

## **EUPHEMISM AND DYSPHEMISM EXPRESSIONS IN THE INDONESIAN CABINET SECRETARIAT NEWS ARTICLE AND THEIR TRANSLATION**

**Ni Wayan Pering Muliawati**

### ***Abstract***

*Euphemism and dysphemism are frequently used in news text, since they are believed to be able to attract the readers. These kinds of expressions are also commonly found in Indonesian Secretariat Cabinet (Setkab) online news. The research aims to find out how euphemistic and dysphemistic expressions are translated from Indonesian to English in the news. The methodology used on the research is descriptive qualitative, through mapping and analyzing 20 news texts and their translations. The researcher used Technique of Translation theory that was proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) to analyze the translation techniques applied in the translations. There are thirty-four expressions containing euphemism and dysphemism in the texts analysed, most of which are dysphemized and modulated in the target texts. The ways the two figures of speech are translated in the target texts, however, do not reflect the particular purposes commonly associated with them, namely to add or neutralize connotations. Rather, they mainly serve to add variations to the texts.*

**Keywords:** *euphemism, dysphemism, technique of translation, news, text*

### **Abstrak**

Eufemisme dan disfemisme merupakan gaya bahasa yang sering digunakan dalam teks-teks berita sehingga ungkapan-ungkapan tersebut dipercaya mampu menarik perhatian pembaca. Ungkapan-ungkapan tersebut juga bisa ditemukan dalam berita daring Sekretariat Kabinet Indonesia (Setkab). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana ungkapan eufemisme dan disfemisme dalam berita ini diterjemahkan dari bahasa Indonesia ke bahasa Inggris. Metodologi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan memetakan serta menganalisis 20 berita beserta terjemahannya. Peneliti menggunakan teori teknik penerjemahan oleh Molina dan Albir (2002) untuk menganalisis teknik penerjemahan yang digunakan oleh penerjemah. Dalam penelitian berita daring tersebut, terdapat 34 ungkapan yang mengandung

\*E-mail: [pering.muliawati@icloud.com](mailto:pering.muliawati@icloud.com), Penerjemah Ahli Muda pada Dinas Komunikasi, Informatika, dan Statistik Provinsi Bali, Jalan Nusa Indah, Denpasar, Bali 80231

eufemisme dan disfemisme. Ungkapan disfemisme dan teknik penerjemahan modulasi merupakan yang paling banyak ditemukan dalam penelitian ini. Ideologi penerjemahan ini juga cenderung pada orientasi domestikasi. Meskipun penggunaan ungkapan disfemisme paling dominan, namun secara keseluruhan tidak ditemukan maksud tertentu. Penggunaan ungkapan-ungkapan tersebut biasanya dibutuhkan untuk menarik perhatian pembaca.

**Kata kunci: eufemisme, disfemisme, teknik penerjemahan, berita, teks.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background**

Journalists are required to write short, clear, simple, straightforward and interesting news. They usually use several expressions to accommodate the language's styles in news. Euphemism and dysphemism are expressions used by journalists that are frequently found on the news.

Regarding the characteristics of journalistic language, Anwar (1979) explained that it should be short, concise, simple, fluent, clear, straightforward, and attractive. Journalist often use various expressions and styles of language in order to accommodate those characteristics of journalistic language.

Indonesian Secretariat Cabinet (Setkab) as a government's institution provides online news portal that aims to inform the government's programs, especially those of the central government. The bilingual news portal uses Indonesian as the Source Language (SL) and English as the Target Language (TL).

This research tries to find out the expression of euphemism and dysphemism used in the SL and TL analysed and the translation technique adopted, as well as techniques of translation that have been applied by translators. The researcher also analyses if there is any intent of using those expressions by examining the meaning of whole context of news.

