



EUPHEMISM FOUND IN CELEBRITY NEWS PUBLISHED IN PEOPLE.COM WEBSITE

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Abstract

Euphemism is one of language phenomena that exists in society in order to keep the relationship in good harmony. This research aims to describe forms and functions of euphemism that are found in Celebrity News published in people.com website. This research is descriptive qualitative based on phenomena of euphemism in written language. Data of this research are words, phrases and sentences that contain euphemistic expression found in Celebrity News during February 2017. The result of the research shows that there are four forms and four functions of euphemism. The form of euphemism that is mostly found is semantic change, especially metaphorical transfer. The researcher also found various functions of euphemism. The function of euphemism that is mostly found is avoiding taboo.

Key words: euphemism, celebrity news, people.com

A. INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool in delivering message from one person to the other people. However, not all of words are good to be heard. Some words in every language are labelled vulgar or at least inconsiderate, and some kinds of languages are forbidden. For better maintaining social relationship, people need to think another appropriate word to say it. Therefore, euphemism is coming.

Euphemism is one type of figurative language that can be found in both spoken and written language. In written form, the style of writer's language will influence the readers' interest. Therefore, in written language, the writers have to pay attention to the choice of word they use. Sometimes a word is considered as offense or taboo, and it cannot be talked. A word that is impolite will make the readers not feel comfortable in reading the text. In order to replace certain words which may prove embarrassing for reader's ear, the writers usually use implicit expression which is considerably soft and mild.

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Qi Pan (2012: 2107) reports that although language can be used freely by people as a tool for communicate, their cultures has a rule that divide between words that are polite and impolite to be heard. Therefore, people use the other word that shows the same meaning that is considered more polite.

Burridge (2012: 66) states that euphemism is sweet-sounding, or at least inoffensive, alternatives for expressions that speakers or writers prefer not to use in executing a particular communicative intention on a given occasion. Euphemism makes a word sounds good in the ear of the listener or reader so that the speaker or writer can share his idea and purpose comfortably. The reader or listener also feels comfortable in receiving the message because the language is not disgusting.

Sari, Refnaldi and Rosa (2013: 32) state that euphemism is essential to replace the trigger word. Sari and Al-Hafizh (2013:77) support this idea. They claim that people use euphemism to change a word or expression that is difficult or embarrassing. To replace the unpleasant word with polite word, they try to find another way, called euphemism.

Alqaryouti (2016: 44) reports that euphemism is an idiomatic expression which loses its literal meanings and refers to something else in order to hide its unpleasantness. Euphemism can make a word more polite in the form of meaning. It can create new meaning that is better than before, and it sounds more comfortable in the ear of the reader or listener.

This is one of an example of using euphemism:

Although she is not very bright in academic area, she has a good attitude.

Not very bright in this sentence means *stupid*. The use of *not very bright* is considered more polite instead of using *stupid*. The expression of *not very bright* is better than expression of *stupid* because *stupid* seems rude word or unpleasant word. When someone reports *stupid*, it may make a person hurts. Although the truth reports that she is stupid, the speaker or writer can soften the language and protect the face of the object from feeling of embarrassed. From this example, the purpose of euphemism is indirect expression that replaces direct one which may sound offensive.

Euphemism can be classified into five forms based on how it is created linguistically (Burridge, 2012; Allan, 2012). The types are shortening, circumlocution, remodelling, semantic change, and borrowing. Shortening is a process of dropping one or more syllables from a word to form a shorter word with the same meaning. There are a number of different processes of shortening. The first is abbreviation. It is a shortened form of word or phrase to the initial letters. For example, S.O.B is used instead of Son-Of-a Bitch. Abbreviation is slightly different from acronym. People have to say abbreviated word letter by letter. However, if it acronym, people can say it directly. The second division is apocoptation. Apocoptation is a process of deleting or omitting the last syllable of a word, such as *brassiere* becomes *bra*. The third is backformation. Yule (2010: 5) reports that typically a word of one type (usually a noun) is reduced to form a word of another type (usually a verb). Backformation is a process of forming a word by removing

the suffix and prefix of the original one. For example, the word *burgle*, which is derived from burglar, is a euphemism for *rob*. The other type of shortening is diminutive. It forms a new term by shortening a name and adding a suffix to indicate affection, such as *vajay-jay* that refers to *vagina* (Allan, 2012: 25). Then there is omission. It involves leaving out the letters of taboo words after the initial, such as *s_ _ _* instead of *shit*. The last type of shortening is clipping. Clipping is deletion of some part of words with the same meaning. For example, *nation* is from the complete word *damnation*.

