

An Analysis of Euphemism in Donald Trump's Speech on Afghanistan

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Abstract—Euphemism is a phenomenon of using language to avoid unpleasant words or phrases. Therefore, many people use it included president since his or her language has always been attention to the public. Donald Trump is the president of United States that has always been attention particularly his speech. Hence, this study examined euphemism in Donald Trump's speech on Afghanistan by using Warren (1992) model of euphemism and Ryabova (2013) function of euphemism. Since the speech was delivered in Afghanistan, he used many euphemism types to directly mention unpleasant thing. In addition, the function of his euphemism was to avoid mentioning unpleasant things particularly not to offend certain person. Hence, he considered his use of language by using euphemism particularly to avoid delivering unpleasant words or phrase.

Keywords—Donald Trump, euphemism, speech.

I. INTRODUCTION

PEOPLE depend on language to communicate with each other since it does not only give information but also establish and maintain people's relationship (Trudgill, 2000, p.13). In addition, Lutz (1989) states "language thus reflects our perception of reality, which in turn influences and shapes our reactions to people, events, and ideas". Therefore, the existence of language can not be separated in people's daily life since it connects people and reflection of their reality. However, there are some parts of language such as words, phrase or sentence that can not be spoken which is called as taboo words that include some subjects such as sex, death, excretion, bodily function, politics, and religious matter (Wardhaugh, 2006, p.238). Despite of the emergence of taboo words, euphemism exists.

Euphemism is used to replace taboo words or unpleasant subjects (Fromkin&Rodman, 1993, p.316). while, Allan & Burridge (2006) defines euphemism as "words or phrases used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression. They avoid possible loss of face by the speaker, and also the hearer or some third party. A dispreferred language expression is simply one that is not the preferred, desired or appropriate expression (...) Dispreferred expressions might alternatively be dubbed tabooed expressions." Hence, euphemism is not merely only used to replace unpleasant words but also to save the face of speaker or the hearer.

In recent study, it was conducted by Crespo (2014) found that euphemism was used by politicians to give good impression which was related to controversial topic. His analysis was

based on critical discourse analysis proposed by Van Dijk Wilson, politeness and facework theory proposed by Brown and Levinson 1987, and Cognitive Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff 1993. Hence, it has shown that euphemism is important for public figures particularly president. As a president, his words and language always draw attention of society because he is the leader of country. Moreover, Ren and Yu (2013) state "using euphemism is an active pragmatic strategy of speakers in a certain time and a certain situation. It is predictable that euphemism will gain more publicity, legitimacy and respectability." Thus, it is certain that euphemism that is used will gain respect from public. In addition, Donald Trump's language is always be an interesting topic since it represents himself. In other words, he must be careful of using language.

Donald Trump is a president of United America since 2016. His language has always been watching by public since he never doubts to speak the thought of his mind. This study examined a speech of Donald Trump when he was in Afghanistan, August 2017. He talked about terrorists and their activity.

II. THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Model of Euphemism

In order to analyze euphemistic expression of Donald Trump, this study used model of euphemism which was proposed by Warren (1992, p.133) (cited in Linfoot-Ham, 2005, p.4) that divided into 4 classifications as follow.

1. Word Formation Device. Warren (1992, p.133) (cited in Linfoot-Ham.) describes of how to form euphemisms into five ways by using this method. These are the kinds of how to form euphemisms as follow:
 - a. Compounding: the combining of two individually innocuous words form of a euphemism for an otherwise unacceptable term such as '*hand job*' which means as masturbation.
 - b. Derivation: the modification of a latin term to form a printable modern English word (Rawson, 1981). '*felatio*' which means as oral sex is an example of derivation.
 - c. Blends: There is no example is given by Warren of what she means by this term, how a blend is formed as euphemism.

