

EUPHEMISMS IN PHILIPPINE CULTURE POTRAYED IN FILIPINO MOVIES

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Abstract

This study explores the euphemisms in Philippine culture portrayed in Filipino movies. This study attempts to answer the research questions: (1) What euphemisms are used in the movies (a) Remington and the Curse of Zombadings and (b) Die Beautiful along with metaphor, idioms, and hyperbole? and (2) What are the functions of the euphemisms used in the two movies? The researchers analyzed the data using the lens of latent content analysis and qualitative analysis to unpack the meanings and relationships. The data were taken from the script supported by the transcription method. The method of data analysis is described in great detail—Transcribing, Data Reduction, and Data Selection. Study found various euphemisms under metaphor (ng ganun, confimed, Diana Rose, in fairness, magbooking, kaligayahan, and usapan ng mga tao 'to); Idioms (malakandila ang mga daliri, natuluan ng kandila); Hyperbole (dynamite, mitsa, busy po masyado, hindi kailangan ng utak dito) in the movie Remington and the Curse of Zombadings. In the movie Die Beautiful, numerous euphemisms were also categorized on its types: Metaphor (pambabae, pag inampon mo yang batang yan magiging babae ka na, bantot, lason, mani, wala naman sa kalingkingan, hindi ka pa nagpapabreastfeeding, magkapechay, number 2; Idioms (pakainin kita ng sangkatutak na star margarine, nanginginig yung matres, naputikan ka na); Hyperbole (kahit anino, wala, anak lang ng anak hindi naman nanay, anglalaking wawasak sa'aking puri, 3 inches lang yung ano). Therewere variations of functions seen according to the speaker euphemisms' contexts and purpose, made to inform (conveys new information), evaluate (conveys opinions and attitude), modalize (conveys attitude towards truth and utterance), convince(persuade), criticize (for giving criticisms), order (giving instructions), and refuse (to deny or reject).

Keywords: Euphemisms, Language and Media, Philippine Culture, Philippine Movies,Pragmatics

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of spoken and written expressions and transmission of ideas and emotions, as well as the system's style and lexicon. Language, in general, serves not only as a means of communication for people, but also as a means of maintaining positive interpersonal relationships. Euphemism is one of the elements of the language custom that establish relationships (Allan and Burridge, 2006).

Through the use of euphemisms, people avoid to use unethical, taboo, or harsh expressions as it is less obscene to many. As what Stephenson (2016) stated, it is used to sugar-coat offensive language, making communication less transparent. Euphemisms help to keep a cheerful tone and counteract bad feelings when addressing hard topics because they replace harsh terms with indirect ones that are not upsetting to the listeners.,

Some people in different regions of the world speak in a foul language that reveals their identity, knowing that Philippines is one of the religious countries across the world, Filipinos use a variety of expressions to express their sentiments, attitudes, and views. In everyday utterances, various expressions revealing dismay or antipathy can be heard since „chissmiss“ is one the most common past-time of Filipinos. This normalized past time that has a negative impact in some ways is becoming acceptable as it gives pleasure, this phenomenon best exemplified by the common stereotypes which is also used as an image commonly portrayed in Filipino movies

Since movies in the Philippines reached a new era and sustained creativity through the years, the diversity of personal, social, and groups involved, as well as the diversity of subject and form, defy a wider variety of dynamic movement. The researchers chose Philippine movies as the focus of the study it is because movie reflects the life and culture of Filipinos and the direct use of euphemisms in the conversations. In addition, there are many conversations between the characters in different contexts and situations with different language expressions used in the movie and get a clear data from the script of the movie.

This study of euphemisms in Philippine culture change some pragmatic perspective that hoped to create a new dimension of understanding and put forward some clarifications and deeper understanding about Philippine euphemisms through Filipino movies

Euphemism defined as the form of words and expressions permit people to have a topic about unpleasant things in interaction (Wardhaugh, 2010). The word euphemism comes from the Greek word *eupheme*. *Eu* means well, and *pheme* means

speaking. This Greek word was originally a term used in a place of religious word that should not be spoken loudly.

