, fundamental rhetorical tools continue to be used to examine both modern and ancient literature.

In addition to applying rhetorical tools, skilfully structuring discourse is one important method for effective persuasion. Business discourse used in the negotiation process is a multi-layered speech tactic determined by linguistic and extralinguistic factors, the unique structure of which allows for flexibility during a negotiation, avoiding abrupt and drastic solutions. Discourse is a complex phenomenon - the application, perception and analysis of which imply a complicated study of linguistic, social, cultural, economic, historical and other factors. Russian linguist Karasik (2002) differentiates between person-oriented and status-oriented types

of institutional discourse. Institutional discourse encompasses business, political, diplomatic, administrative, legal, religious and other types of discourse. Karasik claims that institutional discourse is a reflection of the ethnic value system of a society, which is based on the values of the different groups forming the given society. The socio-cognitive paradigm of discourse was developed by a contemporary Dutch linguist, the founder of Critical Discourse T. A. van Dijk, who emphasizes the paramount importance of analysing actual language use from the perspective of its cognitive and social characteristics rather than confining it to grammatical analysis of isolated sentences (van Dijk, 2011). This means that the thorough examination of negotiation discourse, which is a type of institutional discourse, with its linguistic and extralinguistic specificities (cultural, social, cognitive, and so forth) is in the realm of pragmatics, which encompasses both contextual and co-textual features for the examination of the given discourse. A pragmatic analysis of discourse creates a situation-oriented platform for the parties involved in the communication process through constant collaboration, which provides an opportunity to raise and discuss mutually acceptable opinions and views and to create premises for further cooperation. This type of multifaceted approach is viable during negotiations since the concept of negotiation itself allows the parties to employ versatile linguistic tools alongside pre-planned negotiation methods and strategies to reach a mutually acceptable agreement.

The inferred function of any negotiation is to persuade the other party to accept one's terms and reach an amicable resolution. Rhetoric, which in Aristotle's conception is grounded in persuasion, could be regarded as one of the indispensable tools for achieving negotiation objectives. Within this framework, the stylistic aspect of any language accounts for a huge part of the negotiating aspect of business discourse.

The focus of this research paper is the examination of the central role euphemisms play during principled negotiations because they're used to reduce tension between parties and advance their interests politely and respectfully (a core strategy in principled negotiations).

## **2. Previous Studies on Euphemisms Employed in Various Types of Institutional Discourse**

Various studies examining euphemisms emphasize their importance, especially in political and social contexts, highlighting their strategic ambiguity to show politeness and, as a result, save face when touching upon controversial and disputable issues.

A study conducted by Crespo-Fernández (2014) examines the softening effect of euphemisms as applied by politicians to address those impacted by an economic crisis, for example. Terms like *vulnerable*, *in financial difficulty*, or *people in debt* help politicians minimize the severity of people living in extreme poverty. Euphemisms are used to hide unpleasant truths, while also providing a *safe ground* for the speaker's offensive intention.

In another study using a critical discourse analysis of political language, Crespo-Fernández (2018) investigates the role of euphemism in the discourse of US politicians based on language data taken from The Star-Ledger, New Jersey's largest newspaper. Euphemism, both metaphorical and non-metaphorical, is a key tactic used by politicians to protect themselves and present a positive image of themselves. It enables them to (primarily through understatement, periphrasis, and metaphor): (1) refer to socially disadvantaged groups or delicate subjects without sounding insensitive; (2) criticize their political opponents in a way that is acceptable to society; and (3) intentionally hide from the public uncomfortable or controversial issues.

Euphemisms also help enforce distance in communication within the framework of politics. As Karnyushina and Makhina (2017) demonstrate based on discourse and statistical data analysis of political language, lexical and grammatical constructions help to minimize pressure, avoid embarrassment and thus save face while discussing disputable issues.

From a pragmatic point of view, the humorous effect of euphemisms is also noted. Hamilton and Foltzer (2019) consider an underhanded euphemism double-speak in one context, pointing out that the latter might be humorous and hence a ludic euphemism in another. Studying the form and function of euphemisms reveals an interesting platform where syntax and semantics merge creating new meanings of ideas and messages that might also produce the pragmatic effect of humor (Hamilton, Foltzer, 2019).

In some cases, euphemisms come in handy as hedging strategies (such as detachment, complimenting, justification, showing initiative, vagueness, etc.) which help people maintain politeness (save face), mitigate the illocutionary force, reduce the risk of conflict, and, at the same time, get the desired effect (Harutyunyan, Baghranyan, 2022:p.180).

