

# AN ANALYSIS OF EUPHEMISM IN ONLINE WRITTEN MASS MEDIA IN INDONESIA; JAKARTA POST AND REPUBLIKA NEWSPAPER IN POLITICAL SECTION

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**AN ANALYSIS OF EUPHEMISM IN ONLINE WRITTEN MASS MEDIA IN  
INDONESIA; JAKARTA POST AND REPUBLIKA NEWSPAPER IN POLITICAL  
SECTION**

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**Abstract.** Euphemism exists since there is an emergence of taboos and people nowadays are likely to avoid something harsh to say or mentioned. Further, the purpose of Euphemism in People's communication is actually to maintain their social relation. Since Euphemism is very crucial in building up someone's communication so that, it makes the researcher conducted this study of analysis Euphemism especially in Political field. Further, the aim of this research is to find out: (1) the types and functions of Euphemism appeared in Online Newspapers; *Jakarta Post and Republika*, (2) the most frequent of type and function of Euphemism have shown up in the selection section, Politics. Moreover, this research is qualitative-descriptive since the researcher analyzed the data interpretatively or based on the writers' point of view. In addition, all the data explained descriptively by using some theories in describing the types and the functions of Euphemism. In categorizing the types, the researcher used theory from Allan and burridge who proposed 13 types of Euphemism and for explaining the function the researcher used Samoskaite theory who proposed 5 pragmatic functions of Euphemism. Moreover, the techniques in collecting the data the researcher followed 3 steps from Wray and Bloomer theory; *choosing the media, transcribing the section and taking a note for the object (Euphemism)*. The last for analyzing the data there are 3 steps taken from Miles and Huberman theory; *reducing data, displaying data, drawing and verifying conclusions*. In two weeks of the observation, the researcher found 9 Euphemism from 23 articles selected and 9 of them are categorized into 5 from 13 types Euphemism, they are; *Figurative (Idiom and Irony), Circumlocution, Omission (Synecdoche), Understatement and Borrowing type*. Further, the function of Euphemisms found in the Political section is categorized into *Politeness function, Taboo function, and Tactical function*. Finally, the researcher took a conclusion on the most frequent of type and function of Euphemism found in Online Newspapers; *Jakarta Post and Republika in Political section published in April 10<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019*, and they are *Idiom in figurative type and Taboo function*.

**Keywords:** euphemism, types and functions of euphemism, online newspapers

## INTRODUCTION

Mass Media is the media of communication which serve some kinds of information that is in purpose to expose what is happening now to the readers as a news. It can be presented in any of platforms such as Electronic Broadcasting, Printed Media, also in Online Media. Furthermore, the objective of Mass Media is for building a public opinion, which can also affect the mass audiences' ideology indirectly. Building the public opinion and affecting the mass audiences' ideology are obviously the role of Mass Media writers. They sometimes reveal the global issues becomes in more seriously concern, such as in social, politic, or economy matters. However, those matters sometimes bring those writers about to familiar on something towards taboo, harsh or offensive words to be mentioned. If the writers of the Mass Media keep mentioning those taboos or something offensive in their issues, then it can possibly bring any negatives perspectives for anyone who read it. If this negatives perspectives are rising around the society, the conflicts cannot be avoided among one to another parties.

The word of Euphemism itself has been defined as, "a practice of referring to something offensive or indelicate in terms to make it sound more pleasant or becoming than it really is", Leech (1980:45). According to Warren (1992:8) Euphemism is a word or phrase as a communication's style that is used to convey something that is unpleasant, sensitive, vulgar or taboo to be sounded positive, polite or pleasant and generally it is used in particular topics such as sex, drug abuse, mental defects, political, death, crim<sup>7</sup> military fact and physical. Further, from the online Etymology Dictionary, Euphemism is originally from a

Greek word with two parts “eu”, that means “good”, and “ph<sub>2</sub>rae”, which means “utterance”. There are some functions of Euphemism, and one of them is to protect the speaker or writer, hearer<sub>11</sub> reader from possible effrontery and offence, (Linfood-Ham, 2005:228).

