ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the usage of euphemistic expressions in modern Chinese and explores the semantic aspects, syntactic functions and rhetorical use. In addition, a comparison of euphemistic expressions between Chinese and English is also included. This study was prompted by the need to recognize the peculiarity of euphemistic expressions which serve as an indirect act in speech. Moreover, it provides further insight by investigating the pragmatic implications involved.

Materials for this study are drawn widely from published texts, newspapers and personal observation. Moreover, a small-scale survey is designed and conducted to investigate the general pattern and different degree of euphemistic expressions in modern Chinese, based on direct response. The findings supplement the previous analysis and enhance the originality of the thesis.

The study indicates euphemistic expressions is very active and flexible in modern Chinese. Pragmatically, the implications of euphemistic expressions allow interactions to flow smoothly, though implicitly. Rhetorically, it strengthens the expressiveness and vividness of modern Chinese in terms of its flexibility. Besides, the study also shows that euphemistic expressions vary in different situations.

Finally, the study concludes that the phenomenon of euphemistic expressions in modern Chinese has its constraints and limitations, which refer to unwisely use in speech. Nevertheless, being so useful and efficient in interacting and expressing unspeakable meanings, euphemistic expressions unquestionably is an important part of modern Chinese which deserves more attention.