

A LEXICAL-STYLISTIC

AND CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF VULGARISMS AND THEIR USAGE SPHERES

UN ANÁLISIS LÉXICO-ESTILÍSTICO E INTERCULTURAL DE LOS VULGARISMOS Y SUS ÁMBITOS DE USO

Babayev Javid Sabir ^{1*}

E-mail: cavidbabayev@ndu.edu.az

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-2472-0006>

Sadikhova Sayyara Namig ¹

E-mail: seyyaresadixova@ndu.edu.az

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4777-7303>

Baghirova Mulayim Abbas ²

E-mail: bagirova_mulayim@adu.edu.az

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2224-5611>

Seidova Emma Rafael ³

E-mail: seidova.emma@oyu.edu.edu.az

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3470-968X>

Mammadova Aynur Akif ⁴

E-mail: aynur.mammadova@adpu.edu.az

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4049-858X>

¹Nakhchivan State University, Azerbaijan.

²Azerbaijan University of Languages.

³Odlar Yurdu University, Azerbaijan.

⁴Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University.

*Corresponding author

Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Babayev, J. S., Sadikhova, S. N., Baghirova, M. A., Seidova, E. R., & Mammadova, A. A. (2025). A lexical-stylistic and cross-cultural analysis of vulgarisms and their usage spheres. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 17(6). e5525.

ABSTRACT

Vulgarisms exhibit expressive potency that distinguishes them from other lexical classes, yet their lexical-stylistic properties and sociocultural distribution remain incompletely theorized. This study investigates the lexical-stylistic mechanisms and usage patterns of vulgarisms using a mixed-methods approach that combines surveys and controlled experiments with student participants, qualitative and quantitative analysis of user-generated social media content, and stylistic examination of media artifacts (songs, films, and public discourse). Comparative analyses by gender and age reveal statistically robust tendencies: male speakers produce vulgarisms at higher rates than female speakers, and prevalence peaks within the 10–20-year age cohort. Usage is concentrated in public speech and popular media, where authors and speakers exploit a repertoire of rhetorical strategies—periphrasis, euphemism and dysphemism, metaphor (including personification), antanaclasis, metalepsis, and synecdoche—to adjust intensity and social acceptability. Crucially, cross-cultural and diachronic evidence demonstrates that the designation of an expression as a “vulgarism” is relative, contingent on locale, temporal norms, religious frameworks, and cultural practices; furthermore, vulgarity manifests not only in colloquial speech but also within religious cults and artistic production. We argue that vulgarisms can be use both as pragmatic instruments for identity negotiation and as aesthetic resources in creative contexts. In the paper it is also identified limitations in extant work—most notably the scarcity of large-scale, longitudinal corpora and causal experimental designs—and advocates for integrated sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic approaches, larger cross-cultural datasets, and targeted experiments to elucidate the mechanisms governing production and perception of vulgar language, with implications for media studies, content policy, and theories of linguistic taboo.

Keywords: Vulgarisms; Swear words; Taboos; Euphemism; Sociolinguistics; Media.

RESUMEN

Los vulgarismos exhiben una potencia expresiva que los distingue de otras clases léxicas. Sin embargo, sus propiedades léxico-estilísticas y su distribución sociocultural aún no se han teorizado completamente. Este estudio investiga los mecanismos léxico-estilísticos y los patrones de uso de los vulgarismos mediante un enfoque de métodos mixtos que combina encuestas y experimentos controlados con estudiantes participantes, análisis cualitativos y cuantitativos del contenido generado por los usuarios en redes sociales y un examen estilístico de artefactos mediáticos (canciones, películas y discurso público). Los análisis comparativos por género y edad revelan tendencias estadísticamente robustas: los hablantes masculinos producen vulgarismos con mayor frecuencia que los hablantes femeninos, y la prevalencia alcanza su punto máximo en el grupo de edad de 10 a 20 años. El uso se concentra en el discurso público y los medios de comunicación populares, donde autores y hablantes explotan un repertorio de estrategias retóricas —perífrasis, eufemismos y disfemismos, metáforas (incluida la personificación), antanacsis, metalepsis y sinécdoque— para ajustar la intensidad y la aceptabilidad social. Fundamentalmente, la evidencia transcultural y diacrónica demuestra que la designación de una expresión como “vulgarismo” es relativa y depende del contexto local, las normas temporales, los marcos religiosos y las prácticas culturales. Además, la vulgaridad se manifiesta no solo en el habla coloquial, sino también en los cultos religiosos y la producción artística. Argumentamos que los vulgarismos funcionan como instrumentos pragmáticos para la negociación de la identidad y como recursos estéticos en contextos creativos. En el artículo también se identifican limitaciones en los trabajos existentes —en particular, la escasez de corpus longitudinales a gran escala y diseños experimentales causales— y se aboga por enfoques sociolingüísticos y psicolingüísticos integrados, conjuntos de datos transculturales más amplios y experimentos específicos para dilucidar los mecanismos que rigen la producción y la percepción del lenguaje vulgar, con implicaciones para los estudios de medios, las políticas de contenido y las teorías del tabú lingüístico.

