



## **EUPHEMISM OF SURAH AL-BAQARAH IN THE HOLY QUR'AN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study deals with euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah in the Holy Qur'an. It was aimed for investigating the types of euphemism used in surah Al-Baqarah, to describe realization of euphemistic expressions in surah Al-Baqarah, and to elaborate the reasons for realization of euphemism in surah Al-Baqarah. This study was conducted by using descriptive qualitative research. The data analyzed were sentence to sentence which contained euphemism. The source of the data was taken from Tafseer Ibn Kathir Vol 1-10 in the English language with Arabic verses. The researcher is the key instrument of the research. The result showed that there were 29 verses that contained of euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah. It divided into four concepts found in surah Al-Baqarah and one concept as new finding found in surah Al-Baqarah. Specifically, 1 (4%) for Shortening, 7 (23%) for Remodelling, 17 (59%) for Semantic change, 2 (7%) for Borrowing, and 2 (7%) for narrowing as new finding. The dominant types of euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah was Semantic change. It means that Muslim have to understanding and comprehending the meaning deeply. The ways of euphemism realized in surah Al-Baqarah, namely direct, indirect, implicit, and explicit. The reason euphemism realized in surah Al-Baqarah to soften a vulgar expression. In certain social contexts, they are used to avoid embarrassment and the direct mention of social taboos. In other situations, they are used to give more importance and a higher status to certain individuals and events.

**Keyword:** *Euphemism, Taboo, Surah Al-Baqarah*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a power that used to make one's statement stronger. Someone uses language to influence people. Moreover, it can hide the fact to avoid misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer or the writer and the reader (Fromkin, 2001). Language has developed rapidly in such way

that people may notice various functions as well as intentions in using language. As Wardaugh (2006) pointed out that language expresses the feeling and attitude of the speaker and writer.

In the life of human as a creature of God cultured to note how one expresses the words in either language (euphemism), especially regarding the use of words that are culturally significant to be expressed in the language. To avoid the use of a language that is taboo, there is a study of language called euphemism. Euphemism is a universal linguistic phenomenon. As supported by Wardhaugh (1986) that euphemism is also universal that social groups do not use language quite uninhibitedly. An unlimited number of examples can be easily cited from most formal writing styles to most colloquial everyday spoken language. Then, Rawson (1995) explained that euphemism is a word (a phrase) which people use in place of terms which more disagreeable or offensive to themselves to their audience. When a phrase becomes a euphemism, its literal meaning is often pushed a side. E

Furthermore, Allan and Burridge (1991) stated that euphemism is alternatives to dispreferred expressions, and is used to avoid possible loss of face. The dispreferred expression may be taboo, fearsome, distasteful, or for some other reason has too many negative connotations to felicitously execute speaker's communicative intention on a given occasion. Euphemism seems to be culturally sensitive areas in many languages and cultures, religion, death, disease, sex, parts of body and bodily function. They also add that euphemism has survived throughout history and they are used even among the primitive people.

In addition, Hadeel stated that euphemism is a substitution of an agreeable or less offensive expression in place of one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant to the listener. It means that euphemism in the communicative linguistic composition is to obtain a word, phrase, expression, manifestation or denotation that is gentler, ambiguous, more pleasant, inoffensive, or less offensive, less unpleasant, decorous, neutral, tactful, veiled, more appropriate. As supported by David Wilmsen that euphemism carries a conventionalized meaning. He indicated euphemism is usually used to soften sad events like death, but sometimes there is no need to use such utterances in some sad events because it can be understood immediately and it doesn't have ambiguity (Marwan, 2016). Euphemism is not only a common strategy in people's daily communication which can make a harsh topic softer and an embarrassed conversation agreeable but also euphemism used in Holy Qur'an.

Al-Qur'an is kalamullah were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad saw through the mediation of Gabriel as. The Holy Quran is rich in the euphemistic expressions dealing with sensitive topics such as sex, divorce, death ...etc. Many surah which contain euphemism in holy Qur'an, such as Al-Baqarah, An-Nisa, Al-maidah, Thaha, Yusuf, Maryam etc. Surah Al-Baqarah is the longest surah of the Quran which contains 286 verses.

