



## DYSPHEMISM IN INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Rina Mulya<sup>1</sup>, Rizky Femilya Elsa<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Guntar<sup>3</sup>,  
Dina Sartika<sup>4</sup>, and Meisuri<sup>5</sup>

Universitas Negeri Medan

**Abstract**--The aim of this study is to explore more about the use of dysphemism limited to high school students especially in Indonesia and analyze which type of dysphemism used the most. The objectives of the analysis are: to analyze the dysphemism used in their conversational activity, and to identify which type of dysphemism by Allan's theory is dominantly used. The research emerges from the qualitative perspective as the analysis focuses on the meanings of dysphemism found in certain situations especially in conversational activity. The findings of the research will be categorized by Allan's 8 types of dysphemism namely synecdoche, dysphemistic epithet, euphemistic dysphemism, dysphemistic euphemism, homosexuality dysphemism, name dysphemism and cross-cultural dysphemism. The purpose of the use of dysphemism through this paper is to find out how high school students play with words as a device in degradation, humiliation or express anger among their peers which create the emerges of dysphemism in every utterance.

**Keywords:** *Dysphemism, Types of Dysphemism, High School Students*

### INTRODUCTION

In communication, sometimes we uttered hurtful words but the existence of the euphemism can help in making it sounds nicer. Based on Harper (2013), he provides an etymological explanation of the word 'euphemism' derived from Greek, composed of the word 'eu' which means good, and 'pheme' which means to talk. So, etymologically means speaking using good words. It is reinforced by the opinion of Leech (1982: 45) which suggests that euphemism is the use of more terms polite for a disrespectful term. Another opinion is given by Wijana (2008: 96) that euphemism is the using of words or other forms to avoid any form of prohibition or taboo form in the language. In line with this opinion, Kridalaksana (2008: 59) also states that euphemism is the use of words or other forms to avoid the form of ban or taboo.

Meanwhile, Allan and Burrige (1991: 11) argues that euphemism is the use of the term to replace a lacking expression to avoid the possibility of losing face, whether the interlocutor or third parties. Another opinion of Allan and Burrige (2016: 32) euphemism are words or phrases used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression. They avoid possible loss of face by the speaker, and also the hearer or some third party. In many ways, euphemism has existed throughout recorded history. To an undesirable expression which in order to avoid the possible loss of face, euphemisms can be used as another way. The words and expressions of euphemism allow us to talk about unpleasant things and eliminate discomforts, such as death and dying, unemployment, and crime. They also allow us to label unpleasant things and act so that what is being talked about becomes more attractive.

Dysphemism is the opposite of euphemism, which means using words with rude manner or expressing something that is not true. Similar to Cuddon (1991:246) that dysphemism emphasizes defects or shame. The term dysphemism derived from the Greek; dys that means "non" or "miss" and pHEME that means "speech" or "reputations". It is written that "a filthy dirty face" is one of the examples of dysphemism.

Chaer (1995) states that dysphemism is replacing words with subtle meanings or ordinary words with meanings that are rude. Furthermore, it is said that dysphemism in addition to having the value of rough taste also strengthens certain meanings and contexts.



Dysphemism is an expression with offensive connotations or pejorative traits in form of words or phrases which address to a certain person or a group of people (Allan and Burridge, 2006:31). Similar with the theory of Allan and Burridge, Spears (1981:27) describes that dysphemism is words that have unpleasant or taboo connotations. A word or phrase can be considered as dysphemism or bad words by examining the context of the words, the meaning of the words which dynamically changes and the way the word is conveyed (Rawson, 1989:3).

Leech (2003: 27) states that language reflects the speaker's personal feelings, including his attitude towards the listener or his attitude about something he says. There are 8 types of dysphemism according Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (2001), namely synecdoche, dysphemistic epithet, euphemistic dysphemism, dysphemistic euphemism, homosexuality dysphemism, “-ist” dysphemism, name dysphemism and cross-cultural dysphemism.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1) **Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is defined as figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole and vice versa (Nordquist, 2014:1). Simply put, it is a figure in which the name of a part is applied to the entire thing, or the name of the whole is applied to a part of it, or vice versa. For example, some people interpret wheel as car, “How would you like my new wheel?” also means “how would you like my new car?”

### 2) **Dysphemistic Epithet**

It usually involves the use of animals naming. The speaker offends the listener by targeting on his or her humanity when they use one. For example, calling someone “A pig” in order to insult her / his weight, or insult someone by calling them “Chicken” because she / he is a coward (Allan & Burridge, 2001).

### 3) **Euphemistic Dysphemism**

When a speaker wants to swear (interjectionally) for emphasis, he or she can utilize a minced oath. The dysphemistic illocutionary act (expressive) is used to avoid offending others. The common example of this type is the use of *she is freaking amazing!* As an exchange from *fucking to freaking* in order to avoid offending others because it sounds less harsh.

### 4) **Dysphemistic Euphemism**

Abusive words which can be used in friendly greetings between friends or families that are not meant to be hurtful. This is a sign of familiarity or friendship and closeness between two parties. For example, “You are a dumbass, but I love you anyway.” The word dumbass can be considered as the harsh word but the speaker does not have.

