

## Euphemism Roles as a Disguise Tool in Political Texts: A Case Study of *Tempo* Online Political Articles

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Received 16 November 2022

Revised 9 February 2023

Accepted 20 March 2023

### Abstract

The mass media tends to use euphemisms in political-themed news narratives. The editor chose the euphemistic language style to avoid controversy due to the broadcast of news material. This research aims to discuss the types of euphemisms in the news narrative on *Tempo* political articles (December 2022-January 2023). Political euphemism is seen through van Dijk's paradigm, which focuses on local semantics and lexicon, especially how political leaders use this language style as a political linguistic tactic. The data in the form of political texts were then analyzed again with Allan and Burridge's concept of euphemism, who thought that euphemism was an ideal style of language in social communication to achieve maximum effect to avoid sensitive topics. The results of the study conclude that politicians tend to use euphemisms in word and phrase classes. Their linguistic corpus mostly includes metaphors, synecdoche, borrowing, hyperbole, abbreviations, and acronyms.

**Keywords:** *euphemism, political discourse analysis, political articles, Tempo*

### Abstrak

Media massa cenderung menggunakan eufemisme dalam narasi pemberitaan bertema politik. Gaya bahasa eufemistik dipilih redaksi demi menghindari kontroversi akibat penayangan sebuah materi pemberitaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendiskusikan jenis-jenis eufemisme dalam narasi pemberitaan pada artikel politik *Tempo* (Desember 2022-Januari 2023). Eufemisme politik dilihat melalui paradigma van Dijk yang berfokus pada semantik dan leksikon lokal, terutama bagaimana para pemimpin politik cenderung memanfaatkan gaya bahasa ini sebagai taktik linguistik yang politis. Data yang berupa teks politik tersebut lantas diuji kembali dengan konsep eufemisme Allan dan Burridge yang beranggapan, bahwa eufemisme sebagai gaya bahasa ideal pada komunikasi sosial demi mencapai efek maksimum untuk menghindari topik yang sensitif. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa terdapat kecenderungan penggunaan eufemisme pada kelas kata dan frasa oleh para politikus. Korpus linguistik mereka kebanyakan berupa metafora, sinekdoke, meminjam, hiperbola, singkatan, dan akronim.

**Kata kunci:** *eufemisme, analisis wacana politik, artikel politik, Tempo*



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## INTRODUCTION

Political expressions, somehow, are provocative, sensitive, and made-up—and some political expressions can lead to a problem, conflict, if it is not delivered well. When reporting the news or publishing articles especially politics—this is the case, it is essential to use language that is appropriate or acceptable. When words are appropriate for a situation, they are neither offensive nor sensitive to the person reading and ‘consuming’ them. Politicians who work for public services usually try to avoid using negative or harsh language and instead focus on their own feelings to make a positive impact on society. By using euphemisms, they can make offensive words less offensive and avoid the harshness. For instance, politicians may prefer to use a softer language or a pleasant word (euphemism) that has a solid impact in expressing a criticism publicly. Here is an example of data finding found on *Tempo*:

- (i) *Ketua KPU **offside** dan terjadi disorientasi dalam dirinya.* (TEM-040123)  
‘The chairman of the KPU (Independent Elections Commission), was **offside** and he was disoriented.’

While in euphemism in political cases, politician often say something implicit in quoting or stating, such as *offside* (i). Hereby the examples above, the context of (i) means a crossing of someone’s established boundary without permission; or moved out of way. It is safe to say that the concept of ‘offside’ actually meant about being outside the law or crossing sort of regulation. The term is not being used because of the potentially offensive meaning it could convey. Hence, the term ‘offside’ (i) is considerably used by a politician as a euphemism to soften the connotation in referring his criticism.

The observation of euphemisms in politics further by Forstie & Fine (2017, p. 772), shows that political leaders utilize euphemisms as a method to limit the flow of information that is shared with the general public. As such, euphemism plays an important part in the politician’s communication because it allows them to couch unfavorable sentiments or expressions in terms that are perceived as more positive by their audiences, which in turn may leave them feeling glad to have heard of the sentiments. This also may previously bring Ryabova (2013, p. 36) stating that political media communication is always two-fold. It has several levels of interpretation: an official and uncontroversial version. That is why politicians often use euphemistic political expression to blur their unpleasant words when expressed directly in a political text.

