

# Euphemism and dysphemism expression in “The Rainbow Troops” novel by Andrea Hirata

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# Euphemism and dysphemism expression in “The Rainbow Troops” novel by Andrea Hirata

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## Abstract

This study analyses the used of euphemism and dysphemism in the Indonesian novel which is translated into English. The purpose of this study to find and to explain the used of those terms in the Rainbow Troops Novel by Andrea Hirata. In analysing, descriptive qualitative is used. The data collected through documentation and corpuses. The research revealed that there are a lot of forms and styles in the used of these two expressions. Moreover, this analysis has explained why people speech differently in different social context and by identifying the social function of social language and the way it is used to convey social meaning.

## 1. Introduction

Learning the literature means also learning the language. Humans use language to interact with each other, socially or emotionally. People work show what the people are or what they things they are or what would like to be. Their word shows their hates, their dreams, their success, their strength and their weakness.

Appreciation to literature produces the reader’s emotional and intellectual responses. By reading literary work reader can get much knowledge and information about human life, history and culture. The main purpose in studying literature is to make readers acquainted with the form of literature and develop the reader’s desire in reading short story and novels with foreign culture setting. It will enrich the reader’s knowledge of Middle East social culture and sociolinguistics background.

Someone who labelled as a good conversant usually are those who are able to expressing the targeted message directly and clearly. However, in some occasion in the daily conversation, people tend to be indirect in deliver their targeted message. Thus, the might use euphemism or dysphemism expression. (Rababah, 2014)

### *The Theory of Euphemism*

Meriam- Webster Online Dictionary defines euphemism in this way:

*The substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant; also: the expression so substituted. Simply put, there are some words and topics which are not supposed to be mentioned directly in various cultures. To avoid the negative meanings and connotations of the*

words and subjects, euphemisms encompass the subjects such as religion, politics, death, different functions of the human body, and diseases.

From that definition it is clear that at the time when a phrase used as euphemism, it may be used as a courteous way to hide harsh or unpleasing ideas. It is clear that the above mentioned definitions infer avoiding certain social situations which contain tabooed words and expressions (Al-khasawneh, 2018). The use of this expression is not a new phenomenon. People used it in different social status and most all languages in the world. By using euphemism people try to avoid being rude, negative, morally crude or not well mannered from others (Rababah, 2014). Euphemism is used in public relations and politics, where it is sometimes called doublespeak.

Wang (2013) stated that people used euphemism not only as a common strategy, but also as a cultural phenomenon. Because it can make a bitter topic to be agreeable or pleasant. Thus, it enable people to communicate smoothly and successfully.

### *The Theory of Dysphemism*

Dysphemism is a part of sociolinguistic theory. The definition of dysphemism refer to the substitution of a disagreeable, offensive, or disparaging expression for an agreeable or inoffensive one (Mariam- Webster Dictionary). Dysphemism can be either offensive or deprecatingly funny. Or in other word, dysphemism making something sounds bad in purposively. Dysphemistic words tent to be offensive because of the shock value and the taboos that are broken in their use (Klerk, 2011).

Another example of dysphemism includes ‘bullshit’ as a dysphemism for ‘lie’. ‘idiot box’ is the dysphemism for television.

The diferences between euphemism and dysphemism can be showed from the Table 1.

**Table 1. Comparison of the impolite, neutral and polite word**

Dysphemism	Neutral	Euphemism
stingy	carefull	thrifty
take a shit	go to bathroom	defecate
pigheaded	stubborn	firm

From the explanation above the writer tries to analyze one of the literature works. One of the approaches that can be used to analyze a work of literature is sociolinguistic approach, from that we can understand the differentiate the society, the culture and the language itself that can be found in “The Rainbow Troops” written by Andrea Hirata. Sociolinguistics is discussing about the social term used in society. The example of social term used in society can be seen from euphemism and dysphemism.