Palabras clave:

Vulgarismos; Palabrotas; Tabúes; Eufemismos; Sociolingüística; Medios de comunicación.

INTRODUCTION

Vulgarism is a word or phrase used in non-standard colloquial speech that is considered to be unrefined, offensive, obscene, or harsh. The Oxford Dictionary treats vulgarism as a word or expression that is considered inelegant,

especially one that makes explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions. This includes swear words, profanity, slang, and terms related to taboos (e.g., sex, bodily functions). Vulgarisms are typically characterized by a lower stylistic register. However, their usage may vary within different contexts, shifting between being purely offensive or being used humorously, ironically, or to express strong emotion. Thus, vulgarisms can serve various functions in speech acts, such as:

1. Expressing emotion: frustration, anger, surprise, etc.
2. Reinforcing identity: Particularly in in-group settings, they can signify solidarity or rebellion.
3. Insulting or degrading: used in a derogatory manner to attack someone

The synonyms of vulgarity or vulgarism are regarded as ‘obscenity’ or ‘profanity,’ though ‘vulgarity’ is used in a more restricted meaning. Since vulgarisms have been analyzed and studied from lexical-stylistic and cross-cultural points of view only superficially, there is a pressing need to conduct research on this topic. At the intercultural level, various cultural communities view the boundaries of vulgarity from different angles. Some nations see and use vulgar words as commonplace in their speech and do not feel shame while using them, as in the Philippines. Even the speech of the president of the Philippines is rich in vulgar words and taboos. President Rodrigo Roa Duterte used profanity in his speech during the presidential elections on May 9, 2016 (Berowa, 2019). He was even called the “trash-talking president” for his excessive swearing in Bisaya, Tagalog, and English languages (McCargo, 2016). Despite his bad language, President Duterte received full support from the Filipino people (Casiple, 2016). However, some nations are very careful in their usage of profanity in speech.

Vulgarisms are mainly confused with dysphemism, whose function is to humiliate somebody. Cheporukhina (2019) scrutinized the terms “dysphemism,” “slang,” “vulgarism,” and “invective.” He noted: “Slang and vulgarism can have dysphemistic meaning, while invective is a type of dysphemism with the main idea of expressing aggression.” Vulgarism is a word or expression that is considered inelegant, especially one that makes explicit and offensive reference to sex or bodily functions. However, some secretions may express dysphemism, such as spitting or vomiting, as the mouth is not a genital organ. The mouth and tongue are regarded as digestive body parts, though they can also be used in sexual discourse. Hence, vulgarisms express or reflect meanings that are related to sexual discourse and contain words (mainly genitals and physical-sexual relations) belonging to intimate relationships or persons performing these actions in a harsh way,

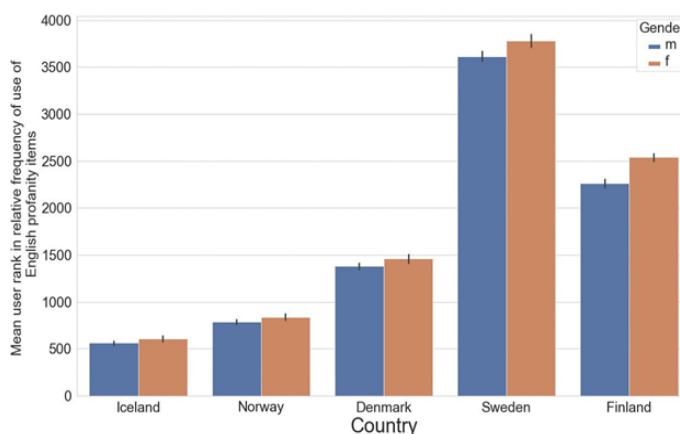
while dysphemism do not possess such content (Babayev, 2022, p. 11). It should be emphasized that not all coarse words express vulgarity, but all vulgar words express harsh or coarse content. We can confidently claim that although dysphemism also serves to humiliate somebody or something, they do not contain vulgarity. They are just considered to be harsh in meaning. This means that both dysphemism and vulgarisms are coarse.

Taiwo et al. (2021) defined vulgarisms as the linguistic expressions of impoliteness. They underline: "Common linguistic expressions of impoliteness were name-calling, vulgarism, cursing, dismissal and sarcasm." Swear words or curses may contain harsh words, but not all of them contain vulgarisms. Although most swear words are expressed with harsh words, some of them do not contain coarseness like dysphemism, since the aim in the usage of swear words, like dysphemism, is the humiliation of a person. In turn, not all vulgarisms can function as swear words. To receive this status, those vulgar words should have a dominant role in speech. The euphemized synonym of a vulgar word is not usually used in swearing or curses.

