

EUPHEMISMS IN THE HEADLINES OF *HALUAN* NEWSPAPER

Sucia Winita¹ and Ermanto²

¹Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia, suciawinita@yahoo.com

²Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia, ermanto@fbs.unp.ac.id

Abstract

The use of language in communication process is not limited to its function as a tool for delivering information, but also as an important tool for maintaining social relations. This can be realized with the use of the right language, one of which is by including the euphemism. This study aimed to describe the use of euphemism and its background in the headlines of *Haluan* February 2018 edition. The method used in this study is descriptive method. The results showed that the use of euphemism on research subjects was in the form of figurative expressions, flippancy, circumlocutions, abbreviations, one for one substitution, hyperbole, and jargon. The background of the use of euphemism was interpreted to: (1) avoid the use of some words that can cause panic and fear; (2) be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others; (3) decrease or to not mention something hurtful or tragic; (4) appear diplomatic or rhetorical; (5) replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words; (6) keep a secret; (7) respect others; (8) give critics politely.

Keywords: euphemism, mass media, headline news

Introduction

Language is a system that has an important role in human social life. In its use, language is not just a tool used to convey information, but as an important tool for establishing and maintaining social relationships with others (Trudgill, 1974, p.13). Wang (2013) states that euphemism can help people to form a positive communicative atmosphere to build harmonious social relations.

In communication, euphemism is needed by the speaker in order to avoid misunderstandings and to keep from losing the 'face' in communicating, both 'face' of the speaker and listener or third participants (Basri, 2011; Kurniawati, 2011). In fact, euphemism is not only regarded as something that has a function in terms of saving 'face', and expression to cover an unpleasant reality, but also provides a 'safe foundation' to the speaker who has the intention to convey something that is felt rude to be explicitly said (Fernández, 2014; Mooney, Annabelle, et al., 2011, p.52).

In accordance with the development of journalism that makes the language as a raw material in producing news on television, radio, magazines, and newspapers. The mass media has a power in influencing society, one of them because the mass media has a function as a social control. In Indonesia, mass media is one of the means of mass communication which has an important role in the development and language training. One of them, the strength of a newspaper can be seen from the skills of a journalist using the right language in conveying information, opinions, and entertainment in it. This skill also intersects with the use of sense values in disclosing information that is written by journalists in each of his writings.

In a newspaper, there is usually a shift in meaning intentionally carried out by journalists with the aim of respecting the party being reported, and to attract the attention of the reader. This is realized by journalists by displaying finer word forms (Chaer, 2010, p.87). The use of more polite words in a language is usually related to abstinence or taboo. Indriyasari (2003, p.2) states that abstinence or taboo is a word that is avoided to be spoken directly because it contains a threat of danger or because it is considered unpleasant, rude, and can offend others. The effort that can be done is to use euphemism in the news. Kridalaksana (2008, p.59) and Prasetyo (2017) interpret euphemism as a symptom of language in the form of using words to avoid forms of prohibition or taboo. The use of euphemism is placed in a taboo area with the aim of mapping relationships and social attitudes (Stockwell, 2002, p.30).

The existence of euphemism as part of language cannot be separated from external factors that exist in the community. Regarding this, Rabab'ah and Al-Qarni (2012) stated that language is influenced by culture, tradition, religion, psychological orientation of nations and other social problems. Wang (2013)

added that euphemism's not just a general strategy in the use of human language, but also a cultural phenomenon. The statement above shows that euphemism's a phenomenon that's influenced by several aspects of human social life, especially cultural phenomena.

Regarding the use of euphemism, Allan and Burridge (1991, p.14) divided some forms of euphemism consisting of sixteen forms, namely figurative expressions, metaphor, flippancy, re-modeling, circumlocutions, clipping, acronym, abbreviations, omission, one for one substitution, general for specific, part of whole euphemisms, hyperbole, understatement, jargon, and colloquial. The background to the use of euphemism itself includes several things as follows: (a) to be more pleasant, not offensive so that it does not cause social conflict; (b) as a tool to keep things secret; (c) as a tool for diplomacy so as not to cause unwanted access; (d) as an educational tool, primarily carried out by parents to their children; (e) as a hazard repellent tool (Wijana and Rohmadi, 2008, p.104-109). Furthermore, Laili (in Sariah, 2017) describes the unit functions of expression of euphemism contained in environmental discourse in mass media in Indonesia with several functions, namely (a) hiding facts, (b) showing respect, (c) avoiding taboos, (d) quip, (e) show concern, (f) give advice, (g) exaggerate, (h) show evidence, (i) convey information, (j) avoid words that cause panic, disgust, or trauma, (k) accusing or blaming, (l) criticizing, and (m) warning.