- d. Acronyms: SNAFU ['Situation Normal All Fucked Up'], a military euphemism for a possibly catastrophic event.
 - e. Onomatopoeia: the sound of 'things' hitting together during the sexual act is employed to refer the act itself. For example 'bonk' which means sexual intercourse.
2. Phonemic Modification. "The form of an offensive word is modified or altered," (Warren, 1992, p. 133), for example:
- a. Back slang: 'enob' [bone/erect penis], Rawson (1981, p. 88) and 'epar' [rape] (Warren, 1992, p. 133). The words are reversed to avoid explicit mention.
 - b. Rhyming slang: 'Bristols' [breasts], a shortened, and further euphemised, version of Bristol cities' [titties] which becomes a "semi-concealing device," (Burchfield, 1985, p. 19).
 - c. Phonemic replacement: 'shoot' [shit], which Rawson terms "a euphemistic mispronunciation," (1981, p. 254), i.e. one sound of the offensive term is replaced.
 - d. Abbreviation: 'eff' (as in "eff off!") [fuck (off)].
3. Loan words. "...it has always struck me as curious that most, if not all, the banned words seem to be of Saxon provenance, while the euphemisms constructed to convey the same meaning are of Latin-French," (Durrell, 1968, p.ix). Some examples of this include:
- a. French: 'mot' [cunt] (Allen and Burrige, 1991, p. 95), 'affair(e)' [extramarital engagement] and 'lingerie' [underwear], (Stern, 1931).
 - b. Latin: 'faeces' [excrement] and 'anus' [ass-hole]. Aside from typical motivations for euphemism, Latin is often favoured as the uneducated and the young cannot interpret the meanings (Allen and Burrige, *ibid*, p. 19). However, "often such substitutions are just as vulgar if one understood the meaning of the latinate," (Liszka, 1990, p. 421).
 - c. Other languages: 'cojones' [testicles], is Spanish (Nash, 1995), and 'schmuck' [penis] in Yiddish literally means 'pendant' (M. Adams, 1999).
4. Semantic innovation.
- In this case, a "novel sense for some established word or word combination is created," (Warren, 1992, p. 133). Examples of Warren's seven categories of semantic innovation are:
- a. Particularisation: a general term is used, which is required to be 'particularised'
 - b. within the context to make sense, e.g. 'satisfaction' [orgasm] and 'innocent'
 - c. [virginal], both of which require contextually based inference by the reader/listener to be comprehensible.
 - d. Implication: In this case, several steps are required to reach the intended meaning, e.g. 'loose', which implies 'unattached', which leads to the interpretation [sexually easy/available]. Warren warns against possible misinterpretation of this
 - e. type of euphemism, though it seems this could occur with many examples of 'semantic innovation'.
 - a. Metaphor: A multitude of colourful metaphorical euphemisms surround menstruation, centring around 'red', e.g. 'the cavalry has come' - a reference to the red coats of the British cavalry, 'it's a red letter

day' and 'flying the red flag,' (Allen and Burrige, 1991, p. 82). Other metaphorical euphemisms include 'globes', 'brown eyes' and 'melons' [breasts] (Rawson, 1981, p. 38), and 'riding' [sex],

- f. which is common to many languages, including English, Greek and Middle Dutch (cf. Allen and Burrige, *ibid*.).
- a. Metonym: Otherwise called 'general-for-specific', this category includes the maximally general 'it' [sex] and the contextually dependent 'thing' [male/female
- g. sexual organs, etc.].
- a. Reversal: or 'irony'. Including 'blessed' [damned] (Stern, 1931) and 'enviable disease' [syphilis], both of which enable reference to something 'bad' by using opposites.
- b. Understatement: or 'litotes'. Examples like 'sleep' [die], 'deed' [act of murder/rape] and 'not very bright' [thick/stupid] fall into this category.

Thus, this theory is used to categorize type of euphemism which found in Donald Trump's speech.

2.2 Functions of Euphemism

This study also used theory of Ryabova (2013, p.38-39) to find out the functions of euphemism from communicative function. The functions of euphemism are described as follow.

