



# 1 • Language

**PRE-READING 1** Read the subtitle of the text and guess the meaning of *euphemism*.

A euphemism is ...

- a a word or phrase that means one thing and is used to refer to another thing, in order to emphasize their similar qualities.
- b a phrase or idea that is boring because people use it a lot and it is no longer original.
- c a word or expression that people use when they want to talk about something unpleasant or embarrassing without mentioning the thing itself.

The other two definitions are for *simile* and *metaphor*. Decide which is the correct definition for these words.

**PRE-READING 2** Which of the following words are usually connected to language (L) and which are usually connected to war (W)? Write L or W. Find the words in **bold** in the text to help you.

- 1 to dumb down
- 2 to be inarticulate
- 3 to translate
- 4 a civilian
- 5 a target
- 6 a campaign



## The power of double-speak

*Euphemisms have been used since ancient times to avoid giving offense, but now politicians are using them to hide the realities of war.*

5 *Deferred success, person who is hearing-impaired* – are these phrases in any current dictionary? Where did they originate? Does anyone actually use them? While our media are frequently charged with **dumbing down** and our teenagers with **being inarticulate**, and perhaps both accusations have merit, some of our leaders are busy creating a whole new vocabulary. Listen to political speeches these days and you'll find yourself having to spontaneously **translate** newly-combined words from your own language. It could be the Minister for Education finding reasons why our children are now leaving school without having mastered simple arithmetic (they're motivationally challenged), or someone from the Department of Transportation explaining why the differently-abled are still denied access to numerous subway lines. All politicians seem to be semi-fluent in double-speak.

15 The ancient Greeks used euphemisms for certain religious words so they did not offend the gods. Native English speakers in previous centuries used euphemisms mainly to avoid giving offence to each other. Better to say 'I have to visit the rest room' than directly announcing your intention to use the toilet. 'He passed away yesterday' is a bit more sensitive than 'Tom has just died'. As we know, language evolves with time and trends. So now we have the rather modern 'She's rather full figured', which is certainly kinder than 'She's fat'! Even more recently, 'blended family' has been used to replace the much longer 'Divorcees Jack and Mary have got married and their kids from previous relationships are now one big family'. But in the 21st century, the use of euphemism or double-speak is also being exploited for far more sinister purposes. If you don't believe this, listen hard to what our military leaders are really telling us and read between the lines of the next 'factual' report on any country afflicted by war.

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40 Even if you deplore their policies, you have to agree that our military leaders are clever. Once you dehumanize the enemy, it's far easier to drop your bombs and mask the horror of war. Your own **civilians** reading the paper or listening to their leaders on the evening news are less likely to protest or comprehend the claim that 'An attack on soft **targets** is the only way to destroy the terrorists hiding among them' than the admission that 'We

45 also had to kill innocent men, women, and children who lived in the town.' We are now so used to double-speak that we are in danger of becoming truly desensitized. We hear about military **campaigns** and the statistics of death, but the actual gruesome details are quite remote. Our politicians and our generals know that if we actually saw what is left after a bomb has dropped and witnessed the grief of the survivors, we might demand an end to the fighting.

50 The greatest hypocrisy, of course, is the use of language to glorify or justify the actions of your army and then to denounce exactly the same actions when they are carried out by the opposing army. A military report that announces 'Our soldiers were forced to take cover' is factually no different from the statement that 'Their soldiers ran away and disappeared,' but the latter sounds far more cowardly. And, of course, when the government supports the actions of a rebel group that it believes could serve as a potentially useful ally, the rebels are more likely to be called 'freedom fighters'. This label instantly creates an image of bravery and selflessness. As soon as the government decides that the group might not be a useful ally after all, its members become 'terrorists'; in other words, evil and inhumane. Whether you realize it or not, your opinions are being made for you by the words that someone else chooses to say or write.

65 When I was child, I used to believe that war was about good versus evil, and it was easy to know whose side you should be on. Now when I hear of another case of young soldiers being killed by 'friendly fire', I almost wish I was still that naïve.

**POST READING** Match the euphemisms to their meanings below. Look for similarities in vocabulary.

**euphemism**

- 1 deferred success    2 hearing impaired    3 motivationally challenged  
4 soft target    5 friendly fire

**meaning**

- a shots fired at you accidentally by soldiers from your own army  
b the bombing of an area where civilians live  
c to be deaf  
d to under-perform (at school)  
e a failure

**COMPREHENSION 1** Decide if the information about the text is True (T), False (F), or Not Given (NG). Write T, F, or NG.

- 1 The quality of newspaper and TV reports is sub-standard.
- 2 Politicians are borrowing words from other languages for their speeches.
- 3 Native English speakers are less polite than they used to be.
- 4 People often fail to understand the use of euphemism in the media.
- 5 The use of euphemism has made people indifferent to other people's suffering.
- 6 Military leaders do not admit that their soldiers need to hide from the enemy.

