

APPLICATION OF B. WARREN'S MODEL TO POLITICAL EUPHEMISMS
IN UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE 2012

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji penggunaan eufemisme dalam debat politik. Dalam debat politik, eufemisme membantu kandidat presiden untuk membuat bahasa yang lebih baik dengan menggunakan kata-kata yang santun (nyaman) dalam rangka untuk mendapatkan suara dari pemilih. Dalam penelitian ini menggunakan debat presiden Amerika Serikat tahun 2012 yang mana debat presiden adalah bagian dari proses kampanye untuk pemilihan presiden. Debat tersebut disiarkan secara resmi dalam program televisi CNN. Kandidat presidennya adalah Barack Obama dan Mitt Romney. Penelitian ini fokus pada ucapan Obama, karena Obama sering menggunakan euphemism dalam debat tersebut dan dia keluar sebagai pemenang dalam pemilihan presiden Amerika 2012. Jadi, penelitian ini difokuskan untuk mengidentifikasi tipe dari eufemisme yang digunakan oleh Barack Obama. Model eufemisme Warren diambil untuk menganalisa cara yang digunakan Obama untuk membentuk eufemisme dalam ucapannya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam rangka untuk mendapatkan penjelasan sejelas-jelasnya melalui teori Warren dan Laura. Penelitian ini difokuskan pada debat presiden Amerika 2012. Sebagai data adalah ucapan-ucapan Obama yang mengandung eufemisme. Hasil dari tipe pembentukan eufemisme yang digunakan Obama adalah alat formasi kata, kata pinjaman and proses perubahan semantik.

Kata kunci: eufemisme, debat politik, fungsi eufemisme

Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the use of euphemism in political debate. In politic, euphemism helps the candidates to make a better language by using comfort words in order to get vote from the voters. The debate is United State Presidential Debate 2012 which is part of campaign process for presidential election. Those debate was broadcast live on CNN television officially. The president candidates were Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. This study focused on Obama's utterances because he often use euphemisms and he came out as the winner in the presidential election 2012. So, this study focused to identify the types of euphemism used by Barack Obama. The Warren's model of euphemism was taken to analyze the types/device to form Obama's euphemism. This study using qualitative method in order to get clearer explanantion through Warren and Laurus's theory. This study focused on U.S presidential debate 2012. The data was Obama's utterances which contain euphemisms. The result of the euphemism types were word formation device, loan word and semantic innovation process.

Key words : euphemism, political debate, function of euphemism.

INTRODUCTION

Euphemisms are strategy in using language that are embedded so deeply in our daily life. this language represent a comfort word to reduce the tension when conversing. Euphemisms are soft and polite language to use in conversation. Its language created to substitute the harsh, rude, taboo and impolite language into soft, smooth and polite language. Euphemisms give us tool to

discuss touchy topics without having to spell out what it is we're discussing. According to Warren (1992), The function of euphemism is to protect the speaker/writer, hearer/reader, from possible loss of face and offence. This offence may occur in the utterance of a taboo topic, e.g. religion or death, or by mentioning subject matter to which one party involved may be sensitive, such as politics or social issues. In order to make communication smoothly and without conflict, people use euphemisms in their conversation.

Euphemisms are used extensively in politics. U.S presidential debates are the most well-known political debates. During the debate, sometimes the candidates should talking about sensitive topic, be face of rough or impolite utterance and harm word. Those languages will have the negative or bad impact to the character or policy of the candidate if uttered directly. In this case, the candidate tend to avoid those words and try to find another word to replace it. So, this study entitle "application of b. warren's model to political euphemisms in united states presidential debate 2012", will examines how the euphemism form by the candidate as a tool or strategy to discuss or deliver his message to the listener.

The research question, which is to be answered in the present study, is as follows: what are the types of euphemism used by Obama in U.S presidential debates 2012? The Objectives of the Research is to identify the types of euphemism used by Barack Obama in U.S presidential debate 2012.

According to Warren's model of euphemism, there are five types of euphemism formation. They are:

1) Word formation devices.

Word formation devices. Warren gives five ways to form euphemisms using this mechanism. An example of each of these is:

- a) Compounding: 'hand job' [masturbation], the combining of two individually innocuous words forms a euphemism for an otherwise unacceptable term.
- b) Derivation: 'fellatio' [oral sex], the modification of a Latin term ('fellare', to suck) to form a printable modern English word (Rawson, 1981).
- c) Blends: Warren gives no examples of what she means by this term, or of how a blend is formed.
- d) Acronyms: SNAFU ['Situation Normal All Fucked Up'], a military euphemism for a possibly catastrophic event.
- e) Onomatopoeia: 'bonk' [sexual intercourse], here the sound of 'things' hitting together during the sexual act is employed to refer to the act itself.