According to Pavlenko (2009), euphemisms tend to protect the speaker from negative situation. Not using euphemism to filter words might lead to bad situations. Not using euphemism to filter words might lead to bad situations.

As how Hillary Clinton campaign ended last 2008. Her speech did not help her to win because of what she said about being pinned down by a sniper on her trip, her speech leads to a bad situation. Very broadly, euphemism are sweet-talk that alternates expressions speakers or writers prefer not to execute in particular occasion (Burridge, 2021). Therefore, euphemism is a form of expression used to avoid loss of face and shame.

In Philippine culture, good manners are displayed to safeguard some conceivable ineptitude of the individual in power. Filipinos manifest certain pakikisama (maintaining smooth interpersonal relationship) mentality which takes the form of extravagant praise of another, or the use of metaphorical language (Andres, 1981; Ledesma, Ochave, Punzalan, & Magallanes, 1981 as cited in Domocmat, 2009). Munalim and Genuino (2019) affirmed that distance, rank, cultural and academic orientations of pakikisama as a Filipino mentality are important in maintaining politeness to others. In daily conversations, a person should consider not just the choice of his words, but also his facial expressions (Goffman, 1955 in Haugh, 2009). In which, language use becomes the way of people to speak and express politely (Frigillano, 2020).

The practice of Euphemisms shows its polite function. Roses and Rices (2013) cite Lynch claiming that Filipinos' use of euphemisms is "an art that has long been highly prized in the Philippine society and is known as highly regarded today. Harsh and insulting words are correspondingly devalued". In the communication process, using impolite words needs to be valued in language use.

As Hudson (1980) states that as listeners, "we make a good attempt to figure out what others say, in any event, when this implies perusing undeniably more somewhere within that is in them". Politeness is the common motivation behind using euphemisms for Filipinos as reflected in the short stories subjected to this study (Banagbanag, 2018). He added, since literature reflects culture, the Filipinos even then tried every means not to offend other people. Also, Filipinos would conceal their real feelings so that relationships would not be tarnished. In addition, Filipino writers tried to make their writing "clean" by using euphemisms instead of the taboo expressions so that they could invite more readers to read their stories (Banagbanag, 2018)

In the Philippines, the trend of using euphemisms are also seen in film industry. Film titling in the Philippines film industry diverge from using title suggestive of the context that would frame the sexual liaisons of the characters to genitalia itself to grab the public attention. A number of sex-oriented films arisen in the 1990's, *Kesong Puti* (1997) for semen, *Talong* (1999) for penis, and *Itlog* (2002) for testicles. These titles were produced from agricultural industry, however not just mere of plain innocent agricultural produce but are sexually explicit. These euphemisms may be used to satisfy the most widely used mode of audio-visual translation for economic as well as pedagogical implication (Chiaro & Tveit, 2009).

According to Tan (2008), the titles show how film producers find ways to subvert the norm using euphemisms to attract people to watch the film. In addition, the titles of film (that use euphemism), are used to reflect the main plot and express the main idea of the film. There are several keywords of expression to be discussed used in titles of Filipino films, but not studied in scripts of the movie. The involvement these keywords from movie titles show how those words reflect society's battles over sex and sexuality (e.g. *Talong*, *penis*). The scripts used might be just a barometer social attitudes of the Filipino in film making

Researchers focused in Filipino Indie Films. The importance of focusing in Indie films, as the genre of data source is because Filipino Indie films primarily

produced not as heavily censored, more explicit, honest, and deal with more sensitive issues of Filipino identity and culture (Jardin, 2004). In this, there could be offensive expressions, or one that is socially unacceptable, or that is unpleasant (Larson 1998).