Several similar studies that use the views of Allan and Burridge in classifying forms of euphemism are carried out by Rubby and Dardanila (2008) who find seven forms of euphemism in the *Seputar Indonesia* daily newspaper, including figurative expressions, flippancy, circumlocutions, abbreviations, one for one substitution, general for specific, and hyperbole. This study was also conducted by Simamora (2012) who found seven forms of euphemism in *Sinar Indonesia Baru* newspaper, including figurative expressions, flippancy, circumlocution, abbreviations, one for one substitution, hyperbole, and metaphor. The research differences that have been carried out by Rubby and Dardanila with this research lies in the research objectives, the researchers aim to reveal the existence of forms of euphemism and the background of its use in a newspaper, while Rubby and Dardanila only limit the discussion of forms of euphemism.

Furthermore, an analysis of the background to the use of euphemisms similar to this study was found in a study conducted by Kurniawati (2011) who interpreted eight main reasons for the use of euphemisms in *Spiegel Online*, namely to avoid the use of some words that can cause panic and fear; be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others; decrease or to not mention something hurtful or tragic; appear diplomatic or rhetorical; replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words; keep a secret; respect others; and give critics politely. Research on the background of the use of euphemism was also conducted by Sariah (2017) who found seven reasons for the use of euphemism in *Tempo* newspaper, namely to avoid the use of some words that can cause panic and fear; be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others; appear diplomatic or rhetorical; replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words; keep a secret; respect others; and give critics politely. The difference of this study with Kurniawati's research lies in the classification of forms of euphemism, the author refers to the form of euphemism according to Allan and Burridge, while Kurniawati refers to euphemisms based on the form of grammatical units. Furthermore, the difference with Sariah's research lies in the research objectives. The researcher has two research objectives, namely to reveal the forms of euphemism and background of its use, while Kurniawati only aims to reveal the background of the use of euphemisms in newspapers.

Based on the assumption that people from different cultures use different euphemisms in communication both directly and indirectly. This study aims to look at the use of euphemism and the background of its use in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper. This newspaper was chosen because it's one of the local newspapers in West Sumatra which will reveal how West Sumatra people using words in media mass, especially which indicated by journalists.

Method

This research is a type of qualitative research using descriptive methods. The author tries to describe and explain something as it's. In this study, the author will describe and explain the use of euphemisms and their use background. Data analyzed in the form of words, phrases, and clauses. The data source's obtained from the main news contained in the February 2018 edition of the *Haluan* newspaper, with a sample of 10 headlines. That's because many forms of euphemism are found in the headlines of that month, especially in the ten headlines that has passed the selection stage.

Data collection techniques used in this study are reading and note-taking techniques. The data collection techniques are reading the headline text, marking the parts that contain euphemisms, classifying data in accordance with the formulation of the problem being studied, and recording all the parts that contain euphemisms into the results of the study. The data analysis stage in this study is the data

that has been recorded is then classified according to the use of euphemisms consisting of several forms of euphemism, then data using certain euphemisms are grouped according to type, the data that has been grouped's then presented in the form of paragraph descriptions, and concludes the data has been explained.

Results dan Discussion

Types of Euphemisms

The euphemism used in headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper consists of figurative expressions, flippancy, circumlocutions, abbreviations, one for one substitution, hyperbole, and jargon. The frequency of use can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. The forms of euphemism in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper

Euphemisms	Frequency
Figurative Expressions	12%
Flippancy	9%
Circumlocutions	9%
Abbreviations	9%
One for one substitution	27%
Hyperbole	4%
Jargon	30 %

A figurative expression is a type of euphemism that's symbolic, like or figurative. This is shown in the following quote.