Euphemism is the avoidance of words which may be seen as offensive, obscene, or somehow disturbing to listeners or readers and the items which<sub>1</sub> are being euphemized are often taboo (Southerland, Katamba, 1997: 554). According to Fromkin and Rodman who defined a Euphemism as “a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening or unpleasant subjects” (1993: 304). The Oxford Companion to the English Language (1992) stated a Euphemism in a similar way that it is a word or phrase used as polite replacement for another, which<sub>4</sub> considered too vulgar, too painful or offensive to religious susceptibilities. Moreover, according to Rawson (1981: 3), Euphemism is “described as mild agreeable or round about word used in place of coarse, painful or offensive one”. Neaman and Silver (1983: 5) also claim that Euphemism is a way to substitute an offensive or unpleasant word for a more explicit, offensive one, thereby veneering the truth by using polite words. From the definition above, then the researcher conclude that Euphemism has a meaning to replace any kinds of offensive or harsh words, which can be mentioned or sounded in some contexts in human’s life into a pleasant one (make the words soften or hide unpleasant ideas) which can be more acceptable by anyone who heard it or in other words, the listener can accept it as well.

Moreover, related to Mass Media which served some issues in English context, it can be associated towards the educational purpose. It means, there is an availability of a media which can be utilized in English Learning context for Indonesia EFL Learners especially. By utilizing this Mass Media, it is expected that EFL Learners can enrich their vocabs, grammar, and particularly their insight about Euphemism which play an important role in their part of social communication. However, the numbers of Euphemism and the one which got euphemistic seems always increase<sub>7</sub> and get a little bit changes based on the situation and need of the speakers over the times. Hammond & Bransford (2012) have noted from those changes, Euphemisms can pose problems such as confusion and failure to adequately interpret information not only for language learners, but also for language teachers. Hence, the way to avoid to such problem is becoming too familiar.

Bearing these all in mind, the researcher believes that people now are likely to put their concern about to use Euphemism whenever they find the issues are difficult to talk cause its sensitivity. Also, for the EFL learners, the topic about Euphemism is really essential for them to be learnt in order to help them to maintain the social communication and relation whenever they find some people surround them trying to discuss some serious global issues in Eng<sub>3</sub>h context. Therefore, by looking up to this circumstance, the researcher wants to focus on “An Analysis of Euphemism in Online Written Mass Media in Indonesia; *Jakarta Post and Republika Newspaper in Political Section (Published in April 10<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019)*”. Based on the background of the study above, the researcher would like to carry out a research based on the following questions: What are the types and the functions of Euphemisms appeared in Jakarta Post and Republika Online N<sub>3</sub>ewspaper in Political Section? What are the most frequent of Euphemism appeared in Jakarta Post and Republika Online Newspaper in Political Section based on its types and functions?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research will be in a descriptive<sub>3</sub>-qualitative method, due to the finding of the research need a detail explanation on each types and f<sub>2</sub>unctions of Euphemisms found in the two of Jakarta Post and Republika Online Newspaper. Mackey and Gass (2005: 162) defined qualitative research as “a research that is based on descriptive data which doesn’t make (regular) use of statistical procedures. In addition, qualitative research is not set up as

experiments in which the data cannot be easily quantified and the analysis is interpretative rather than statistical. It means, this research will be analyzed interpretatively based on the writers' point of view.

Further, in this research design, the researcher will use Samoskaite (2011) model of Euphemisms which divided into six semantic categories. However, the researcher only choose one of them, and the focus is only on the Political Euphemism. Then the researcher will try to find out the meaning by using Euphemism dictionaries, such as '*Euphemism and Other Doubletalk*' written by Hugh Rawson (1981) and '*How Not to Say What You Mean*' written by R.W. Holder (2002) and if the researcher find any difficulties in reveal the meaning of some Euphemisms found, the researcher will browse it in Google; Online Idiom dictionary, Collins Dictionary or consult with the linguists. Besides that, the types of Euphemisms also will be analyzed by conducting Allan and Burridge theory (1991:14-19) who proposed thirteen types of Euphemism. Moreover, the researcher will mention the function of each Euphemisms appeared in Mass Media which have been selected before, by applying Samoskaite theory (2011: 18) who proposed five pragmatics functions of Euphemism. After finding out the Political Euphemism in both Medias choosen, then the researcher will conclude about the most frequent Political Euphemism appeared based on its types and its functions.