The study of euphemism has been used in many kinds of field around the world. In social interaction, words can be unhappy, impolite, and embarrassed, which often make the communication unpleasant. According to Euphemism Theory of (Allan and Burridge, 2006) expressions are used to alternate dis preferred expressions, in order to avoid possible loss of face; or though giving offense. These expressions soften the effect of what they really wish to communicate, avoiding, as much as possible, offence and conflict. For example, the theory posits euphemistic expression of “plus-size” for “overweight”. Additionally, there are types and functions were presented in the theory. Allan & Burridge (2006) divided the types of Euphemisms into several types, and this includes; metaphors, idioms, and hyperbole. Metaphor indicates something different from the literal meanings. Whereas, idiom is an expression functioning as a single unit whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts. And, hyperbole uses exaggerated statements to make the statement different from the literal meaning.

Mazidah (2001), proposes that text under consideration, four functions are seen; (1) Informs, euphemism conveys new information, (2) Evaluates, euphemism conveys writer's opinion or attitude through a sentence, (3) Modalizes, euphemisms conveys writer's attitude toward the truth value of his/her utterance, and for (4) Political Euphemism, it shows the a reader's reaction to something in the extra linguistic situation, namely: convince, criticize, order, question, reject/refuse/deny, curse, promise and apology, which Moon in Rusman, (2000) added

According to Saeed (2004), meaning is putting words into relationships with the world; the meaning of words and sentences is conveyed by showing how they relate to situations. Moreover, he stated that meaning must be something that exists in the mind rather than the word that it must be more abstract than pictures or features.

Meaning therefore exists only in the minds of the speaker of the language. Synonymous to the (Leech, 2014) *Semantics*, meaning can be studied as language phenomenon in its own and not „outside language“. This means that we investigate is the involvement between the recognized meaning and the sentence single unit whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts. And, hyperbole uses exaggerated statements to make the statement different from the literal meaning.

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This study is aimed to find out : 1) What euphemisms are used in Filipino Movies along: a. Metaphors, b. Idioms, and c. Hyperbole, and 2) What are the functions of euphemisms are used in Filipino movies?

The researcher focused to analyze the three (3) most popular Filipino Gay movies in the year 2011-2019, titled *Die Beautiful* (2016), *Remington and the Curse of the Zombadings* (2011), and *Metamorphosis* (2019), of random productions from Filipino Film Industry. The selected movies represent a range of Euphemisms from different casts of each movie. These 3 movies were analyzed using Content Analysis and Allan and Burrige (2006) Euphemism and its types and functions. This could be regarded as a reliable and valid source for application and no other known studies used in similar manner.

In this article, we only show one film as the example of analysis and discussion . In the conclusion, we do not reduce or conclude for one film only but it the complete conclusion as the result of the analysis of the three films above as whole,

METHOD

The research design of a study outlined the basic approach that researchers used to answer the research questions (Poly & Beck, 2010). To meet the aims and objective of the study descriptive design under qualitative analysis was used as an appropriate research design. This described the characteristics of the certain condition or phenomenon that is being studied.

The study used content analysis and qualitative analysis to analyze the meanings and relationships of such certain concepts in the movies, focusing on the latent content analysis to deduce what the contents hidden meaning is. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data. Researchers can analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts. It is relevant to this study to organize and elicit meaning from the data collected and draw realistic conclusions (Polit & Beck, 2006). Qualitative analysis consists of data data descriptions, data reduction and data selection (Sugiyono, 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Euphemisms used in Filipino Movie

“ Remington and The Curses of the Zombadings (2011)”

1.1. Metaphor

Lakoff & Johnson (2003) define metaphors as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. Moreover, a metaphor is a figure of speech that directly refers to one thing by mentioning another for rhetorical effect.¹ It can give (or obscure) clarity or reveal hidden parallels between two different ideas. As the statement “*ng ganun*” in the conversation;

Conversation 1 (Extract 0:00:49-0:00:57)

Remington: Bakla, bakla, bakla, bakla....