Academic research on the linguistic peculiarities of principled negotiation discourse is almost non-existent and the main thrust of these research papers is the pragmatic, rather than the linguistic, aspect of negotiation discourse.

Most existing research examines a broader negotiation framework incorporating various types of negotiations, including principled negotiation. For example, Zhao

and Nie (2014) examined the vague language in business negotiations generally, without mentioning the method of principled negotiation and its discourse specificities. Zhang and Constantinovits (2018) developed a questionnaire of principled negotiation to provide negotiators and researchers with a scientific measuring tool.

Among research papers, partially pertaining to this topic is Geche's (2007) work where the problems of mutual understanding during Russian-Hungarian negotiations are examined from a linguistic, psychological, and ethnocultural point of view. In another work, Dmitrievna (2021) considers the effect of the structure of persuasive speech as an algorithm of conjugation of logos, ethos and pathos within the framework of English business communication.

### **3. Methods**

To analyse business negotiation discourse, particularly with regard to principled negotiation, the following methods have been applied: linguostylistic analysis, pragmalinguistic analysis, discourse analysis, and case study. Lingostylistic analysis was used to identify euphemisms in the discourse of business negotiations and the psychological and emotional impact they have on participants. Pragmalinguistic analysis was used to understand the meaning of euphemisms in context, specifically how they are applied to mitigate the directness of the delivered message. Discourse analysis was used to combine linguistic and extralinguistic factors from transcripts of movie excerpts to gain an overall background of the negotiation process. Nine business negotiation episodes have been excerpted and studied from the following movies: *Argo* (Affleck, 2012), *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972), *Erin Brockovich* (DeVito et al., 2000), *The Social Network* (Fincher, 2010), *The Founder* (Hancock, 2016), *Startup* (Ketai and Prieto, 2016), and *Moneyball* (Miller, 2011). It should be noted that the analysis was conducted on pre-prepared discourse which provides more clarity, depth and is more suitable for academic purposes, whereas spontaneous discourse is more general and usually targets the emotional aspect of negotiation framework. Finally, case studies were used to conduct an in-depth analysis of how different strategies for using euphemisms can contribute to various solutions and outcomes of the negotiated problem.

### **4. Euphemisms in Principled Negotiations**

The term euphemism originates from the Greek word *euphemia* (eu – good or well, phemi - speech) and is intended to soften direct, rude expressions. The Oxford

Dictionary defines a euphemism as: 'An indirect word or expression used instead of a more direct one when talking about something unpleasant or embarrassing' (Oxford Student's Dictionary, 2010:p.251). According to Aghayan, 'A euphemism replaces 'impolite' or 'inappropriate' words with the new ones' (Aghayan, 1987:397). Periodically displaying neutrality in negotiation processes allows the parties to devise a coherent and stable strategy, which de-escalates conflict situations. However, the focus should be on the linguistic means through which the sides may promote their interests politely and constructively. Hence, the implemented discourse should be deliberate, that is to say, pre-planned as much as it is possible to predict the flow of negotiation. 'Euphemisms are synonyms which aim at producing a deliberately mild effect' (Galperin, 1977:p.56). Cameron views a euphemism as 'a term intentionally used to avoid or soften the negative associations related to taboo topics' (1995:p.73). 'Deliberate, indirect, or socially convenient means for addressing forbidden, uncomfortable, or unpleasant topics' (Hughes, 2006:p.151).

The implied, deliberate and polite nature of euphemisms used in business negotiations is regarded as a part of institutional discourse that allows for the selection of stylistic means and sublanguage relevant to the pre-planned negotiation strategy.

The principled negotiation method was developed in 1979 by Harvard Law Professor Roger Fisher and anthropologist William Ury within the framework of *Harvard Negotiation Project*. The foundational principles of the method were published in their seminal book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (1981). The method is based on the principle *hard on the merits, soft on the people* and is structured around the following four principles:

1. People: Separate the people from the problem.
2. Interests: Focus on interests, not positions.
3. Options: Generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do.
4. Criteria: Insist that the result be based on objective criteria (Fisher et al., 2011:p.11)

A linguostylistic examination of euphemisms means looking at how they are employed in business negotiations, specifically where the principled negotiation method is used.

Aligning the components of rhetoric (ethos, pathos, logos) with the principles of principled negotiations, we will have the following picture.

