
The Use of Euphemism in Dr Oz Indonesia TV Show

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Abstract

When we are discussing topics that are considered sensitive, such as death, religion, excretion, and sex, the use of euphemism is very helpful. There is always the tendency to protect the “face”, especially in the media. This research examines the euphemism formations, according to Allan’s (2012) classification of euphemism formations, for death and sickness, and sexual terms in Dr. Oz Indonesia talk show. The data was taken from the euphemisms used by the speaker in the selected video. The selected videos were taken only from segments of the show that discuss related topics. The used euphemisms then were analysed by putting them on table and classified them one by one by how they are formed. The findings show that the euphemisms are formed by using clipping, general-for-specific, circumlocution, litotes, hyperbole, substitution, and verbal play. The use of euphemism becomes the solution for all these problems that arise in sensitive communication. Euphemism does not only give a more positive connotation to a negative context, but also protects, at the same time, maintains the face of both of the participants.

Keywords: euphemism, taboo, sex, sickness & death, talk show

Media and Euphemism

Language is the main means for conducting communication with people around us in our daily life. Not only for communication matters, language is also essential for expressing one’s ideas to others. Therefore, the function of the media is essential in society, since the media is the most powerful medium that facilitates people to express their thoughts.

The media is so powerful but it cannot be separated from euphemism due to its powerfulness itself. According to McChesny (2004, as cited from Ryabova 2003), “media is in the center of struggle for power and control in any society”. Thus, the most effective control for power in the media is argued to be euphemism (Ryabova, 2013). American media were tasked with the Bush Administration to produce a “positive stories about war” (propaganda) (Washington Post, 12.2.2005, as cited from Ryabova, 2013) to cover the Iraq war.

Euphemism and frames are usually used to resort ambiguity (Ryabova, 2013). It is not rare to find discussion on sensitive issues or topics such as death, religion, excretion, and sex, on the media. In the discussion of these topics, certain expressions are used, which are considered taboo and unpleasant by the society. This will be troublesome for the continuity of the discussion itself: the discussion will be obstructed and even unpleasant to be talk about. More difficulty will arise if the issue is important to be discussed and has still to be discussed in the society, whether you want it or not. Therefore, the discussion of these topics cannot be separated from the use of euphemism.

This research focuses on the formations of the euphemism for death, which deals with the expression used to describe a terminal sickness and to implicitly encourage the audience to see a sickness or disease in a more positive way. It also examines the euphemism for the profane, which talks about sexual topics, whether the host(s) will use euphemism to express or explain sexual acts and/or related body parts, or uses the actual terms as what they are. The data of the research were taken from Indonesian television talk show, Dr. Oz Indonesia, which is an adaptation of America’s The Dr. Oz Show. Keith Allan’s (2012) classifications of euphemism formations are used to analyse the collected data.

Politeness and face

There must be some etiquette to be polite within a culture, not only in how we behave, but also in how we speak to other people. In “Pragmatics”, a book written by Yule (1996), it is explained that politeness can be “defined as the means employed to show awareness of another person’s face.” Here, face is one’s public self-image that refers to emotional and social sense. The face expects to be recognized by others according to whatever the face wants it to be. This is also known as face wants. If someone says something that threatens another’s face, it is regarded as face threatening act. If what happens is the opposite, then what he is doing is considered a face saving act.

Goffman wrote in his essay, “On Face-Work” (compiled in his book, “*Interaction Ritual: Essay on Face-to-Face Behaviour*”, Goffman, 1967), that the face is protected (conscious act) and affected (unconscious act) by a set of verbal and/or nonverbal acts. There is some kind of responsibility to always maintain the face, not only one’s own face, but also others’. This happens in order to retain cooperative and amiable relationship in one’s environment and to prevent conflict by damaging other’s face. Threatening one’s own face and others’ are considered as undesirable acts.

Euphemism

The etymology of euphemism is originated from Greek word *euphemos*, which means ‘auspicious, good, fortunate speech, kind.’ The word itself is a derivation of the Greek root-words *eu*, meaning good or well, and *pheme*, meaning speech or speaking (Burridge, 2012). According to Oxford dictionary, euphemism means “a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing.” There are a lot of motives behind the use of euphemism, but we can simplify that its use is mainly to protect, either the “face” of the speaker or the listener.