## **1.2. Theory**

### **1.2.1. Euphemism and Dysphemism**

Euphemism (polite expression) and dysphemism (negative expression) are commonly used in writing news text. These expressions are forms of meaning's change in texts. According to Gomez (2012:43) "Euphemism and dysphemism are two cognitive processes of conceptualisation, with countervailing effects (having the same base and resources but different aims and purposes), of a certain forbidden reality." Both expressions are used to reveal topics that are considered taboo. Euphemism is used to mask the taboo, while dysphemism aims to stress the taboo.

Allan and Burridge (in Allan, 2012: 3) clearly argue that euphemism is used as "an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offence, that of the audience, or some third party". They also add that "a dysphemism is an expression with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the audience, or both, and it is substituted for a neutral or euphemistic expression for just that reason". Based on the explanation, euphemistic expression is used to hide unpleasant or tabooed objects, to make them being more acceptable. On the contrary, dysphemistic expressions are used to stress the taboos.

Politically, Fernandez (2014: 6) argues euphemism as the "process whereby a distasteful concept is stripped of its most inappropriate or offensive overtones", providing thus a "safe" way to deal with certain embarrassing topics without being politically incorrect or breaking a social convention. Based on Fernandez's definition, euphemism is mostly described as a process of eliminating the offensive or unpleasant expressions and changes into the safer ones while mentioning the disagreeable topics which can offend the social norms. He also mentions euphemism is effectively used in the political field, since it could hide the original meaning which has rough tone.

Politicians commonly use the expression while expressing the opinion, so they can deliver speech without offending the hearers.

Another study of dysphemism is conducted by McArthur (at Duda's, 2010:10). He defines dysphemism as "the use of a negative or disparaging expression to describe something or someone". By using the expression the utterance has intention to offend the hearer.

### **1.2.2. Techniques of Translation**

News is one of references to find out the condition of one country. Thus, news is currently not only consumed by readers in the country, but also by those who are abroad or foreigners who speak other languages. People usually discover the situation of foreign country through reading news. Many news sites have been in bilingual (in Source Language and their translations versions) in order to provide the information for foreigners. Translation process is an important way to reveal the situation of country to foreigners, and the reason makes translators role become important as well.

Generally, translation means the process of transferring meanings from one language to another. Every expert has a different idea about the definition of translation. There are some definitions about translation by the experts. Newmark (1988: 5) states "translation is rendering the meaning of the text into another language in the way the author intended the text". Catford (1995: 20) says "translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)". Yowell and Mutfah (1999) even describe "the translation is on the other hand, a product since it provides us with other different cultures, to ancient societies and civilization life when the translated texts reaches us". Through these definitions, translators must have a good knowledges of both the SL and TL. Therefore, they must have high linguistic sensitivity to explain

the writer's intention, thoughts and opinion into TL as precisely and faithfully as possible.

A successful translation can be seen from the equivalent meaning of SL to TL. Molina and Albir (2002) define translation technique as procedure to analyse and classify how the translation equivalents can be applied to various units of language. Molina and Albir (2002: 509-511) propose eighteen ways of translation techniques. These techniques of translation are:

1. Adaptation is related to cultural environment with the Source Language. The technique is chosen when the translator did not find any equivalent word from SL to TL.

SL = I stayed in Bungalow during holiday in Bali

TL = *Saya tinggal di pondok wisata saat berlibur ke Bali*

2. Amplification technique is a way to add any detail about information that is not formulated in SL.

SL = *Gamelan*

TL = *Gamelan*, an Indonesian orchestra.

3. Borrowing is taking a word or expression straight from another language. There are two kinds of borrowing technique, namely pure borrowing and naturalized borrowing.

Pure borrowing: flash disk, laptop

Naturalized borrowing: computer / *komputer*, music / *musik*

4. Description is a technique of translation that replaces a term of expression to the description of its function.

SL : *baguette*

TL : *sebuah roti berbentuk Panjang dan keras berasal dari Perancis*

5. Calque is the literal translation of a foreign word or phrase, it can be lexical or structural.

SL : Prime Minister

TL : *Perdana Menteri*

6. Generalization is used of a more general or natural term. The technique commonly used if there is no same expression from SL to TL.