It is impossible not to hear or use vulgar words in films, which is also considered "impolite" while translating them from the source language into the target language. One can express their feelings and emotions more sharply with vulgarisms. Vulgarisms are usually avoided while translating a film from one language into another. The vulgar words are often euphemized in translation. Since the films are watched by viewers of all age groups, it would be improper for children and teenagers to hear vulgar words while watching such films, as it might have a negative impact on their behavior in society. Actually, the expressivity should be preserved while translating from the source into the target language or conversely. The usage of vulgarisms differs and changes from nation to nation and from culture to culture as well. Profanity use also differs by gender and social class. Bad language, though considered offensive since the XVI century, became much more comprehensive of low-class status with lacking education and morality (Natividad, 2020, p. 6). The facts show that vulgarity is not used at the same level and changes from country to country. There is an interesting research study on vulgarisms in the Nordic languages considering profanity and gender in social media corpus. The researcher studied the frequency of vulgarisms according to gender in the Nordic countries and English. Among Twitter users, 18,686 bad language users wrote about a 210-million-token corpus of messages, which formed around 19,000 'bad language' word forms. Compared to females, males

prevailed among 'bad language' users as shown in Figure 1 (Coats, 2021).

Fig 1. Mean use of English profanities by country and gender.



Source: developed by the authors.

As seen from Figure 1, Sweden leads the chart with the most profanity use in both genders. English language tweets with vulgar content exceed 3,500 in Sweden, though female profanity speakers are relatively more numerous than males. It is followed by Finland with more than 2,000 profanity users. In all 5 countries, female profanity speakers prevail in ratio to males.

For example, as we mentioned above, the speech of the president of the Philippines is rich in vulgar words, and the local people welcome his speech sincerely, since the local people living in the Philippines find using vulgar words very usual in their own speeches (Curato, 2016, p. 97). Vulgar words are not accepted as harsh words there. The factor of religion also plays a crucial role in the usage of vulgarisms. In Papua, a widow hangs her deceased husband's genitals around her neck, believing that they are together even if the husband is dead. Widows follow different kinds of rituals to cut and dry their husbands' genitals (Pouwer, 2010). The Skoptsy were considered a cult in the Russian Empire that practiced genital mutilation, whose another name is emasculation. It was believed that the genitals could be the source of sin and that eternal salvation could be attained by removing them (Engelstein, 2018).

The major aim while using vulgarisms and taboos is to strengthen the expressivity of the meaning. Unlike jargon, argot, and slang, vulgar words have larger regional use. They do not pertain to a particular stratum of language users. Semantically, they are related to certain specific cultural values, and due to this semantic relation, they are

regarded as part of the taboo language (Moore, 2012). The usage sphere and recognition rate of vulgarisms depend on what aspects you approach the matter from. For example, vulgarisms do not always appear as a result of swearing. Along with swear words, one can easily find vulgar words in pampering or fondling as well. Babayev (2024) touches upon this issue in his article, underlining that not all vulgarisms express anger and fury, so some vulgar words are used to fondle someone. The article mentions:

There is no anger or fury in fondling. When someone is coddled or pampered, the names of genitals can be heard in the meantime. For example, when father or mother coddles his/her baby, it is possible to hear: 'Let me eat your dink' or 'Let me lick your testies' which is nothing but fondling. (Babayev, 2024, p. 53).

Therefore, there is no need to look for vulgarisms only in words. One can find them in famous paintings where naked men and women have been depicted. Renaissance European painters used to draw nude humans, and it used to be a trend at that time. One of the elements of this new genre of art depicts naked people. Apart from this, ancient Greeks depicted nude bodies through statues. When we approach the matter from a religious perspective, we can hear about the worship of the phallus. Bhutanese people worship the male genitalia, and it is considered a symbol of fertility. As the religion accepts it as holy, this is not known as vulgarity among the people living in Bhutan. This cult also exists in some regions of India as well. It means that the concept of vulgarism is relative and changeable depending on the environment, time, religion, and culture. Another proof of this theory is that people in the past lived naked. Even now, the indigenous people of the Amazon can be seen walking nude in the forest. However, those people living in that place and time did not and do not accept it as shame or vulgarity.

Considering the above discussion, the goal of this article is to analyze how vulgar language varies according to social factors. The aim of this study is not merely to examine the lexical characteristics of vulgar words and amuse readers, but to explore the stylistic features, usage spheres, and gender and age characteristics of vulgar words. Like other lexical units of a language, vulgarism is also part of the language and must be studied. We believe that stylistic opportunities of vulgarisms, taboo, and swear words in different linguistic social spheres have been studied only superficially so far. So, we aim at relating vulgarisms with regard to stylistic devices and statistical data.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this research, we adopted a hybrid approach since we conducted a literature review regarding the main studies of stylistic analysis of vulgarisms, but also used the survey method. The survey about the environment of profanity use was carried out among the participants who were 19-20-year-old junior students of English language teaching specialty in the Foreign Languages faculty at Nakhchivan State University. The English language classroom hosted 18 students composed of 5 males and 13 females. The written survey was distributed among the students, which showed where English vulgar words are spoken most. The other survey including the same categories was conducted regarding the Azerbaijani language. The results were different compared to English. This is likely caused by cultural differences. The survey proved that profanity is used less in Azerbaijani in comparison with English.