The formation of euphemism

In his paper “X-phemism and creativity” Keith Allan (2012) proposes types of euphemism formations:

1. **Remodeling.** Remodeling covers the change in the spelling of words. For example, instead using the word *fuck*, the spelling is remodeled into *fcuk*. Remodeling can also change the dispreferred terms into a completely different word form, such as *Golly* instead of *God*, or *eld* instead of *old*. Burridge (2012:77) proposes this kind of remodeling as *phonological remodeling*.
2. **Contractions**
 - a. **Clipping.** There are two types of clipping, which are fore-clipping (deleting the front part of the word) and end-clipping (deleting the part of the word from the back). The use of *pants* instead of *underpants* is considered as a fore-clipping, and the use of *undies* for the same reference is regarded as end-clipping.
 - b. **Acronym.** Acronym is a word constructed from the initial of the words or phrases, and pronounced all the initials as a word instead of pronouncing it letter by letter, like abbreviation. E.g. *snafu*, which is an acronym for ‘Situation Normal, All Fucked Up’, and pronounced as /'snafu/.
 - c. **Abbreviation.** Abbreviation is similar with acronym in forming the word, but, as stated above, the pronunciation is different with acronym. An abbreviation is pronounced letter by letter. ‘S.O.B’ is an abbreviation for ‘Son Of a Bitch’ and pronounced as /'es ɒv bi/ rather than /sāb/. Abbreviation is also known as alphabetism or what Burridge (2012:75) refers as initialism.
 - d. **Omission.** There are two types of omission. When some letters in a word are missing and ‘replaced one-by-one by a non-alphabetic symbol’, this formation is called quasi-omission. The example of this kind of omission is *f—k* or *f**k* for *fuck*. This kind of omission is also referred as **non-lexical substitutions**, even though this kind of omission also includes the use of *mhm*, *er-mm*, and similar sounds, to replace the dispreferred terms. There is also full-omission which works the same as clipping. The use of this kind of formation will omit *God* from *Gracious God!*, resulting an end-clipping *Gracious*, or omit *Good* from *Good gracious!*, resulting a fore-clipping *Gracious*. These are the profane reference to the

graciousness of God. Another example of full-omission is the omission of *lavatory* from *the ladies / gents lavatory*.

3. **General-for-specific.** It also refers to metonymy, in which changes the dispreferred terms into a more general terms, e.g. *down there* for 'genitals'.
4. **Part-for-whole euphemism.** This kind of euphemism is also known as synecdoche, which means taking the dispreferred terms with something else that is more specific, e.g. *grey hairs*, *white hairs* 'old age'.
5. **Upgrades, downgrades, deceptions and obfuscations**
 - a. **Circumlocution.** It uses more words to express or describe the dispreferred, e.g. *doors* 'entry systems'.
 - b. **Litotes.** When a positive expression is expressed through negating its contrary, then the litotes formation is used (e.g. *he's not unintelligent*). Kate Burridge (2012) argues that litotes or **understatement** is the form that is most used by the bureaucrats, specifically the use of *not in/un*. Allan also proposes **ironic hedges** as another kind of litotes, e.g. *criminal sexual assault* 'rape'.
 - c. **Hyperbole** or **overstatement** is the opposite of litotes or understatement. E.g. *fight to glory* 'death'.
6. **Substitution** covers both the substitute of the dispreferred terms into another terms from within the language (e.g. in Indonesian, *burung* 'bird' is the substitution for *penis*) or borrowed terms from another language (e.g. the use of French word *mot* for *cunt*) to make the phrase sounds more polite.
7. **Appearance based metaphor.** Euphemism can also be used through using figurative speech, which replace the dispreferred phrase into something that it is not really relevant. E.g. in Malaysia, people (mostly woman) use the term *pisang* 'banana' for *penis*.
8. **Colour based metaphor for X-phemism.** People sometimes figuratively use colour as euphemism terms, even though it is more rare to find euphemistic figurative speech by using colours, rather than orthophemistic (straight-forward phrases) and dysphemistic (opposite of euphemistic). However, we cannot simply categorise certain colour is euphemistic colour and certain colour is not, because the meaning also varies depends on the context. E.g. *be in pink* means 'to be in excellent health', but when we say *seeing pink elephants* 'inebriation', the connotation changes into something more negative (dysphemism).
9. **Sound based metaphors** or **onomatopoeia.** As the name of the classification said, the sound based phrase is sometimes used to replace the dispreferred terms. Sometimes, the euphemistic terms used are rather morphological than literal. E.g. *thunderbox* 'lavatory', which "might have been inspired by the noise of toilet flushing and/or the noises made prior" (Allan, 2012).
10. **Smell, taste, and touch based X-phemism.** To describe certain smell politely, certain terms shall be used due to the connotation the phrase has possessed. *Smell* and *odour* have a negative connotation rather than *fragrant* and *perfumed*. Exception can be made for *smell*, whereas it is quite acceptable to say *nice smell*. Taste based phrase is sometimes used as a substitution of vocatives (*sugar*, *sweetie*, *sugar*, *honey*, etc.) or adjectives (*saucy person* 'impertinent'). It is harder to distinguish whether a certain touch based phrase is considered as euphemistic or not, because, same like colour based x-phemism, it is based on the context of the phrase. To say *she is hot* 'sexy' is rather euphemistic, but to say *she is hot blooded person* 'angry' is not.
11. **Verbal play.** Metaphor and figurative interpretations are considered as verbal play use as euphemism. The problem with this kind of euphemism (due to the symbolism) is the difficulty of perceiving the actual term's meaning, but in other hand, it can also weigh the actual meaning. E.g. *rose* is a euphemistic symbol of the blood from a newly split hymen.