#### **Technique Data Collection**

First, the researcher will open the internet portal (browser) from Laptop or Smartphone and access Online Newspaper especially Jakarta Post and Republika.co.id in Apps or Google. After get the access on these two online Newspapers, then the researcher will follow the news and take the data only from Political section April 10<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019. The duration in collecting the data is about two weeks. Next, if the researcher found a Euphemism in the data which have been collected, the researcher will copy the paragraph in Microsoft Word and give them a highlight. Then, copy the words or phrases which got highlighted and paste it in table Political Euphemism. The theory in collecting the data will be taken from Wray and Bloomer (2006: 170) who explained that observation is the activity of recording, transcription and notes related to what is going to be observed.

#### **Technique Data Analysis**

After doing the observation, the researcher will use a theory from Miles and Huberman (1994:12) for analyzing the collected data before. The steps on analyzing the data; *Reducing data, displaying data, drawing and verifying conclusions*. In *drawing and verifying conclusions* the researcher will provide some theories to classify the Euphemism found into its type and functions. First, the researcher will classify a Euphemism into thirteen types of Euphemism and it is based on Allan and Burridge theory (1991:14-19). The first step to determine the type of a Euphemism is by looking at the form (as it can be included in *figurative, flippancy, remodeling, circumlocution, clipping, acronym, abbreviation, omission, hyperbole, understatement, borrowing, indirection and abstraction*). Afterward, the researcher will categorize them into Five Pragmatic Functions of Euphemisms based on Samoskaite theory (2011: 18); *Politeness, Taboo, Covering Up, Inducing, and Tactical*. After finding out Political Euphemism in both of Mass Medias chosen and classified them into types and functions, next the researcher will conclude about the most frequent Political Euphemism which appeared based on its types and also its functions due to answer the second research question in this study.

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

There are 23, the total number of Political articles from Jakarta Post and Republika Newspaper in 2 weeks of the observation, which is selected to be analyzed. The Political news in Jakarta Post newspaper is always being published and updated everyday until in one



day there are more than two articles being published. Different from Republika Newspaper which in some certain time, like on dates of the observation; 13<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April 2019, is not publishing any Political articles and for one day this newspaper published about one or two articles only. By comprehending this situation, the writer decided to take one article which has presented Political issues on each days in both of the Newspapers. In addition, this selection might contain Euphemism as well. Moreover, in reducing the data, the writer is not only reducing the number of Political articles on each days but also reducing some sentences written in the articles collected before. The writer intend to focus on some words which contain Euphemism only. Further, this focused is for explaining the meaning of each Euphemisms found in articles published by both of the Newspapers. Further, they are as presented below;

Table 1: The distribution of Euphemism

Date	Red:	Title of the article	No	Political Euphemisms	Taboo
Wed, April 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (04:34 pm)	Fachrul Sidiq	<i>Junior Candidates Try to Come Out From Parents' Shadows</i>	-	-	-
Thu, April 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (03:34 pm)	Ghina Ghaliya and N. Adri	<i>Jokowi Has Solid Footing, but Tide Changing in Kalimantan</i>	-	-	-
Fri, April 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (05:15 pm)	Made Anthony Iswara	<i>Local Election Offices Reject Hoards of Late Voters</i>	-	-	-
Sat, April 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (03:27 pm)	Marguerite Afra Sapiie	<i>Carnival, Concerts Entertain Crowd at Jokowi's Largest Rally in Jakarta</i>	-	-	-
Sun, April 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (05:31 pm)	9 Marchio Irfan Gorbiano and Ghina Ghaliya	<i>Presidential Camps Touch on Nationalism in Economy, Different Formulas to Achieve Equality</i>	1	Opening salvo	Verbal attacks
Mon, April 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (09:45 am)	Karina M. Tehusjarana, Ghina Ghaliya, Agnes Anya and Tertiani ZB Simanjuntak	<i>Voter Zeal Leads to Poll Hiccups</i>	-	-	-
Tue, April 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (04:43 pm)	Rizki Fachriansyah	<i>Online Quiz Helps Undecided Voters Identify with Candidates</i>	-	-	-
Wed, April 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (05:51 pm)	Made Anthony Iswara and Nurul Fitri Ramadhani	<i>Prabowo Claims Election Lead, Accuses Pollsters of Being 'Partisan'</i>	-	-	-
Thu, April 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (07:27 pm)	Made Anthony Iswara	<i>Prabowo Declares Victory, Again</i>	-	-	-
Fri, April 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (06:05 pm)	Ivany Atina Arbi	<i>KPU Says Human Error Caused Inconsistent Vote Recap Data</i>	2	Lose faith	Distrust
Sat, April 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 (09:33 am)	Dian Septiari	<i>World Leaders Laud RI</i>	-	-	-