### 5) **“-ist” Dysphemism**

Ethnic slurs are a kind of racial slur that is directed against people of a certain ethnicity and might include stereotyping. This type of dysphemism can be used against someone of a certain biological sex, religion, political stance, sexual orientation, skill level, or any other personal trait. For example, nigga is a racist word used to call people who have dark or black skin.

### 6) **Name Dysphemism**

When someone uses another person's name instead of a proper kinship term or address title. Given the social setting, the speaker uses a more informal or lower style than a proper calling. If the speaker's choice of words is accepted by the audience, this use of language may not be considered dysphemism. In such instance, rather than harming the listener's positive face, it would appeal to it, and therefore would not be a dysphemism. A speaker may be compelled to use a name dysphemism or word of address dysphemism due to anger or discontent with the audience (or group of people). For example, calling uncle Johnny with a name without a proper kinship term would consider as name dysphemism.



#### 7) **Cross-cultural Dysphemism**

Various slang words that are dysphemistic in one culture may not be in another culture if they have a different connotation. For example, *fag*. *Fag* means a slur used for gay man in American English, whereas, in British English it used for cigarette.

#### 8) **Homosexual Dysphemism**

Homosexuality dysphemism here is the terms that are used regarding homosexuality like, “gay,” “faggot,” and “queer.”

Dysphemism is a part of pragmatics which study about the meaningful communication. There are some previous studies related to Dysphemism. Maulana et al. (2020) discussed about dysphemism used in Prohaba Newspaper. Winsantana (2018) studied about the function of dysphemism used in ‘Orange is the New Black’ television series. Darmawan and Muhaimi (2019) talked the type of dysphemism that mostly used by people in disseminating hate speech on Social Media posts. Azar and Faizar (2018) analyzed about how kind of spoken utterances dysphemism the lecturers. Sitanggang et. al (2020) revealed the functions which explain why the characters utilize such dysphemistic words in deadpool movie. Based on the studies, they showed that dysphemism can be analyzed in communication object. Language is related to communication where it processes the expressing ideas and feeling to give people information.

As a way used in communication, dysphemism has function such as device for degradation, humiliation of individuals who are disapproved of or condemn, express anger or social distance of particular group. Teenagers, especially in high school students, are in the moment of coming to grips with one’s identity. They feel superior when they humiliate others. Thus, the used of dysphemism is commonly revolving around them.

Allan and Burrige in Mohammed (2011:40) also explain that dysphemism can be used in particular situation as the following:

- a. When one talks about one’s opponent.
- b. When talking about things one wishes to show disapproval of these things.
- c. When talking about things one wishes to be seen to downgrade.
- d. It characterizes policy when groups and cliques talk about their opponents.
- e. It is used when woman speak about men.
- f. When larrikins and macho speak of women and effete behavior.

Based on the explanation above, the researchers wanted to conduct the same research with the difference object. In this study, the researchers focused on the types of dysphemism by Allan and Burrige (2001) found in Indonesian high school students.

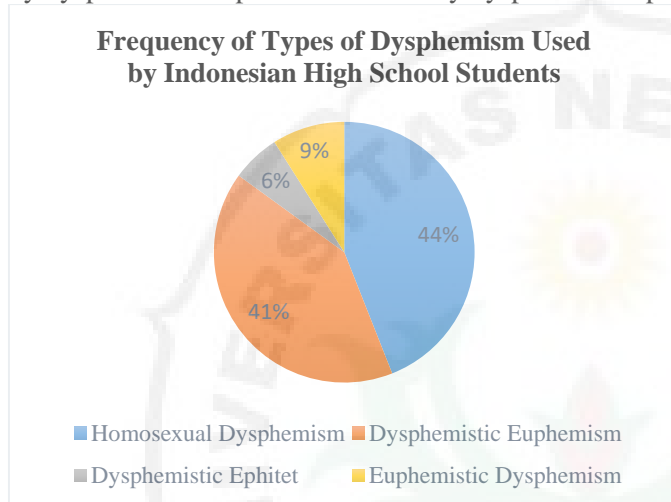
#### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used qualitative research method in analyzing the data. The development and use of questionnaires are common in research, and the use of qualitative methods to generate items enriches the quality of questionnaire items (McKenna et al., 2011). The data were related to the types of dysphemism according Allan, K., & Burrige, K. (2001), namely synecdoche, dysphemistic epithet, euphemistic dysphemism, dysphemistic euphemism, homosexuality dysphemism, “-ist” dysphemism, name dysphemism and cross-cultural dysphemism filled by students in Senior High School. Source of data were obtained by the answer of the students which the questions were put in the questionnaire. In this study, the researchers applied questionnaire as instruments which were given to the students in several schools in Indonesia, they are senior high school in Aceh, Jambi, and Medan. There are 68 participants in this study and the questionnaire consists of ten questions. Those questions were related to the expressions regarding to the types of dysphemism.



## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researchers found out the used of dysphemism in Indonesian high school students. The data of findings were taken by analyzing the answers of the students. Homosexual dysphemism is the most used type of dysphemism by Indonesian high school students followed by dysphemistic euphemism and lastly dysphemistic epithet.



Homosexuality dysphemism here is the terms that are used regarding homosexuality. As a result, the researchers found out that this type of dysphemism is mostly used in Indonesian high school students to give a label for homosexuality. It is also a common term used by society. Nowadays, information about the homosexuality is easily attended in social media. In other words, social media plays a big role in associating with people around the world (Saroh & Relawati, 2017). Similar to Colvin (2006), media can influence the public opinion about certain issue and also has insignificant influence on concrete policy innovation. Therefore, the terms in homosexuality dysphemism mostly known by the students because social media give information regarding to the issues of community. The terms are used by high school students to call homosexual group namely; Gay, Lesbi (Lesbian), Homo

According to Uzarevic (2010) the use of dysphemisms belonged not only to a negative attitude toward homosexuality or the organization of the festival, but also to factors such as education, age, exposure to Western culture, and the need to fit into the jargon used by other argument participants. For instance, dysphemistic term for a gay man was sometimes used even by the readers who had no negative feeling about homosexuals and those who defended their right to organize the parade (Uzarevic, 2010). In brief, this terms commonly used since there is no other way to say that. Unless, there is a jargon that is used among community which still do not know about.

The second type that used the most is dysphemistic euphemism. Dysphemistic euphemism is abusive words which can be used in friendly greetings between friends or families that are not meant to be hurtful. This is a sign of familiarity or friendship and closeness between two parties. Tambunsaribu (2018) stated that the usage of about words in a communication with other people is a bad communication. Yet, in this type the using of abusive words is sometimes used to praise someone in a good way. For example, taken from the result, *kamu itu hitam tapi manis* it means you have dark skin but you still look sweet. However, this sentence contradicts with the theory before. Therefore, Terry (2020) stated in dysphemistic euphemisms, the speaker uses a dysphemistic term without meaning to be offensive and without offending the listener. Some of the examples taken from the data:





- *Dia gila tapi temanku* which means he's crazy but he's my friend
- *Bodoh gitu temenku juga* which means even though he's stupid, he's still my friend
- *Jelek kek gini kawan aku juga* which means he's ugly but he's still my friend
- *Kamu jelek tapi aku mencintaimu* which means you're ugly yet I love you

Overall, Allan and Burrige (2006) also came up with the terms 'euphemistic dysphemisms' and 'dysphemistic euphemisms', which they defined as 'expressions at odds with the intentions that lurk behind them.

Next, the third type of the findings is dysphemistic epithet. It usually involves the use of animals naming. The speaker offends the listener by targeting on his or her humanity when they use one. Using animal names is a part of taboos words or commonly known as swearing. Stapleton (2010) said that swearing is often described as a linguistic activity that involves the use of taboo words. Moreover, Jay (2009) stated taboos in English are placed on sexual references (blow job, cunt) and on those that are considered profane or blasphemous (goddamn, Jesus Christ). Taboos extend to scatological references and disgusting objects (shit, crap, douche bag); some animal names (bitch, pig, ass); substandard vulgar terms (fart face, on the rag); and offensive slang (cluster fuck, tit run). Thus, the term swearing is used generally to bring up several categories of offensive speech: name calling, insulting, profanity, slang, vulgarity, obscenity, epithets, slurs, and scatology (Jay, 1996). For instance, the data found in this type mostly are: *Anjing* means dog, *Babi* means pig, *Monyet* means monkey.

The last type found in this study is euphemistic dysphemism. When a speaker wants to swear (interjectionally) for emphasis, he or she can utilize a minced oath. The dysphemistic illocutionary act (expressive) is used to avoid offending others. It is similar to harsh words but there is no intention to hurt listener at all. Euphemistic dysphemisms are euphemistic locutions in which the illocutionary point is dysphemistic; in other words, the speaker uses a euphemistic term with no intention of sparing the listener (Terry, 2020).

For example, that found from this study is *anjay* which means euphemism of *anjing* (dog). But in this case, the intention of using *anjay* is for amazement towards the listener.

## CONCLUSION

The dysphemism in Indonesian high school students only found by researchers are four types. They are homosexual dysphemism which the most type found in this study, followed by dysphemistic euphemism, dysphemistic epithet, and euphemistic dysphemism. Some types of synecdoche, "-ist" Dysphemism, Name Dysphemism, and Cross-cultural Dysphemism are not found in this study. Though the use of homosexual dysphemism is mostly found in the study, it does not mean it is always used frequently by them but it could be mean the students know the term because of the effect of society and also social media. Moreover, dysphemism has function as swearing, including giving an amazement to someone and targeting people' humanity. Each type of dysphemism used in the researchers' findings serves a specific purpose. The terms of humiliation of individuals who are disapproved of or condemned, taboo term used as an insult, and dysphemism function as expressing anger or social distance of a specific group. As a result, all types of dysphemism provided a function.

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