A study about this topic is conducted by Putranti, et al. (2017). Their research analyzed the used of euphemism, orthophemism, and dysphemism of sexual languages from an English novel which is translated into Indonesian. In doing so, the researchers analyzed a novel by Sandra Brown and its translation. The result appealed that there are several words, phrases and clauses from English which can be classified into euphemism, orthophemism,

and dysphemism, softened in Indonesian by using some strategies.

Based on the previous reasons, this paper aims at further revealing the use of euphemism and dysphemism in from the Indonesian novel translated into English. Therefore, the research questions addressing in this aim are:

1. What is the Euphemism expression in “The Rainbow Troops” novel by Andrea Hirata?
2. What is the Dysphemism expression in “The Rainbow Troops” novel by Andrea Hirata?

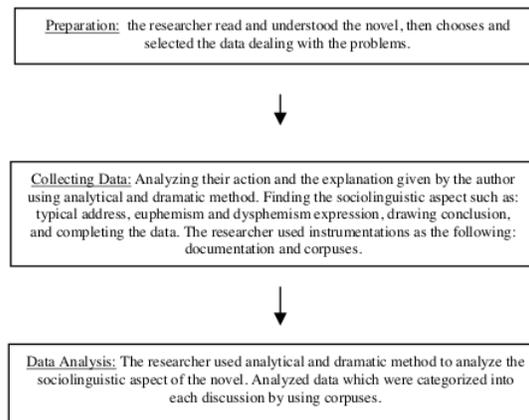
## 2. Method

In this study employed qualitative. Thus, the data were taking and gathering from the novel “The Rainbow Troops”. In analyzing and appreciating a work of literature the researcher uses analytical approach with deals analysis of sociolinguistics, such as: euphemism and dysphemism expression.

Related to the data collection in this study, two instruments are used for collecting them. They are: (1) Documentation which is used by the researcher in collecting data. By reading the novel, researcher collects the data to make data collection. The researcher not only read the novel but also read literary book that can help the researcher to analyze the novel that has been chosen. (2) Corporuses which is related with the classifying the plot in every chapter of this novel.

The researchers used procedures to analyse the novel, to give description on the pattern of study. This includes constructing the outline of the research and book review that is taken from the work of literature after reading and understanding the novel choosing and selecting the data dealing with the problem. Figures 1 shows the procedure to analyse the novel.

**Figures 1. All the steps to analyze the data**



### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Results

##### *Euphemism found in "The Rainbow Troops" novel*

###### Chapter 1

- He was already 15 years old, the same age as Bu Mus, but was a bit *behind mentally*. (page 7)

Behind mentally is the euphemism for idiot.

###### Chapter 2

- Sahara was extraordinarily *hard-headed*.

Hard-headed is the euphemism for stubborn.

###### Chapter 8

- "Ibunda Guru, you must know that these coolie children cannot be kept under control! Borek acts like a *mental hospital patient*. (page 59)

Mental hospital patient is the euphemism for crazy people.

- Nowadays people call it *Down Syndrome*. (page 63)

Down Syndrome is the euphemism for idiot.

###### Chapter 14

- Her dialect was hard to follow-it was very *backcountry* Malay. (page 134)

Backcountry is the euphemism for outlying district.

###### Chapter 30

- Sahara was a *straight-shooter*. (page 307)

Straight-shooter is the euphemism for someone who speak without any decency.

###### Chapter 32

- It was an *underground* organization. (page 326)

Underground is the euphemism for illegal.

- He was the founder of the organization, respected by its members for his wide knowledge of the *dark world* and his comprehensive collection of rumors and foolish news. (page 327)

Dark world is the euphemism for black magic. It tends with something like curse or the worst thing.

Chapter 33

- Since the *passing* of Pak Harfan, it was her duty to teach all of the lessons. (page 333)

Passing is the euphemism for die.

Chapter 37

- A few *narrow-minded* people started intimidating Bu Mus. (page 360)

Narrow-minded is the euphemism for unknowledge. is also more agreeable.

Chapter 38

- We went home *empty-handed*. (page 379)

Empty-handed is the euphemism for failed.

chapter 44

- Long ago, Bu Mus and Pak Harfan had taught me not to *back down* from any difficulty. (page 420)

Back down is the euphemism for give up.

