



## Representation of Euphemism as a Speaking Politeness Strategy of Crime Story YouTubers

Siti Aulia Umami<sup>1</sup>; Sumarlam<sup>2</sup>; Supana<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Postgraduate Program, Linguistics, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Linguistic Program, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Doctoral, Linguistic Program, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v10i8.5042>

---

### **Abstract**

This study examines the use of euphemism in the speech of criminal story YouTubers using semantic and pragmatic theories. This study is a descriptive qualitative study that aims to describe the form and function of the euphemism in the speech of criminal story YouTubers. The study data were in the form of euphemism utterances obtained from YouTube videos @Nessie Judge, @Nadia Omara, and @Korea Reomit. The results showed that the form of euphemism spoken by criminal story YouTubers included words, phrases, and sentences. The euphemistic functions of the utterance included sensing, politeness, elegance, disguise of meaning, and humor. Strategies used by YouTubers to express euphemisms included indirect speech functions (pleasantries), the use of foreign languages, and the use of slang. Expressions of euphemisms from the three YouTubers show different patterns, this is due to differences in cultural background, education, age of speakers. The difference in the use of euphemism is a manifestation of the function of social structures related to the norms contained in the culture of the speaker community and acts as social control.

**Keywords:** *Euphemism; Politeness Strategy; Criminal Story YouTubers; Social Structure Functions*

### **Introduction**

As a manifestation of the times, the delivery of information also develops. One of the communication media used to obtain information is YouTube. YouTube presents a variety of videos that are interesting, innovative, accessible, and free. There are various content or information available on *YouTube*, from content about daily life, education, entertainment, politics, and various other things (Faiqah et al., 2016). Criminal occurrences such as loss of life, attempted murder, theft, and other criminal cases reported on television are often tedious because they are very rigid and inflexible. Submission of such information is less desirable, so a lot of YouTube contents raise criminal issues with the creators' own characteristics disposition. Criminal story creators with more than 5 million subscribers - @NessieJudge, @NadiaOmara, and @KoreaReomit - have their own specialty and distinction of retelling a crime scene. The three creators in telling a criminal incident using diction that is diverse and varied.

Like when mentioning taboo things, all the three YouTubers often replace taboo words with more polite words that do not cause misunderstanding.

The three YouTubers of the criminal story expressed euphemism with their own peculiarities and diversity. This is influenced by differences in cultural background, education, age, and gender. YouTuber Nessie Judge has a characteristic of using a mix of English codes into Indonesian because of her educational background. Nadia Omara puts herself like a speech partner so that storytelling is more humorous and more familiar. Korean YouTuber Reomit uses a longer explanation, due to the influence of his mother tongue, which is Korean.

The refinement of a word or so-called euphemism and its opposite, an expression that connotes insulting dysphemism, is included into the form of language variation. According to Gorys Keraf (1991:129) are expressions which references have a subtle, polite, and courteous semantic components to replace expressions that are insulting, vilifying, or unpleasant (Wijana & Rohmadi, 2011). The use of the YouTuber euphemism of criminal stories in utterances is a speech strategy. The speech strategy offered by Brown and Levinson (1978) is closely related to face threats so that the speech strategy is still related to language politeness (Purwo, 2007).

This study aims to describe the form of euphemism expression and its function in the speech of criminal story YouTubers. The form and function of euphemistic expressions are known by applying a semantic approach to find out the lexical meaning or the actual meaning applied with different purposes in the form of words, phrases, and sentences (Meilasari et al., 2016). The use of euphemism in a speech is influenced by the socio-cultural of local speakers, so to discuss euphemism it is necessary to look at the context of speech in the form of existing socio-cultural situations (Allan, 2016a).