2) Phonemic modification. "The form of an offensive word is modified or altered," (Warren, 1992:133), for example:

- a) Back slang: 'enob' [bone/erect penis], Rawson (1981:88) and 'epar' [rape] (Warren, 1992:133). The words are reversed to avoid explicit mention.
- b) Rhyming slang: 'Bristols' [breasts], a shortened, and further euphemized, version of 'Bristol cities' [titties] which becomes a "semi-concealing device," (Burchfield, 1985:19).
- c) Phonemic replacement: 'shoot' [shit], which Rawson terms "a euphemistic mispronunciation," (1981:254), 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:ix). Some examples of this include:

- a) French: '*mot*' [cunt] (Allen and Burridge, 1991:95), '*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 Burridge, *ibid*: 19). However, "often such substitutions are just as vulgar if one understood the meaning of the Latinate," (Liszka, 1990:421). 3) 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, 1992:133). Examples of Warren's seven categories of semantic innovation are:

- a) Particularization: a general term is used, which is required to be 'particularized' within the context to make sense, e.g. 'satisfaction' [orgasm] and 'innocent' [virginal], both of which require contextually based inference by the reader/listener to be comprehensible.
- b) 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 type of euphemism, though it seems this could occur with many examples of 'semantic innovation'.
- c) Metaphor: A multitude of colorful 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 Burridge, 1991:82). Other metaphorical euphemisms include 'globes', 'brown eyes' and 'melons' [breasts] (Rawson, 1981:38), and 'riding' [sex], which is common to many languages, including English, Greek and Middle Dutch (cf. Allen and Burridge, *ibid*.).
- d) Metonym: Otherwise called 'general-for-specific', this category includes the maximally general 'it' [sex] and the contextually dependent 'thing' [male/female sexual organs, etc.].
- e) Reversal: or 'irony'. Including 'blessed' [damned] (Stern, 1931) and 'enviable disease' [syphilis], both of which enable reference to something 'bad' by using opposites.
- f) Understatement: or 'litotes'. Examples like 'sleep' [die], 'deed' [act of murder/rape] and 'not very bright' [thick/stupid] fall into this category.
- g) Overstatement: or 'hyperbole'. Instances include 'fight to glory' [death] and those falling under

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Rawson's (1981:11) "basic rule of bureaucracies: the longer the title, the lower the rank." For example, 'visual engineer' [window cleaner] and 'Personal Assistant to the Secretary (Special Activities)' [cook] (Rawson, *ibid.*).

METHOD

In this research, descriptive-qualitative method is used. It used descriptive because the researcher focuses on the description of the data, and the factors that influenced the data. The qualitative research is used in analyzing Political Euphemism in "U.S presidential debates 2012". Based on the research questions, this thesis want to analyze Obama's euphemism based on the types to form euphemistic language in the U.S Presidential Debate.

The data source of this research is the Obama utterances in U.S presidential debate 2012. While The data is Obama's utterances in the debate which contain of euphemism language. The utterances could be in the form of sentences, phrases or word. Those utterances appear when Obama make acclaim, attack or make defends. This research focused on euphemisms language used by President Barack Obama. This research uses writer himself as the key instruments. The use of laptop and dictionary of euphemism is needed in this research in order to support the instruments and data.

According to Heigham and Croker (2009:17-18), there are six ways for collecting data. Those are observation, interviews, open-response questionnaire items, verbal reports, diaries, and discourse analysis. In this study, Observation is chosen to collect the data in form of utterances of Obama's euphemism. Wray, Trott, Bloomer, Reay & Butler (1998:186) explained that observation is the activity of recording, transcription and notes related to what is going to be observed.

After collecting the data the researcher analyzed what he has found. Miles and Huberman (1994:12) break down the Analysis of qualitative data into three processes they are reducing data, displaying data and drawing and verifying conclusions. The writer reduced the data that he does not focused on and need. In this case the writer reduced the Obama's utterances which does not contain of euphemism. Each utterances of euphemisms language that had been found would be listed on the table. The tables are displayed as in figure 3.1:

No	Euphemism	Types of euphemism

Table 3.1 The Types of Euphemism

The last step is making conclusion, In data analysis technique, the data are obtained through several steps based on the research questions. Finally, after doing reducing and displaying data, the researcher can be drawn and verified by using theory which used Warren's model

of euphemism from Warren's theory to analyze the type of euphemism

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part of result and discussion will display the euphemism used by Obama and identify or analyze the types of euphemism formation method based on Warren's model of euphemism.