dr OZ Indonesia TV show

dr OZ Indonesia is a interactive talk show aired on Indonesian private television station. This is a show that discusses health-related topics and healthy lifestyle, hosted by two doctors, namely dr Ryan

Thamrin and dr Reisa Broto Asmoro. It is an adoption of an American television show with similar theme and concept, namely “*The Dr. Oz Show*”.

The duration of an episode is approximately 60 minutes, with 4-5 different topics discussed per episode. There is no specific big theme in one episode, so the show will discuss entirely different topics per episode. For example: in an episode aired on March 21st, 2015, the show had the topics of: *Failed diet due to hormones, Foods that make our satiety holds longer, Does laughing make us younger?, Slowing down the aging process, and How to know the fertile period through vagina fluids.*

These keywords: (1) *dr Oz Indonesia*, (2) *dr Oz Indonesia kematian*, (3) *dr Oz Indonesia kanker*, (4) *dr Oz Indonesia seks*, and (5) *dr Oz Indonesia organ reproduksi*, were used to search the video on Youtube.com. Here are the steps of how the data was collected.

First, the writer searched the video by using keyword (1) on the web. After the keyword was typed into the searching bar, most related videos (according to the title or the tags of the videos) would appear in the result page. Only on the first result page the videos’ title were skimmed before the most suitable one was selected. If there was no suitable video (according to the title) on the page, the writer repeated the first step, but using keyword (2), (3), (4), and so on.

Next, the writer selected and opened one video from the first result page, which was related or suitable to this research, in a new tab. Then, the entire video was watched and looked for the euphemism used by the speaker(s). If there was no euphemism used in the video, the tab was closed, and the writer searched for another video from the same result page that was mentioned before. If the speakers used euphemism in the selected video, then the video was downloaded by using safefrom.net website.

The videos were chosen based on the number of euphemisms used by the speaker(s) in the video. Here are the lists of the titles of the suitable videos found:

No.	The title of the video (given by the uploader)
1.	<i>Dr Oz Indonesia Eps Waspada penyebab ketidaksuburan pada wanita</i>
2.	<i>Kram Perut Saat Haid Normal atau Tidak - DR OZ Indonesia</i>
3.	<i>Dr Oz Indonesia - Waspada Resiko Kematian Bayi Prematur - 28 Desember 2013 Part 1</i>
4.	<i>Dr Oz Indonesia Eps Infeksi saluran Kemih</i>
5.	<i>DR OZ INDONESIA 5 DES 2015 - Kelainan Paru Paru Pada Bayi Part 1_5</i>

After the video was downloaded, the selected videos were watched thoroughly to find the euphemisms used by the speaker(s). Finally, the euphemisms spoken by the speaker were listed, along with frequency and the possible meaning of the euphemisms. The overall data was then classified according to two big topics: sex and body parts, and sickness and death.

After the data were collected, the next step of the research was to analyze the euphemism terms found in the videos. The analysis began with watching the selected video again and repeating the parts when the used euphemistic terms were used. This was needed to recognize the context of the euphemism terms used by the speaker(s). The contexts or the meanings of the terms were also listed along the terms. After that, the euphemism terms were categorized by using Allan’s (2012) classification of euphemism formation. The frequency of the occurrences of each category was counted to see which formation was used more than another in certain context. The function of the euphemism according to its context was also inspected.

Euphemism in dr OZ Indonesia TV show

Among all the euphemism formations that have been explain in the previous chapter, it is found that not all of them are used in the data. There are only seven forms of euphemism that are used in the video, which are: clipping, general-for-specific, circumlocution, litotes, hyperbole, substitution, and verbal play.

The list of all the euphemisms used in the show are shown the following table along with the meaning, formation, and frequency.