The next survey with the same students was about the age and gender of profanity speakers in English. It is an undeniable fact that culture, nationality, religion, and profession matter more in profanity use. Besides, some surveys were also conducted about the top 15 profanity-speaking countries by writing the names of the countries on YouTube. The last survey was conducted regarding the stylistic opportunities of vulgarisms. The students were required to distinguish profane words. Vulgarisms were split up into periphrases, allusions, euphemisms, personification, depersonalization, and synecdoche. Therefore, data collection, comparative-linguistic, comparative-stylistic, and descriptive methods have been used to conduct this research article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature review

There are numerous researches on vulgarisms, taboos and swear words that reflects linguistic, cultural and social features. Different studies were made on vulgarisms around the world (Babayev, 2024; Cheporukhina, 2019; Fus, 2020; Kazakova & Godina, 2020; Machala, 2019; Maguraushe, 2023; Mareš, 2024; Meskova, 2017; Sornicola, 2013; Xudayberganova, 2021; Yuldashev Otabek, 2023). Among these, we found interesting the research by Maguraushe (2023), carried out on the Zimdancehall music genre which hosts explicit vulgar content in song lyrics. The article

underlines those vulgarisms foster identities laced with cultural ambivalences. Sex is one of the most tabooed aspects of human existence and sexual identity affects how and where a person uses sex words. The use of obscenities has liberalized in the past few decades, and the normally tabooed “four-letter” words related to sexual activity are now accepted in the current scene (Gordon, 1994, p. 217).

Translation challenges concerning vulgar words and swear words have always been an obstacle for interpreters. Meskova (2017) conducted a study about the translation of vulgarisms in mass media. She made an experiment with students and observed that they encountered some problems because of lack of knowledge and experience. It was emphasized that translators should decrease the level of vulgarity and the intercultural aspect should be taken into account while making translations. In this respect, translators who face the problem of translating vulgar words and swear words should take into consideration not only the cultural aspect of the source text, but must also know the specific features of the target language (Biloveský, 2011).

Semelik & Liskova (2019) note that taboo words are classified into etymological, terminological, euphemistic and informal/vulgar categories. This means that vulgarism is a branch of taboo which is mainly based on vulgarisms. Religion, psychology and other factors created these taboo words. Briefly speaking, vulgarisms are a source from taboos which are the output of colloquialism.

Jericho James Sayao Natividad wrote a conference research paper dealing with vulgarisms in the action film “Extravaganza.” The paper elaborates on the major functions of vulgarisms in Philippine independent films of the action genre. The article determined the distinct features of independent films involving three films in the study titled *Astig: Mga batang Kalye* (2009), *Janitor* (2014), and *Buy Bust* (2018). Those films changed modern attitudes towards vulgar words and their plots.

Finally, Tomalin (2007) in his article notes “vulgarity is a quality that can distinguish the idioms and manners of people from all social strata” (pp. 28). The usage of vulgarisms in Shelley, Byron and Keats poems proves that vulgarisms are also widely used in literature.

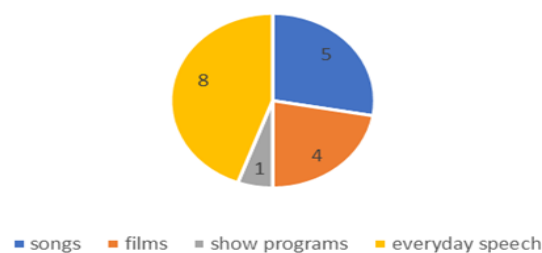
Survey data analysis

A comparative analysis was carried out in English and Azerbaijani regarding the use and placement of profanity. Figure 2 shows the usage environments including songs, films, show programs and everyday speech, along with percentages of bad language use in English. Most

students (8) confirmed that the biggest portion of profanity pertains to everyday speech, which is also considered colloquial speech. The students considered that common people uttered more vulgar words compared to other categories. The everyday speech category is followed by the category of “songs,” which was claimed to be the second most profanity-heavy environment by 5 students. The “film” section comprised only 4 students who considered films to be full of bad language users. Only 1 student thought that show programs are rich in vulgarisms and taboos. The statistics were obtained after listening to the songs “Anaconda” by Nicki Minaj (2015), “WAP” by Cardi B feat. Megan Thee Stallion (2020), and watching some films with offensive language, namely “Full Metal Jacket” (1987) and “Reservoir Dogs” (1992), as well as analyzing the TV show program called “The Ellen Show” (2018).