The second type of euphemism is remodelling. Remodelling also can be divided into some divisions. The first is phonological distortion. It creates a word that has different pronunciation with the original one. For example, the word *Christ* is pronounced by *cripes*, *crust* or *crockery*. The second type of remodelling is blending. It is formed by squeezing together two or more words that orthographically and phonetically. It involves taking two or more words, removing parts of each and joining the residues together to create a new word whose form and meaning are taken from the source words. For example the word *Gezunda* which derived from the object *goes under the bed*. The last is reduplication. Burridge (2012: 77) states that reduplication repeats syllables or letters of words such as *pee-pee* that refers to *piss*.

Circumlocution is the next type. Allan (2012: 11) reports that circumlocutions are comparatively verbose. It is the use of an unnecessarily large number of words to express an idea. For example, *a little girl's room* is used instead of *a toilet*.

The next type of euphemism is semantic shift or semantic change. Burridge (2012: 73) calls it as analogy. It involves a transfer of meaning from one given context to another. Semantic change can be categorized into semantic shift, metaphorical transfer, widening, litotes, and overstatement. Semantic shift is the evolution of word usage-usually to the point that the modern meaning is radically different from the original usage. For example, *sleeping with* is used for *having sexual intercourse*.

The second type of semantic change is metaphorical transfer. Hassanein (2013: 140) reports metaphor is a case where two referents, the conventional and the contextual, are compared. A metaphor asserts a correlation or resemblance between two things that are otherwise unrelated. For example, *melon* is the replacement of *breast*.

The other type is widening. Widening minimizes the impact of semantic features of a word by moving up one level of generality to a name of super ordinate set, usually omitting the specific features that would unequivocally identify referent. For example, *lower income groups* means *poor people*. Qi Pan (2013: 2109) states that euphemism can be coined by widening the lexical meaning, as *social disease* for *sypphilis*.

Litotes is also the type of euphemism that is included into semantic change. It is created by replacing a word with the negative expression of its opposite. Burridge (2012: 74) mentions that a favourite strategy of using litotes is by using *not* and *in/un*. For example, *not very bright* is used instead of *stupid*.

The next division is overstatement. Overstatement or hyperbole uses exaggerated statements made for effect not intended to be taken literally. Hassanein (2013: 141) mentions that hyperbole is an overstatement in which the truth is distorted by saying it too much. For example, *flight to glory* means *death*.

The last type of euphemism is borrowing. Enright (as cited in Hassanein, 2013: 139) mentions that people need to import words or phrases to describe something that are rare among them. Borrowing can be divided into two processes. They are external borrowing. A word may be obtained from the other language with little or no transformation to make it less offensive. For example, *brassiere* and *chemise* are euphemisms for *women's underwear*. A language may be also taken from sublanguage such as jargons or technical terms. For example, *spirachoeetal disease* replaces *syphilis*.

Moreover, the functions of euphemism are also various. Qi Pan (2013) states that there are four pragmatics functions of euphemisms. They are the function of being polite, the function of gloss-over, the function of avoiding taboo, and the function of disguising.

However, the function of euphemism to make the meaning of a word softer can make the reader catch wrong information. Since euphemism often expresses something in an implicit and roundabout way, sometimes this may cause ambiguity and people may feel confused about them. This is the example.

Reynolds was laid to rest in a funeral ceremony at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles on Jan. 6.

Laid to rest is an example of euphemism. It means *died*. Because death is feared, people tend to use explicit way to mention topic about death. However, not all of people understand about it. Some people may think that *laid to rest* means *sleeping*. Therefore, when creating euphemism happens, both of the writer and the reader should understand with the implicit meaning based on the context of the text unless it will produce stupidity among the society. Euphemism can lead people to double thinking. They form a kind of code. The euphemism stands for something else, and everyone pretends that the 'something else' does not exist.

Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this research is to describe the forms and functions of euphemisms found in Celebrity News published in people.com website. Hopefully, the readers will get scientific description of these forms and functions of euphemism, so that they will not be confused and will be able to identify the language that used by the writers of Celebrity News published in people.com website.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is descriptive qualitative research because this research aims at describing phenomena of euphemism found in Celebrity News published in people.com website. The researcher analyzed and described forms and functions of euphemism. The data are all of words and phrases in a sentence that contain euphemism expressions appeared in February 2017. The

data were taken from people.com website, especially in celebrity news. The data were analyzed based on theories from Allan-Burridge and Qi Pan.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher got 60 data of euphemism. The data were classified into forms and functions of euphemism based on semantic analysis. The researcher enlisted forms and functions of euphemism found in celebrity news.

Table 1. Frequency of Forms of Euphemism

| No | Forms | Freq. | Percentage | Numb. Datum |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|---|
| 1 | Shortening | | | |
| | a. Abbreviation | 6 | 10% | 16,23,32,39,42 44 |
| | b. Apocoptation | 1 | 2% | 47 |
| | c. Omission | 3 | 5% | 1,2,56 |
| | d. Clipping | 2 | 3% | 54,57 |
| 2 | Circumlocution | 4 | 7% | 10,13,34,36 |
| 3 | Semantic Change | | | |
| | a. Semantic Shift | 1 | 2% | 33 |
| | b. Metaphorical Transfer | 26 | 43% | 3,5,6,7,8,9,11,14,17,21, 22,25,26,27,29,31,35,43 46,50,51,52,53,55,59, 60 |
| | c. Widening | 8 | 13% | 18,20,24,30,37,38,48, 58 |
| | d. Overstatement | 4 | 7% | 4,40,41,49 |
| 4 | Borrowing | | | |
| | External Borrowing | 5 | 8% | 12,15,19,28,45 |
| TOTAL | | 60 | 100% | - |

Table 1 shows the finding about the forms of euphemism that are found in Celebrity News published in people.com website. There are 60 data contained euphemism. Table 4 shows the finding about the forms of euphemism found in Celebrity News published in people.com website. It can be interpreted that semantic change in the form of metaphorical transfer is frequently used by the journalists. Then, it is followed by widening, abbreviation and external borrowing. Form of euphemism in the form of apocoptation is rarely used.

Table 2 Frequency of Functions of Euphemism

| No. | The | Freq. | Percentage | Datum Numb. |
|--------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|--|
| 1 | Being Polite | 13 | 22% | 3,4,24,28,35 37,38,39 46,47,49,55,58 |
| 2 | Gloss-Over | 23 | 38% | 5,6,8,9,10,15,16,17,22,23,25,26, 29,32,34,36,42,43,44,48,51,54,5 7 |
| 3 | Avoiding Taboo | 13 | 22% | 1,2,7,11,13,14,27,31,33,40,41,45, |
| 4 | Disguising | 11 | 18% | 12,18,19,20,21,30,50,52,53,59,6 |
| Total | | 60 | 100% | - |

Table 2 shows 4 functions of euphemism and its frequency that is occurred in Celebrity News. The researcher found that the function of gloss over is mostly used by the journalist of Celebrity News in People.com. The second position is the function of being polite and avoiding taboo. Then, it is followed by the function of disguising.

The form of euphemism in the form of metaphorical transfer is mostly found in the research. Twenty six (43%) out of 60 data include into metaphorical transfer. Dubar (2004:108) argues that in commenting certain member of society, such as celebrities or other public figures, the use of metaphor is valuable. It means that people are allowed to give their opinion although it is bad comment as long as it is in good manner. One of the ways to soften language is by using metaphorical language. In metaphorical transfer, the writers resemble two things that are otherwise unrelated. Hassanein (2013:140) says that metaphor is a case where two referents, the conventional and the contextual, are compared.

The second position of the highest form that is mostly used is widening. Widening moves up one level of generality to a name of super ordinate set, usually omitting the specific features that would unequivocally identify referent. It means that widening is a process where a word achieves in a more general meaning. Qi Pan (2013:2109) states that euphemism can be coined by widening the lexical meaning.

Abbreviation is also the form of euphemism commonly used in Celebrity News. The journalists shorten form of word or phrase to the initial letters. Allan and Burrige (2007:71) state that frequent or everyday words will often crop up in casual settings that are called abbreviation. The example is *AIDS* which is used to define a disease in which there is a severe loss of the body's cellular immunity, greatly lowering the resistance to infection and malignancy. *AIDS* is an acronym of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The journalist also can omit some letter of taboo word after the initial letter. It is called omission. The example is *a f___ joke*. It expresses the feeling of anger and annoyance. The journalist uses dashes in order to change the three

letters after the initial letter “f”. The missing elements are u, c, and k. In other words, the form of euphemism used in this text is omission.

