

Dysphemism vs Euphemism in a South African Soap Opera: The Case of the Queen

Authors : Maropeng Maponya, Mawethu Nhlabathi

Abstract : Euphemistic expressions, as part of showing respect and ubuntu, are naturally embedded in the African Languages. These expressions are solely used to soothe the impact which dysphemistic words may have on an individual or the society at large. Conversely, the script producers of one of the well-known soap operas in South Africa, The Queen-Mzansi, seem to have turned a blind eye on that, mostly when they use dysphemistic reference to human genitals. As a result, such practice tends to deteriorate the ethicality of the African languages and the beliefs held by African society in general. They also give less meaning to the promotion of African language concepts. This paper is aimed at explaining and analyzing the impact of dysphemism on language growth, basing the argument on the fact that subtitled texts in the soap opera never reflect the actual dysphemistic sourced text uttered by the character/s. This is a clear indication that the production crew of this soap opera is aware of the impact that these utterances may have on society, yet they do not mind the characters saying them as is in African Languages whilst euphemizing them through English subtitles. The paper adopted a descriptive qualitative method with an embedded case study in it, whereby dysphemistic clips from three characters of the soap opera were selected and analyzed.

Keywords : euphemism, dysphemism, soap opera, The Queen

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