No	Euphemism phrase	Meaning	Euphemism formation	Frequency
1	mitos	Tidak benar	Hyperbole	1
2	berlebihan	Abnormal	Litotes	1
3	tidak mudah	Sulit	Litotes	1
4	lagi halangan	Menstruasi	Substitution	1
5	PMS	Kepanjangannya dari Pre-Menstrual Syndrome, tetapi dalam konteks ini, artinya menstruasi	Substitution	1
6	haid	Menstruasi	Substitution	17
7	wajar	Normal	Substitution	5
8	tidak wajar	Abnormal, berbahaya	Substitution	1
9	harus diwaspadai	Kemungkinan berbahaya	Litotes	3
10	harus dicurigai	Kemungkinan berbahaya	Litotes	2
11	yang harus diperhatikan	Kemungkinan berbahaya	Litotes	1
12	buang air besar	Berak	Substitution	6
13	buang air kecil	Kencing	Substitution	8
14	berhubungan	Melakukan seks	Clipping	1
15	belum ada obat	Penyakit belum bisa disembuhkan	Litotes	1
16	derajatnya yang sedang dan berat	Penyakit sudah sangat berbahaya (tetapi tidak ada penjelasan seberapa beratnya)	Litotes	1
17	diperiksakan ke dokter	Kemungkinan penyakit sudah cukup berbahaya	Litotes	2
18	yang seperti apa yang harus segera ke dokter	Berbahaya	Litotes	1
19	dalam tubuh seorang wanita	Rahim	General-for-specific	1
20	gangguan kesuburan	Kesulitan punya anak (bukan mandul)	Litotes	1
21	sulit untuk punya anak	Kesulitan punya anak karena endometriosis	Clipping	1
22	sakit luar biasa	Sakit yang abnormal	Litotes	1
23	ada <i>something</i>	Masalah, bahaya	Substitution	2
24	ada sesuatu	Masalah, bahaya	General-for-specific	3
25	di luar nyeri yang normal	Abnormal	Circumlocution	2
26	di luar rencana	Tidak diharapkan	Litotes	1
27	<i>drop</i>	Memburuk	Substitution	5
28	itu sudah sampai ke otak	'Itu' di sini diartikan sebagai penyakit yang diderita pasien	Substitution	1
29	tidak bisa memberikan harapan banyak	Kemungkinan besar pasien tidak bisa ditolong	Litotes	1
30	kuat	Hidup	Verbal play	2
31	berjuang	Mengusahakan kehidupan	Verbal play	2
32	nggak ada	Meninggal	Litotes	1
33	Tuhan memberikan yang terbaik	Kematian	Litotes	1
34	Tuhan punya kehendak	Kematian	Verbal play	2
35	masih sehat	Hidup	Litotes	1
36	jangan mengharapkan bayi ini pertumbuhan otaknya itu berkembang	Pertumbuhan anak tersebut akan abnormal atau cacat	Litotes	1

No	Euphemism phrase	Meaning	Euphemism formation	Frequency
	seperti anak normal, seperti biasa			
37	(tumbuh kembang) terganggu	Cacat	Litotes	1
38	(pertumbuhan) berkurang	Cacat	Litotes	1
39	apapun yang tidak diinginkan	Kematian bayi prematur	General-for-specific	1
40	ke belakang	Kencing atau berak	General-for-specific	2
41	saluran kemih	Saluran kencing	Substitution	11
42	saluran buang air	Saluran kencing	General-for-specific	1
43	kebiasaan tidak sehat	Kebiasaan buruk	Litotes	1
44	komplikasi yang lebih parah	Penyakit yang diderita sebenarnya sudah parah, namun bisa mengakibatkan sesuatu yang lebih lagi	Litotes	1
45	pakaian dalam	Celana dalam	General-for-specific	1
46	berkemih	Kencing	Substitution	2
47	(sering berganti-ganti) pasangan	Berganti-ganti pasangan seks, seks bebas	Clipping	1
48	organ intim	Kelamin	Substitution	1
49	organ bagian belakang	Anus	General-for-specific	1
50	keluhan	Masalah	Litotes	1
51	(daerah) kewanitaannya	Vagina	General-for-specific	1
52	membersihkan diri setelah berkemih	Bercebok	Circumlocution	2
53	Tuhan lebih sayang kepada Tabina	Meninggal	Litotes	2
54	berpulang	Meninggal	Litotes	1
55	persalinan	Kelahiran	Substitution	1
56	ada apa-apa	Masalah, bahaya	Litotes	1
57	dilakukan tindakan	Pasien mengalami masalah sehingga dokter melakukan tindakan untuk menangani pasien	Substitution	2
58	hal ini	Kematian	Litotes	1
59	di sana	Surga	General-for-specific	1
60	ditempatkan di sisi Allah yang paling indah	Surga	Litotes	2
61	bahagia bersama Tuhan	Meninggal dengan tenang	Litotes	1
62	di atas sana	Surga	General-for-specific	1
TOTAL				125

To specify the data even further, the entire data was divided into two tables according to which topic they belong to. This table below contains the list of sex and body part euphemisms.