Due to the sensitive nature of political topics, euphemisms are often used in the media, especially in politics, which has a lot of sensitive topics to talk about. As such, in this paper, the article will look at the text of a euphemism to see what kinds of euphemisms are used most often

in Tempo political articles, within the framework of Political Discourse Analysis (PDA). The PDA framework itself expands on the CDA framework (Critical Discourse Analysis). Van Dijk (1997) has stated that this framework will be more focusing primarily on the application of political power, ideology, and political dominance which are embedded in discourse or text (Wang, 2016, p. 2767).

In much literatures, euphemism studies have drawn a lot of attention of many scholars to be researched in various different areas, such as Suhadi, et al (2021), who identified the euphemistic expression in a short story, Hong (2013) on the chronicles, Saefudin, Tartila & Aryani (2018) on the newspaper, Saputri, et al (2021) on social media, Ekasiwi & Bram (2022) on TV series, Jubran & Sa'eed (2019) on Shakespeare tragedies, and Ariani, Beratha, & Malini (2020) in the talk show. Meanwhile, euphemism has also been the subject of several studies on critical discourse. Mainly, Crespo-Fernández (2018) explored politicians use euphemism as a rhetorical tool to broach controversial issues without offending their people. This study takes a critical discourse-analytic approach to political language by analyzing a corpus of language data from New Jersey's largest newspaper, The Star-Ledger, to examine the ways in which euphemism is used to convey meaning in the speeches of state and municipal politicians. The research shows that legislators use euphemisms (both metaphorical and non-metaphorical) as a form of self-defense and public relations to do the following: (1) refer to socially disadvantaged groups or address delicate subjects without coming across as insensitive; (2) criticize their political opponents in a socially acceptable way; and (3) conceal from the public unflattering information about themselves.

Using a case study from Norwich's local paper, the Eastern Daily Press, Crespo-Fernandez (2014) in his journal titled *"Euphemisms and political discourse in the British regional press"*. He analyzed the word- and sentence-level euphemism use among politicians in Norfolk and Suffolk (UK). The results show that politicians in the region often use euphemisms to "sell-promotion campaign" They do this to show that they care about what the public thinks, to avoid saying things that might make people think they do not care about people with less money, to criticize politely, and to reduce (hide) topics that might make people feel uncomfortable. Meanwhile, using Framing Analysis (FA) as a lens, Ryabova (2013)'s research focuses on euphemisms and their role in mass media communication as a general framing device used in the organization and the thematization of events and issues. The major purpose of her research is to investigate the processes involved in the formulation of euphemisms as well as the numerous roles that they play in the realm of communication. Then, she later found that euphemisms play a role in mass media communication as a general framing device— *"Media resorts to ambiguity, i.e. to euphemisms and frames"* which are used in the various organization.

Based on previous research, a large number of scholars have looked into how euphemism can be applied on critical discourse, such as in politics, politician tend to use euphemisms to hide scandals, cover up the truth, and sway public opinion. As such, in finding similar substances like other previous studies, this current study will discuss the euphemistic expression of political expression in *Tempo* and identify its types even further with the framework of PDA. *Tempo*—among the biggest newspapers covering mostly news and community in Indonesia, is used to be a sample of language data, as in Crespo-Fernández (2018, p. 3) says a daily newspaper is socially influential texts. This article, therefore, employs a few research questions; (i) what is the euphemism's lexical levels? (ii) what the euphemism types of political expressions are found?

Euphemism is a term that is used in place of uncomfortable expressions because speakers and writers try to avoid using those expressions while they are trying to convey their views. The origin of the word "euphemism" can be traced back to the Greek words "eu" and "pheme." *Eu* is the Greek word for "good," while *pheme* is the Greek word for "speaking." Because of this, the meaning of the word "euphemism" derives from its origin, which is to speak kindly or respectfully (Pan, 2013; Deng, 2016; Jdetawy, 2019; Allan & Burridge, 1991). Euphemisms, on the other hand, make it possible for people to talk about contentious issues while simultaneously softening the impact of such issues (Terry, 2020, p. 57).

In much literature, euphemism can also generally be defined as a substitute for unfavorable expressions and typically employed to minimize potential loss of face for the reader or receiver (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2014; Abrams & Harpham, 2015). It makes the words sound pleasant in the listener's ears, allowing the speaker to convey his or her thought and intent with ease. Euphemisms are effective because they reframe the more offensive expression with a different one that has the same meaning. This eliminates the potential for the listener to be offended. The recipient is likewise at ease when receiving the texts. The literal meaning of the words or phrases has been pushed aside, resulting in them sound pleasant and are acceptable to employ (Gao, 2013; Ardhan & Syukri, 2018).