**COMPREHENSION 2** Use the words and phrases in the box to re-write the sentences from the text.

make	genuine	react	evil	criticize	risk	used
explain	reality	frequently	good	reasons	wrongly	
less real and important	care	hide	moral	beliefs		



- 1 Euphemism is being exploited for far more sinister purposes.  
Euphemism is being (a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ for much more

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- 2 Once you dehumanize the enemy, it's far easier to drop your bombs and mask the horror of war.  
After you (a) \_\_\_\_\_ your enemies (b) \_\_\_\_\_, it is far easier to drop bombs on them and (c) \_\_\_\_\_ the (d) \_\_\_\_\_ of war.
- 3 We are now so used to double-speak that we are in danger of becoming truly desensitized.

Military leaders and politicians use double-speak so (a) \_\_\_\_\_ that there is a (b) \_\_\_\_\_ that people will no longer (c) \_\_\_\_\_ about or (d) \_\_\_\_\_ to the suffering of war victims.

- 4 The greatest hypocrisy ... is the use of language to ... justify the actions of your army and ... to denounce exactly the same actions when they are carried out by the opposing army.

Your (a) \_\_\_\_\_ are not (b) \_\_\_\_\_ if you use language to (c) \_\_\_\_\_ why the actions of your army are (d) \_\_\_\_\_ and to (e) \_\_\_\_\_ the same actions of the enemy army.



hypocrisy

### VOCABULARY SKILLS 1

Complete the table with the words in the box.

with of at for lying the truth  
tax increases murder cheap labour with

Verb	Preposition	Object
1 to charge s.o.	<i>with</i>	<i>murder</i>
2 to accuse s.o.		
3 to exploit a place		
4 to protest		
5 to present s.o.		

### VOCABULARY SKILLS 2

Use the verb, preposition, and noun combinations from Vocabulary skills 1 to complete the sentences. You may need to change some pronouns or verb forms.

- Everyone was shocked when the police arrested the old lady and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Emma's face became red when her boss \_\_\_\_\_.
- The textile company deny that they are \_\_\_\_\_ the region \_\_\_\_\_.
- Many people surrounded the government building in order to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Steve wouldn't listen to his friends' warning about his girlfriend, but when he saw her out with another guy, he was finally \_\_\_\_\_.

### SPEAKING Discuss the statements with a partner.

- We don't need gruesome photos of dead civilians in newspapers. Photos of people dying in war zones are simply voyeuristic. They don't make people feel more sympathetic, just curious.
- Newspapers should not criticize the army of their own country. Soldiers have to go wherever they are sent by their country and do a good job. They need encouragement and praise, not criticism.
- Most people don't really care about events in foreign countries. They feel so detached from these events that it is difficult to elicit their sympathy, particularly if they are inhabitants of wealthier countries.

**Grammar***Use/Used to*

Look at the functions of *use/used to* below.

- a *The term 'blended family' can be used to replace 'Divorcees ...'*
- b *The use of euphemism is being exploited for far more sinister purposes.*
- c *We are now so used to double-speak that we are in danger of becoming truly desensitized.*
- d *I used to believe that war was about good versus evil.*

**GRAMMAR 1** Read the box above and answer the questions.

- Which sentence shows *use* in the noun form?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which sentence has a passive form of *use*?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which sentence refers to a habit or situation in the past which is no longer true?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Which sentence could be re-written with *familiar with*?

**GRAMMAR 2** Which sentences are correct? Re-write the incorrect sentences.

- Learning a language well requires the use of a good dictionary.  
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\_\_\_\_\_

- I regret that I never used to concentrating in my French classes.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- You'll have to get used to speak English all day if you work here.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Euphemisms can be used in both formal and informal situations.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- When I studied in Australia, I couldn't get used the accent.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- I didn't used to like conversing in English, but it's got easier now.  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Effective Skills

## INFERRING MEANING

You are going to read three interviews for an English language school magazine. Read the questions. Can you infer the meaning of the words in **bold**?

- a Do you think culture has any **effect** on language?
- b Which **aspect** of the English language is most challenging for you?
- c How does learning English in an **Anglophone** country compare to learning English in your country?
- d How important is the use of **gesture** as a means of supporting spoken communication?
- e What would you say are the main differences in grammar between English and your **native** language?
- f What do you do if an English speaker is talking too **rapidly**?
- g Do you have any **tips** for learners of English from your country?
- h What is your main **motivation** in learning English?
- i Do people in your country think learning English is **worthwhile**?
- j Can you tell me about a time when there was a **misunderstanding** between you and another English speaker?

## SCANNING

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Read the interviews quickly. Match the interviewer's questions above to each student's replies. (One question is not used.)

- 1 h
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_



# Student *profile* page

*This week we talk to Anastasia, Natalia, and Camilla to find out about their experiences of learning English.*

**Interviewer:** How long have you been learning English?

5 **Anastasia:** Since I was five. My mother did an interpreting course at university and she started teaching me English **from my young years**.

**Interviewer:** (1) \_\_\_\_\_?

10 **Anastasia:** Communication and reading. I love to read literature in the author's own language. This has always **been very much fascinating** for me. And, also communication because I want to talk to people and it doesn't matter where I am there is always someone who can speak English.