No	Euphemism phrase	Meaning	Euphemism formation	Frequency
1	lagi halangan	Menstruasi	Substitution	1
2	PMS	Kepanjangan dari Pre-Menstrual Syndrome, tetapi dalam konteks ini, artinya menstruasi	Substitution	1
3	haid	Menstruasi	Substitution	17
4	buang air besar	Berak	Substitution	6
5	buang air kecil	Kencing	Substitution	8
6	dalam tubuh seorang wanita	Rahim	General-for-specific	1
7	ke belakang	Kencing atau berak	General-for-specific	2
8	saluran kemih	Saluran kencing	Substitution	11
9	saluran buang air	Saluran kencing	General-for-specific	1
10	Berkemih	Kencing	Substitution	2
11	organ intim	Kelamin	Substitution	1
12	organ bagian belakang	Anus	General-for-specific	1
13	(daerah) kewanitaannya	Vagina	General-for-specific	1
14	membersihkan diri setelah berkemih	Bercebok	Circumlocution	2
15	berhubungan	Melakukan seks	Clipping	1
16	pakaian dalam	Celana dalam	General-for-specific	1
17	(sering berganti-ganti) pasangan	Berganti-ganti pasangan seks, seks bebas	Clipping	1
TOTAL				58

The list of euphemisms for discussing sickness and death is shown in table below.

No	Euphemism phrase	Meaning	Euphemism formation	Frequency
1	itu sudah sampai ke otak	'Itu' di sini diartikan sebagai penyakit yang diderita pasien	Substitution	1
2	berlebihan	Abnormal	Litotes	1
3	di luar nyeri yang normal	Abnormal	Circumlocution	2
4	sakit luar biasa	Sakit yang abnormal	Litotes	1
5	tidak wajar	Abnormal, berbahaya	Substitution	1
6	wajar	Normal	Substitution	5

No	Euphemism phrase	Meaning	Euphemism formation	Frequency
7	yang seperti apa yang harus segera ke dokter	Berbahaya	Litotes	1
8	(pertumbuhan) berkurang	Cacat	Litotes	1
9	(tumbuh kembang) terganggu	Cacat	Litotes	1
10	kebiasaan tidak sehat	Kebiasaan buruk	Litotes	1
11	yang harus diperhatikan	Kemungkinan berbahaya	Litotes	1
12	harus dicurigai	Kemungkinan berbahaya	Litotes	2
13	harus diwaspadai	Kemungkinan berbahaya	Litotes	3
14	diperiksakan ke dokter	Kemungkinan penyakit sudah cukup berbahaya	Litotes	2
15	gangguan kesuburan	Kesulitan punya anak (bukan mandul)	Litotes	1
16	sulit untuk punya anak	Kesulitan punya anak karena endometriosis	Clipping	1
17	keluhan	Masalah	Litotes	1
18	ada apa-apa	Masalah, bahaya	Litotes	1
19	ada <i>something</i>	Masalah, bahaya	Substitution	2
20	ada sesuatu	Masalah, bahaya	General-for-specific	3
21	<i>drop</i>	Memburuk	Substitution	5
22	dilakukan tindakan	Pasien mengalami masalah sehingga dokter melakukan tindakan untuk menangani pasien	Substitution	2
23	belum ada obat	Penyakit belum bisa disembuhkan	Litotes	1
24	derajatnya yang sedang dan berat	Penyakit sudah sangat berbahaya (tetapi tidak ada penjelasan seberapa beratnya)	Litotes	1
25	komplikasi yang lebih parah	Penyakit yang diderita sebenarnya sudah parah, namun bisa mengakibatkan sesuatu yang lebih lagi	Litotes	1
26	jangan mengharapkan bayi ini pertumbuhan otaknya itu berkembang seperti anak normal, seperti biasa	Pertumbuhan anak tersebut akan abnormal atau cacat	Litotes	1
27	tidak mudah	Sulit	Litotes	1
28	mitos	Tidak benar	Hyperbole	1
29	di luar rencana	Tidak diharapkan	Litotes	1
30	tidak bisa memberikan harapan banyak	Kemungkinan besar pasien tidak bisa ditolong	Litotes	1
31	kuat	Hidup	Verbal play	2
32	berjuang	Mengusahakan kehidupan	Verbal play	2
33	nggak ada	Meninggal	Litotes	1

No	Euphemism phrase	Meaning	Euphemism formation	Frequency
34	Tuhan memberikan yang terbaik	Kematian	Litotes	1
35	Tuhan punya kehendak	Kematian	Verbal play	2
36	masih sehat	Hidup	Litotes	1
37	apapun yang tidak diinginkan	Kematian bayi prematur	General-for-specific	1
38	Tuhan lebih sayang kepada Tabina	Meninggal	Litotes	2
39	berpulang	Meninggal	Litotes	1
40	persalinan	Kelahiran	Substitution	1
41	hal ini	Kematian	Litotes	1
42	di sana	Surga	General-for-specific	1
43	ditempatkan di sisi Allah yang paling indah	Surga	Hyperbole	2
44	bahagia bersama Tuhan	Meninggal dengan tenang	Hyperbole	1
45	di atas sana	Surga	General-for-specific	1
TOTAL				67