***Dysphemism found in "The Rainbow Troops" novel***

Chapter 3

- "It was one among hundreds- maybe even thousands- of poor schools in Indonesia that, if bumped by a *frenzied* goat preparing to mate, would *collapse* and fall to pieces". (page 17)

Frenzied is the dysphemism for crazy.

Collapse is the dysphemism for broken.

Chapter 4

- Because Pak Harfan looked quite like a *grizzly bear*, we were scared the first time we saw him.

Grizzly bear is the dysphemism for big body.

- "He went on to tell a mesmerizing story of a historical war during the time of the Prophet in which the forces were comprised of priest, not soldiers: the Badar War. Just 313 Muslim troops defeated thousands of *evil*, well-armed Quraisy troops." (page 25)

Evil is the dysphemism for bad persons.

#### Chapter 10

- He drew a long, deep breath and looked at us- most of who were not wearing shoes and wore *grubby* clothes missing buttons. (page 89)

Grubby is the dysphemism for very dirty.

#### Chapter 11

- His only weakness, if it could even be called even be called a weakness, was his *chaotic chicken scratch handwriting*. (page 101)

Chaotic chicken scratch handwriting is the dysphemism for bad handwriting.

- Because of his own *donkey* bridge design, Lintang would master the whole excretion system as easily as squashing a bloated mosquito. (page 104)

Donkey is the dysphemism for stupid.

- Would his *scrawny* body be able to prop up our collapsing school-the school that probably wouldn't even receive any students the following year? (page 108)

Scrawny is the dysphemism for very thin.

- While he tried as hard as he could and mobilized all his intellectual power, he couldn't get an eight-not even seven-because he couldn't complete with the eccentric young man with a *skinny* body and a handsome face sitting off in the corner. (page 109)

Skinny is the dysphemism for thin.

#### Chapter 12

- Now and again the stripe-winged prinias perched on the windowsill of our classroom, yelling as loud as they could and producing noises that made those with *growling* stomachs dizzy. (page 115)

Growling is the dysphemism for threatening.

#### Chapter 13

- The two of them had inducted themselves into the sect of collective *foolishness*. (page 126)

Foolishness is the dysphemism for stupidity.

- They are like the native Australian inhabitants, the Aboigines: dark skin, strong jaws, deep eyes, thin foreheads, Teutonic like cranial structures and *broom-like hair*. (page 128)

Broom-like hair is the dysphemism for straight and coarse hair. Because using 'broom-like hair' is more offend and unpleasant than using 'straight and coarse hair' which more polite.

#### Chapter 17

- The opportunity to look at her nails was more than enough to make me happy. My friend, I was not one of those *boorish* boys. (page 167)

Boorish is the dysphemism for rude attitude.

#### Chapter 18

- He stared at the sky and suddenly got up, jumped around, ran in circles, yelled like *madman*, threw his own body onto the ground, rolled around, sat down again and, without warning, dropped his head down like an animal suffering because pestering insects. (page 181)

Madman is the dysphemism for people being crazy.

#### Chapter 19

- Meanwhile, right here, we were cornered like a bunch of strange primates popping our heads in and out of banyan tree roots: black, dirty and *dumbfounded* by the word around us. (page 190)

Dumbfounded is the dysphemism for speechless.

#### Chapter 20

- For mercy's sake, isn't it you who always says that the chalk store is *putrid*? (page 203)

Putrid is the dysphemism for smelling.

- Surely, *the* instincts she developed over years of teaching rang bells in her head, warning that my sudden change of heart more or less had to do with cinta monyet – *monkey love, or puppy love*. (page 204)

Monkey love or puppy love is the dysphemism for love story in teenage.

#### Chapter 21

- He paid no heed to the roars of the hundreds of *rugged men* engaged in brutal struggle. (page 218)

Rugged men is the dysphemism for peoples with bad manner.

#### Chapter 25

- I wanted to say and ask A Miauw so many things, but I was *tongue-tied*. (page 258)

Tongue-tied is the dysphemism for speechless.