Sun, April 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2019 (05:12 pm)	Ghina Ghaliya	<i>Pollsters Defend Quick Counts, Challenge Critics to Open Data</i>	3	Biased	Inclined to one side
Mon, April 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2019 (12:07 pm)	Karina M. Tehusijarana	<i>Parties Fail to Make Use of Coattail Effect: Experts</i>	4	Mid-table parties	Losing party
Tue, April 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2019 (03:52 pm)	Marguerite Afra Sapiie	<i>'Prabowo is a Rational Man', Jokowi Aide Says</i>	5	Rational man	An emotional person
			6	Jumped into the fray	Involved in a fight
			7	Ruffling feathers	Unpleasant action

Table 2: Function of euphemism

No	Functions of Euphemism	Script No.	Political Euphemisms
1	Politeness Function	<p>6 <i>"Jokowi Condoles Death of Over 90 Election Officers"</i>                      Calling them <b>democracy's heroes</b>, President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) has expressed his deepest condolences over the deaths of 91 election officers, in the single-day presidential and legislative elections, on April 17, 2019.</p>	Democracy's heroes
2	Taboo Function	<p>9 <i>"Presidential Camps Touch on Nationalism in Economy, Different Formulas to Achieve Equality"</i>                      In Prabowo's <b>opening salvo</b> during Saturday night's debate against the direction the Jokowi administration's economic policy is taking, he stated that the country was taking a wrong turn. "Too much of Indonesia's money is going outside the country, and deindustrialization is happening. While other countries are going through industrialization, we are going through deindustrialization," he said, adding that his camp had a strategy to change that.</p>	Opening salvo
		<p><i>"Prabowo is a Rational Man", Jokowi Aide Says"</i>                      Amid political tension surrounding the election results, an aide of incumbent President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has jumped into the fray and called for the Prabowo Subianto camp to refrain from further ruffling feathers as a real vote count of the presidential election is underway.</p>	Rational man
		<p><i>"Prabowo is a Rational Man", Jokowi Aide Says"</i>                      Amid political tension surrounding the election results, an aide of incumbent President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has <b>jumped into the fray</b> and called for the Prabowo Subianto camp to refrain from further ruffling feathers as a real vote count of the presidential election is underway.</p>	Jumped into the fray
		<p><i>"Prabowo is a Rational Man", Jokowi Aide Says"</i>                      Amid political tension surrounding the election results, an aide of incumbent President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has jumped into the fray and called for the Prabowo Subianto camp to refrain from further <b>ruffling feathers</b> as a real vote count of the presidential election is underway.</p>	Ruffling feathers
		<p><i>"Prabowo Team to Report Ballot Entry Mistake to DKPP"</i>                      If the mistake was not discovered, KPU would have been successful in <b>marking up the number of votes</b> for Jokowi, he remarked.</p>	Marking up the number of votes
		<p><i>"Pollsters Defend Quick Counts, Challenge Critics to Open</i></p>	Biased

		10 a” Eight reputable pollsters grouped under the Indonesian Association for Public Opinion Surveys (Persepi) have defended their “quick count” methodology amid allegations they were <i>biased</i> toward President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo.	
3	Covering Function	Up —	—
4	Inducing Function	—	—
5	Tactical Function	“Parties Fail to Make Use of Coattail Effect: Experts” Meanwhile, several <i>mid-table parties</i> , which some pollsters had predicted might not meet the electoral threshold of 4 percent, have consolidated their positions in the House. The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the National Mandate Party (PAN) and the United Development Party (PPP) obtained around 9 percent, 7 percent, and 5 percent of the vote, respectively. [...] Newcomers, on the other hand, were not so lucky, with none of the four first-time election participants passing the electoral threshold. The Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI), which has billed itself as a party for millennials and has a strong social media presence, gained only around 2 percent of the vote but vowed that it would remain active in Indonesian politics (mid-table parties).	Mid-table parties
		15 a” “KPU Says Human Error Caused Inconsistent Vote Recap 15 a” “With this incident, I’m starting to <i>lose faith</i> in the commission. I hope it can maintain its credibility and honesty. Please, do not take sides for one particular party,” said the person who recorded the video.	Lose faith