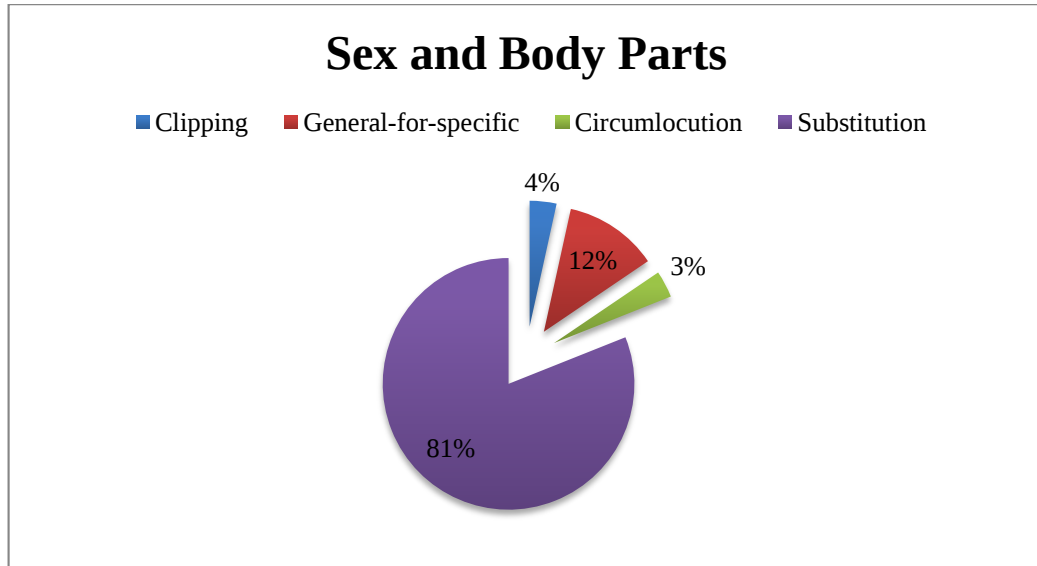
After all the data were gathered and categorised based on the topic they belong to, it is necessary to see the total amount of the frequency of the euphemisms used in the show. This is essential to be done in order to find the most formation of euphemism that is most used in certain topics. This also indicates the most appropriate euphemism by the society to be used in certain topics. The frequency of the euphemism is summed in the table below.

	Euphemism formations	Topics			
		Sex and Body Parts		Sickness and Death	
1	Clipping	2	3%	1	1%
2	General-for-specific	7	12%	6	9%
3	Circumlocution	2	3%	2	3%
4	Litotes	0	0%	31	46%
5	Hyperbole	0	0%	2	3%
6	Substitution	47	81%	19	28%
7	Verbal play	0	0%	6	9%
TOTAL		58		67	

For mentioning sex and body parts related topics, the speaker used some various formation of euphemism, with substitution form as the most used form (81%, e.g. *buang air besar* for *berak*, *berkemih* for *kencing*, and *haid* for *menstruasi*). There are also general-for-specific (12%, e.g. *dalam tubuh seorang wanita* instead of *rahim*, *pakaian dalam* for *celana dalam*, *organ bagian belakang* for *anus*),

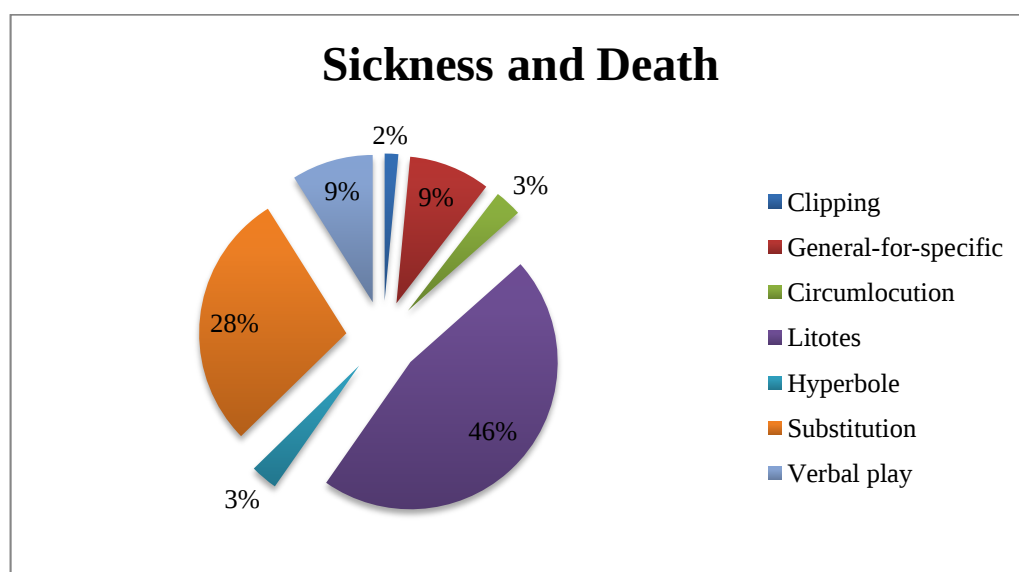
circumlocution (3%, e.g. *membersihkan diri setelah berkemih* instead of *bercebok*), and clipping (3%, e.g. *berhubungan* for *berhubungan seks*) formations that are used in this topic by the speakers of the show.