- 1) Euphemism can be used to change exact names with terrifying or frightening connotations or meanings; cp. the usage of words death, die: curtains (actualizing the image of theater curtains as a logical finish of human life, delimiting two local spheres – this world and another world); passing (going away from this world, life); departure; decease (from lat. decessus), interpreting death as leaving one place and going into another place or location, world; defunction (stop functioning), interpreting death as the state of cessation of normal living functions; quietus (from lat. quietus est, as liberation from obligations); demise (from lat. demittere – to leave; grim reaper (personification of death); the Pale Horse (association with biblical personage); and silence; sleep (mythologization).
- 2) Euphemisms replace words with unpleasant repulsive referential meaning, e.g. louse, flea, bug – parasite, insect.
- 3) Euphemisms can name things or phenomena which at this very epoch are considered impolite, indecent, and unsocial. They are mostly restricted to the sphere of body functions, sexuality, nakedness, genitals, etc., e.g.: intercourse (= sexual intercourse); sleep with/together (sexual intercourse); to relieve oneself (=to use the toilet).
- 4) Etiquette euphemisms function when the speaker avoids using the direct name lest he/she can offend the listener or the third person. In this case, quite decent words can be euphemized though they can sound offensive to somebody else. E.g. speaking about a silly person one can say "he will not invent the gun powder"; not very clever; his upper story is not well furnished, etc. Cp.: We are in romantic terms.
- 5) There is a large part of lexicon used to mild or mask the real nature of things, i.e. to camouflage the truth. A good example from Russian literature is the words dead souls in the novel by Nikolay Gogol, meaning non-existent

people or people who died. Other examples of this group can be expressions such as: to borrow (=to steal); to take (= to steal); the Vietnam efforts (= the Vietnam War); push-button war (nuclear war); peacekeeping mission (=aggression); electronic surveillance (=illegal wiretapping), etc.

- 6) Socialized euphemisms are words that are used to name non-prestigious professions and jobs to heighten their status, to elevate menial or unskilled jobs, e.g.: model (= someone whose job is to show clothes); sanitation engineer; waste-reduction manager (=garbage man); building maintenance engineer (=janitor) (Moskvin, 2001). The post-modern society produces a multitude of euphemisms. The wish not to offend and the avoidance of even the possibility of offending goes hand in hand with this phenomenon of the modern age – political correctness (Veisbergs, 2001). The widespread character of this phenomenon was confirmed by the coinage of a new term – euphemantics.

These functions of euphemism proposed by Ryabova (2013) were required in this research to find out the motive of using euphemism.

III. THE ANALYSIS OF EUPHEMISM IN DONALD TRUMP'S SPEECH ON AFGHANISTAN

3.1 Method of Analysis

As previously stated, Donald Trump's Speech on Afghanistan is analyzed how euphemistic expression formed and the functions of euphemism. Therefore, this research included to the content analysis is an analysis of language's characteristic when communicating with others that consider the content or contextual meaning of the text which are verbal, electronic or print (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967; Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish & Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990) (cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).. In addition, this research will study the euphemistic expression of Donald Trump's Speech on Afghanistan taking into account specific approach to sociolinguistics which is language used in society as mentioned Holmes (2001, p.1) The relationship between language and the context of using it is analyzed in sociolinguistics. Further explanation is stated by Downes (1998, cited in Wardhaugh 2006, p.15) "sociolinguistics is that branch of linguistics which studies just those properties of language and languages which require reference to social, including contextual, factors in their explanation". Hence, the use of euphemism related to the social factors.

In order to analyze euphemism, the first step is finding the transcript of speech which is from newyorktimes on August, 21 2017. The next step is analyzing euphemistic expression by using theory of Warren (1962) and Ryabova (2013). The final step is concluding.

3.2 Analysis Model of Euphemism and Function of Euphemism

The data of this study are euphemistic expression found in Donald Trump's Speech on Afghanistan, August 21, 2017. It is chosen since the relationship of America and Afghanistan has been written in the media.

Datum 1. our brave sailors who were *injured and lost* after a tragic collision at sea,

Lost is used to replace *death*. It is a euphemistic expression since using *death* sound unpleasant especially when mentioning soldier's effort in saving the country. It is included to particularisation type and its function is changing terrifying names.

Datum 2. Our country has produced *a special class of heroes* whose selflessness, courage and resolve is *unmatched in human history*

A special class of heroes is a term for soldiers. He used the phrase to honor soldiers for what they have done to the country. Therefore, Donald Trump called them as heroes. It is included into overstatement type. The function of this expression is socialized euphemism.

Datum 3. American patriots from every generation have given *their last breath* on the battlefield for our nation and for our freedom.

Their last breath is a euphemistic expression for death. Therefore, its function is to change terrifying name. It is included into particularisation.

Datum 4. Through their lives, *and though their lives were cut short*, in their deeds they achieved total immortality
Their lives were cut short is a euphemistic expression which refers to soldiers of America who has died fast because of war. Its function is to change terrifying name. It is included into understatement type.