In expressing euphemism, a YouTuber as a speaker is bound by the audience or speech partner, so that in using speech, a YouTuber needs to pay attention to the socio-culture found in the speech community. The socio-cultural context relates to the structure and social functioning of language-speaking societies. The social structure and its functions can reflect the characteristics and peculiarities of a society. In addition, both of these have a role as an emphasis on norms and rules in society. The function of social structure according to Major Polak is: 1) as a social supervisor related to violations of norms and values, 2) the basis of social group discipline, 3) typical characteristics of society (Sutrisno et al., 2020). As a social supervisor, language is used to regulate the interpersonal of speakers in social interactions so that there is two-way communication that does not cause misunderstanding (Korneeva et al., 2019). This study also aims to determine the differences in the forms of euphemistic expressions of criminal story YouTubers, therefore a sociopragmatic approach is needed to determine the social functions contained in speech.

Studies on the expression of euphemism with semantic and pragmatic approaches have been conducted before, namely research Gernsbacher et.al (2016) that examines the expression of euphemism 'Special Needs' in the speech context. Research Allan (2016) regarding the use of the term 'N' which does not mean blasphemy depending on the speech context and the pragmatic effects caused. And research (Cao, 2020) on the function of euphemism as a pragmatic principle, which formulates the function of pragmatic euphemism includes the functions of sensing, politeness, elegance, disguise of meaning, and humor.

## **Methods**

This study includes a type of qualitative research because the main focus of research is the phenomenon of language contained in the euphemism utterances of the YouTube creator contents and includes all things in it. The data analyzed in this study was obtained from the videos of three criminal story YouTuber accounts, namely @NessieJudge, @Nadia Omara, and @KoreaReomit, which were

uploaded between 2021-2023 with the theme of murder. The sampling technique in this study used purposive sampling in the form of 3 videos from 50 videos that were obtained on each YouTuber account of criminal stories.

The data collection in this study used content analysis techniques. Content analysis is used to deepen the information in the document by relating it to the existing linguistic context (Sumarno, 2020). The analysis technique used in this study was Miles and Huberman's interactive data analysis technique (1992:20).

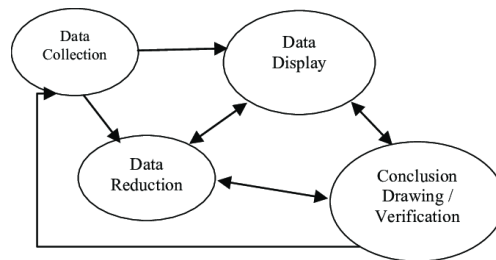


Figure 1. Interactive Data Analysis by Miles and Huberman (1992:20)

**Results and Discussion**

**A. Form and Function of Euphemism**

The forms of euphemistic expressions contained in the YouTubers' utterances of criminal stories include words, phrases, and sentences. The functions of euphemisms in the YouTubers' speech include sensing, politeness, elegance, disguise of meaning, and humor.

The percentage of euphemistic expressions of three YouTubers of criminal stories can be seen in full in the following table.

Table 1. Form and Function of Speech Euphemism in Crime Story YouTubers

No	YouTuber	Speech Form	Function	Total
1.	@Nessie Judge	a. Word	Sensing, Politeness, Elegance, Disguise of meaning	4 2 4 9
		b. Phrase	Sensing, Politeness, Elegance, Disguise of meaning	3 3 1 5
		c. Sentence	Sensing, Politeness, Elegance, Disguise of meaning	2 2 2 4
2.	@Nadia Omara	a. Word	Sensing, Politeness, Elegance,	3 3 9

			Disguise of meaning, Humor	5 2
		b. Phrase	Sensing, Politeness, Elegance, Disguise of meaning	2 2 1 5
		c. Sentence	Disguise of meaning	2
3.	@Korea Reomit	a. Word	Sensing, Politeness, Elegance, Disguise of meaning, Humor	2 2 1 5 1
		b. Phrase	Politeness, Elegance, Disguise of meaning	2 1 2
		c. Sentence	Sensing, Politeness, Elegance,	2 1 2
Total Speeches				95

## Data 1

Nessie Judge: "It was an **alcoholic** who loved to hurt his children and his wife verbally and physically." (NJ1/5/1.29-1.37)

The euphemism in this sentence is found in the word **alcoholic**. The word *alcoholic* has a positive connotation compared to the word *alcohol addiction* or *alcohol dependence*. The word *alcoholic* is an adjective for someone who is addicted to alcoholic beverages. The function of the euphemism of the word *alcoholic* is to disguise meaning. Nessie Judge uses the word to disguise taboo expressions that can cause discomfort to the listeners.

