

## The Use Of Euphemism In Jimmy O. Yang Stand Up Comedy

Nabilah Rachmadhani<sup>1</sup>, Hermawati Syarif<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Negeri Padang

Corresponding author email: [nabilahrachmadhani17@gmail.com](mailto:nabilahrachmadhani17@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Euphemism is a polite utterance used to replace terms that are unlikely to be desired by the speaker since it might cause confusion for both the speaker and the listeners. The purpose of this research is to look into the functions of euphemism in Jimmy O Yang's stand-up comedy. The data for this study was gathered from two videos posted around 2022 by the YouTube channel laugh society. Burrige's (2012) theory of the euphemism function was employed to classify the data in this study. According to the findings of this study, there are five functions of euphemism: uplifting euphemism, ludic euphemism, underhand euphemism, provocative euphemism, and protective euphemism.

Keywords: Euphemism; Function of Euphemism; Standup Comedy

### INTRODUCTION

Humans use language to communicate with each other, and it is important to use good language to keep the interaction pleasant for both parties. The intention to avoid misunderstanding or upsetting the listener is called euphemism. Euphemism is a powerful linguistic strategy that is employed to prevent offending the person being addressed. It is both social and emotional in that it allows for the discussion of delicate or taboo matters without hurting anyone's feelings. Euphemisms include substituting words like "dead" with "passed away," "toilet" with "powder room," and "pornography" with "adult entertainment. According to Burrige (2012), there are six functions of euphemism which is protective euphemism, underhand euphemism, uplifting euphemism, provocative euphemism, cohesive euphemism and ludic euphemism.

The use of euphemisms can be seen in several studies that have been conducted by previous researchers. In the political context, studies by (Nuzulianda Febrina Purba, 2017; Ridwan et al., 2020; Tartila, 2018; Zhao, 2010) revealed their findings in euphemism for political usage. Political euphemism is created in political life and serves political interests. In general, it is a strategy used by political participants to conceal scandals, disguise the truth, and create public opinion when discussing social issues or occurrences. Euphemism is also present in literature (Candra et al., 2022; Lailiyah &

Yustisia, 2019; Suhadi & Ekalestari, 2021). In a social situation, euphemism is one of the tactics used to express politeness, and it is also influenced by the speaker's personal background. This was discussed in the study by (Morelent & Irawan, 2022). They discovered that euphemism is frequently utilized by female speakers with at least a bachelor's degree, solid social contacts with their interlocutors, and jobs as teachers, village administrators, and community leaders. Whereas, male speaker tend to used dysphemism rather than euphemism. Humor also uses euphemisms (Frentiu, 2020; Hamilton & Foltzer, 2021). However, the category of using euphemisms in humor is rarely examined. As a result, the researcher wishes to discuss the euphemisms employed in humor in the context of stand-up comedy in this study.

Stand-up comedy is a humorous genre that attempt to satisfy and amuse people by making verbally amusing references about aspects of everyday life. Stand-up comedy is more complex than telling jokes for three reasons. For starters, it is a personal viewpoint in which the stand-up comic adopts a persona and tackles many subjects in everyday life in a relevant and narrative style. Second, it is mostly presented verbally rather than through song or slapstick. In stand-up comedy, humor is expressed by manipulating language at several levels. The stand-up comic entertains the audience entirely with language and interacts with them only through a microphone. Third, the content of stand-up comedy is highly satirical, as it visualizes and shows social reality from a different angle in order to validate or deny, reinforce or reassess, accept or condemn society's behaviors, attitudes, norms, beliefs, and practices. A stand-up comedian is a social commentator who uses words to achieve his sarcastic goal of turning social reality into an entertaining act.

Stand-up comedy is expressed through language and is utilized to fulfill sociolinguistic needs such as euphemism. When a speaker would like to use sensitive words or terms that are regarded taboo or offensive and may cause problems for both the speaker and the listeners, the speaker prefers to substitute the word with another neutral or acceptable term. The speaker modifies the word to make it more polite and less insulting. This is known as euphemism. "Euphemisms represent a flight to comfort, a way to reduce tension when conversing," writes Keyes (2010). They are comfort word." It is fairly usual to use euphemisms to discuss taboo or unpleasant issues. The used of euphemism in stand-up comedy is an interesting topic to be studied. In this regard, the present study is attempted to analyze the functions of euphemism that found in Jimmy O. Yang stand-up comedy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Euphemism**

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, the word "euphemism" is derived from the Greek words "euphismós" (fair speech) and "euphphmos" (fair speech). The Greek word for "good" is eu-. Euphemism, as defined by Allan and Burridge (2006), is "sweet talking," as opposed to dysphemism ("unfavorable

speech").