In addition, Chi and Hao (2013, p. 45) pointed out that euphemisms are frequently used at every level and in every sector, such as in politics. Exactly why is this the case? This is the case due to the fact that euphemisms make delicate subjects sound less threatening. So, euphemism is often used as an alternative way to talk about something that isn't supposed to be talked about. This is because euphemisms are more acceptable from a political standpoint. But those particular things are not brought up, not because they cannot be, but because people do not talk about them or discuss them, or if they are discussed at all, it is in a roundabout way or in some other way (Jdetawy, 2019; Yıldız, 2021).

Euphemistic theory covers a wide range of topics. Some academics base their conclusions on the study of euphemisms. Drawing from the literature on euphemisms, this study chooses several distinct strategies and theory based on prior studies. All of which have given examples in taboo bodily excretion and damnation (Allan & Burridge, 1991; Warren, 1992). However, this study will apply them on political texts (see. Crespo-Fernandez, 2014, 2018).

Some of these strategies are including formal innovation: word formation, phonemic modification, loan words, and semantic innovation strategies. Word formation includes *derivation blends, acronyms, clipping, and compounding* (Al-Khasawneh, 2018; Rabab'ah & Al-Qarni, 2012; Warren, 1992). Derivation is the process of changing a loan word by having to add a native suffix or prefix to it, as in the case of "celibacy" from "celibatus." (life without love/sex). Blending is the process of forming a new word which is a combination of two or more parts of the word, such as *smog* (smoke + fog). Acronyms constructs from the first or the second initial letters that can be spoken or read like the other common word, such as *snafu* stands for *situation normal, all fucked up*. Clipping refers to terms created by eliminating one or more syllables from a broader word or phrase without altering its meaning, such as *bra* for *brassiere* and *geez* for *Jesus*. Compounding is the act of combining two or more words to make a new term, such as "redneck" (red + neck).

Modifying the form of unpleasant words is an example of a phonemic modification. These methods include the use of back slang, abbreviation, omission, and remodeling. Back slang refers to the custom of speaking words and phrases as though they were written in backward (e.g., redraw for warder) (Warren, 1992, p. 146). Al-Khasawneh (2018, p. 219) said that abbreviation in euphemism consists of a series of letters that are both written and spoken. The words are constructed from the initial letter or two of a phrase's words, but they do not actually perform the function of words. It is all pronounced as letter strings and not as words, such as *WTF* for *what the f\*ck*. Omission is the process of removing offensive language from a conversation by either pausing it or leaving out information that relates to a topic that is off limits. Omission is divided into two kinds of omission; quasi-omission and full-omission (Allan and Burridge). In the process of quasi-omission, the avoided term is replaced with specific non-lexical formulations. This contains the spoken equivalents of dashes and asterisks, such as *mhm* and *er-mm*. The use of full omission appears to be less common than the use of quasi-omission, such as *I need to go*, from which is omitted *to go to the lavatory* (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 17). Remodeling refers to one-for-one substitutions where either the onset or rhyming of an avoided phrase is changed. (e.g., sugar and shoot for shit).

Moreover, euphemisms can be formed by borrowing a foreign language. The word like *spit* is considered inappropriate in English; therefore, it is often replaced with *expectorate* from

French in the form of loan word. The final category of euphemistic strategies is semantics innovation. This strategy comprises *metaphor, circumlocution, colloquial, one-for-one substitution, hyperbole, understatement, general-for-specific, synecdoche*, and *using proper noun*. Euphemisms are included in this group because of their symbolic nature and their flexibility in terms of semantic interpretation (Warren, 1992, p. 149). Metaphor is one of the different approaches to semantic innovation that can be performed. Metaphorical euphemism is a form of euphemism that is used to avoid utilizing taboo terminology by giving those terms more neutral and implicit. Examples of metaphors are: (a) *cavalry's come* (b) *go to the happy hunting* (c) *the miraculous pitcher, that holds water with mouth downward*. The example (a) is substituted for the phrase *I have my period*. It implicitly represents the feeling of menstruation as the arrival of the cavalry. In this instance, the meaning of the term period has been incorporated into the definition of the word cavalry. Next, example (b) alludes to "death," which has a stigmatized meaning. so that using a phrase *go to the happy hunting* makes it sounds good to hear or read. While in (c) the word the miraculous pitcher, which holds water with mouth downward, mean vagina that has a taboo meaning. All of the preceding examples are euphemisms, which hide taboos or unpleasant which conceal taboos or bad connotations by employing metaphorical language with a more acceptable tone.