People – ethos

Interests – pathos

Options - logos

Criteria – logos

It is worth noting that such a coupling is not stable and, depending on the course of the negotiation, the components could change places as well as cooperate. For example, separating people from a problem (ethos/interests) with appropriate linguistic skills (pathos/people) could significantly increase the value of less valid arguments (logos/options, standards) offered by one of the negotiating parties.

Recently, in one of his interviews, Ury made an observation regarding the nature of conflict resolution - the ultimate goal of negotiators should not be the elimination of the conflict itself, but the gradual cultivation of the peace process (Ury, 2024). Researching and analysing the essence of conflict resolution from this perspective breaks a completely new frontier by underscoring the indispensability of the process itself. Negotiating parties should have the mental image or model of the conflict resolution strategy offered by Ury and materialize the negotiation discourse that stems from this mental model. In this context, the usage of euphemisms is central to the execution of the principled negotiation strategy.

The next key component of the principled negotiation method is BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement). The main thrust of BATNA is to prime yourself for the presumptively 'worst,' yet still acceptable, alternative to a negotiated agreement. If negotiating parties have developed their BATNA in advance, they have a mental model of an alternative, which means they have developed and chosen such linguistic means to reproduce the given mental model, which would contribute to the employment of persuasive and yet non-binding discourse. Thus, the parties, applying the principled negotiation strategy, reduce or exclude the occurrence of spontaneous situations (Fisher et al., 2011).

The effectiveness of the use of the method of principled negotiation is conditioned by the unity of multi-layered and diverse components involved in the negotiation process and their examination. According to the findings of our research, linguistic means are the most important links that connect the elements of the complex negotiation process. If the communication format implies the choice of a certain type of language (e.g. formal language), then the types of linguistic means guarantee the maximum possible realization of the goals set during the pre-negotiation stage.

#### **4.1 Linguostylistic and Pragmalinguistic Analysis of Business Discourse Based on Various Negotiation Cases**

Below are several excerpts from movies where negotiating parties are employing principled negotiation. To illustrate the interplay between euphemism and prin-

cipled negotiation the methods of linguostylistic, pragmalinguistic, discourse and case study analysis are applied.

The first negotiation example is from the movie *The Social Network* where Mark Zuckerberg negotiates with his lawyer who is trying to persuade Mark that paying is the best option. To achieve her goal, Marylin employs the following euphemisms.

1. Marylin Delpy: ‘...pay them. In the scheme of things, it’s a speeding ticket.’ (Fincher, 2010)

‘Pay them’ is an imperative and is immediately followed by euphemisms to soften the tone and start an interest-based negotiation. The lawyer uses two euphemisms in one sentence to pave the way for a principled negotiation. The first euphemism *in the scheme of things* is an indirect indication of several existing negative factors. The use of this euphemism neutralizes the importance of the current issue in comparison with the huge problems implied by the same euphemism. The second *it’s a speeding ticket* which, in turn, mitigates the negative impact of the trade-off emphasizing the triviality of the problem. The selection of these euphemisms allows the lawyer to successfully promote the third and fourth principles of principled negotiation: focus on interests and base your decisions on objective criteria.

BATNA: For Mark paying the other party is his BATNA. Initially, he fights to advance his interest, which does not align with the other party’s interest, and may lead to a win-lose outcome. Since he knows his BATNA, the lawyer’s suggestion has come as no surprise and eventually he agrees.

The second example is from the movie *Argo*. The negotiation takes place between Tom Mendez (CIA agent), Lester Siegel (who works in film production), and Max. Tom and Lester offer to sell their film script to Max. He declines because he has a more profitable offer from MGM. Lester, being aware of that offer, explains the situation by employing a principled negotiation strategy materialized through a euphemism.

2. Lester Siegel: ‘The movie is kaput, which means that MGM deal ain’t gonna happen...’ (Affleck, 2012)

Lester uses the adjective *kaput*, which is derived from the German word *kaputt* meaning out of order. Instead of using words such as *failed* or *ruined*, which could create the impression for Max that he was deceived, Lester opts for a softened alternative thereby downplaying the seriousness of the situation and neutralizing the negative impact. Lester tries to separate Max from the problem by being hard on the problem and soft on Max, which is a core value of principled negotiation. Additionally, however painful the trade-off may be, it is still about shared interests



and objective criteria. The only option that is left is Lester's offer. And it is definitely better than nothing.