The other form of euphemism found in Celebrity News is external borrowing. Borrowing words from other languages is a way to evoke euphemism. The writers obtain words or phrases from the other language with little or no transformation to make it less offensive. Enright (as cited in Hassanein, 2013:139) mentions that people need to import words or phrases to describe something that are rare among them.

The other forms of euphemism are apocopation and clipping. Apocopation is a process of deleting or omitting the last syllable of a word, such as *trans* to indicate *transgender*. Apocopation and clipping are slightly the same. The difference is if it is clipping, the original word and the clipped word have the same meaning, but if it is apocopation, the first and the word that has been cut have different meaning. The example of clipping is *bra* which is from the word *brassiere*.

Euphemism is an alternative to express something unpleasant and embarrassed. The writers of Celebrity News in people.com website use euphemism to avoid embarrassing, unpleasant and taboo words. There are multifarious functions of euphemism used by the writers of people.com website.

The function of euphemism in Celebrity News published in people.com that is mostly used is the function of gloss-over. Dubar (2004:100) celebrity news, also can be called gossip, is a term to talk about ill or bad thing of someone. Therefore, the journalists need other word to change a word that is sensitive. Wardaugh (2006:240) states that euphemistic words and expressions allow us to talk about unpleasant things and neutralize the unpleasantness. For example, to talk about people with abnormal personality like lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, the journalists use *LGBT*. The other function of euphemism is to avoid taboo. The most common taboo words that are found in the data are in death category. Because talking about death makes people feel scared, the writers try to find another way to express it. For example, to substitute the word *died*, the writers use *passed away*, *laid to rest*, or *rest in peace*.

Function of being polite also can be found in Celebrity News. The journalists want to respect people and keep them from being hurt, so they use euphemism. For example, *jobless*, *left her role* and *retirement* are used instead of *unemployed*. Euphemism is used to make them accept the truth pleasantly.

The last function is the function of disguising. Sometime there is a word that seems rude and harsh. Therefore, the journalists need to beautify it. For example, *the restroom* is interesting to be heard rather than *toilet* or *WC*.

There are some differences between this research and the previous one. First, Nilwati (2012) conducted a research about euphemism in spoken form. She analyzed types of euphemism that are used by male and female of Kerinciness Speaker. She found that there are two types of euphemism that are used by Kerinciness speakers. They are positive and negative euphemisms. Negative euphemism is usually used by the speakers rather than positive

euphemisms. On the contrary, this research focuses on written language, and the researcher focuses on analyzing forms and functions of euphemism.

Then, the other previous study is conducted by Sari (2013). She observed euphemisms in language of politic in *Padang Express* newspaper. She found two forms of euphemism. They are semantic change and borrowing. However, this research found four forms of euphemism. They are shortening, circumlocution, semantic change, and borrowing.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From all of data analysis that were taken from Celebrity News published in people.com website, the researcher found four forms of euphemism based on theory proposed by Allan-Burridge. Those forms are shortening, circumlocution, semantic change and borrowing. From 60 data, the researcher found 39 data (65%) in the forms of semantic change. So, semantic change, especially metaphorical transfer, is a form that mostly found in Celebrity News published in people.com website.

The use of metaphor is worthy in order to allow people to give their comment to other people, celebrity. The journalists mostly describe something else in a way that is different from normal use in order to show that two things have the same qualities and to make description more powerful. They compare two things that are unrelated to make their language can be accepted by the readers.

This research also found some reasons of using euphemism based on theory from Qi Pan. They are the function of being polite, the function of gloss-over, the function of avoiding taboo, and the function of disguising. The researcher found 23 euphemistic expressions out of 60 data includes into the function of disguising. Therefore, the function of gloss-over is mostly found. The journalists use euphemism to substitute language that is sensitive and cannot be talked. It allow the journalists to talk about unpleasant things and neutralize the unpleasantness.

The researcher hopes this research could give contributions to the further researchers who want to develop and conduct the research about euphemism. This research focuses in analyzing euphemism in written language about celebrity news in people.com. The researcher suggests the next researcher to study euphemism in other website, or in the form of spoken language. In order to analyze data, the researcher uses Allan-Burridge and Qi Pan theories, so the further researcher can use other recent theory. It is also hoped that for further researcher not only focus in the forms and functions, but also in another problems.

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