In this study, there are some problems found in understanding the meaning holy Qur'an. Firstly, many Muslims misinterpreted at the meaning of ayah in the holy Qur'an especially taboo. Secondly, many problems addressed in the Glorious Qur'an are misinterpreted. It misinterpretation is due to decontextualizing a euphemistic expression linguistically and culturally, and failure to regard

the Qur'anic style properly. And the last, the reader only know translate of holy Qur'an without understanding the content and meaning in it. Therefore, the purpose of this research to investigate euphemism realized in holy Qur'an especially in surah Al-Baqarah. In this case focused on the analysis of euphemism in surah Al-Baqarah in order to readers be easier to understand the content of Al-Baqarah and the message that contained in it would be conveyed to the reader with appropriate.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Euphemism

Euphemism is a universal linguistic phenomenon. As Wardhaugh (1986) proposed that it is also universal that social groups do not use language quite uninhibitedly. An unlimited number of examples can be easily cited from most formal writing styles to most colloquial everyday spoken language. English speakers, for example, would consider words such as "disinformation" and "call of nature" as more acceptable and less offensive than their blunt counterparts "lie" and "urge to urinate or defecate" and will therefore use them more frequently in their communication with other members of the society. Furthermore, Hudson as quoted by Marwan (2016) defined euphemism as: "the extension of ordinary words and phrases to express unpleasant or embarrassing ideas. The indirectness of form is felt to diminish the unpleasantness of the meaning. It means that euphemism using the word in good omen. Euphemistic expressions are generally used for different functions: substitution of taboo words, disability, sexuality, excretion, social lower-class jobs, death, profanity, politics, religion and military.

Euphemism is an idiomatic expression which neglects its direct literal meaning referring to something else to avoid strict social censor, religious fanaticism, political theories, sexuality, and death. Euphemism is auseful tool that allows language users to write or speak figuratively about the libelous issues, i.e. it is a linguisticdevice to avoid talking about unpleasant realities directly. English has a lot of euphemistic terms and expressionssuch as: **pass away** instead of **die**, **put to sleep** instead of **kill**, **pillow biter** as alternative for **homosexual** and **restroom** as compensation from **toilet** or **lavatory** (Hudson, 2000).

In addition, Allan and Burridge (1991) define euphemisms as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offense, that of the audience, or of some third party. Burridge (1997) adds that their existence dates back to the time when human language actually developed, i.e. preliterate people used them. As it has already been mentioned, euphemisms have often been considered synonymous with metaphors. However, figurative language is one of many ways which language users employ in order to construct euphemistic expressions (Allan & Burridge, 1991).

### The Ways of Realizing Euphemism

There are some ways of realization euphemism by Rawson (1983), namely:

- a. Implicit: Implicit refers to implied though not directly expressed; inherent in the nature of something. In this study, many verses of surah Al-Baqarah explained meaning which implicitly. It means that Muslim have to comprehending the meaning deeply. For example of surah Al-Baqarah: 257. In this verse, Allah mentioned *Light* and *Darkness*. Why do in the *Light* not use suffix *-ness*? So, comprehend the meaning deeply.
- b. Explicit: explicit refers to something that is specific, clear, or detailed. In the holy Qur'an, Allah has explained covenant, punishment, and reward clearly and briefly to believers and disbelievers who want to follow Him. For example of surah Al-Baqarah: 222. This verse mentioned about forbidden in relation.
- c. Direct: direct refers to aim something in a particular direction or at a particular person. For example related to this study is surah Al-Baqarah: 142. This verse mentioned that Allah directly said *the fool* for idolators, hypocrites, and Jews.
- d. Indirect: indirect refers to not immediate point person or thing to an action is done. For example of surah Al-Baqarah: 11. This verse explained that Allah indirectly mentioned person which made *mischief*.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative design to explain euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah in Holy Qur'an. The data were surah Al-Baqarah consisted of 286 verses and source of the data were taken from Tafseer Ibn Kathir Vol 1-10 in the English language with Arabic verses. The data were collected by applying a documentary technique. The procedures of administrating the data from the Alqur'an of surah Al-Baqarah are as follows:

- 1) selecting surah Al-Baqarah which contains euphemism in holy Qur'an
- 2) classifying surah Al-Baqarah which include of euphemism
- 3) showing the data into table
- 4) converting the occurrences into percentage, and
- 5) Elaborating the finding which have analyzed

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Findings

In this research finding, the researcher elaborated findings after analyzing the data, as follows:

1. The researcher found four concepts of euphemism in surah Al-Baqarah, namely Shortening, Remodelling, Semantic change, and Borrowing. In the shortening only clipping was found in surah Al-Baqarah, in remodelling only phonological distortion was found in Surah Al-baqarah. There 7 euphemism contained phonological distortion. Semantic Change found 17 euphemisms in surah Al-Baqarah consisted of 1 for litotes, 5 for Semantic shift, 4 for indirection, 2 for metaphorical transfer, 1 for abstraction, and 4 for widening. Meanwhile, borrowing only external borrowing

found in Surah Al-Baqarah. In this study, narrowing as new finding found 2 verse in surah Al-Baqarah.

2. The ways of euphemism realized in surah Al-Baqarah deliver directly, indirect, implicit, and explicit. The dominant of ways realized euphemism in surah Al-Baqarah was direct. It means that the most of euphemism to describe truth from Allah is real and to bring disbelievers from the darkness to the light.
3. The reason euphemism realized in surah Al-Baqarah to soften a vulgar expression so that Muslim can easier in understanding the meaning and content. In certain social contexts, euphemism was used by Allah to avoid direct mention of social taboos so that there was no ambiguity in understanding meaning.. In other situations, they are used to give more importance and a higher status to certain individuals and events.

### **Discussion**

As theoretically, euphemism is an idiomatic expression which neglects its direct literal meaning referring to something else to avoid strict social censor, religious fanaticism, political theories, sexuality, and death. Euphemism is not only common strategies in people's daily communication which can make soften a vulgar expression but also strategy is used to all aspect like economic, politic, social, business, law, culture, etc. In addition, euphemism also is used in the Holy Qur'an because t he power of holy Qur'an is language. In this study, the researcher discussed euphemism in Holy Qur'an of surah Al-Baqarah.

In this study, many euphemism found in surah Al-Baqarah. It is not to soften taboo expression but also give higher status to produce the proof of His Kursi that He (Allah) is one and the covenant is true. Besides, In surah Al-Baqarah that our Lord\_ Allah mentioned messenger, punishment, and reward to human directly and indirectly so that what they know and they see in the earth is true in the holy Qur'an no doubt for His covenant. In addition, Allah directly mentioned disbelievers, hypocrites, idolaters are placed in Jahanam and fire shall touch them forever. In this study, euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah discussed varieties subjects, such as law, pilgrimage to Mecca, prayer, fasting, retell stories of adam, the children of Israel, marital relation and divorce, commerce, and debt. So, euphemism not only can discuss some subject on surah Al-Baqarah but also all of surah in the Holy Qur'an, such as An-nisa, Al-Maidah, Al-Muhammad, Al-Hujurat, Al-Fatihah, Al-Waqiah, Yasiin, etc.

Related to the previous studies, many researchers had discussed about euphemism. Some of them like Marwan (2016) discussed about *Euphemism in the Translation of Surah An-nisa in the Holy Qur'an*. In his study, problems and difficulties in the process of translating the religious and cultural expressions because the translator has to bear in his mind the fact that he should render ideas and messages not merely words. The translator encounters a lot of these obstacles when translating euphemistic expressions or terms into the TL i.e. translating the euphemism in the religious text is one of the difficulties for the translator. He only compared many translators in translating on surah An-nisa which contained euphemism and there was no found a new finding in it.