However, I found that the euphemisms used in the show under this topic are mostly used to soften body part phrases rather than sexual activity or clothing phrases.



More various formations of euphemism are found under disease and death subtopic. There are litotes (46%, e.g. *pertumbuhan berkurang* for *cacat*, *keluhan* for *masalah*, *hal ini* for *kematian*), substitution (28%, e.g. *something* for *bahaya*, *itu* for *penyakit yang menyerang pasien*, *drop* for *memburuk*), general-for-specific (9%, e.g. *sesuatu* for *masalah*, *di sana* for *surga*), verbal play (9%, e.g. *kuat* for *hidup*), circumlocution (3%, e.g. *di luar nyeri yang normal* for *nyeri abnormal*), hyperbole (3%, e.g. *ditematkan di sisi Allah paling indah* for *surga*), and clipping (1%, e.g. *sulit untuk punya anak* for *sulit untuk punya anak karena memiliki endometriosis*).

Most of these euphemisms are used to describe how painful the pain of a sickness, how severe a sickness can be, and to talk about life, death, and after-life or heaven.



Interpretation

When someone talks about sex, only embarrassment is more likely to happen (Linfoot-Ham, 2005) to that person, and others who listen to her or him. Or, it is only the face of the speaker, who talks so straightforwardly about the sexual topic, that is threatened. It is also the same with body parts, especially for reproduction and excretion organs, but probably it is considered taboo due to the sex value that it possesses, or simply disgust and revulsion.

Ascribed to that, the speakers try to soften the sex and related body part words, which are considered inappropriate by the society. Due to the overly frequent usage of these words, the euphemisms for these words take place and become the daily used words in the society. Even there is some shift in the connotation that these euphemistic words possess. The word *buang air besar* is the euphemism for *berak*, and has become a daily used word. Same with *buang air kecil* “kencing”, or *haid* and *PMS* “menstruasi”, in which actually these euphemistic words have the same meaning with the original words and are already used in daily basis, but it is used anyway because it has more neutral or positive connotation rather than the original words. Thus, we can see how substitution formation becomes the uppermost form to be used in the topics.

It is a different case with sickness and death topic. With sexual terms, substitution is the most used one, and we can change from one word or phrase into anything, because although it is sensitive to be talk about, it is not as sensitive as topics on sickness (especially the terminal ones) and death. We can substitute *penis* with *pensil*, or *darah menstruasi* with *selai stroberi*, or *payudara* with *gunung* or *pepaya*, and it will be just fine. However, with sickness and death, substitution is also used, but we have to be very thoughtful to the substitution phrase that we prefer to use. This happens due to how much the weight of the taboo or the discomfort that the topic possesses. Litotes is the most used form of euphemism under sickness and death topic, since litotes can mask the dispreferred terms suitably that it does not only save both of the participants’ face, but it also gives a more positive connotation to the actual phrase.

When someone talks about sickness or death very straightforwardly, or without softening it down, he will damage the face of the hearer. Moreover, if the grief is on the hearer, or the hearer has a terminal sickness, not only he will damage the hearer’s face, but he will also hurt the feeling of the hearer. Therefore, the main motive of the use of euphemism is to give more positive connotation, in which litotes is very suitable for this matter, among the rest. Euphemistic phrases in describing the death itself, such as *sudah bahagia bersama Tuhan*, has the ability to turn the painful loss into something more positive, by change the point of view to the one who is dead. This makes the focus in on the feeling of dead (e.g. *bahagia bersama Tuhan*), or what he will turn into or get (such as *ditempatkan di sisi Allah yang paling indah* “heaven”, or *Tuhan lebih sayang Tabina* “the love from God”).

Ajit Varki and Danny Bower (2013) wrote a book, titled “Denial: Self-deception, False Beliefs, And The Origins Of The Human Mind”, that discusses about human’s denial about his own mortality, in biology and psychology scopes. They also discuss what this denial could affect human.