#### Chapter 26

- A Kiong's *silly* face echoed Mahar's sigh. (page 265)  
Silly is the dysphemism for stupid.

#### Chapter 30

- Dr. Zulfikar was clearly being a smart aleck, and with his *big mouth* he was trying to *bully* everyone by giving the impression that he was the most knowledgeable about color theory. (page 312)

Big mouth is the dysphemism for liar.  
Bully is the dysphemism for intimidate.

#### Chapter 37

- Syahdan reported that the head miner had a *dull brain* and thuggish nature – a dangerous combination. (page 363)

Dull brain is the dysphemism for stupid.

#### Chapter 42

- “We sold our valuables, took the risk of being banished from the face of the earth by Tuk Bayan Tula, but in the end, we proved that Societeit de Limpai is not a bunch of *morons!*” (page 401)

Morons is the dysphemism for stupid.

#### Chapter 43

- Sahara glared at us with disgust, “All boys are cowards!” she said *sassily*. (page 407)

Sassily is the dysphemism for rudely.

#### Chapter 44

- “If you’re going to get angry, Ma’am, pour it out on this *messy* man,” Dahrodji snapped. (page 417)

Messy is the dysphemism for dirty and disorderly.

### 3.2. Discussions

The finding revealed that there are several data that use euphemism or dysphemism expression. There are three characteristic of literature. The writer used those expression as a strategy to show the reader cultural phenomenon in their language.

There are several example of the use euphemism. For example, the writer used ‘*behind mentally*’ in place of ‘*idiot*’. Because using ‘*behind mentally*’ is more inoffensive than using ‘*idiot*’ that may offend or suggest unpleasant. And by using ‘*behind mentally*’ also more agreeable. Another example is the use of word ‘*hard-headed*’ instead of ‘*stubborn*’. By using ‘*hard-headed*’ the writer tries to express mannered than using ‘*stubborn*’ to hide the truth by employing different expression. Next is, the use of ‘*straight-shooter*’ as expressing someone who speak without decency. Because using ‘*straight-shooter*’ is more inoffensive.

In term of the used of dysphemism, there are several example. The use of ‘*frenzied*’ as opposed to ‘*crazy*’. Even ‘*frenzied*’ is more offend and unpleasant, but by using ‘*frenzied*’ is more effective for the context above. Next is, the use of ‘*grizzly bear*’ to express someone

with a big body. By using 'grizzly bear' is more violate and unpleasant than using 'big body'. But by using 'grizzly bear' is nearly always a humorous or affectionate term. Another example is the use of 'foolishness' instead of 'stupidity'. Even 'foolishness' is more impolite and unpleasant than using 'stupidity' which more polite, but by using 'foolishness' is nearly always a humorous or affectionate term in which more suitable for that term.

Those expression in euphemism and dysphemism used by the writer is the proof of that euphemism and dysphemism is naturally used in daily communication. There are several factors for the writer to use that expression, such as the purpose of the conversation, the speaker and the hearer, and the situation of the conversation. To sum up, the use of euphemism in the conversation in this novel used to avoid harsh words. While the use of dysphemism which is sometimes using taboo words use as the expression to emphasize on their targeted message. It is sometimes only for merely humorously deprecating.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestions

<sup>8</sup> Sociolinguistics is a term including the aspects of linguistics applied toward the connections between language and society, and the way we use it in different social situations. Sociolinguistic is concerned with the relationship between language and social context in which it used. Therefore, sociolinguistics studies the relationship between languages in society. It is explaining why people speech differently in different social context and by identifying the social function of social language and the way it is used to carry social meaning.

And also, we can conclude that the study of language cannot be separated from studying the society as a place where language is use. Language and society affect one another, it means that social situation determines the kind of language or speech to be used and how it develops to meet this social situation.

Dealing with the further suggestion, since this novel is analyzed only on sociolinguistic aspect, there are so many possibilities and changes to conduct further analysis either from the sociolinguistic or other aspect to get insight about this novel.

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