SL : *becak*

TL : public transportation

7. Modulation related to change the point of view or cognitive categories in relation to the SL.

SL : I cut my finger

TL : *jariku tersayat*

8. Compensation technique introduces or replaces an element or stylistic effect from another plane in TL, because it cannot be reflected in the same place of SL.

SL : a pair of scissors

TL : *sebuah gunting*

9. Discursive creation is used to establish a temporary equivalence that is totally unpredictable out of context following the translator creativity.

SL : husband for a year (Rebecca Winter)

TL : *suami sementara*

10. Established equivalent is used for two expressions (both the SL and the TL) in the same situation by using completely different stylistic or structural methods for producing 'equivalent text'.

SL : traffic bumps

TL : *polisi tidur*

11. Linguistic amplification adds the linguistic elements. This is frequently used in interpreting or dubbing.

SL : It's up to you.

TL : *Ya sudah, itu terserah kamu sendiri.*

12. Linguistic comprehension means to synthesize the linguistic element in TL. It is often used in simultaneous interpreting or in dubbing.

SL : I want you to know.

TL : *ketahuilah.*

13. Literal translation is used to translate a word or an expression word for word.

SL : I will call you

TL : *Aku akan menelponmu.*

14. Variation changes the paralinguistic elements that affect aspect of linguistic variation: change of textual tone, style social dialect, geographical dialect. The technic normally used to translate the literature text.

SL : "He will never get to sleep with all this din," said Ma Lion

TL : "Leo tidak akan bisa tidur jika ramai seperti ini," kata Bu Singa.

15. Transposition is the translation technique that changing the grammatical category or word class without changing the meaning.

SL : He waits for the father to come.

TL : *Dia menunggu kedatangan ayahnya.*

16. Substitution technique changes the linguistic elements for paralinguistic elements (intonation, gestures). For example in translating the way of Balinese praying with "putting your hands together in the front of your forehead"

17. Reduction technique of translation is used to suppress or decrease the SL item to TL. It is in opposition of amplification.

SL : SBY the president of Republic of Indonesia took a leave in order to campaign.

TL : *SBY mengambil cuti kampanye.*

18. Particularization is the use of a more precise or concrete term.

SL : air transportation

TL : helicopter

### **1.2.3 Ideology of Translation**

Hoed (2003) says that ideology in the translation field means a principle or belief on “right or wrong”. Translation is considered proper if it is already conveyed into the SL properly. Acceptance aspect must also meet both grammatical and cultural rules of TL.

Based on those two opinions, Nababan (2008) divided techniques of translation into two groups namely foreignization (source-language-oriented ideology) and domestication (target-language-oriented ideology). The source-language-oriented techniques can be grouped from borrowing, calque, and literal technique of translation. While target-language-oriented techniques consist of adaptation, amplification, compensation, discursive creation, established equivalent, generalization, linguistic amplification, linguistic comprehension, modulation, particularization, reduction, substitution, transposition, variation, and description techniques of translation.

The analysis of this research used a semantic study. Semantic is the branch of linguistic that deals with meaning. Tarigan (2017) says that semantic is a science that examines symbols or signs that express the intentions, relationship of the meaning to one another, and their implications for humans and society. Meaning has a significantly role in various fields related to language, since every writing or speech has meaning to deliver.

### **1.3. Method**

This study is qualitative descriptive, there are twenty source texts and their translations that are purposively chosen. The data sources consist of source texts and target texts that were taken from Setkab website.

The first step in this procedure was reading the news in SL and TL, then choosing the data that can be classified as euphemistic and dysphemistic expressions. Furthermore, the researcher grouped the



data based on four categories of expressions translation, namely euphemism translated into euphemism, dysphemism translated into dysphemism, euphemism translated into dysphemism and dysphemism translated into euphemism. After finding those categories, the method was followed by analysing the technique of translation proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). The data was explained directly. The final step is determining the context of Setkab's news, if there is any intention through using the expressions of euphemism and dysphemism.