Mother : Remington, ano ka ba! Ilang beses ko ba dapat sabihin sayo na wag kang magsasabi ngganun.

The metaphor described in this statement by the word “*ng ganun*” is referring to the word “*bakla*”. It is a metaphoric euphemism that directly refers to one thing by mentioning another term. The same with the “*confirmed*” in the conversation;

Conversation 2 (Extract 0:11:31-0:11:40)

Guy: The subscriber cannot reach po. Please try your call later po.

Mimi: Confirmed! Lahat sila confirmed!

The metaphor “*confirmed*” is another metaphoric euphemism that refers to one thing which is “*bakla*” by mentioning another term “*confirmed*”. in the conversation Another metaphor also showed in the conversation;

Conversation 3 (Extract 0:03:48-0:03:50)

Mimi: Yes, Chief

Someone: Diana Rose na naman?

From the statement above which said by someone, it classified as metaphor. It is a metaphorical associated with the gay lingo word “*bakla*”. It was used substituted to the word “*bakla*” which resemblance of two different terms which is made based on a common characteristic; *Diana Rose* as a famous leader of a girl group and best-selling lead singer due to her girly appearance and *bakla* as a male in girl appearance.

Another euphemism under metaphor that shows association is the word “*in fairness*” in the conversation;

Conversation 4 (Extract 0:14:05-0:14:10)

Remington: Hannah, hi.

Hannah: Hmmm, in fairness.

“*In fairness*” is a euphemistic term for not bad. It is a metaphor that associates with the fair judgment in a person’s appearance. It shows that Remington looks good after criticizing him.

The utterance said by Mimi also categorized as metaphor;

Conversation 5 (Extract 0:28:30-0:28:51)

Mimi: *Kaya kung gusto nyo magbooking, wag yung paisa-isa...*

The euphemism “*booking*” substituted the context meaning of “*dating that may end up having a sexual intercourse*”, implied the two things *booking* and *dating* which share the same characteristics and has resemblance made based on a typical situation wherewhen people date, they usually book to a restaurant or hotel.

Furthermore, a metaphor showed by Ed in the conversation;

Conversation 6 (Extract 0:29:06-0:29:17)

Ed: *Alam mo pare, ang beauty contest na yan, ha, ginawa yan para talaga sa mga babae. Ha. Pero, para sa kaligayahan nating mga lalaki.*

Serge: *Tama ka diyan! Tama, tama!*

From the above utterance, it is classified as a metaphor. The metaphor showed by the word *kaligayahan* indicates something different from the literal meaning. It does not mean the real happiness of the men, but it means of sexual pleasure for men. Lastly, the same with the statement “*usapan ng mga tao „to*” said by Ed in the conversation;

Conversation 7 (Extract 0:29:21-0:29:28)

Serge: *Sample, sample.*

Ed: *Wala akong maalala. Bata sila’y nakakatawa kasi ang papangit nila. Tawa tawa ka diyan, usapan ng mga tao „to.*

Usapan ng mga tao „to indicates something from its literal meaning. It does not mean that Ed is having a conversation with real individual and the one who is laughing is not human and differs from them, but it indicates that the one who is laughing is not as good looking as them.

1.2 Idioms

An idiom is a word or statement with a figurative, non-literal meaning attached to it; yet, some phrases can become figurative idioms while keeping their literal meaning. An idiom's metaphorical meaning differs from its literal meaning, which is classified as formulaic language.² There were two idioms collected by the researchers.

In the conversation of Hannah and Remington, Hannah uttered an idiom which is the;

Conversation 8 (Extract 0:48:23-0:48:29)

Remington: Echosera!

Hannah: Ang sabi sakín ng daddy ko, mas bagay daw magpiano and mga malakandila ang mgadaliri.

Malakandila ang mga dalari is an idiomatic expression for Filipinos for having a good, long, big hands. The expression was used to indicate that Remington has a long, big hands that there's a possibility that Remington is a good pianist.