Allan and Burridge (2012) define euphemism as "a collection of words or phrases used as an alternate expression when conveying something unpleasant." The term may be taboo, frightening, unpleasant, or otherwise have too many negative connotations to happily fulfill the speaker's expressive purpose at that time. Euphemisms are used to avoid embarrassing the speaker, listener, and/or third person. Euphemism can be employed to avoid using language that is potentially harmful, considered forbidden, or has a negative connotation.

Euphemism is defined as an alternative way of explaining something that makes it sound more pleasant than it actually is (Murphy & Koskela, 2010). The term euphemism is used to substitute words that are judged excessively harsh, unpleasant, or embarrassing. Euphemisms are considered as a better and more polite phrases or expressions that are used to replace offensive words or expressions so that everyone may accept them. In society, euphemisms are employed to express facts more polite. According to Abrams (2005), euphemisms are used to replace words that are seen to be unpleasant.

According to Dilmonov (2020), euphemisms are words that occur as synonyms for words and phrases that the speaker finds awkward, unsuitable, or offensive. They are employed to avoid naming a negative fact, to minimize the negative consequences of such a reality, to diminish the negative consequences of events that offend, insult, or breach moral norms, or to conceal them. Euphemism is related with the development of traditions, cultural levels, aesthetic tastes, and ethnic conventions, and the euphemistic layer of a language evolves alongside it. Developing euphemisms evolve as a result of evolving morals and worldviews.

## **2. Functions of euphemism**

There are six function of euphemism that proposed by Burridge (2012) such as:

### **1) Protective euphemism**

Protective euphemism is used to shield and avoid offending, particularly when discussing sensitive themes. In various contexts, euphemisms are employed to address social awareness, such as death. For example, euphemisms for "death," such as "pass away," may be more appropriate in some contexts than unpleasant idioms, such as "kick the bucket." According to Keyes (2010), we all use euphemisms to avoid what makes us uncomfortable, and this is especially true of protective euphemisms.

### **2) Underhand euphemism**

Underhanded euphemism is used to conceal and misrepresent something, or to sugarcoat bad news. Human resource managers, for example, may utilize deceptive euphemisms such as payroll adjustment to give employees the pink slip. These euphemisms may be more acceptable than the words "fire," "dismiss," or "sack."

### 3) Uplifting euphemism

An "uplifting euphemism" is a phrase used to talk up and exaggerate something, such as in technical, legal, or bureaucratic language. It is usual for car dealerships to sell used cars as pre-owned vehicles since "ownership" has a more positive connotation than "use."

### 4) Provocative euphemism

Provocative euphemism for revealing or inspiring. For example, in (Burridge 2012), it is fairly common to officially refer to some persons as having a "migration background," much the ways that the term "visible minorities" is officially used in Canada. Similar terms are African-American and Japanese-American. Euphemisms can be provocative as well as polite. According to Pinker et al. (2008), indirect language can assist us negotiate social relationships.

### 5) Cohesive euphemism

Cohesive euphemism used to show solidarity and to help define the gang. This can be seen, for example, in hospital employees dealing with death and disease. When speaking to patients and their families, hospital staff frequently uses euphemisms, whereas when speaking to colleagues in the staff room, they use crude dysphemism.

### 6) Ludic euphemism

In playful and creative circumstances, ludic euphemisms can be utilized to have fun and entertain people. Ludic euphemisms are useful for "diffusing the seriousness of taboo subjects." Breaking wind for "fart," night games for "copulation," and plumbing for "defecation and urination" are some examples. Ludic euphemisms can also be used to relieve tension through humor.

## 3. Stand-Up Comedy

Since the 18th century, stand-up comedy has been a part of popular culture in Europe and America. Ludruk and Ketoprak are examples of Indonesian comic traditions. Stand-up comedy has just recently been popular in Indonesia, partly because of comedians such as Raditya Dika and Pandji Pragiwaksono who employ it. Jimmy O Yang is a well-known comic in America. Stand-up comedy is defined as an encounter between a standing and single performer performing hilariously and/or talking amusing things to the audience without the use of props such as a costume, set, or other dramatic vehicle (Mintz, 1985).