Apparently, human is the only species that has the awareness of his self and other. Human recognize him self when he looks at himself in the mirror, and only a few animals has this ability. Mortality is another thing that human are aware of. Human is aware and understands when someone surround him is dying or died. Consequently, this makes human also understand that somehow, some when, he will too. This is probably one of the most frightening truth that they aware of. (Varki & Brower, 2013) Thus, instinctively, human are afraid of his own death and willing to do whatever he could do to get away with it, or to keep it from happening.

To believe in religion or belief is one of the examples of how human deny themselves of their mortality. Because religions teach us that even after we die, we will still be ‘living’ in another kind of form. This is what we know as after-life, even though there has not been any scientific evidence of it. Human denies the idea of being mortal and thus this what makes our intuition insist the idea that human is immortal and can live forever.

Euphemism could be one of the proofs how human denies his own and other’s mortality, especially when discussing about sickness and death. This makes human altered the way they see death, not only his

own but also others'. When we talk about sickness or death in a very straightforward way, we are considered as someone who disrespects one's life.

The use of sickness and death euphemisms is a way of giving respect and comforting to one's death or the *eternal rest*. In another perspective, it also contributes a more positive connotation to any phrases that discusses sickness and death, makes it easier for others to accept the reality that death is an unbearable phase or end in our life. The example of this is the use of euphemistic expressions such as *Tuhan memberikan yang terbaik, di tempatkan di sisi Allah yang paling indah*, and *bahagia bersama Tuhan* to replace "kematian" or "death", which are found in the data of this study. Euphemism makes these phrases appear "sweeter" to swallow and this function is manifested in the underhand euphemism.

If saying something inappropriate will cause the speaker some sort of "punishment," then the level of dreadfulness of the "punishment" is different according to the topic. If it is sex topic, then the speaker gets a lighter punishment than sickness and death topic. As explained before, talking about sex without euphemism only causes embarrassment to both of the participant. Even though the loss is just the same, which is the loss of the face, to talk about someone's death or sickness leads more damage to the speaker than the hearer, due to the psychological and emotional reasons that have been discussed before. The damage here is more harmful than just embarrassment; it has more complexity to the loss of the face (of the speaker). While the hearer gets an emotional pain of losing the death, the speaker gets the worse: he is considered as not empathetic and rude, sometimes heartless and arrogant, because the discussion is not only simply about someone's sickness or death, but it is about someone's life that is *taken* and that person will not coming back ever again. Not only losing his face to these traits, the speaker could also lose the trust-worthiness from the hearer, and causes the communication, even the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, to ruin.

The use of euphemism becomes the solution for all these problems that arises in our sensitive communication. Euphemism does not only give a more positive connotation to a negative context, it also protects, at the same time, maintains the face of both of the participants, and more importantly, it also preserves the feeling of the ones who is grieving over their loss of someone they treasures. Essentially, this benefits to the communication, and most importantly, the communion of the community.

Conclusion

When we are communicating with someone, the obligation of maintaining the face indeed becomes bigger on the speaker, as a way of cooperation to others. Euphemism is a tool to help us to maintain our face and the hearer without lessen the essence of the message. In addition, euphemism gives more depth and strength implied to the context of the message.

This research finds that the use of euphemism in sex topic has more variety in formation rather than sickness and death topics. In other hand, the use of euphemism for death and sickness have to be carefully chosen, and the most used formation of this euphemism is litotes or understatement.

While for the function of euphemism, it is found that there are four most used euphemism function when we are discussing sex, sickness, and death. They are provocative euphemism, underhand euphemism, uplifting euphemism, and provocative euphemism. If we specify the most used function in smaller topics, we got: protective, underhand, and uplifting function for sex topics (including body parts), provocative, underhand, and protective, while for death topics, the most used euphemism function is underhand and provocative function.

The motive behind the existed differences in the usage of euphemism formation and function within one topic to another is based on many things. The sensitiveness of the topic is the most influential motive to this matter. Sex topic is less sensitive to be discussed about rather than sickness and death topic. This happens because of the human's insecurity of being immortal and cannot go against it (cancel, prevent, or postpone death, or even put himself back to life after he was dead). This insecurity of immortality works stronger than just the embarrassment that one gets when talking about sex.

What we feel when we are talking about death is different from sex: it is not embarrassment, but loss and pain—it is frightening and emotional. Walter discusses the approach used by Becker (1973, as cited in Walter, 1991:304), which is the re-interpretation of Freud and Kierkegaard. Becker argues that the *id*

(or self) does not fear sex, but death, and this makes human learns how to restrain from it. Therefore, the way we respond to it when we happen to encounter these kinds of topic will be different.

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