Fig 2. Usage sphere of vulgarisms in English.

Usage sphere of vulgarisms in English

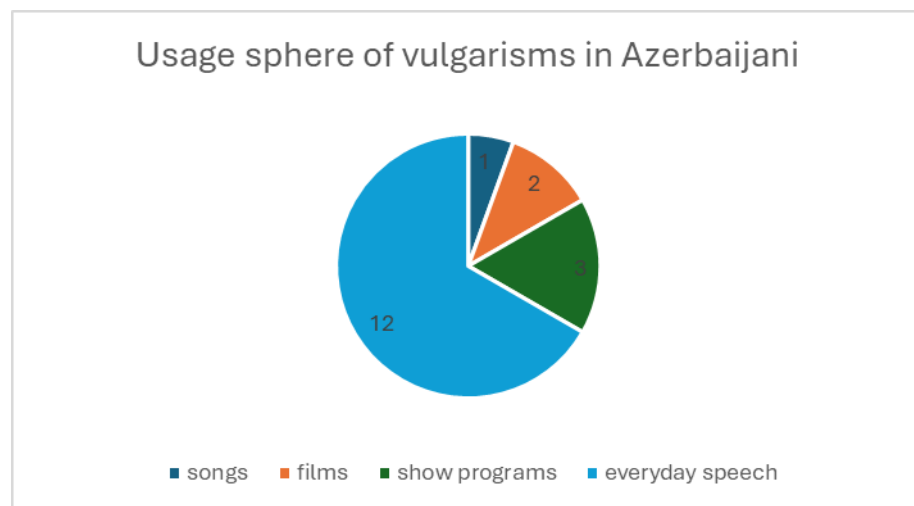


Source: developed by the authors.

As seen in Figure 3, the place of use of profanity is quite different in Azerbaijani compared to English. Like in English, the majority of students ticked “everyday speech” as the most profanity-heavy category with 12 responses, which makes up 66.6% of the total respondents. Unlike English, films and songs don’t allow profanity in Azerbaijani. This is most probably caused by strict censorship existing in the local film and song industry. Only one student considered songs to be a place of profanity use and 2 students chose films as an environment where bad language is used. Three students confirmed that show business is an environment where vulgar words are spoken most after the category of “everyday speech.” The last 3 categories comprised only 33.3% of the total. The students made their decision based on daily experience and facts including song clips, movies and show programs that they watched. The students watched “Tehmine və Zaur” produced by Rasim Ojagov (1993), meykhana (a type of song) full of swear words by Rashad Dagli (2013), and show news titled “Əbdül Xəlil əsəbləşib söyüş söydü” (2020). It should

be noted that not all films, meykhana and TV show programs use profanity, and the statistics were obtained based on a specific survey carried out with 18 students.

Fig 3. Usage sphere of vulgarisms in Azerbaijani.



Source: developed by the authors.

According to the next survey conducted among students specializing in English language teaching, it was proved that adolescents and teenagers aged 14-20 use more vulgar words in their speech in Azerbaijani compared to other age categories. This survey is based on two videos and their Instagram and TikTok comments in Azerbaijan (Table 1). Both video reels psychologically evoked anger in viewers. Therefore, a myriad of swear words were written in the comments below the reels. The students began to count the number of profane words and made a list of vulgar words indicating specific numbers and percentages. Then they accessed the profiles of users from both Instagram and TikTok accounts in order to obtain information about their ages. The students were involved in teamwork to count the percentages and numbers precisely.

The first reason is that mainly boys begin to prove their manhood when they enter the teenage period, which covers ages 14-20. This stage of life is also known as the self-recognition period. The second reason is joint military service, where many boys gather together and use vulgar words, which mainly encompasses ages 18-20. People aged 21-35 are inclined to use less profanity as they have already become mature and understand the meaning of life. People aged 36 or more speak less profanity compared to other age categories. This is caused by the environment in which they are present. Environment also plays a vital role in the usage of swear words or curses.

Table 1. Profanity use according to age in Azerbaijani.

Age category	Instagram	TikTok
14-20	41,5%	44,3%
21-35	37,1%	40,7%
36 or more	21,4%	15%

Source: developed by the authors.

The students were assigned to differentiate euphemistic vulgarisms stylistically. Cards were given out with profane words and ask the students to find out which stylistic device each word owns. Many vulgarisms, swear words and taboos are able to form a number of stylistic devices and expressive means. One can find co-existence of multiple figures of speech related to vulgarisms. Table 2 shows the existence of two stylistic devices in euphemistic vulgarisms. As seen from the table, male genitals are personified and addressed as Richard. Personification is explicitly seen in the above-mentioned euphemistic vulgarisms. Along with personification, this is also considered to be synecdoche, since the part substitutes the whole in synecdoche. Sometimes, the whole can replace the part as well. Hence, Richard can

be a genital or a part of the whole, or can be a person's name associated with genitals, too. In some cases, vulgarisms can be depersonalized and likened to lifeless objects such as schlong, hose or tube. In this case, another branch of metaphor— depersonalization—emerges. All 18 students overwhelmingly confirmed that Richard is personification, while schlong is depersonalization. Both words are considered synecdoche.