## Data 2

Nessie Judge: "The police also suspect that the killer may have been a very intelligent person who knew **anatomy**." (NJ2/44/6.43-6.50)

The word *anatomy* is a form of euphemism. The word has a positive connotation when compared to its equivalent, namely *surgery* or *cutting*. The function of the word euphemism is as sensing. Nessie Judge uses the word to avoid feeling disgusted or rude to the speech partner.

## Data 3

Nadia Omara: "So this case is the **disappearance of life** of a high school girl named us Gucci Satomi by an unknown man who suddenly infiltrated her room". (NO1/60/0.29-0.37)

The phrase *disappearance of life* is a form of euphemism. The phrase consists of two words, namely the noun *disappearance* and *life*. The phrase has a positive connotation when compared to the true meaning or word equivalent, namely *murder* or *massacre*. The function of euphemism based on the context of the sentence is for politeness. Nadia Omara uses the phrase to smooth out abusive or traumatic expressions.

## Data 4

Nadia Omara: "Well! Kasima whose efforts failed to *memperkaos* (**rape**) Satomi immediately panicked, then there he immediately stabbed Satomi's body with a folding knife". (NO1/75/22.28-22.38)

The word *memperkaos* is a form of euphemism. The word is a slang form of the word *memperkoska* or *rape* and has a positive connotation. The function of the word euphemism is humor. Nadia Omara disguises the meaning of the word by using a slang phrase to avoid embarrassing situations and as a way to build familiarity with the listeners.

## Data 5

Korea Reomit: "It's like he has his own **sexual fantasies** and usually asks his wife eh do like this and his wife often rejects the requests so they often get quarrel". (KR2/121/10.00-10.11)

The phrase *sexual fantasy* is a form of euphemism. The phrase has a positive connotation when compared to its equivalent namely *delusion*, *sexual satisfaction*, or explicit mention of sexual fantasy forms. The euphemistic function of the phrase is for politeness. Jang Hansol uses the phrase to conceal the kind of sexual fantasies perpetrators do, it is used to minimize discomfort and feelings of disgust.

## Data 6

Korea Reomit: "One day, his mother saw Pedro who was doing something to his sister, of course it wasn't intimate, but like sexual harassment against his sister, so it seems like he was **holding her sister's private parts**". (KR1/110/3.55-4.18)

The phrase *holding private parts* is a form of euphemism. The sentence has a positive connotation when compared to the explicit meaning of *holding the genitals* or *reproductive organs*. The function of the euphemism of the sentence is for sensing. Jang Hansol uses the phrase to avoid embarrassment and discomfort for the listeners.

Table 2. Comparison of Politeness Levels of Euphemism and Taboo Expression

Euphemism	Taboo Expression
Alcoholic	Alcohol addict
Anatomy	Cadaver surgery
Disappearance of Life	Murder or Massacre
Slang of Memperkoska (Rape)	Rape or fuck
Sexual Fantasy	Sexual delusion or satisfaction
Holding private parts	Explicit mention of private parts (breasts or genitals)

## B. Politeness Strategy

The politeness strategy used by all three YouTubers to express euphemisms has a similar pattern. The politeness strategies used by criminal story YouTubers include indirect speech strategies (pleasantries), slang phrases, and foreign or medical language terms. The strategy is aimed at smoothing out expressions that can be uncomfortable or ambiguous.

YouTuber Nessie Judge in expressing euphemism uses many foreign terms or medical terms such as the word *alcoholic*, *anatomy*, *autopsy*, the phrase *base toxic*, *very sotoy* (*smart ass*). YouTuber Nadia Omara uses indirect speech strategies and the use of slang in speaking euphemism such as the use of the word *memperkaos* which is the slang word for rape, the word *neko-neko* (doing something strange or weird), the word *gatal* (*itchy*) to replace the word *ganjen* (*filtratious*). Finally, Korean YouTuber Reomit uses indirect strategies (pleasantries) when uttering taboo phrases such as the use of *going to die* phrase to

explain the state of *dying*.