BATNA: The suggested deal is indeed a BATNA for Max. Nonetheless, he definitely has not primed himself for such a standard to be measured against, since he didn't know about MGM's project being 'kaput'. It is shocking news for him. However, the flexibility of principled negotiations allows him to weigh the pros and cons and agree to the best alternative under the given conditions.

The third example is from the movie *The Godfather*. It is the meeting of the heads of the five Families and the Corleone Family. Their ultimate goal is to make peace and allocate spheres of influence among the Families. One of the Family heads, Zaluchi, uses euphemisms when referring to black people and narcotics in his discourse.

3. Zaluchi: 'I also don't believe in drugs... In my city, we would keep the traffic in dark people, the colored... so let them lose their souls.' (Coppola, 1972)

Zaluchi's negotiation tactic is based on the principle of shared interests. There are no signs of positional bargaining. Secondly, he corroborates his offer by using objective criteria accepted by all parties involved. Surprisingly, even representatives of the criminal world attempt to employ euphemisms like 'keep the traffic' and 'the colored' to soften the discussion of delicate, morally questionable issues. As one of the regulators of peace-making operations, Zaluchi is concentrated on the process of negotiation, rather than on the outcome. He realizes that a shrewdly employed negotiation strategy may contribute to the formation of the desired mental model to reach a mutually acceptable outcome. Through the euphemisms (keep the traffic, dark people, the colored, so let them lose their souls) he neutralizes the offensive associations that these words would have had if they had not been replaced. This stylistic device secures the polite and civilized aspect of the negotiation process, even in such a criminal setting.

BATNA: Zaluchi initially presents the other parties' BATNA. He knows that, for example, Vito Corleone would refuse the direct offer of controlling drug circulation. As a seasoned negotiator, he plays out the best alternative from the outset and takes advantage by implementing all four principles of principled negotiation.

Another example from the same movie demonstrates a tough positional negotiation accompanied by sheer manipulation, but even in such cases, the negotiator opts to employ a euphemism. However soft or neutral it may sound, such an approach does not leave space for applying BATNA, which, in its turn, violates the principles of principled negotiation and leads to personal conflicts.

4. Vito Corleone: 'I'm gonna make him an offer, he can't refuse.' (Coppola, 1972)

The whole sentence is a vivid illustration of euphemism, since, if we consider the extralinguistic factors around the text, it is obvious this is a real threat. The apparent contrast between the two parts of the sentence conveys the inferred message politely and indirectly. The use of the word 'offer' sets a positive tone by concealing the real threat behind it. However, the second part of the utterance balances the situation through the modal verb 'can't', which indicates not only mental but also physical inability. Even having an explicit negotiating advantage, Vito Corleone is determined to save face and remain polite with the help of a skilfully structured discourse.

The fifth example is from the movie *Startup*. Izzy, the founder of *Gencoin* is pitching its product to representatives of *Valecia*. In the course of the negotiation, one of the *Valecia* representatives is trying to politely decline the offer by employing a euphemism.

5. Representative: 'That sounds very interesting, but I have just one concern, all this Bitcoin cryptocurrency stuff. Its ultimate success looks pretty, um... Well, it just looks pretty grim for the banking community.' (Ketai, 2016)

It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the speech, the negotiator uses the strategy of praise (that sounds very interesting), which can also be considered as a euphemism since the goal is to mitigate the negative impact of the refusal. Next, he applies another euphemism *concern*, again aiming to neutralize a negative atmosphere. The combination of a praising strategy with an appropriate linguistic unit contributes to distancing the representative from the problem. This approach minimizes the risk of personal conflicts or resentments. Then he proceeds to the stage of hedging (pretty) again with a clear objective to mitigate the impending rejection.

Hedges contribute to the creation of vagueness and fuzziness of meanings of words in discourse. As a result, the message of these lexical units can be conjectured drawing on pragmatic features of the general conversational situation rather than only on semantic meanings of the words (hedges) in the context. 'Failure to hedge appropriately may result not only in misunderstanding, communication breakdown, but may also be perceived as impolite, even offensive phenomenon' (Harutyunyan, Baghranyan, 2022:p.170). After a slight pause, the representative uses the euphemism *grim* to soften the criticism of the proposal, which is immediately followed by the *banking community* to depersonalize himself from the issue. The use of *the banking community* is an indirect reference to shareholders, which also could be interpreted as a euphemism. In this collocation, the word community neutralizes

undesirable associations related to the word *bank*. This short negotiation discourse displays how the meticulous selection of linguistic devices alongside shrewd strategy may implement the core value of principled negotiation - hard on the problem, soft on the people.