Table 2. Stylistic devices of euphemistic vulgarisms.

Euphemistic vulgarism	personification	depersonalization	synecdoche
Richard	+	—	+
Schlong	—	+	+
2	1	1	2

Source : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick_\(nickname\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick_(nickname)).

The students participating in the formation of this study also conducted a rigorous study about the euphemistic character of profane speech. They were introduced to a word and assigned to find out its euphemized and medical forms. To carry out this process, they had to look it up in the Collins dictionary. Then they had to find its synonyms and categorize them, as shown in Table 3. There are multiple ways to depict one of the harshest expressions, “to have sex with,” in the dictionary. The character of this vulgarism changes due to the place where it is used. We can categorize the variants of this expression under 3 titles including profane speech, euphemized language and medical language. Six profane words were categorized as euphemized language while 4 words were treated as medical language.

Table 3. Usage environments of profanity.

Profane speech	Euphemized language	Medical language
To have sex with	go to bed with	have intercourse with
	sleep with	mate
	have your way with	copulate
	cohabit	conjugate
	unite	
	do business with	

Source: developed by the authors.

When we try to describe something, stylistic device called periphrasis comes out. The usage of this word may change depending on the environment and profession. For example, in medical language this is replaced with “have intercourse with” while there is allusion in “do the business with”. In allusion, there is something hidden that we hint to. Both periphrasis and allusion serve to milden or euphemize the harsh meaning of the so-called word. The synonyms as “sleep with”, “have your way with”, “go to bed with”, “cohabit”, “mate”, “copulate”, “conjugate”, “unite” also serve to euphemize their vulgar variant. The next task that the students should have done was to analyze vulgarisms from stylistic point of view. They were given 4 vulgarisms and their stylistic versions. The students had to categorize these vulgar words as periphrasis, allusion and euphemism. 4 words were classified as periphrases while 6 of them were introduced as allusion. Only 3 of the presented words were considered euphemisms. Nearly all 18 students converged towards Table 4.

Table 4. Stylistic devices describing vulgarisms.

Vulgarism	Periphrasis	Allusion	Euphemism
whore	Sporting woman	Yellow ticket	Lady of pleasure
prostitute	Fancy woman	Working girl	Common woman
whore house	Den of iniquity	Lady of the evening	Fallen woman
brothel	House of assignation	House with red doors	
		Cathouse	
		Red light district	
		Call house	

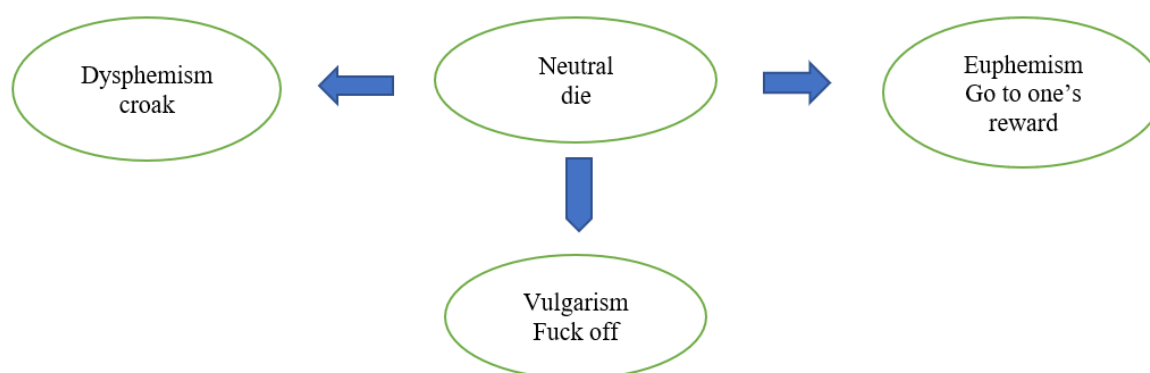
Source: developed by the authors.

Another example of euphemistic vulgarism is “common woman” for “whore” or “prostitute.” Among the synonyms, “fallen woman” is also used to euphemize the vulgarity of this word. Another allusion, “yellow ticket,” is a historical vulgarism used to describe the aforementioned vulgar word. Similarly, “working girl” is also an allusion which is understood from the mimics and hints of the speaker. Among the equivalents of these words, there are some which describe this profession. Unlike the aforementioned vulgarisms, “streetwalker” is the periphrasis that gives the first idea and common

description of the vulgar term. "Lady of pleasure," "lady of the evening," "fancy woman," "sporting woman," and "common woman" are also words used to describe and euphemize the so-called vulgarism. The vulgar word "brothel" or "whorehouse" also has some euphemistic variants. "House with red doors," "red light district," "cathouse," "den of iniquity," "house of assignation," "call house," and "happy house" are periphrases for the so-called vulgarism. There is an allusion in "house with red doors," which is not a well-known word combination among common people. All the above-mentioned word combinations have been skillfully fabricated to create a euphemistic effect in public.