## 2. Findings and Analysis

In this section, the expressions change will be discussed in 4 categories that were found on 20 news texts, namely the translation from euphemism to euphemism, dysphemism to dysphemism, euphemism to dysphemism and dysphemism to euphemism, and how the technique of translation applied by translator to translate the expressions.

There were 9 of 18 techniques of translation that have been applied by the translators to translate the euphemism and dysphemism expression, namely adaptation (1), established equivalent (1), and variation (1) became the least number technique of translation used by translators, while modulation technique of translation (14) was the most frequently appeared. The most dominant technique of translation (modulation) showed that the translators mostly changed the point of views of sentences. This way is normally made the translation results become more natural or acceptable in the SL.

### 2.1. Euphemism translated into euphemism expressions

The method is usually used by the writers to maintain the expressions being bland and avoid to offend someone. The following example shows how the translator maintain the expression from euphemism to euphemism.

SL : Satgas BLBI akan terus **melakukan upaya** untuk memastikan pengembalian hak tagih negara.

TL : The BLBI Task Force will continue **to make efforts** to ensure the return of state claims.

The data above found on the text entitled “*Satgas BLBI Kembali Sita Aset Senilai Rp 630 Miliar*” that was translated to “Gov’t Seizes BLBI Obligor Asset Worth Rp630 Billion”. The article was published on 23 February 2022. The article reported about the efforts of BLBI (Bank Indonesia Liquidity Assistance) to seize the obligor’s assets. The confiscation is carried out as part of government efforts to recover the BLBI funds. The phrase “**melakukan upaya**” in SL refers to confiscation act. Based on The Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) word “**upaya**” means to achieve a purposes, or solve the problems. While the word “**effort**” is described in Cambridge Dictionary (CD) as physical or mental activity needed to achieve something. Both expressions in SL and TL refer to an attempt to achieve something, which is state claims return. The words “**upaya**” and “**effort**” are implicit form of forced taking by someone. The appropriate word to describe the act of returning of state claims is “**menyita**” or in TL translated to “**to seize**”. However, the words “**menyita**” and “**to seize**” have a strong/rough treatment. Through generalization, the journalist has implied the rough impression contained in the word “**to seize**” by changing to the word “**effort**”.

The choice of phrase “**melakukan upaya**” or “**to make efforts**” in TL above is also variation form of word “**menyita**” or “**to seize**” in TL which has been mentioned in the title. Making variation of words in one article has become commonplace in journalistic language in order to avoid monotonous selection of words that make readers are bored. However, through the variation there is also smoothing or neutralizing of meaning or euphemism.

In addition, the technique of translation used by translator to translate expression was literal translation. Since the expression was translated directly from word to word.

There are 9 euphemism expression in SL that was translated to euphemism expression (euphemism – euphemism) that found on the 20 news text. The techniques of translation used to translate those 9 expressions were literal translation, modulation, particularization, and variation.

## 2.2. Dysphemism translated into dysphemism expressions

Dysphemism expression is absolutely found on the most of news text. Since it would put emphasis on the theme of text. In the meantime, dysphemism expression would also attract the readers. The expression was also found on *Sekretariat Kabinet* news. There are 9 data that contain dysphemism expression in SL that was translated into the same expression as well. One of expression as follow:

SL : Kasus **kematian** 91 kasus per 6 Maret dengan CFR 2,61

TL : The number of **deaths** reached 91 as of Sunday (03/06) with case fatality rate (CFR) of 2.61.