- (1) Beberapa hari tertangkap polisi, dia sempat mendatangi guru bimbingan konselingnya dan bercerita tentang **hidupnya yang pahit**. (20/02/18)

In the headlines (1) the word "pahit" which's part of a bitter life clause if interpreted literally has meaning as an unpleasant taste like bile taste. However, in this case 'pahit' is defined as a condition that is not pleasant or sad. The word is used to replace the rough form of the word 'sengsara' or 'menyedihkan'.

A flippancy is a form of euphemism that displays terms that have meaning outside of existing statements. Flippancy can be found in the following quote.

- (2) “Ada **tangan-tangan** lain yang turut serta dalam perkara, serta diarahkan untuk berbuat demikian.” (13/02/18)

The flippancy is found in headlines (2), especially in the use of the 'tangan-tangan' re-word form. Literally, the word 'tangan' is a term of limbs from the elbow to the fingertips which the euphemism of the term 'orang-orang'. The form of the word "tangan-tangan" is categorized as flippancy because the term used has meaning beyond the statement stated.

Circumlocution is a term used for the use of several words that are longer and indirect. The form of circumlocution appears to be used in the following quote.

- (3) Mirisnya, F berasal dari keluarga yang **tidak mampu**. Beberapa hari tertangkap polisi, dia sempat mendatangi guru bimbingan konselingnya dan bercerita tentang hidupnya yang pahit. (20/02/18)

The phrase 'tidak mampu' contained in headlines (3) is part of the term circumlocution. This phrase is used as a form of refinement of the word 'miskin'. The word "miskin" if used certainly has a negative sense of value because it can be considered an insult.

Abbreviations are a type of euphemism in the form of abbreviations of words that are converted into several letters. The use of abbreviations in the headlines of the newspaper bow can be seen in the following quote.

- (4) Sepakat dengan Hidayat Supardi menginginkan Pemprov mengambil langkah cepat mencegah tumbuh suburnya **LGBT** di Sumbar. (19/02/18)

Express messages using words that are worthy will greatly help the recipients of the message interpret the message without offense or disruption of unpleasant feelings. As for expressing "lesbian, gay,

biseksual, transgender" as a term from a combination of minorities in terms of sexual. The euphemism used the abbreviation type to reveals the term and called it "LGBT".

One for one substitution is a type of euphemism that using a word that has the similar meaning, but which is more subtle that can replace a more rude word. Regarding the existence of this type, can be seen in the following quote.

- (5) Ditambahkannya, **perselisihan** antara PT KAI dan Basko tak elok dilanjutkan karena kedua pihak saling berhubungan dengan kepentingan orang banyak. (08/02/18)

The word 'perselisihan' in the headlines (5) is a form of euphemism from other words that have similar meaning as 'percekcokan', 'perdebatan', 'perkelahian', 'permusuhan', 'pertengkaran', 'pertikaian'. In this case, 'perselisihan' are words that are considered to have good values compared to other words that have similar meanings but are felt harsher when used in public spaces.

Hyperbole is a type of euphemism which shows as exaggerating expression. The hyperbolic euphemism is contained in the following quote.

- (6) Meski **sempat tenggelam**, namun sepak terjang orang Minang di kancah nasional tak pernah benar-benar hilang. (09/02/18)

In headlines (6), there's a clause 'sempat tenggelam' which's a form of euphemism from 'pernah terlupakan' atau 'pernah tidak diperhitungkan keberadaannya'. The term is expressed in the form of expressions that seem excessive, it appears in word 'tenggelam' which can literally be interpreted as sinking into the water.

Jargon is a type of euphemism that shows by using words that have similar meaning but different forms, usually a technical term or terminology in a particular field. Jargon is found in the following quote.

- (7) Dalam tahun 2017, katanya, kasus bayi kurus dan **stunting** terdapat 14 kasus. Dan itu sudah teratasi dengan baik. (04/02/18)

The word 'stunting' contained in the headlines (7) is a term in the health field for a problem of 'kurang gizi kronis' caused by insufficient nutritional intake in a long time due to feeding that is not in accordance with nutritional needs. If definition's written as it's without needed to refining the expression, then the text will feel poor of value.