By using circumlocution, one can explain an idea without resorting to an overly large amount of words, such as *a little girl's room* for *the toilet*. Colloquial refers to terms or expressions used by common people in everyday language, such as *period* for *menstruation*. One-for-one substitution is a strategy to replace phrases that are disliked with expressions that are more pleasant and have connections in their meaning components or synonyms, such as *ass* and *butt*. The art of understatement consists in bringing up a taboo subject while giving the impression that the matter is of less significance than it actually is (e.g., as in *sleep for die*). On the other hand, hyperbole is defined as the use of exaggerated language with the purpose of eliciting an emotional response. This type of language involves warping taboo terms in order to make them appear larger and more impressive than they really are (e.g., *flight to glory* for *dead* and *visual engineer* for *window cleaner*). General-for-specific strategy (metonymy) is a way to talk about a part of a whole. (e.g., I 'll go to the bathroom for go to excrete) (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 18). Meanwhile, synecdoche (Part-for-Whole) takes certain other things with wider characteristics, such as *I've got a cough*, which means *stuffed up nose, postnasal drip, and running eyes*. Another common euphemism is to use proper nouns or proper names. It means to use the name of a specific person to say something hurtful. Warren gave the names "John Thomas" (Prick or penis), "Roger" (having sexual relations), and "Lady Jane" (cunt) as examples (Warren, 1992, p. 147).



A significant amount of discussion has been carried out making use of CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) in being the standpoint analysis. CDA, which was based on critical linguistics and was initially outlined in Fowler et al. (1979), demonstrated how language and grammar can be employed as ideological and power instruments (Mayr & Machin, 2012, p. 2), in particular, to investigate the language goal in *"understanding of how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge, in organizing social institutions or in exercising power"* (Wodak & Mayer, 2015, p. 7). Conversely, PDA (Political Discourse Analysis), a subfield of CDA that concentrates on discourse in politics (such as arguments, public appearances, news, etc.) and critically studies the decisive use of language to accomplish political interest, will be a more comprehensive framework to aid this research and help in the process of analyzing political text. (Chilton, 2004; van Dijk, 1997; Wang, 2016).

So, the current article will use the CDA framework to analyze these politically sensitive terms. In particular, van Dijk's PDA (Political Discourse Analysis) will be used. There are multiple dimensions and levels to the various discourse structures and procedures that make up political speech, as outlined by van Dijk (1997). Among these are topics, textual schemata, local semantics, lexicon, sentence construction, rhetoric, expression patterns, and speech acts. Yet, the local semantics and lexicon of euphemisms are the exclusive focus of this study—in order to relate lexical choices used by politicians, to eventually will break them into both word and phrasal levels.

In all of his work on CDA which is a method that looks at language as a type of social practice and concentrates on the methods by which inequality, oppression, and abuse of power are performed in society, whether written, oral, or both (Fairclough, 1989, 1995a; Fowler, 1991; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Van Dijk, 1995, 2003; Weiss & Wodak, 2003), Van Dijk has also paid special attention to the role of PDA in its place. In a lot of different ways, this could be related to the study of political discourse or the political framework to discourse. For the record, PDA are especially focusing on how language is reproduced, mislead, or used to dominate through political discourse which is similar to what CDA is interested in. This is because PDA is still embedded within the complete framework of CDA (Wang, 2016, p. 2768).

In addition, participants in political discourse, such as politicians, are the ones who "responsible" for producing it. This is a reference to the kind of talk that politicians use to achieve their political goals, such as addressing political campaigns, inciting political language to engage in political misuse, validating their political image, and raising their status in the public's view. (Al-Momani, 2017; Bayram, 2010; Bello, 2013; Chilton, 2004; van Dijk, 1997; Van Dijk, 2003). Even though the PDA can be reduced to the actions of politicians, Van Dijk (1997, p. 13) said that the PDA is "political communication," such as civilian events, because politicians are not the only

political actors. He further said that "the recipients" should also be included. People, citizens, the press, and many other types of people or groups who are involved in political society.