**Interviewer:** (2) \_\_\_\_\_?

15 **Anastasia:** Grammar! Yes, It really fascinates me, because you have so many tenses and basically I have studied all of them but I can't always get them right. And when I read the grammar or the vocabulary, I think 'yes I know that', but when it **comes in terms of speaking** or writing I'm always confused. Because I think 'Well maybe this will do' or 'I've read something like this before' and sometimes I hit the bullseye and sometimes I can't believe I could get it so wrong.

20 **Interviewer:** What do you think **Russian students should know about studying here?**

**Anastasia:** Don't be afraid to talk. It doesn't matter if you make a mistake, they'll explain. The **way to teach** is much more relaxed here.

**Interviewer:** (3) \_\_\_\_\_?

25 **Anastasia:** Nothing. I just need a few minutes to adjust and I'm usually OK.

**Anastasia is organizing a meal at a Russian restaurant in Parnell this Saturday. If you want to go, put your name on the list in the Student Room.**

30

**Interviewer:** (4) \_\_\_\_\_?

35 **Natalia:** I think it's really different, because, like, I'm in a home-stay family so I'm living with people from other countries. I'm living with a Swiss girl and a Russian girl so it helps a lot because I have to speak English with them and also, with the family I'm always speaking English, so it's really challenging. In Brazil we speak Portuguese the whole time.

**Interviewer:** Do English and Portuguese have anything in common?

40 **Natalia:** Sometimes the words are pretty much the same. So visually you can **do the relation** between the English word and the Portuguese word. It doesn't always work though and sometimes you can get it wrong.

**Interviewer:** (5) \_\_\_\_\_?

**Natalia:** Oh, well I think they have to incorporate English into their lives as much as they can. Use songs, television, reading, anything. And try to go to an English-speaking country.

45 **Interviewer:** (6) \_\_\_\_\_?

50 **Natalia:** Definitely, I think that language is all the result of... Oh how can I say it? Language is a way of representing what a country... who the people are. That's the way I see it. I think they are totally connected. In Brazil, we... our sentences overlap, we often start talking before the other **people has finished**. And here I've noticed other people do that a tiny bit but nowhere near as much. So, sometimes conversations here seem to drag for me. I don't know.

**Natalia has just finished the Teachers of English as a Second Language course. She's now going to take a well-deserved break in Fiji.**

55 **Interviewer:** Can you describe a typical English class in Sweden?

**Camilla:** The classes have about 20 students. All the four skills are important, and we do a lot of vocabulary and grammar. The teacher always stays in front of the class. Macmillan Publishers LTD

**Interviewer:** (7) \_\_\_\_\_?

60 **Camilla:** Absolutely. You know, you can speak English **in the whole world** and you can't speak Swedish. So for most of us it's vital.

**Interviewer:** (8) \_\_\_\_\_?

65 **Camilla:** Oh that's difficult. **It's a big difference**. But maybe one is, for example, the way we order our words in a sentence is quite different. In English, you can say 'I want to travel round the world' but we say 'round the world' first, and then 'I want to travel' after, so adverbs can go in different places.

**Interviewer:** (9) \_\_\_\_\_?

70 **Camilla:** Yes, one time **when I called to the hotel** to make a reservation, they didn't get what dates I wanted. When you speak face to face, it's easier. You can use gestures. But on the phone your pronunciation must be crystal clear.

**Camilla is also hoping to improve her French while she's here. If you speak French and want to learn a little bit of Swedish, you can meet her in Room 5.**

**ERROR  
CORRECTION**

The three students have a good level of English, but they made a few mistakes. Look again at the parts of the interviews in **bold**. Correct the mistakes using the following prompts.

For example:

from when I was young.

1 been very \_\_\_\_\_

2 it comes \_\_\_\_\_

3 teaching \_\_\_\_\_ more relaxed here

4 make the \_\_\_\_\_

5 people \_\_\_\_\_

6 speak English all \_\_\_\_\_

7 There are \_\_\_\_\_

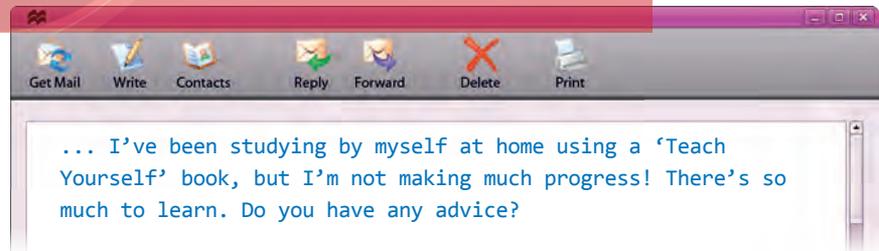
8 one time when I \_\_\_\_\_ to make a reservation

**DISCUSSION**

Interview a partner with some of the questions from **Inferring meaning on page 12.**

**WRITING**

Write a reply to an email from an English-speaking friend who is trying to learn your language before coming to work in your country. First read part of the email.



- Describe your experience of being a language learner.
- Suggest other ways that your friend could learn your language.
- Say what areas of your language your friend should focus on.