BATNA: The representative of the company probably has a BATNA which he will apply as soon as the opportunity arises. This is evidenced by the fact that he refers to the banking community, thus leaving room for BATNA speculation. The moment Izzy provides valid arguments corroborated by facts or, at least, a compelling perspective, he would diplomatically redirect its business discourse toward the mutually acceptable outcome. That is to say, he would apply his BATNA instead of refusing the deal/offer.

Below is another example of a euphemism from the movie *Erin Brockovich*. The negotiation is between Erin Brockovich and Mr. Masry, director of a law firm, (representing the interests of the residents of Hinckley) on the one hand, and Mr. Foyle, an attorney for the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), on the other hand. PG&E contaminated water in a local community, which resulted in devastating illnesses among the residents. The company is ready to compensate.

6. Mr. Foil: 'In the interest of putting this whole thing to rest PG&E is willing to offer the Jensen's two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for their home.' (DeVito et al., 2000)

From the outset, the lawyer uses a euphemism expressed by an idiom (putting this whole thing to rest). This is a deliberately chosen negotiation strategy to avoid unpleasant issues regarding the illnesses of the residents. The use of euphemisms is a recurring point throughout the negotiation process.

BATNA: It is obvious that Mr. Foil does not have a developed BATNA, since he starts the negotiation by offering the only acceptable option for his client, without considering the other party's reaction. He could suggest less and then come to an agreement through negotiations, which would create the impression that a mutual compromise is taking place. It has become apparent that, despite the use of euphemisms, the failure to have BATNA is almost equal to positional bargaining, which leads to either a deadlock or a win-lose outcome.

Here is another example from the same movie.

7. Mr. Foil: 'I understand they've had a bad run of luck health-wise and they have my sympathies but that's not PG&E's fault.' (DeVito et al., 2000)

In this example, Mr. Foil employs several euphemisms: *a bad run of luck health-wise, fault*. His ultimate goal is to neutralize the negative aspects of the negotiation and create

a constructive, collaborative atmosphere for advancing the interests of the company. Instead of enumerating all the illnesses caused by contamination, he uses *a bad run of luck health-wise*, or *fault* as an alternative to negligence, malpractice which could be, at least, labeled as tort. The constant employment of euphemisms is designed to separate the problem from the company, demonstrate an interest-based negotiation strategy based on objective criteria and reach a conflict-free resolution acceptable to both parties.

BATNA: The frank confession made by Mr. Foil regarding the health issues allows the other party to detect some weaknesses in the defense and negotiate terms unless they reach Mr. Foil's BATNA, that is to say, the lowest acceptable option.

Another example from the movie *The Founder* illustrates how the absence of BATNA may negatively impact the outcome of a negotiation. Ray Kroc and his lawyer are negotiating with the McDonald brothers about the terms of the contract for acquiring their company. During negotiations, Ray Kroc uses a euphemism to create a friendly atmosphere and predispose the brothers towards a handshake deal.

8. Ray Kroc: 'Look fellas, you get your full royalties. All right? You've got my word on that.' (Hancock, 2016)

The word *fella* is informal and generally not employed in business negotiations, the format of which requires a more sober tone using appropriate formal vocabulary. However, the use of *fellas* instead of *Mr.*, or *dear*, *respected* serves the negotiator's purpose: to soften the tone and persuade him to accept his terms. The continuation *you get your full royalties* is based on objective criteria and displays the advancement of mutual interests. The other party agrees on that point of the deal. Before coming to negotiate, they did not prepare themselves properly for that complicated process and didn't have a BATNA in mind.

The next example is from the movie *Moneyball*. The negotiation takes place between the general manager of the *Oakland Athletics* baseball team and Grady Fusion, the head of the scouting department.

9. Grady: 'Billy, that's a very touching story and everything, but I think we're all very much aware of what we're facing here. You have a lot of experience and wisdom in this room, now you need to have a little bit of faith and let us do the job of replacing Giambi.' (Miller, 2011)

The polite and tactful attitude demonstrated by Grady is in full compliance with the merits of principled negotiation. Maintaining an objective approach based on shared interests is enhanced by a shrewd execution of the following euphemism: *that's a very touching story and everything*. Instead of saying that Billy's story is not relevant, he somewhat praises the narrative. The praising strategy expressed

by a euphemism is a prevalent technique employed in principled negotiations to neutralize the negative impact of bare facts. Another euphemism is *Let us do the job of replacing*. Instead of saying *stand aside and do not interfere*, Grady uses the euphemism to reduce tension and persuade Billy to step back politely.