This study's research data comprises of euphemistic terms taken from political articles published on *Tempo*. It was gathered between the months of December 2022 and January 2023. This current study will be analyzed using Allan and Burridge (1991)'s euphemistic theory. Digital or online media has been chosen because it is one of the most straightforward ways for individuals living in the modern day to acquire information and keep up with contemporary issues and trends. One of the concerns that people obtain and gain in internet media is a political issue which is one of the themes that is a highly sensitive topic.

All of the data that were accessible and contained euphemistic terms were separated into the various sorts of euphemisms. It has designated the euphemism on the basis of these three references. 1) the term "euphemism" is generally understood to have a harsh connotation in political discourse. 2) the use of euphemism is often considered to be insulting or pointing directly to the subject of politicians. 3) Euphemism is a way of saying something in a way that does not make the person being spoken to feel bad or lose face.

The euphemistic political expression will also be examined qualitatively using the CDA framework. In specific, van Dijk's Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) will be implemented. According to van Dijk (1997), the different typical structures and methods of discourse that are part of political discourse have different levels and dimensions. These include subjects, textual schemata, local semantics, lexicon, sentence construction, rhetoric, expression patterns, and speech acts. However, this study focuses only on **the local semantics and lexicon of euphemism** which will break them into both word and phrase levels. So, this study will be able to discuss how euphemism became a way for political actors to conceal criticism, conceal the facts, and shift public sentiment when talking about social problems and occurrences in political texts.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes from the present study informed that euphemism can be applied in political discourse analysis in having a better view how politicians use a softer language (euphemism) in avoiding the sensitive topics. It is helpful to have the perspective of a second opinion which is familiar with the topic at hand. Therefore, when discussing it, it took into account the similar approach employed in previous related studies (see. Crespo-Fernandez, 2014, 2018; Ryabova, 2013). Then, following the analysis of data, each result is discussed in detail below.



### Euphemism at the word level

Lexical, the most surface level of linguistics interaction, is where the outcomes of euphemism are more clearly obvious and noticeable. Word choice, both figurative and non-figurative sense, plays as the most common place where euphemisms come from in political articles.

One of the euphemistic outcomes of lexical that had been using is that of *metaphorical* euphemism, which is when the true meaning of one term is replaced with another word that is more apparent yet has a more implicit meaning (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 17). This type can be recognized in the articles by the politicians' use of language that is evasive when attempting to avoid debating controversial subjects. Consider the following data:

(1) *Daripada uang kami **dihisap** oleh pusat.* (TEM - 131222)

'Instead of our money **being sucked** up by the central government.'

Based on sentence (1), the word *dihisap* (being sucked) is a euphemism according to the context of its delivering. It refers to pull or take something by force. The word of *dihisap* is used in order to substitute the term *diambil* (to be taken or to be withdrawn). *Dihisap* is considered as metaphorical euphemism which replaces the explicit meaning of a word with an implicit and vague one. Thus, the word *dihisap* served as a figurative expression, as it does not explicitly refer.

The use of the euphemism *dihisap* (1) is to convey in a different way that which Muhammad Adil (The regent of Meranti) intends not to be addressed to the Indonesian Ministry of Finance. The reason for this is that the language in text carries sensitive connotations; therefore, it has to not be mentioned directly in order to prevent the recipient from reacting in an aggravated manner. That is why using a metaphorical euphemism can be an escape for being too blunt by a politician.

While metaphors in euphemism are "by far the most potent mechanism in the construction of euphemism" (Fernández, 2006, p. 111), it is pretty apparent that metaphors offer a plentiful and powerful resource for euphemism (Warren, 1992 p. 146-149). When used in criticism, such as *dihisap* (1), the usage of (1) can lead to a hazy understanding of the situation since they compare two unrelated concepts (being sucked and being taken); however, this is done without addressing either of the concepts to which people may relate and feel, rather than insulted. A similar point is mentioned, Fairclough (1995b, p. 71), because of the social context in which they are used, metaphors can carry varying ideological connotations and reflect a variety of interests and points of other view.