Stand-up comedy is a style of solo comedy in which comedians perform alone and monologue. The show's performer is referred to as a stand-up comedian or a stand-up comic. The way stand-up comedians make the audience laugh, according to Schwarz (2010), is telling a succession of funny stories, one-liners or short jokes, and anecdotes, which are often called "bits". The terminology used on stand-up comedy shows is not formal because the performance is intended to entertain. In stand-up comedy, humor is expressed by manipulating language on multiple levels. The audience is only entertained

by the stand-up comedian use of language. Even though stand-up comedy is delivered in a humorous mood of interaction, this does not mean that the materials conveyed by the comic are not serious (Wijana, 2016). Some of the topics delivered by the stand-up comedians are about ideology, politics, ethnicity, and other popular issues (Glick, 2007).

## METHOD

This research is descriptive qualitative research. It adopted content analysis as its design. This research aims at analyze the function of euphemism that found in jimmy o yang stand-up comedy published in YouTube channel named laugh society. The data are all of words and phrases in a sentence that contain euphemism expressions in 12 and 4 minutes long video uploaded by the laugh society YouTube channel. The data were analyzed based on theory from Burrige (2012).

## FINDINGS

The researcher got 13 data of euphemism. The data were classified into forms and functions of euphemism based on semantic analysis. The researcher enlisted functions of euphemism found in 2 video of Jimmy O Yang stand-up comedy.

### *First video*

No	Euphemism	Function
1	like about 10 years ago I went on a college trip to Tijuana Mexico because that's just what a good American college student would do	Uplifting euphemism
2	it's easier to get into Mexico than a Costco	Provocative euphemism
3	there's no more revolving doors now it's a concrete windowless tunnel with guards with m16 machine guns	Provocative euphemism
4	I was like well his name is Ian	Ludic euphemisms
5	what was I going to do back in Hongkong restart my ping pong career that ship has sailed man	Ludic euphemism

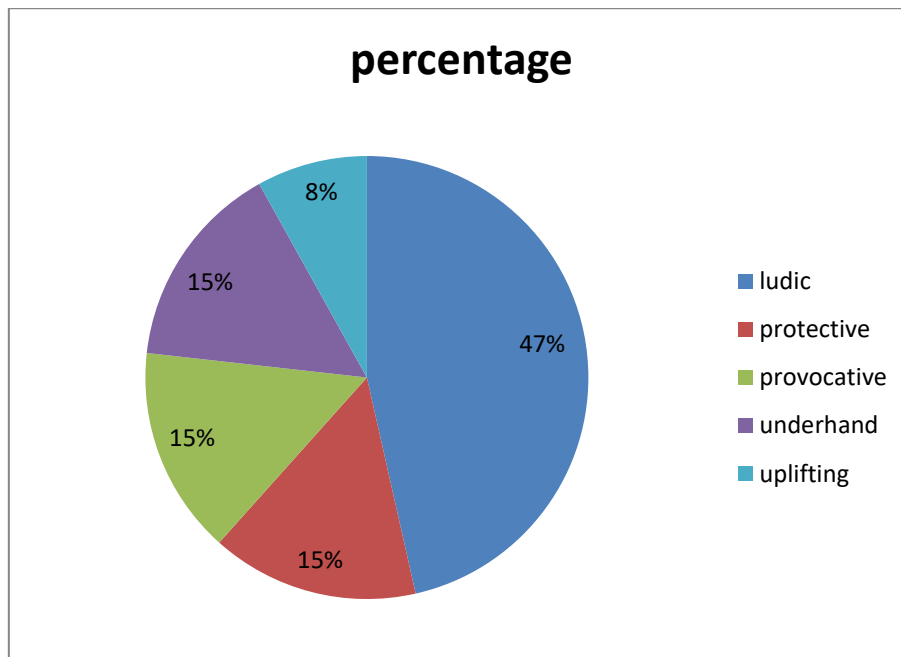
6	holy look at him he looks just like rocky balboa	Ludic euphemism
7	but do you know today is the dragon ball lightship gotta use it to your advantage people very happy to be here man	Ludic euphemism
8	like I'm finally I'm like quasi-famous now	Underhand euphemism
9	but then it took me years to realize that having a good look is totally different thanbeing good-looking	Underhand euphemism

In the first video, the data shows that there are four euphemistic functions found in Jimmy O Yang's first video. During the duration of the 12 minute video, Jimmy O mentions 9 euphemisms with different functions. Among them are 1 uplifting euphemism, 2 provocative euphemisms, 4 ludic euphemisms and 2 underhand euphemisms.