There are also some taboos and slang terms that do not euphemize the coarseness of the word; on the contrary, they make the meaning harsher or more vulgar, such as "shag," "poke," "hump," "bonk," "screw," "bang," "shaft," etc. These vulgarisms can also be used to humiliate someone, which leads to the emergence of dysphemism. One can see and hear some phraseological units related to the so-called word. Phraseological units such as "be done with someone," "get the wind up," "have seen better days," "fool around," and "go all the way" serve to euphemize the meaning of this vulgar word. In Figure 2 we show the stylistic coloration of the word "to die".

Fig 2. Stylistic variations of the word "to die".



Source: developed by the authors.

The word "to die" is a neutral word with euphemistic and dysphemistic meanings. To euphemize the sense of the word, "pass away," "depart this life," "breathe one's last," "go to the last home," "expire," "draw one's last breath," "join the great majority," "lay down one's life," "kick the bucket," "give up the ghost," and "lose one's life" are the most popular periphrases that describe the process of death both in abstract and real meanings. However, it is possible to find dysphemistic variants of these periphrases. For example, "croak" or "go to hell" can be considered dysphemistic periphrases. There are some vulgarisms expressing the process of death as well. For example, "fall off the toilet" is a vulgar expression for dying. Actually, this expression means "to die in an untimely or unexpected manner," but the usage of the word "toilet" makes the meaning harsher and more vulgar. Another vulgar expression for this word is "fuck off," which means "to die unexpectedly."

According to the previous analysis, it is evidenced that the usage of vulgarisms does not only depend on age and gender, but also on culture, religion and nation. The usage sphere of vulgarisms is very broad, including popular music, films, literature, colloquial speech (proverbs and sayings), arts, reality shows, and even political speeches. Some rap hits and popular songs contain vulgarisms which are mainly encountered in the USA. People listening to songs full of profanity accept it as a normal occurrence, and this change has had a negative impact on customs and cultural language recently. In addition, profanity can also be used in literature. The results taken from the samples show that, films also host profanity, which is mainly caused by the absence of censorship in the usage of vulgarisms. Most American and European films do not have any censorship regarding the usage of vulgarisms. Hence, it is a usual occurrence to see a great number of vulgarisms in films, whether it is an action film or comedy.

Thus, we can say that the usage of vulgar words is more related to the personal character traits of a person. This means that any person who has reached mature age can use vulgarisms irrespective of age, sex, culture, religion and profession. Periphrasis, euphemism, dysphemism, metaphor (personification and depersonification), epithet, synecdoche,

metalepsis, simile, antanaclasis and other stylistic devices may describe, soften, harden, transfer, define, make whole, liken or create vulgar words.

CONCLUSIONS

As with other colloquial lexical items, vulgarisms exhibit distinctive expressive properties that contribute uniquely to the stylistic and pragmatic repertoire of language. While their expressive force is notable, it should not be framed as absolutely incomparable to all other lexical classes; rather, vulgarisms often afford a degree of emotional intensity and social indexing that many other resources do not typically provide. This study confirms that vulgarisms, taboos, and swear words are integral components of language use and that their prevalence varies systematically across communicative contexts: everyday/public speech and popular media (notably songs and films) are primary loci of use.

Cross-cultural analysis indicates substantial variation in frequency and acceptability by country, religion, and sociohistorical norms; moreover, demographic patterns observed here show higher rates among male speakers and a concentration of use during adolescence and early adulthood. Stylistically, speakers and authors routinely deploy a wide set of devices—periphrasis, euphemism, dysphemism, metaphorical strategies (including personification and depersonification), synecdoche, metalepsis, and antanaclasis—to modulate force and social acceptability. Crucially, euphemistic variants do not imply the absence of cultural mediation: euphemization is itself a culturally conditioned strategy that mitigates perceived harshness through conventional lexical alternatives rather than eliminating the underlying pragmatic function. Finally, the findings underscore the need for larger, longitudinal and cross-linguistic corpora and for experimental designs that can clarify causal relations among social factors, production practices, and perception—work that will have implications for translation studies, media policy, and theories of linguistic taboo.

Data availability statement

The data set used for this study is freely distributed on Researchgate and Academia. It is possible to download data from these social academic platforms.