BATNA: Since Billy already knows his BATNA, it is not difficult for him to make a concession, which does not leave him with a sense of resentment. The focus is on the process which, if structured smartly, would result in the desired outcome.

## 5. Conclusion

The effectiveness of principled negotiation is vastly enhanced by linguistic techniques framing the negotiation discourse through persuasive speech. By comparing the merits of principled negotiation and the practical application of euphemisms, it seems clear that the main function of these two components shaping negotiation discourse (negotiation method + linguistic device) is the creation of a favourable cooperative business setting to secure a win-win outcome. The use of euphemisms in conjunction with BATNA significantly enhances the efficiency of advancing core values of principled negotiations while reducing tension. According to this analysis, euphemisms strengthen the application of the second and fourth values of principled negotiations. As linguistic tools, they allow parties to avoid unnecessary directness, fostering a constructive and collaborative atmosphere, even under challenging circumstances. Moreover, the enrichment of the negotiation toolkit with BATNA could be a vital strategy and defensive weapon in the process of improvement of business negotiation skills.

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## **ФУНКЦИОНАЛНЕ КАРАКТЕРИСТИКЕ ЕУФЕМИЗАМА У ПОСЛОВНОМ ДИСКУРСУ (НА ПРИМЕРУ ПРИНЦИПІЈЕЛНИХ ПРЕГОВОРА)**

### *Резиме*

Током последњих година, пословна заједница препознала је потребу за драстичним променама у начинима вођења преговора. Ово истраживање испитује ефикасност употребе еуфемизама у пословном преговарачком дискурсу у оквиру предности методе принципијелних преговора. Метода принципијелних преговора, развијена у оквиру *Харвардског преговарачког пројекта*, показала се као изводљив модел преговарања који задовољава захтеве савремене пословне заједнице. Једна од кључних компоненти методе принципијелних преговора јесте BATNA (Најбоља алтернатива договореном споразуму). Увођењем концепта BATNA, култура вођења преговора и перцепција компромиса значајно су се променили. Сада је постала уобичајена пракса да се фокус стави на заједничке интересе уместо на позиције,

да се људи одвоје од проблема и да се константно ради на самом процесу. Очигледно је да је у домену лингвистике преношење информација на учтив и дипломатски начин, при чему еуфемизми служе као средства за ублажавање, доприносећи формирању конструктивног и бесконфликтног дискурса током преговарачког процеса. Да би се горе наведено демонстрирало, примењене су методе студије случаја, прагмалингвистичке, лингвостилистичке и дискурсне анализе. Истраживачки материјали су одломци из пословних преговарачких дискурса коришћених у различитим филмовима. Резултати истраживања показали су да се употреба еуфемизма током реализације предности принципијелних преговора сматра паметним маневром и неопходном лингвистичком стратегијом за унапређење преговарачког процеса заснованог на интересима, без конфликта. Упоређивањем предности принципијелних преговора и карактеристика практичне примене еуфемизма постаје очигледно да је главна функција ових двају компоненти које обликују преговарачки дискурс (метода преговарања + лингвистички алат) стварање повољног кооперативног пословног окружења за обезбеђивање обострано корисног исхода. Употреба еуфемизма у комбинацији са BATNA значајно повећава ефикасност унапређења основних вредности принципијелних преговора уз смањење тензија. Према анализама, еуфемизми јачају примену друге и четврте вредности принципијелних преговора. Као лингвистички алати, они омогућавају странама да избегну непотребну директност, подстичући конструктивну и сарадничку атмосферу, чак и у изазовним околностима. Штавише, обогаћивање преговарачког алата са BATNA може бити витална стратегија и одбрамбено оружје у процесу унапређења вештина пословног преговарања. Метода принципијелних преговора у комбинацији са одговарајућим стилским средствима, посебно еуфемизмима, показала се као изводљив модел преговарања који задовољава захтеве савремене пословне заједнице. Налази истраживања, поткрепљени анализама, могу се користити од стране лингвиста (еуфемизми као стилско средство), као и од стране пословне заједнице која тежи побољшању својих преговарачких вештина.

► **Кључне речи:** еуфемизам, дискурс, пословни дискурс, пословни преговори, принципијелни преговори, BATNA.

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