The quote above was taken from news text of *Sekretariat Kabinet* that published on 7 March 2022 with title in SL “*Airlangga: Kasus Covid-19 di Luar Jawa-Bali Menurun*” that translated into TL became “Regions Outside Java, Bali Report Dropping COVID-19 Cases”. The word “*kematian*” (noun) comes from word stem “*mati*”. Based on KBBI, “*mati*” means lifeless or not alive. Meanwhile in SL, the word “death” according to CD defined as the end of life. Both these two words have a meaning of lost life. However, in the community or social life, especially in Indonesia, word “*mati*” has a negative connotation, since it directly mentions the process of losing the life. Many people avoid that word if they deliver their condolences, since the word is too sensitive for the family in particularly. It’s similar to the word “death” in TL, which has a sensitive meaning too. The journalist might change the word choice becomes “*meninggal*” in SL, since it has smoother meaning for speaker in SL, and changing the word “death” to “fatality” or “mortality”, since it indirectly mentions the word “death”.

The technique of translation used by translator to translate the expression above is literal translation. There are four techniques of translation used by translator to translate the dysphemism – dysphemism expression, namely literal, established equivalent, modulation, and reduction techniques of translation.

### 2.3. Dysphemism translated into euphemism expression

As defined above that translating the dysphemism to euphemism expression aims to mask the taboo or the rough-tended word meaning. Likewise in the text news, some expressions sometimes are disguised to the more neutral ones. The translating of expression from dysphemism – euphemism was also found in the Setkab's texts news with total about five (5) texts. Here is below the example of dysphemism – euphemism translation:

SL : *Menko PMK menjelaskan, para **pengungsi** akan mendapatkan bantuan dari pemerintah berupa uang tunggu.*

TL : The Minister explained that the **affected residents** will receive assistance from the Central Government in the form of money

The article above described about the acceleration process of updating data of evacuees of earth quake in West Sumatra. The data above was taken from article entitled “*Menko PMK Minta Pemda Percepat Validasi Data Pengungsi Gempa Sumbar*” or in TL is “Minister Urges West Sumatra Govt's to Complete Data Collection on Quake Victims”. The word “*pengungsi*” in SL according to KBBI means people who evacuates or be evacuated. They must be evacuated as the impact of natural disaster or even because of conflict/war in one region. Therefore, it has a negative sense or dysphemism expression since it can be described a bad situation that they must face.

Meanwhile in TL, the translator used “affected resident” that has smoother meaning than in SL. The word “resident” in SL based on CD means person who lives or has their home in place. Hence, it refers to

people in general. However, the translator put the word “affected” to describe more specific about their condition caused by the earthquake. Indirectly, through the using of that phrase by the translator, the readers then do not have the negative perspective on the condition of evacuees.

The translation of dysphemism to euphemism expression above applies amplification technique of translation. Since, the translator added any word or detail to describe or to emphasize any message that want to inform to readers. There are 5 (five) techniques of translation applied by translator to translate the dysphemism to euphemism, namely, amplification, modulation, reduction, variation and literal technique of translation.

#### 2.4. Euphemism – dysphemism

In addition to dysphemism that is shifted its forms to euphemism, there are the form shift as well from euphemism to dysphemism expression. Another example of euphemism expression that is translated into dysphemism is as follow:

SL : *Buku yang memuat perjalanan bangsa Indonesia dalam melewati **ujian** pandemi COVID-19.*

TL : The book chronicles the Indonesian people’s journey in getting through the **daunting challenges** of COVID-19 pandemic.

The sentence above is quoted from news text of Setkab entitled “Setkab Luncurkan Buku “Indonesia dan Pandemi COVID-19: Kerja Keras di Tengah Pandemi”” or “Cabinet Secretariat Launches Book Chronicling Indonesia’s Measures in Tackling Pandemic” that issued on 7 March 2022. Overall the article tells about the launching of book on how Indonesia handles the pandemic. Based on the article the pandemic that mentioned in the book as a challenge, as written in SL through the word “**ujian**”. The word “**ujian**” means an unfavourable situation that must be faced. Based on KBBI, the situation might be given by God. Synonym of “**ujian**” to describe the pandemic situation is “**musibah**”. Both words have the meaning of sad condition, and these

are closely related to pandemic situation. However, word **“musibah”** has rougher effect in the community, through the selection of word **“ujian”** can be classified as euphemism, since it makes the meaning is smoother.