In addition, the following quotation contains an additional fascinating usage of euphemism. Jokowi (the current president of Indonesia) and Istana (the palace) are examples of what Allan and Burrige (1991) point out as "synecdoche euphemism" in that the politician acted as a protective measure to avoid a sensitive word or reference. Synecdoche euphemism in politics are often used to be a save space in pointing someone— it helps concision because politician can classify numerous concepts under one single term (Catalano & Waugh, 2013, p. 408).

(2) *Bukannya memperbaiki UU, **Jokowi** malah menerbitkan Perpu Cipta Kerja pada 30 Desember [...]* (TEM-030123a).

‘Instead of amending the Law, **Jokowi** issued the Perpu (Government Regulation in lieu of Law) for The Job Creation on December 30<sup>th</sup> [...]

Here in excerpt (2), the word *Jokowi* does apply the notion of euphemism. It is actually referring to the individual who hold the authority to issue executive orders, which either command executive officers or explain or expand upon laws that are already in place. *Jokowi*, in this context, represents the president of Indonesia as the one who passes the Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (*Perpu*). However, the regulation is not solely Jokowi's responsibility; rather, it is designed and issued by the executive branch, which includes the president, vice president, and cabinet members (Zaidir & Arfai, 2022, pp. 361–362) . The use of *Jokowi* is classified into the euphemism type of synecdoche (part of the whole) because the broader connotation of *the executive branch* exchanges with the more specific one of *Jokowi*. Here, *Jokowi* is used for expressing a single word used to represent the whole related word which is being discussed.

(3) *Itu bukan urusan mendag, itu urusan **istana*** (TEM-030123b).

‘That's not the business of *mendag* (Ministry of Trade), that's the business of **the palace**’

The word *Istana* (the palace) (3) refers to a place for a president who makes a policy and decision. It can be said that *Istana* substitutes for *The President of Indonesia*. The term *Istana* is used as a synecdoche in euphemism, which replaces the general meaning with a specific word that is intimately associated with it. In this instance, when referring to *The President of Indonesia*, the author of this political article used the word *Istana* (3) as a synecdoche euphemism to avoid making a direct accusation. In other words, to lessen the possible face-affront of this sensitive

matter for his public image (Crespo-Fernandez, 2018, p. 10), he employs the mild-sounding word like *istana* to portray use a different way of dealing with the term.

Euphemism can also be formed as *borrowing*, that is, it used for instances from other languages that has the same meaning (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 18). This type manifests in the word *offside*, used in (4) to have a more pleasant connotation by using the borrowed word.

(4) *Ketua KPU **offside** dan terjadi disorientasi dalam dirinya.* (TEM-040123)

'The chairman of the KPU (Independent Elections Commission), was **offside** and he was disoriented.'

The word *offside* (4) refers to a crossing of someone's established boundary without permission. It can be seen that the word *offside* is actually talking about *being outside the law*. In this context, that term is not being used because it has a sensitive connotation if it delivers. The word *offside* (4), therefore, is considered as a *borrowing euphemism* that substitutes the initial referring with another language; English, so that it lessens the connotation. As it being said, "*Language is what creates politics*" in which politician and politics cannot exist apart from the systematic manipulation of language— borrowed word, as in the case, to construct and enact a particular political purpose (Moody & Eslami, 2020, p. 328).

Euphemism like *offside* (4) here is used to give negative concepts becoming a more positive tone. It is used by Ahmad Ali (the vice-chairman of Nasdem Party) as a choice language in voicing his criticisms against the chairman of KPU (Independent Elections Commission), Hasyim Asy'ari. The euphemism is chosen and said in order to save Hasyim Asy'ari's face from the offensive move. It also has a softer connotation and is more pleasant to hear.

*Acronym* is one of the euphemism types constructed from the first or second letters of a word, and they are both readable and pronounceable in the same way as common words. It uses to avoid directly using an insulting or otherwise unflattering term (Warren, 1992, p. 146). Many euphemisms can be found in the form of *acronym*, because it replaces the word that might provoke or discomfort the society in receiving the message:

(5) *Biasanya orang-orang yang **golput** ialah mereka yang bingung dengan keabsahan informasi yang ada, sehingga sulit untuk percaya pada para kandidat.* (TEM - 050123)

'Usually people who **golput** (the whites/abstain) are those who are confused about the legitimacy of the information available, making it difficult to trust the candidates.'