REFERENCES

- Babayev, J. (2022). The usage of dysphemism in colloquial speech. *World Scientific Reports*, 1. <https://ojs.scipub.de/index.php/WSR/article/view/305>

- Babayev, J. (2024). Usage Sphere and Recognition Rate of Vulgarisms. *Global Spectrum of Research and Humanities*, 1(2), 49–54. <https://doi.org/10.69760/gsrh.01022024005>
- Berowa, A. M. (2019). President Rodrigo Roa Duterte in the spotlight: The pragmatic factors and functions of swearing in public discourse. *Asian EFL Journal*, 21, 183–204.
- Biloveský, V. (2011). *Zázraky v orechovej krupinke: Prekladové konkretizácie tvorby SW Hawkinga v slovenskom kultúrnom priestore*. Univerzita Mateja Bela. Fakulta humanitných vied.
- Casiple, R. C. (2016). The Duterte Presidency as a Phenomenon. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 38(2), 179–184. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24916625>
- Cheporukhina, M. G. (2019). On The Distinction Between The Terms “Dysphemism”, «Slang», «Vulgarism» And «Invective». *Bulletin of Samara University. History, Pedagogy, Philology*, 25(4), 116–126. <https://doi.org/10.18287/2542-0445-2019-25-4-116-126>
- Coats, S. (2021). ‘Bad language’ in the Nordics: Profanity and gender in a social media corpus. *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*, 53(1), 22–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03740463.2021.1871218>
- Curato, N. (2016). Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte’s Rise to Power. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 35(3), 91–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810341603500305>
- Engelstein, L. (2018). *Castration and the Heavenly Kingdom: A Russian Folktale*. Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501734243>
- Fus, A. (2020). Vulgarisms and swearing as verbal aggression. *Germanica Wratislaviensia*, 145, 119–127. <https://doi.org/10.19195/0435-5865.145.11>
- Gordon, E. (1994). Sex Differences in Language: Another Explanation? *American Speech*, 69(2), 215–220. <https://doi.org/10.2307/455707>
- Kazakova, I., & Godina, V. (2020). Barrier perception of slang and vulgarisms in Australian and New Zealand versions of English. *ICERI2020 Proceedings*, 5926–5934. 13th annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation. <https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2020.1274>
- Machala, L. (2019). Vulgarismus jako laser (nad tvorbou Ladislava Šerého). *Studia et Documenta Slavica*, 10(4), 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.25167/SetDS/2019/4/1>
- Maguraushe, W. (2023). When Vulgarism Comes through Popular music: An Investigation of Slackness in Zimdancehall Music. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, 12(1), 131–144. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v12i1.8>

- Mareš, P. (2024). Revolt against standard language: Requirements for language of literature and Jan Zábřana's stories. *Journal of Linguistics/Jazykovedný Casopis*, 74(2), 547–560. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jazcas-2024-0010>
- McCargo, D. (2016). Duterte's Mediated Populism. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs*, 38(2), 185–190. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/628454>
- Meskova, L. (2017). Translation of vulgarism in Mass media. *XLinguae*, 10(3), 101–109. <https://doi.org/10.18355/XL.2017.10.03.08>
- Moore, R. L. (2012). On Swearwords and Slang. *American Speech*, 87(2), 170–189. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00031283-1668199>
- Natividad, J. J. S. (2020, March 7). Vulgarism in action film extravaganza: A scrutiny on Philippine independent films. *The 2nd DLSU Undergraduate and Graduate Conference on Literary, Cultural, and Performance Studies*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349695140_Vulgarism_in_Action_Film_Extravaganza_A_Scrutiny_on_Philippine_Independent_Films
- Pouwer, J. (2010). *Gender, ritual and social formation in West Papua; A configurational analysis comparing Kamoro and Asmat*. Brill. https://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_353252
- Semelik, M., & Liskova, M. (2019). On the lexicographical treatment of taboo words. *Slovo A Slovesnost*, 80(1), 39–57.
- Sornicola, R. (2013). «Vulgo dicitur»: Vulgarisms in legal Latin. *Journal of Latin Linguistics*, 12(2), 269–299. <https://doi.org/10.1515/joll-2013-0013>
- Taiwo, R., Akinwotu, A., & Kpolugbo, S. (2021). Linguistic Impoliteness and Interpersonal Positioning in Nigerian Online Political Forum. *Linguistik Online*, 109(4), 113–132. <https://doi.org/10.13092/lo.109.8028>
- Tomalin, M. (2007). "Vulgarisms and Broken English": The Familiar Perspicuity of William Hazlitt. *Romanticism*, 13(1), 28–52. <https://www.euppublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/rom.2007.13.1.28>
- Xudayberganova, D. (2021). Vulgarisms expressing people's character and other features of their personalities in the language of dastans. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 4(2), 203–205.
- Yuldashev Otabek, M. O. (2023). Lexical-semantic analysis of certain definitions and vulgarisms used In Tahir Malik's "Shaytanat." *International Bulletin of Applied Science and Technology*, 3(5), 718–722. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7956199>