Further, comparing the result of this research study to some previous relevant studies discussed in Chapter 2 before, for instance the research study entitled “Euphemism used in Political Articles in Reuters.com”, by Munfaati (2008) who also found; Metonymy, Metaphor, Synecdoche, Idiom and Circumlocution. Another research study from Azkiyah (2008) entitled “a Study of Euphemism Found in Political Articles in The National Section of The Jakarta Post” also found; Metaphor, Idiom and Synecdoche. Based on the result on this research study and other previous studies in analyzing Euphemism in some written mass medias which originally written by Indonesian mass media writers in English context, it can be seen that they mostly often employ figurative types such as *Idiom*. More Focusing on this research result, the writer emphasized that the most frequent of types Euphemism appeared in both of the Newspapers is *Idiom in figurative types*, exm: *Lose faith, Jumped into the fray* and *Ruffling feathers*.

Moreover about the functions of Euphemism used for conveying the Political issues, the writer found 3 from 5 functions proposed by Samoskaite theory (2011: 18). They are **Politeness function, Taboo function, and Tactical function**. At least, the writer wants to notice to the readers in this research result about the most frequent of functions of Euphemism shown in the articles above is *Taboo function*, exm: *Opening salvo, Rational man, Jumped into the fray, Ruffling feathers, Marking up the number of votes and Biased*. Those Euphemism are actually replacing the harsh or the offensive words, (the things mentioned harshly and offensively, it calls Taboo). By looking at this function of Taboo, it

clearly shows that the rising Political tension between one and another parties in the Election is literally exist. However, our Indonesian mass media writers still put much concern on the issues above by employing Euphemism with types of figurative, such as Idiom in their Political articles in Jakarta Post and Republika online newspapers.

## CONCLUSION

The used of Euphemism which employed by Indonesian mass media writers in their media written context, especially in English context, from the last research study conducted by Al-hafiz in 2013 on the analysis of Euphemism in Opinion Coloumn of Jakarta Post Newspaper to this present time, it can be proven that Indonesian mass media writers still keep trying to prevent the readers from any kinds of taboo or harsh words or utterances which can possibly trigger a rising tension between one and another parties. Based on the research result, the researcher then concluded several things for answering two research questions.

They are as follows;

- a. The types of Euphemism which appeared in Jakarta Post and Republika Online Newspaper especially in Political Section, are categorized into 5 from 13 types of Euphemism (the theory adopted from Allan and Burridge (1991:14-19)). They are Idiom and Irony which are included in **figurative types** and for Idiom, the Euphemisms appeared here; *Lose faith, Jumped into the fray, Ruffling feathers* and for Irony; *Rational Man*. The other types of Euphemism are **Circumlocution type** with the words; *Biased*, then Synecdoche for the word; *Mid-table parties* in the **Omission type**. Next, **Understatement type**; *Marking up the number of vote* and *Democracy's heroes*. The last type is **Borrowing type**; *Opening salvo*. Moreover, the functions of Euphemisms appeared in the online Newspapers chosen above are classified into 3 from 5 functions of Euphemism theory proposed by Samoskaite (2011: 18). They are **Politeness function, Taboo function, and Tactical function**. In **Politeness function**; *Democracy's heroes*, then **Taboo function**; *Opening salvo, Rational man, Jumped into the fray, Ruffling feathers, Marking up the number of votes, and Biased*. The last is **Tactical function**; *Mid-table parties and Lose faith*.
- b. The most frequent of Euphemism appeared in Jakarta Post and Republika Online Newspaper in Political Section based on its types and functions are **Idiom** in **figurative** type and **Taboo function**. By looking at Taboo function which appeared most often in the Political articles chosen above, then it clearly shows that the rising Political tension between one and another parties in the Election is literally exist. However, our Indonesian mass media writers still put much concern on it by employing some Euphemisms and it is mostly in types of figurative, like Idiom.

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