A. The types of euphemism formation method used by Obama in U.S presidential debates 2012

Based on the Warren's model of euphemism, the euphemism used by president Obama in United States presidential debates 2012 can grouped in three categories. They are: semantic innovation method, word formation device and loan word.

1. Semantic innovation method

One of the euphemisms formation method is used by President Barack Obama is semantic innovation. The typical of this category is constructed a euphemism by using semantic innovation process. In those debates, President Obama use *understatement*, *reversal* and *overstatement* to form his euphemism.

No	Euphemism	Types of euphemism
1	<i>Very little of what Governor Romney just said is true</i>	understatement
2	<i>Nothing Governor Romney just said is true</i>	understatement
3	<i>That's not what you said</i>	understatement

Understatement is a form of speech or disclosure which contains an expression of less strength than what would be expected. This method happens when the speaker or writer express an idea with significantly less force than is expected or would be required to accurately describe an idea. Understatement can be used to downplay a negative or say too little to minimizing the effect of a statement. In those debates, President Barack Obama used understatement strategy to rebutting and describe Governor Romney as a liar. President Barack Obama used euphemism; *And very little of what Governor Romney just said is true*, *Nothing Governor Romney just said is true*, *Governor Romney that's not what you said* are shown in data 1 until 3 above.

In data 1, Obama said that "*And very little of what Governor Romney just said is true*" to rebut Governor Romney statement . *And very little of what Governor Romney just said is true* means that most of what Governor Romney just said is wrong or untruth. It means that what Governor Romney just said is only a lying. That word just understatement of saying *you are a liar*.

In data 2, "*Nothing Governor Romney just said is true*" also becomes euphemism of President Barack Obama to say that Governor Romney is *a liar*. *Nothing Governor Romney just said is true* means that what Governor Romney just said absolutly is wrong.no single

thing is true or all of those statements are far from the fact (lying). By using statement like in data 2, It makes seem less offensive than said *you are a liar* directly.

In data 3 the word *that's not what you said* used by President Obama to rebut the Romney statement. In other word, President Obama wants to say that what Governor Romney just said is a lying. But to said "you are a liar" directly is too offensive and those euphemisms got to be the understatement of it (you're a liar).

No	Euphemism	Types of euphemism
1	<i>Frozen up</i>	Overstatement
2	<i>Roaring back</i>	Overstatement

Overstatement is a statement or description that makes something seem large, better, worse or more important than it really is or need to be, (of an action) done in a way that makes people notice it.

In data 1, President Obama used word *frozen up* in describing the condition of financial system of America. By using those technical terms, President Obama does not say that financial system was in a situation which at a very low temperature, but the meaning of *frozen up* is the financial system that *not functioning normally or not working properly*. This word is constructed by overstatement method, where the word frozen up used to say something (in this case is not functioning normally) in a way that makes it seem more important than it really is. The word "financial system had frozen up" feels more in serious condition than we just say "financial system not functioning normally or America to be in financial difficulties. Similarly, in data 2 President Obama used word *roaring back* as his euphemism. In utterance "the auto industry has come roaring back", the word *roaring* does not mean that the auto industry make a loud deep sound, but here President Obama wanted to emphasize that the auto industry has *come success again*. The word *roaring* feels greater, attractive and felt that something was got out from their sleep.

Reversal is euphemism formation method of euphemism which the word or sentence is used to change of something so that it is the opposite of what it was.

No	Euphemism	Types of euphemism
1	<i>Investment</i>	reversal

President Obama used *investment* when the talk was about economy especially on federal deficit. According to Obama, Governor Romney makes an unbalance approach for spending and government revenue, where Governor Romney does not want to take \$10 of spending cuts for just \$1 of revenue. Of course This policy will increase the federal deficit and repeal the

government spending for school and education where have been doing under Obama policy. "Now, if you take such an unbalanced approach, then that means you are going to be cutting our investments in schools and education" Obama said. it is very clear that what President Obama mean by *investment* here is just *government spending*. Government spending or government budget for school and education will lost if Governor Romney makes some policy that not allowed taking some spending cuts for government revenue. Where it will bring down the government revenue and the country will getting into big deficit. Based on the Warren's model of euphemism, this euphemism is included in reversal category, where this euphemism to change of something so that it is the opposite of what it was. *Investment* mean earn profits => income, whereas spending is just lost => expenditure.

