

修辞格：委婉

Euphemism

宁波华茂外国语学校 薛洪波

# What can I do about it?

如果一个男士的拉链忘记拉上了，你怎么委婉地告知他？

**Your fly is open.**

**Mind your XYZ.**

**You've lost your license.**

# Enjoy Chinese verses

“死亡”的委婉语：

- \* 圆寂、涅槃、归寂、升天、仙逝；
- \* 去世、辞世、离世、谢世、长眠、寿终、与世长辞、
- \* 壮烈、牺牲、
- \* 驾崩
- \* 翘辫子、蹬腿了、死翘翘了

# Enjoy English examples

**\* go to heaven, pass away, be gone, breathe one's last, be safe in the arms of Jesus, go to a better land, depart from the world forever**

# Defination

\* 委婉语(euphemism):

用不冒犯人的或令人愉快的词语代替直率的、触怒人的词语，去掩盖某些尴尬的事实，这种表现手法叫做委婉语。例如：

She is a beautician. (理发师)

The maiden lady is still holding her position as a single. (老处女)

They're financially challenged. (贫困潦倒的)

The security officer is kind. (守门人)。

# 1.词汇手段 1.敬畏神灵上帝

- \* 西方人笃信上帝 (God) , 敬畏上帝而不敢直呼其名: 上帝耶和华 (Jehovah) , 于是产生了许多委婉语, 如: **the Almighty**(万能者), **the Supreme Being**(至高无上者), **Holy One**(至圣者), **the Eternal**(永生者), **the Creator**(创世纪者), **the Maker**(造物者), **the Savior**(救世主), **the Lord of Lords**(万主之主), **the King of Kings**(万王之王), **the Light of the World**(世界之光), **the Sovereign of the Universe**(宇宙主宰者), **Our Father**(我们的圣主)等。口语里, 人们用 **Josh**, **Gosh**等代替上帝耶和华。

同样，魔鬼 (devil) 也有一些委婉语，如：  
**His Satanic Majesty**(魔王)，**Old Gentleman**(老先生)，**Old Harry**(老哈里)，**Old One**(老家伙)等等。随着社会的发展，这类委婉语相应地减少了。

## 2. 避免粗俗不雅

在公共场合，凡是与疾病、死亡、人体排泄、性爱等有关的犯忌讳的事物，不忍或不便直接说出，而改成其他词语来回避掩盖或装饰美化，以避免不快，增加令人愉快的信息成分。

He got venereal disease. 他得过性病。 ➡ He has secret disturbance. 他得过暗疾；他有难言之隐。

I want to go to the lavatory/toilet/WC. ➡ I'd like to get some fresh air. 我去放个风。



因此，为了避免使用与病、死、性有关的禁忌语（taboo words），语言学家们规定了“四字母词”，如crap, shit, piss, arse, ball, cock, fuck, cunt, tits, wank, hell等。

从心理层面看，委婉语的出现是为了保全面子，取悦他人，使用一些拔高词（uplifting/glorifying words）

# 上厕所:方便, 解手, 洗手

男士专用语: (观瀑亭; 大使馆; 归一; 擎天门; 靖国神社; 离苦得乐; 男排)

wash one's hands, visit the John, answer the call of Nature, go to the rest room/bathroom, use the facilities(设施)/toilet, spend a penny, make oneself comfortable, do one's official business, retire for a moment, go to the gents, see Johnny, relieve oneself,

听雨轩； 解放区； 芳草阁；  
万缘放下； 泉水叮咚； 女排

**女士专用语：** sing a song, powder one's nose,  
visit the Jane, pick some flowers, get some  
fresh air, go somewhere else, go and see one's  
aunt, go feed the goldfish,

## 儿童专用语:

go to the pot/potty, do No. 1, do No. 2, pee-pee,  
poo-poo, shake a lily, make weewee (小),  
stand up(小), sit down(大)

### 3. 体现礼貌功能

“生老病死”委婉表达法:

\* 形容词:

- \* pregnant: expecting, in a family way
- \* fat: plump(女), stout(男), chubby(孩子)
- \* thin: lean(男), slim, slender, willowy(女)
- \* ugly: plain, homely

- \* **old**: elderly, senior, getting on in years, feeling one's age, in second childhood, past one's prime, be advanced in age
- \* **mad**: insane, feeble-minded, mentally ill, not all there, soft in the head, unsound in mind, simple-minded, mentally challenged/disturbed

## \* 名词

- \* **heart disease**: (have)a heart condition
- \* **funeral**: memorial service
- \* **graveyard**: memory garden, cemetery, memorial park
- \* **death**: the last call, the payoff, the one-way ticket, the last great change, the last sleep, a happy dispatch, one's last rest, the (dear) departed