The word *golput* in sentence (5) stands for *golongan putih* (the whites). *Golput* (5) is considerably a euphemism, because it replaces the bitter word by constructing its acronym. In other words, it is an acronym euphemism that can be read or spoken in the same way as other common words due to the fact that it is formed from either the first or the second initial letters. *Golput* (5) which initially comes from to the word *golongan putih* means people who refuse to vote either for or against it, or it is also called the abstain (non-voting) (Lestari, 2021, p. 38).

In addition, it has used the term *golput* in talking about the *golongan putih* in a way that would otherwise be mentioned. In euphemism, an acronym is designed to smooth over or diminish the effect of what is actually going on by making and stating it in a short way (Deng, 2016, p. 545). Mudiwati, a political science expert at Padjajaran University, uses this term to emphasize her view on the electability survey and avoid saying face-affront to related people who giving an empty vote or non-voting.

Besides, *abbreviation* euphemism also plays a role in some cases of the euphemism in the articles. Abbreviation euphemism is a form of euphemism that consists of a string of letters. It created by merging the first letters of adjacent words, but they serve no functions as words. It is all spoken as a string of letters, not as a form of a word, such as *pee* for a piss. (Allan & Burridge, 1990. p.15). The interplay can be seen in the following quotation:

(6) *Sementara tersangka LE belum dilakukan penahanan oleh KPK.* (TEM – 050123a)

‘While the suspect **LE** has not been detained by the KPK.’

The word of *LE* (6) above refers to unethical conduct in which one person takes advantage of his position of power for personal gain. The word *LE* is an abbreviation for *Lukas Enembe* (an Indonesian corruptor). *LE* considers a euphemism because it is short for the name of person. The word *LE* is a euphemism for getting through abbreviation process. It is a method produced from the beginning letter of the words in a sentence, and it is spoken as strings of letters. By adopting the initial letter of *Lukas Enembe*, the word *LE* is transformed into an abbreviation euphemism.

The reason of using the euphemism *LE* is to replace *Lukas Enembe* in order to avoid saying a someone’s name and save his face. Alexander Marwata, vice-chairman of Indonesia’s Corruption Eradication Commission, uses *LE* (6) as an alternate method to say his name. Instead of revealing his name, *Lukas Enembe*, he prefers to use the first letter “*LE*” to avoid sensitive sentiments and keep his name ambiguous.

### Euphemism at phrasal level

Apart from lexical, the construction of phrases has a substantial contribution to the euphemistic effect and the objective of face-saving that politicians are trying to achieve. In example (7) below, a euphemism is constructed in the phrase as hyperbole; that is, it is employed for circumstances in which such exaggerations are used for emphasis or impact. (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 18) This type manifest in the phrase of *kembali terjun* (replunge), used in (7) to have pleasant connotation by using the exaggerated word.

(7) *Setelah resmi bebas pada Maret 2020, Rommy lama tak terdengar kabarnya. Dia kembali mengejutkan publik ketika mengumumkan dirinya **kembali terjun** ke politik* (TEM-040123)

‘After being officially released in March 2020, Rommy was not heard from for a long time. He surprised the public again when he announced his **return** to politics.’

A euphemism is conveyed with the use of the term *kembali terjun* (7). It initially refers to throw someone or something forward, down, or into a place at high speed. It can be seen that the phrase of *kembali terjun* is actually referring to *rejoin* or *return*. In this context, after a resignation, it is generally frowned upon to use the term "rejoining" as it does not point explicitly in whatsoever. The phrase *kembali terjun* is used, therefore, as a hyperbolic euphemism in which were employed to exaggerate the meaning effect of Rommy's rejoining to the political party after serving time as a corruption prisoner. As a rhetorical strategy, the use of hyperbole in political texts serves to modify the original of fact by exaggerated it in order to accomplish a political goal (Dezhkameh et al., 2021, p. 234). Thus, by employing hyperbolic term (7), the political text is able to exaggerate the negative behaviours of Rommy in a way that is more subtle.

*Metaphor*, according to Otieno et. al (2016, p. 25), plays an important role in political discourse because they give politicians the ability to either conceal or bring attention to particular political scenarios, ideologies, or emotional states. When taking a critical stance toward political discourse, metaphors become increasingly important. Metaphors are considered as offering a direct access to conceptual, including ideological structures which CDA tries to uncover, as Musolff (Musolff, 2016, pp. 2–3) astutely demonstrates. It can reveal the speakers' true intentions and attitudes when they use euphemistic metaphors in political speech (Crespo-Fernandez, 2018, p. 14)

While in euphemism, metaphor is the practice of modifying the implicit meaning of a term by substituting another word that has a favorable connotation. (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 17), and it also performs at phrase level. The results are presented in the following (8) and (9).