Research findings are similar with the findings of Rubby and Dardanila (2008) who found forms of euphemism in the daily newspaper *Seputar Indonesia*, and Simamora (2012) in the *Sinar Indonesia Baru* newspaper. In line with these findings, the results of the research Rubby and Dardanila (2008) and Simamora (2012) show that this form of euphemism can be found in newspapers. The figurative expression form is used to smooth the word by symbolizing the word in another form. The flippancy form is used to smooth the word by revealing a word that is different from what is stated. The circumlocution form is used to soften the words revealed by using longer and indirect words. The abbreviation form is used to define words by abbreviating words. The one for one substitution is used to define words by changing words.

Backgrounds of Using Euphemisms

The background of the use of euphemism was interpreted to: (1) avoid the use of some words that can cause panic and fear; (2) be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others; (3) decrease or to not mention something hurtful or tragic; (4) appear diplomatic or rhetorical; (5) replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words; (6) keep a secret; (7) respect others; (8) give critics politely.

Table 3. The background for the use of euphemisms in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper

Background of Using Euphemism	Frequency of use
Avoid the use of some words that can cause panic and fear	9%
Be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others	30%
Decrease or to not mention something hurtful or tragic	23%
Appear diplomatic or rhetorical	7%
Replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words	7%
Keep a secret	20%
Respect others	2%
Give critics politely	2%

First, euphemism is interpreted to the use of some words that can cause panic and fear.

- (8) “Sebagai Ketua Kadin Sumbar, saya berterima kasih kepada semua pihak yang membantu mediasi masalah itu sehingga seribu lebih karyawan hotel dan mal Basko terhindar **PHK**.....” (03/02/18)

'PHK' is an abbreviation of termination of employment or in other words called as 'pemecatan'. When linked to the whole of the headlines, information was obtained that the polemic between Basko and PT KAI regarding land disputes had a major impact on the fate of Basko hotel and mall employees. The dispute has the potential to cause an even dismissal by Basko to all employees. Therefore, in an effort to avoid the use of words that can cause panic, journalists prefer to use the subtle form of the phrase 'pemecatan' to 'PHK'.

Second, the euphemism in headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper is used to be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others

- (9) Barang bukti hampir 0,8 gram sabu ditemukan di tangan tersangka. “Dua tersangka pengedar sabu **diamankan** petugas. Mirisnya mereka masih berstatus pelajar.” (20/02/2018)

The word 'diamankan' is used to express word that more polite that have similar meanings as 'ditangkap', 'dicituk', 'dibekuk'. Can be connected with the existence of shabu dealers who are still students. The phrase 'ditangkap', 'dicituk', 'dibekuk' deemed inappropriate and potentially offensive to the person concerned, as well as the family of the perpetrators.

Third, euphemism is interpreted to decrease or to not mention something hurtful or tragic.

- (10) **Polemik** antara Basko dan PT KAI diminta tidak berlanjut. (03/02/18)

In the headlines (10), journalists choose to use the word 'polemik' as a subtle form of the word 'pertengkaran', 'perdebatan', 'pertikaian'. which has similar meaning. In this case, the use of euphemism is carried out in order to reduce the delivery of things that have negative connotations related to the problems being faced by Basko and PT KAI.

Fourth, the euphemism contained in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper is interpreted to appear diplomatic or rhetorical.

- (11) Dia menyebut, ada sindikat yang sengaja menciptakan rencana **memamah uang negara** secara bersama-sama. (13/02/18)

For the purposes of diplomacy and to avoid any turmoil or anxiety in the community in response to the corruption report amounting to Rp 62 Billion that's currently in the process of handling, journalists attempt to report this incident with the right words, one of which's to use euphemism to refine phrases that have negative connotations. In this headlines, the word 'memamah' is included in the clause 'memamah uang negara. The word "memamah" is a form of euphemism from the word 'memakan' which talking about stealing state money or using state money for personal gain.

Fifth, euphemism is interpreted to replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words.