## \* 动词

\* **die**: depart, abandon the world, answer the last call, be called home, be called to God, become one with nature, be done for, be laid to rest, be no more, breathe one's last, check in, check out, close one's eyes, cross the river, fade away, fall asleep, free sb. from earthly cares, go to glory, go to heaven, go to one's last home, join the majority, **kick the bucket**, **kick up one's heels**, **pass away**, pay the debt of nature, rest in peace, return to dust, return to the earth 等。



\* 人们常用委婉语来表达人体缺陷，以示礼貌。

- 1) 肥胖的 (obese) 人常用 **plump**, **stout** 或 **over-sized** 来形容，甚至 **nutritionally challenged**
- 2) 身体清瘦的妇女称之为 **slender** 或 **slim**
- 3) 相貌丑陋的 (ugly) 人说成 **homely** 或 **plain**
- 4) 耳朵聋的 (deaf) 人说成 **hard of listening**
- 5) 盲人 (the blind) 叫做 **the visually challenge**
- 6) 矮子 (short) 叫做 **vertically challenged**

教师千万不能当着家长的面说他的孩子“笨”  
(stupid)，你得委婉地说成：

- 1) “他学得慢” (He is **a slow learner**)
- 2) “他尚未发挥潜力” (He's **an under -achiever**)
- 3) “他大有潜力可挖” (He **has lots of potential to develop**)
- 4) “他淘气” (He is **over active**)
- 5) “他懒得学习” (He **needs pushing to learn**)

## 4. 体现掩饰功能

掩饰功能主要体现在政治领域，必须政治正确：

- 1) 英语里看不到穷国 **poor nations**，有的只是 **backward nations**（落后国家），**underdeveloped nations**（欠发达国家）**developing nations**（发展中国家），**emerging nations**（新兴国家）
- 2) **industrial action**（工业行动）代替了 **go on strike**（工人罢工），没有了一点“罢工”的痕迹。
- 3) a **colored** man代替 **negro, nigger, black**。

#### 4) 贫穷的

needy, badly off, less well off, down on one's luck, economically/financially challenged, be shy of funds

#### 5) 弱势群体

the less privileged, the less fortunate, the disadvantaged

6) 政治、经济、外交辞令多用委婉语，如

suppression 镇压---**police action** 警方行动

economic crisis 经济危机---**recession/slow-down**

strike 罢工---**industrial action** 产业行动

murder/kill---**take care of, dispose of, get rid of, remove, rub out**

capture/occupy 占领---**liberate** 解放



# Practice

1. They concluded that the increase of divorce rates resulted from **free love**.

他们认为离婚率的增加是由**婚外恋**造成的。

2. He would wear his black suit on his father's **pay day**.

他在父亲的**忌日**总穿黑色西服。

此处pay day 婉指 day of death, 而非发薪日。





**3. She loses count of drinks and gets a little **blind**.**

她喝了不少酒，已有几分**醉意**。

blind 在这里绝不是“眼睛瞎了”，而是thoroughly drunk.



## II. 句子手段

1. 用if, mind, would like等句型，如

I'll open the window **if you don't mind**.

**Would you mind** my opening the window?

2. 否定式句型，如

**I don't think** he would be so rude.

**Won't** it be better for us to set off earlier?



### 3. 虚拟语气句型，如

**It's time that you got up.**

**If I were you, I would do it alone.**

**If I had worked harder, Yale would have admitted me.**

#### 4.过去时句型，如

It **might** be a good idea to hold two separate meetings.

**Could** you do me a favor?

There is something I **should** advise you not to do.

I **was wondering** if you could come to my party.

# III. 构词手段

1. 用否定前缀或后缀，如

foolish---unwise; rude---impolite;

blind---sightless; false---untruthful

2. 用字母代替原词，如

cancer---C或big C; bar-girl---B-girl;

garbage man---G-man; heroin---big H

### 3. 用首字母缩略词，如

drug addict---**DA**吸毒者

body odor---**BO**狐臭

son of a bitch---**S.O.B**狗娘养的；王八蛋

tuberculosis---**TB**肺结核



# Conclusion

**英汉委婉语都是把原来显得粗鲁或令人不愉快的话换成婉转含蓄的说法, 使语言变得温和或悦耳。但是由于英汉语言特点和文化价值的差异, 英汉委婉语又各具特色。挖掘二者间的相同点和不同点, 有助于我们的英语学习与翻译工作的进行, 也有助于加强中英文化交流。作为英语学习者, 如果不注意英汉文化差异在委婉语中的反映, 就有可能造成阅读中的错误理解, 言语交际中的语用失误。**





Thanks for your attention  
Any comments are welcome

\* [zjxuehb@163.com](mailto:zjxuehb@163.com)

# 参考书目

- 吕煦 实用英语修辞 清华大学出版社 2004年1月第1版
- 徐鹏 修辞与语用 上海外语教育出版社 2007年6月第1版
- 冯翠华 英语修辞大全 外语教学与研究出版社 2005年1月第1版
- 吴平 英汉修辞手段比较 安徽教育出版社 2001年9月第1版