2. Word formation device

The word formation device method also founded in Obama debate. The word formation device is the formation method which contains of five ways to form euphemisms. There are compounding, blends, derivation, acronyms, and onomatopoeia.

No	Euphemism	Types of euphemism
1	<i>undocumented works</i>	compounding
2	<i>Mentally ill</i>	compounding
3	<i>Mentally disturbed</i>	compounding

To form a euphemism through word formation device, compounding method is used to form his euphemism as in data 1, 2 and 3. In data 1, President Obama form the word *undocumented worker* instead of *illegal immigrant*. The word *illegal* is controversial because the term *illegal* is used for an act not people, there is no *illegal human*. So, in those debates, president Obama prefer to utter *undocumented worker* to describe the immigrant without green card. Based on Warren's model of euphemism, the word *undocumented work* included in compounding category, where it is a collocations which consist of an *undocumented* (adjective) and *works* (noun). In data 2, President Obama used the word *mentally ill* instead of *Daffy/crazy*. This term *mentally ill* was constructed by compounding method. the word of *mentally ill* is kind of noun phrase, which the head is on the right side (*ill*) as noun and modifier is on the left side (*mentally*). The word *mentally* is from *mental* and *ly*, *mentally* is kind of adverb. The form of adverb and noun called as noun phrase. Similarly in data 2, in data 3 President Obama also use the word "*mentally disturbed*" as his euphemism. *Mentally disturbed* is absolutely *crazy or daffy*. The word *mentally disturbed* is formed by compounding method where the head is *disturbed* as noun and *mentally* as modifier.

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3. Loan word

The third categories of euphemisms formation method are used by President Barack Obama are Loan word. The typical of this category is constructed a euphemism by using other languages, such as French, Latin and Spanish.

No	Euphemism	Types of euphemism
1	<i>Revenue</i>	Loan word (Latin)

To form a euphemism through loan word, Obama use loan word from Latin language as in table above. President Obama said "... how do we have enough revenue to make those investment". Those statement means that President wanting more revenue to invest in education and energy. Whereas *revenue* itself is the money that the government receives from taxes. *Government revenue* is really *tax receipts*, but to say he wants more *tax receipts* by increase the tax is a political loser in campaign for President Election. So, he use the word revenue as his euphemism. Based on Warren's model of euphemism, the term revenue is included in loan word category, where the word *revenue* comes from Latin *revenire* means 'return', from re- 'back' + *venire* 'come'.

In forming his euphemism, President Obama tends to use two-word euphemism or more. Those two-word euphemism consisting of an adjective and a noun as in *roaring back* and *undocumented works*, noun and adverb as in *frozen up*, adverb and a adjective as in *mentally ill and mentally disturbed*. Whereas the euphemistic expressions that consist of more than two-words are euphemism that expressed indirectly through figures of speech. The interpretation of figurative euphemisms is difficult unless there is the context given. Figurative euphemisms consist of more than one word and mostly expressed through understatement. As in utterances *And very little of what Governor Romney just said is true, Nothing Governor Romney just said is true* and *Governor Romney that's not what you said*. By the context given, we understood that what president Obama means by those utterances are *Governor Romney is lying*, because the fact that happens in the field is different from what Governor Romney has said. There are also Obama euphemism which formed by only one-word noun, as in *revenue* and *investment*.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The result of the study in U.S Presidential debate 2012, prove that euphemism not only used to make other's feeling pleasant but also as strategy to cover some policy that maybe is difficult to accept by American's people. From the explanation above, the writer might points that euphemism play important role in Obama U.S Presidential debate 2012, especially to make Obama language better in order to get sympathy or vote of American's people. Although we know that there are many factors to win the Presidential election, but the existence of euphemism itself is needed for political actors as strategy of using language in campaign process.

From the findings and the analysis, the conclusions of the euphemism can be drawn from this presidential debate practiced by President Obama were firstly, according to the result, Obama used euphemism in U.S presidential debate. There are three types of euphemisms used by Obama, they are word formation device; compounding (*undocumented works, Mentally ill and Mentally disturbed*), loan word; Latin (*Revenue*) and semantic innovation; reversal (*Investment*), understatement (*Very little of what Governor Romney just said is true, Nothing Governor Romney just said is true and that's not what you said*) and overstatement (*Roaring back and Frozen up*).

As a strategy of using language, the euphemism is very important to be studied more and give deep understanding about it. In this case, the writer suggests to the next researchers in the same field to study the euphemism from other politic discourse or other media, for example in mass media or society. The way of analysis the data is so various, he or she can analyze euphemism from syntax and morphology.

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