Datum 5. Through their lives, and though their lives were cut short, *in their deeds they achieved total immortality*
The expression means that the soldiers' deed will be remember forever eventhough they already passed away. Thus, Donald Trump used *immortality*. It is included into overstatement type and its function is to change terrifying name

Datum 6. They transcend every line of race, ethnicity, creed and color to serve together and *sacrifice together* in absolutely perfect cohesion

Sacrifice is a euphemistic expression which means death. Therefore, its function is to change terrifying name. It is included into particularisation.

Datum 7. *horrors on the scale of Sept. 11* —
The phrase above is a euphemistic expression of terrorism tragedy that happened in sept. 11 which made American was weary. For American, the tragedy of terrorist attack which attacked WTC is a terrifying memory. Thus, they refer the tragedy as Sept 11 which sound less horrible than mentioning the tragedy itself. Therefore, *Sept. 11* is a euphemistic expression for terror tragedy that attacked many citizens at that time. Hence, it is included to implication type. Its function is to replace words with unpleasant repulsive referential meaning.

Datum 8. *after the extraordinary sacrifice of blood and treasure*

Sacrifice blood and treasure is a euphemistic expression which means death. Therefore, its function is to change terrifying name. It is included into particularisation.

Datum 9. the tremendous sacrifices that have been made, especially the *sacrifices of lives*

The phrase sacrifices of lives replaces death since it sounds more pleasant than using death. Therefore, its function is to change terrifying name. It is included into particularisation.

Datum 10. that country was ruled by a government that gave *comfort and shelter to terrorists*.

The euphemistic expression means that the government indirectly provided or supported terrorist. Its function is to mask the real nature. It is included to implication type.

Datum 11. A hasty withdrawal would *create a vacuum* for terrorists,

It is a euphemistic expression which refers to the emerge of terrorist. Therefore, Donald Trump indirectly blamed the decision which was taken previously. Hence, it is included to implication type. The function of this euphemism is to mask the real nature.

Datum 12. As a result, *our hard-won gains slipped back into the hands of terrorist enemies*.

The euphemistic expression means that every hard work to fight against terrorist previously was useless. Thus, it is included to understatement type whose function to mask the real nature.

Datum 13. We cannot repeat in Afghanistan *the mistake* our leaders made in Iraq.

The mistake our leaders is a euphemistic expression which included to implication type since the hearer need to interpret which mistake that has been committed by the previous leader. Donald Trump used the expression to remind the hearer about decision of previous presidents by withdrawing soldier in Iraq which made terrorists became stronger. Moreover, he did not mention directly the previous president but he generalized by using the leaders to avoid offending the previous US presidents. Thus, the function of this euphemism is etiquette euphemism.

Datum 14. Pakistan often gives safe haven to *agents of chaos, violence and terror*.

Agent of chaos, violence and terror replaces terrorist who spread chaos, violence and terror to the society. Since terrorist sounds unpleasant to hear. Therefore, it is included to overstatement type. The function is to socialized euphemism.

Datum 15. The threat is worse because Pakistan and India are *two nuclear-armed states whose tense relations threaten to spiral into conflict*.

It means that relationship of India and Pakistan could create war. Thus, it is included into understatement. Its function is to mild the words.

Datum 16. No one denies that we have inherited a challenging and troubling situation in Afghanistan and South Asia. *But we do not have the luxury of going back in time and making different or better decisions*.

Donald Trump used the sentence above to blame the previous president regarding their decision. Furthermore, he repented the decision of previous president has been decided that made the situation worse and it could not be repeated. Therefore he used expression of metaphor of going back in time to emphasize that the good time has passed and it could not be repeated. The sentence above is euphemistic expression which is included to implication. Its function is etiquette function.

Datum 17. America and our partners are committed to *stripping terrorists of their territory*,

It means that trump and his allies want to vanish terrorist. It is included to particularisation. Its function is to mild the real thing.

Datum 18. Working alongside our allies, we will break their will, *dry up their recruitment*,

Dry up is an indirect reference to vanish. In the speech, Donald Trump wanted to vanish terrorist. It means he used

euphemism to make his words milder. It is included to particularisation type. Its function is to mild the real thing.