## **Video 2**

No	Euphemism	Function
1	she brings it on furniture makes the house look amazing and chip just hires Mexicans to do everything from it's the most symbiotic American relationship ever	Protective euphemism
2	maybe my house could look that nice if I move to Waco Texas if I just give up on mylife	Protective euphemism
3	I've seen enough movies to know that ghosts only haunt houses not one-bedroom Apartments	Ludic euphemism
4	I've seen enough Hollywood movies to know that ghosts only haunt rich people's houses	Ludic euphemism

In the second video, the duration is less than the first video. In Jimmy O's stand-up comedy performance, 4 euphemisms were found. The function of euphemism here is indicated as ludic euphemism and protective euphemism. Overall from the two video of Jimmy O Yang stand-up comedy it was found that the most dominant function is ludic euphemism (47%) from the total of data. Then it followed by protective euphemism (15%), provocative euphemism (15%) and underhand euphemism (15%). The least euphemism function that found in the data is uplifting euphemism (8%).



**Figure 1. functions of euphemism**

## DISCUSSION

Based on findings above, there are five function of euphemism that have been used by jimmy o yang in his stand-up comedy. The most frequently used is ludic euphemism. It can be seen from the one of the phrase "I've seen enough Hollywood movies to know that ghosts only haunt rich people's houses". Instead of saying that he is too poor, he said something that focused on the opposite. He made it sound fun and entertaining rather than sound pitiful. For protective euphemism, jimmy said "maybe my house could look that nice if I move to Waco Texas if I just give up on my life", he said 'give up on my life' instead of 'kill myself'. It may sound rude and unpleasant to hear the word kill myself in the middle of stand-up comedy. In one the phrase, jimmy also used euphemism that function as underhanded euphemism, which used to sugarcoat something bad. "like I'm finally I'm like quasi-famous now". Instead of saying that he is not popular at all, he said he only half famous. In the phrase " like about 10 years ago I went on a college trip to Tijuana Mexico because that's just what a good American

college student would do”, the euphemism here used as uplifting euphemism. Where an uplifting euphemism can be used to can be used “to talkup and to inflate” something, as occurs in technical, legal, or bureaucratic jargon sometimes.

Euphemisms have been around for a long time because they serve important societal functions. Euphemisms can be used for a variety of purposes, including entertainment, misdirection, saving face, avoiding offending someone, discussing taboo themes, and enhancing group cohesion. An uplifting euphemism such as intellectually challenged (for stupid) may occasionally cause laughter and thus fall into the category of ludic euphemism (Hamilton & Foltzer, 2021). According to Crespo-Fernández (2015), the semantic value of the euphemism can range from neutral to negative to amusing, depending on the context of usage and the intention behind the usage, as would be expected with X-phemisms. Stand-up comedy usually used euphemism to entertain the audience which contains humor.

Based on (Hamilton & Foltzer, 2021) study, several euphemisms can be utilized for humor. As defined by Colston (2015), humor is a specific pragmatic effect that may "arise as a result of some other effect," such as ingratiation, a general pragmatic effect. We can make indirect compliments to listeners by using metaphorical language to flatter them (Colston 2015), and their positive response can have a positive effect on us. While we can use euphemisms to avoid offending someone, we can also use them to gain someone's favor. When the result is effective, a ludic euphemism may produce the pragmatic impact of humor. Furthermore, when we detect an underhanded euphemism as a euphemism, we are more likely to find it hilarious, resulting in a ludic euphemism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Humor is expressed through stand-up comedy by manipulating language on multiple levels. In stand-up comedy, humor is created by combining numerous linguistic components of jokes such as wordplay, hyperbole, repetition, timing, and paralinguistic choices (Schwarz, J. 2010). Each comedian has a unique approach to producing wordplay, one of which is to employ euphemism. From Jimmy O's stand-up comedy video, the use of euphemisms is found in 13 sentences with a variety of different functions. The most frequent function in this study is ludic euphemism. Euphemisms can be amusing. Humor is a significant pragmatic effect of what Burridge (2012) refers to as "ludic euphemisms." The findings indicate that euphemisms might fall into multiple categories at the same time. In one context, an underhanded euphemism may be employed as doublespeak, but it can also become humorous, resulting in what we call ludic euphemism.



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