The word **“ujian”** in SL was translated into **“daunting challenge”** into TL. Based on CD, the word “challenge” means (the situation of being faced with) something that need a great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore test a person’s ability. Both the words **“ujian”** and **“challenge”** has the same meaning and expression, but by adding word **“daunting”**, makes the meaning in TL is more rough. **“Daunting”** can be defined as making feel frightened or worried about. Through adding word **“daunting”** the translator hinted the situation that they are in as if it is more tense. Hence, the euphemism expression **“ujian”** was translated into dysphemism expression **“daunting challenge”**.

Amplification technique of translation was applied to translate the euphemism expression to dysphemism one. The translator added the word **“daunting”** in TL that is never existed in SL. There are 6 (six) techniques of translation that were found to translate euphemism to dysphemism, there are literal, amplification, discursive creation, modulation, transposition, and reduction.

## 2.5. Ideology of translation

As described above, translators used 9 of 18 techniques of translations proposed by Molina and Albir (2002). These techniques of translations are modulation (14), literal translation (8), amplification (3), discursive creation (3), reduction (2), transposition (1), variation (1), established equivalent (1), and adaptation (1).

Techniques of translation as proposed by Nababan (2008) are grouped into domestication and foreignization. Based on analysis only one technique of translation that can be grouped into foreignization, namely

literal translation. And 8 other techniques of translation namely amplification, modulation, discursive creation, established equivalent, adaptation, variation, transposition and reduction can be grouped into domestication. The data can be seen as follow:

<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Technique of Translation</b>	<b><math>\Sigma</math></b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Foreignization	Literal translation	8	23.53%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23.53%</b>
Domestication	Amplification	3	8.82%
	Modulation	14	41.18%
	Discursive creation	3	8.82%
	Established equivalent	1	2.94%
	Adaptation	1	2.94 %
	Variation	1	2.94%
	Transposition	1	2.94%
	Reduction	2	5.88%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>76.47%</b>

The table above shows that there are more domestication-oriented translation techniques, namely 76.47%, while foreignization-oriented translation technique is only 23.53%. Therefore, based on the frequency, translators adhere domesticated ideology, since they tend to target-language-oriented.

## **2.6. Purpose of expressions use**

Based on data above, online news of Setkab contain more rough meaning or dysphemism. The use of dysphemism results in an utterance or expression of harsh value. However, overall the use of those harsh meanings in Setkab news do not contain any particular intent, since as government institution Setkab aims to deliver information of government programs to public. The use of dysphemism in Setkab news gives the exaggerated sense as in the phrase “**daunting challenge**” which aims to attract the readers.

Meanwhile, there are some expressions that are also translated into euphemism. As a government news portal, the use of euphemism in Setkab online news aims to smooth the use of words/sentences so as not to offend others, to avoid the unacceptable of communication, and to respect readers and institutions as well.

### **3. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis above, dysphemistic expressions are used very often by both the writer in SL and translator in TL on the text when describing or detailing the situation on the text news. The same things were also found in *Sekretariat Kabinet* online news. Despite it is not categorized as hard news since it belongs to government, expressions choice of euphemism and dysphemism are unavoidable. The expressions are needed to put emphasis on the situations that have been reported on the news. The most-used dysphemistic expression on the news clearly shows that hard and rough things are needed to attract viewer or reader to read the news.

This study is captured that modulation becomes the most technique of translation that was applied by the translators. It indicates that the translators want the translation results to be as natural as possible in the TL, or it tends to be domesticating. Through domesticated ideology of translation, the readers can understand the texts more easily into TL. However, by applying the ideology, many expressions have no accurately equivalent in the TL.

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