The use of indirect speech strategies (pleasantries) using examples or explanations that contain explicit and implicit meaning is used to smooth out the chronology of crime so that the speech partner or listener feels comfortable and does not feel ambiguous when listening to abusive events. Slang strategies are used to build familiarity or humor. And strategies for the use of medical terms are used to disguise abusive meanings and for politeness purposes.

### C. Social Structure Function

In expressing euphemism, YouTubers of criminal stories pay attention to the differentiation and social stratification between themselves and their speech partners or audiences. In addition to the social distance, criminal story YouTubers also consider sociocultural speech partners to measure the politeness of a speech. All three YouTubers use euphemism with different forms and functions, this is motivated by differences in culture, education, gender, and age of the YouTubers. These differences in backgrounds are the basis for the YouTubers to respond to a criminal incident because they are armed with the norms, values, and regulations that exist in the speaker community. The choice of the use of euphemism is also based on knowledge about people's attitudes and habits, so that the YouTubers can determine which bad actions violate the rules. YouTubers also look at the social structure to determine the basis for understanding the criminal act and adapt it to the utterances used to explain the criminal act.

### Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the use of euphemism by criminal story YouTubers, it can be concluded that although the three YouTubers tell criminal events with the theme of murder, there are differences and similarities in speech patterns. The first difference in the use of euphemism is found in the politeness strategy used, it is influenced by the differences in the background of each YouTuber. The second difference is that in the euphemism function used, YouTuber Nessie Judge does not use the humor function in expressing euphemism expressions. The similarities found in the speech of criminal story YouTubers are in the speech strategy, the three YouTubers use indirect speech strategies (pleasantries) to smooth out taboo expressions. YouTubers of criminal stories in expressing euphemism pay attention to the function of the social structure used as a social supervisor that determines the selection of words to be used by paying attention to the characteristics of speech community or speech partner.

### References

- Allan, K. (2016a). A Benchmark for Politeness. *Interdisciplinary Studies in Pragmatics, Culture and Society*, 4, 397–420. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-12616-6>.
- Allan, K. (2016b). Contextual determinants on the meaning of the N word. *SpringerPlus*, 5(1141), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40064-016-2813-1>.
- Cao, Y. (2020). Analysis of Pragmatic Functions of English Euphemism from the Perspective of Pragmatic Principles. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 10(9), 1094–1100. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tp1s.1009.12>.
- Faiqah, F., Nadjib, M., & Amir, A. S. (2016). Youtube Sebagai Sarana Komunikasi Bagi Komunitas Makassarvidgram. *KAREBA*, 5(2), 259–272.
- Gernsbacher, M. A., Raimond, A. R., Balinghasay, M. T., & Boston, J. S. (2016). “Special Needs” Is An Ineffective Euphemism. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 1(29), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-016-0025-4>.

- Korneeva, A., Kosacheva, T., & Parpura, O. (2019). Functions of Language in The Social Context. *SHS Web of Conferences* 69, 00064, 1–5. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20196900064>.
- Meilasari, P., Nababan, M. ., & Djatmika. (2016). Analisis Terjemahan Ungkapan Eufemisme dan Disfemisme pada Teks Berita Online BBC. *Prasasti: Journal of Linguistics*, 1(2), 336–358.
- Purwo, B. K. (2007). *PELBA 18* (Y. Nasanius (ed.)). Yayasan Obor Indonesia. <https://doi.org/9789794615270>.
- Sumarno. (2020). Analisis Isi dalam Penelitian Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra. *Jurnal Elsa*, 18(2), 36–55. <https://jurnal.umko.ac.id/index.php/elsa/article/download/299/170>
- Sutrisno, A., Usman, S., Wahyuni, E., Jumiaty, E., Adiasti, N., Jafar, R., & Irsalina, D. (2020). *Pengantar Sosial Ekonomi dan Budaya Kawasan Perbatasan* (1st ed.). Inteligencia Media.
- Wijana, I. D. P., & Rohmadi, M. (2011). *Semantik Teori dan Analisis* (Y. Kusumawati (ed.); 2nd ed.). Yuma Pustaka.

## Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).