(8) *Yunarto menyebut hasil survei juga mengungkap Partai Golkar dan Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) dapat menjadi **perahu baru** untuk Ganjar Pranowo di Pilpres 2024, apabila tidak diusung PDIP. (TEM - 131222)*

'Yunarto said the survey results also revealed that the Golkar Party and the National Awakening Party (PKB) could become **new boats** for Ganjar Pranowo in the 2024 Presidential Election, if they are not supported by the PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle).'

(9) *Atau malah mereka berbeda **kendaraan politik** mengingat panas-dingin hubungan yang terjalin. (TEM - 131222)*

'Or even they have different **political vehicles** considering the hot and cold relationship that exists.'

The euphemism of *perahu baru* (new boats) (8) and *kendaraan politik* (political vehicles) (9) are deduced based on the sentence of Tempo political article above. Both of which refer to a tool or platform that organizes candidates to across and run in elections. The *perahu baru* (8) and *kendaraan politik* (9) are used in order to substitute the portrayal of a political party as the medium for someone to be running the election. Both are considered metaphor euphemisms which replace the actual meaning of a term with one that has a milder connotation. Thus, the term *perahu baru* and *kendaraan politik* played in a figurative sense in order to not making direct pointing and avoid unsettling topic, as metaphorical euphemism is initially devised (Zhang & Lei, 2019, p. 48).

The role of the euphemism *perahu baru* (8) and *kendaraan politik* (9) in this article are to say in a different sense about *political party* that prefers not to be mentioned by Yunarto Wijaya (a political expert) on his interview. The reason is that it has sensitive connotations. Therefore, the phrase must not be mentioned directly to prevent provoking annoyance in the readers or other parties.

Likewise, in example (10) below, politicians also would replace the use of a small number of words to describe a concept with an excessively big amount of words in order to say something that is unfavorable. It leads to a *circumlocution euphemism*. Consider the following datum in (10).

(10) *Ahmad Yani menanggapi soal elektabilitas **partai berlambang Ka'bah itu** yang anjlok dalam setiap survei.* (TEM – 050123b)

‘Ahmad Yani responded to the issue of the electability of **the party with the Kaaba symbol** which has fallen in every survey.’

The phrase of *Partai berlambang Ka'bah itu* (that party with Kaaba symbol) refers to *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (The United Development Party). Hence, the phrase *Partai berlambang Ka'bah itu* applies circumlocution euphemism. It replaces the referring with a large number of words one which has a relation around its sense. This expression is intended to imply indirectly about the party with an Islam-based purpose – an Indonesian Muslim party.

The euphemism *Partai berlambang Ka'bah itu* is used here because it avoids the blunt, which Ahmad Yani uses it. With the goal of covering the real intended referring. By saying in circumlocution, it sounds a nicer connotation and will help to avoid offending to the readers or any related parties. As Al-Haq & Al-Sleibi (2015, p. 326) points out that politicians are able to dodge the obvious and preserve their reputations through the use of circumlocution.

## CONCLUSION

Euphemism plays a vital role for politician when they convey their unpleasant words or expression to be more pleasant remarks, which may leave their people feeling pleased to hear. By using such expressions, they aim to exert influence over people's worldview and information transfer. Therefore, when reading political discourse, people should be on the lookout for potential political intentions concealed by using euphemism. Here, in view of the results, the findings give support to the theory that politicians had a tendency to use euphemism at the word and phrase levels as a disguised tool for them in concealing unsettling statements. This tendency was most commonly demonstrated by politicians by using *metaphor*, *circumlocution*, *synecdoche*, *borrowing*, *hyperbole*, *abbreviation*, and *acronym*. This research of political euphemisms also confirms that the political aims in employing euphemisms in politics are for the purpose of providing political leaders with a disguise tool that can be used to hide the unpleasant statements, cover up the criticism, and sway public opinion.



In conclusion, the findings of this study offer a fresh viewpoint, not only on the matter from the point of view of pure politics, but also from the point of view of linguistics and political discourse analysis. It is hoped that the findings of this study would encourage resourceful reading and give a contribution to the study of euphemism, particularly as it relates to political text, which will serve as reference of future research.

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