- (12) Pengujung bulan Januari lalu ditutup dengan pemberitaan menyayat hati di sejumlah media massa terbitan Sumbar. Bocah berusia 7 tahun, Habil Daud **meregang nyawa** di RSUD Dr Rasyidin Padang karena divonis medis menderita gizi buruk alias kurang gizi akibat kemiskinan. (04/02/08)

In the headlines (12), it appears that there's the use of the phrase 'meregang nyawa' as a form of euphemism from the word 'sekarat', and the phrase 'hampir mati'. 'Meregang nyawa' is an expression chosen to replace taboo words and negative images. It can be understood with certainty that the term dead for humans is inappropriate and has a negative sense of value.

Sixth, the euphemism in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper is interpreted to keep a secret.

- (13) “Setelah mediasi dengan PLN bersama Kapolda dan Ketua DPRD, besok listrik nyala kembali. Karyawan yang sudah **dirumahkan** tentu akan kami panggil kembali.” (02/02/18)

The use of the term „dirumahkan“ can basically be understood as an attempt to keep the real situation experienced by the employees of Basko hotels and malls threatened with layoffs. Changing this term is done so that the public as readers isn't prejudiced against Basko regarding the policy they're taking. It is laid off in relation to the expression of homeowners which means „mencutikan karyawan dari

pekerjaannya“, „membebaskan karyawan dari pekerjaannya dengan cara menyuruh tinggal di rumah saja“. If it's associated with a rough term from being laid off, the expression „diberhentikan sementara“ is a phrase suitable for use.

Seventh, the use of euphemism in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper is interpreted to respect others.

- (14) Menurut **mantan** Kapolres terbaik versi Kompolnas ini, kerja keras dan usaha panjang masih dibutuhkannya untuk menuntaskan macet menahun dari dan ke Bukittinggi menuju Padang itu. (17/02/18)

In the headlines (14), the word 'mantan' has the similar meaning as 'bekas'. But in this case, as an effort to respect the position of Senior Commissioner Singgamata as a figure who has been awarded as the best police chief in Kompolnas.

Eighth, the use of euphemism in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper is interpreted to give critics politely.

- (15) Persoalan LGBT bukan hal yang tiba-tiba muncul begitu saja, tapi sudah berbulan-bulan, bahkan bertahun jadi polemik, yang tak kunjung ada solusi cerdasnya. Ketika jalan keluar penyelesaian terbuka lebar. Pemprov pula yang malah **tidak sigap**. (19/02/18)

The phrase "tidak sigap" is a form of euphemism from the word "lamban". In this case, even though the expression is manifested in a more subtle form of language, the expression is a form of criticism from journalists to the provincial government who seem slow in taking steps as an effort to resolve a problem that's happening.

Regarding the background of the use of this form of euphemism basically to avoid the use of some words that can cause panic and fear; be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others; decrease or to not mention something hurtful or tragic; appear diplomatic or rhetorical; replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words; keep a secret; respect others; and give critics politely. This has similarities with the findings of research conducted by Kurniawati (2011) and Sariah (2017).

Conclusions

Euphemism is found in the communication that exists between humans. This is used to create a positive atmosphere in social relations, especially in an effort to achieve communicative goals that are realized through the communication process. This euphemism can also be found in the mass media as a space that can be used for the purpose of delivering messages or information from a source to the public. The types of euphemism found in *Haluan's* headlines consists of figurative expressions, flippancy, circumlocutions, abbreviations, one for one substitution, hyperbole, and jargon.

The background to the use of euphemism in the headlines of the *Haluan* newspaper is interpreted to: (1) avoid the use of some words that can cause panic and fear; (2) be non-offensive, insulting, or demeaning to others; (3) decrease or to not mention something hurtful or tragic; (4) appear diplomatic or rhetorical; (5) replace taboo, vulgar, prohibited and negative words; (6) keep a secret; (7) respect others; (8) give critics politely.

The existence of euphemisms and newspapers as part of the mass media has the potential to influence society. Society is influenced through the choice of words used in newspapers. How people perceive and interpret a phenomenon that is reported certainly depends on the choice of words. The use of euphemism basically aims to uncover a phenomenon with a choice of words that are correct and polite so as not to offend certain parties. Research on euphemism is a forum to reveal the diversity of journalist ways of reporting in newspapers, this research can also be used as a forum to evaluate the performance of journalists in reporting something so that journalists can improve the quality of their writing, and give a positive impact to society by his writing.

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