In addition, Rashid (2016) discussed about *The Illusion of Untranslatability of Culture-Bound Euphemistic Expression in the Qur'an*. He investigated the notion of untranslatability where the concept of equivalence is reconsidered since the misconceptions, related to the said concept, inevitably lead to the emergence of untranslatability. Identifying equivalence as relative, approximate and necessary identity makes the notion of untranslatability a mere theorization. There was no new finding in his study because his study only about valid or not valid in translation.

Hamad and Salman (2013), investigated of the translation of euphemistic expressions in the Holy Quran has long been a neglected topic of study where few researches have been conducted. His aimed of study to examine through analysis and comparison, the incongruities in translating Quranic euphemistic expressions into English in the works of Ali, Hilali and Khan, Pickthal and Arberry. A number of 23 examples of euphemistic expressions were cited from different surahs of the Holy Quran. The collected data were classified according to the mechanisms of lexical euphemism: substitution and deletion, and to the topics that require euphemism. Assessment of the translations depended mainly on the two criteria of meaning and euphemism. In the finding, the researchers more appropriate translations of these Quranic euphemisms considering the criteria of meaning and euphemism.

Shehab (2014), examined the role context plays in determining the translation strategies pursued by translators of Arabic euphemisms into English. Due to different cultural backgrounds, adherence to the employment of euphemism in a social context may differ in both Arabic and English. While some situations call for the use of euphemism in one culture, the other culture finds no point in using such euphemisms for such situations; preserving the original Arabic euphemisms when rendered into English in this case could lead to misunderstanding and may deprive the Source Language (SL) from a cultural trait. The study derives evidence from 11 Arabic euphemistic expressions taken from five literary masterpieces written by the Egyptian novelist and Noble Prize winner Najib Mahfouz, and it looks into the English translation of these euphemisms. The present study attempts to advance the proposition that Arabic euphemisms in their context exhibit fluctuating, unstable meaning, which emanates from various contextual factors such as speakers, addressees, shared knowledge and background information, and hence these factors combined dictate on translators the chosen translation strategy.

And the last previous study, Galal (2014), investigated and compares the conceptualization of death euphemism in English and Arabic as embodied in various euphemistic metaphors using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory initiated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). It has been found, based on 442 euphemistic expressions in both languages (192 from Arabic, and 250 from English) that both languages use 10 strikingly similar complex conceptual metaphors to mitigate the effect of death, emanating from blending primary metaphors with cultural assumptions. The two languages share the common human experience of avoiding mentioning death by means of using identical euphemistic conceptual metaphors; however, both languages differ as regards the emphasis, details and range of

the complex metaphor. Evidence based on data analysis supports the view about the universality of euphemistic conceptual metaphors.

However, in this research different with other research. This study not only explains about types of euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah in the Holy Qur'an but also explain the way euphemism in realization in surah Al-Baqarah. Theoretically, types of euphemism divided into five types, namely shortening, remodeling, semantic change, circumlocution, and borrowing. In this study, the researcher found new finding of types of euphemism in Surah Al-Baqarah, namely narrowing. In findings, there were four concepts found in surah Al-Baqarah and one concept as new finding found in surah Al-Baqarah. Specifically, 1 (4%) for Shortening, 7 (23%) for Remodelling, 17 (59%) for Semantic change, 2 (7%) for Borrowing, and 2 (7%) for narrowing as new finding. The dominant types of euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah was Semantic change. It means that Muslim have to understanding and comprehending the meaning deeply.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, some conclusions are drawn as the following:

There were 29 verses that contained of euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah. It divided into four concepts found in surah Al-Baqarah and one concept as new finding found in surah Al-Baqarah. Specifically, 1 (4%) for Shortening, 7 (23%) for Remodelling, 17 (59%) for Semantic change, 2 (7%) for Borrowing, and 2 (7%) for narrowing as new finding. The dominant types of euphemism of surah Al-Baqarah was Semantic change. It means that Muslim have to understanding and comprehending the meaning deeply.

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