Datum 19. We must stop the resurgence of *safe havens* that enable terrorists to threaten America.

Safe havens refers to place of terrorist where they are supported. Therefore, he did not mention the name of region directly. It is included into understatement type. Its function is to mild the real thing.

Datum 20. And we must prevent nuclear weapons and materials *from coming into the hands of terrorists and being used against us*, or anywhere in the world, for that matter.

The phrase above is euphemistic expression whose meaning is a war. If terrorists have weapon, They will attack people. It means war for America. It is included to understatement type. Its function is to mild the real thing.

Datum 21. It has much *to lose by continuing to harbor criminals and terrorists*

Datum 22. We recognize those contributions and those *sacrifices*.

Sacrifices replaces of soldiers' lives which means death. Therefore, its function is to change terrifying name. It is included into particularisation.

Datum 23. Finally, my administration will ensure that you, *the brave defenders of the American people*,

The brave defenders refers to America's soldier that defend America from the threat. It is included into overstatement type since Donald Trump wanted to honor the soldiers. The function of this expression is socialized euphemism.

Datum 24. I have already lifted restrictions the previous administration placed on *our war fighters*.

Our war fighters means soldiers since it sounds more honorable to hear. It is included to overstatement type. Its function is socialized euphemism.

Datum 25. We're already seeing *dramatic results* in the campaign to defeat ISIS, including the liberation of Mosul in Iraq.

The dramatic result means the great result that were not expected which refers to the victory of Iraq that defeated ISIS. It is included to overstatement type. Its function is etiquette euphemism.

Datum 26. But we will no longer use American military might to construct democracies in *faraway lands*

Faraway lands refers to the country that america try to help such as afghanistan and iraq. Hence, Donald Trump did not mention those country explicitly since it would make the hearer particularly afganistan because the speech was delivered in afghanistan. In addition, iraq and afghanistan were far away from america therefore he used faraway lands. Its function is etiquette euphemism which indirectly mentioned third person to not offend them. It is included to implication type.

Datum 27. our support is *not a blank check*.

Donald Trump used *not a blank check* means the real support and reformation. It is included to metaphor which are blank check that can be found in bank that means no result or useless check compares to the support of America's government under Donald Trump. Its function is etiquette euphemism.

Datum 28. hundreds of thousands of America's greatest patriots *lay in eternal rest* at Arlington National Cemetery
Lay in eternal rest means that those soldiers have died. Instead of using grave, eternal rest sounds milder to use.

Hence, it is included to understatement. Its function is to change exact name.

Datum 29. There's more courage, sacrifice and love *in those hallowed grounds than at any other spot on the face of the Earth.*

The phrase replace cemetery. He used the euphemistic expression since it sounded more pleasant to hear and to honor the fight of the soldiers. It is included to overstatement type. Hence, its function is socialized euphemism.

Datum 30. They *volunteered* for a simple reason: Volunteered refers to the soldiers fight in battle which made them died. It is included to particularisation type. Its function is to change exact names such as death.

Datum 31. Now we must secure *the cause for which they gave their lives.*

It replaced cause of their death which is sound more pleasant to hear. Therefore, it is included to particularisation type. Its function is to change exact name which is death.

Datum 32. all of them will honor *the sacrifice of every fallen hero*, every family who lost a loved one, and every wounded warrior who shed their blood in defense of our great nation.

The euphemistic expression above is to replace death of soldiers. Therefore, Donald Trump used word fallen hero to honor soldiers by not using words such as death. It is included to particularisation type. Its function is to change exact name which is death.

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IV. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the type of euphemism shows that the euphemistic expression were created by combination of words to refer indirectly unpleasant terms since the speech talked about soldiers fight that defend America. Therefore, Donald Trump honored the soldiers by using his combination of pleasant words.

In addition, the functions of euphemism are analyzed to find out the motive of Donald Trump of using euphemism in his speech on Afghanistan. Most of his euphemistic expression is to change exact terrifying names such as death. The etiquette euphemism also found since Donald Trump did not want mention directly the third person that might be offend them.

In short, Donald Trump used euphemism since he realized where the speech delivered and the topic itself to avoid unpleasant terms. Despite of his position as a president of US, he considered the use of his language particularly the people who heard his speech at that time.

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