Another idiom gathered by the researchers was the statement said by Hannah again;

Conversation 9 (Extract 0:48:29-0:48:36)

Hannah: ...Yun sakín daw parang natuluan ng kandila.

Halika, hanggang dun lang alam ko.

It is the opposite idiom of the first expression, where *natuluan ng kandila* refers to having a hard, short hands.

1.2 Hyperbole

In poetry and oratory, it emphasizes, evokes strong feelings, and creates strong impressions. It is usually not meant to be taken literally as a figure of speech.³ It invokes exaggeration of ideas for the sake of emphasis. There are quite hyperboles found by the researchers in the script of the movie. As stated by Ed;

Conversation 9 (Extract 0:29:56-0:30:16)

*Ed: Dynamite! Hinubad and pantalon. Sabi naman, "wow! Really dynamite!" Suarez and Serge: *laughing**

*Ed: Edi brief na lang ang natira. Kaniyang hinubad ngayon ang brief, ang sabi ng babae, “anoyan, **mitsa**?”*

From the statements above, they categorized as hyperbole because the words *dynamite* and *mitsa* refers to a big explosion as dynamite and a very thin thread as candle wick. It is an exaggerated word to describe the genitalia of a man, which it is impossible to have as explosive as dynamite and as thread as the candle wick.

Moreover, the dialogue between Mang Biyo and Remington was also categorized as hyperbole;

Conversation 10 (Extract 0:07:25-0:07:27)

Mang Biyo: Sino sainyo ang may gusto ng trabaho?

*Remington: Eh, **busy po masyado**, Mang Biyo.*

It was identified as hyperbole since it was an overstatement of Remington saying *no*, and it would be impossible for him to be busy since he was a bystander in the movie. Lastly, the statement of Mang Biyo in the conversation;

Conversation 11 (Extract 0:07:29-0:07:35)

*Mang Biyo: Kulang ako ng mga kanang-kamay ngayon. **Hindi kailangan ng utak dito**, kayapwedeng-pwede kayo.*

Remington: Mang Biyo, tagay na lang ho kayo!

The statement *Hindi kailangan ng utak dito* in the conversation above does not mean having no brain but it represents having no skills and knowledge about the job Mang Biyo is offering.

Functions of Euphemisms

Remington and The Curse of the Zambadings (2011)

The **ng ganun** was categorized as *order*, the statement shows the reaction of the mother toward *bakla*. The function is to order Remington not to say such words for it is not acceptable to say. (See Conversation 1). Order is a verbal request or written by the speaker for something to be made, supplied or served (Moon in Rusman, 2000).

For *confirmed*, *magbooking* and *kaligayahan* were fall under Inform function. In the study of Purba, Silaban, et. al (2020), inform was used to due to its function to inform, it expresses the speaker's expression in one of good ways of speech to express a casual information⁵. Given the analysis, researchers categorized "*confirmed*" as to inform, since the use of the word by the speaker seemed to indicate that Councilor Saliendro and Engr. Saludes are gay, because they are nowhere to be found. Speaker wants to convey information to the receivers that Councilor and Engineer could not get reached due to the fear they felt that they might also die since all the victims are gay. (See Conversation 2). Also the word "*magbooking*", the word indicates that it is dangerous to go and do such thing since victims are gay. The speaker tries to convey an information to the receiver through the euphemism that they should go to convey an information to the receiver through the euphemism that they should go outside with someone for their safety. (See Conversation 5). As well as the expression "*kaligayahan*" informs the receivers that pageants are made for women but also for the sexual pleasure of men. (See Conversation 6). On the other hand, evaluate function was also determined on the following euphemisms, Euphemism is a tool for maintaining a harmonious relationship between the speaker and the recipient. (Allan and Burrige, 1991: 07). Evaluate is kind of euphemistic commentary by the speaker to something (Mazidah, 2001). *Diana Rose* was used by the speaker to evaluate the victim's identity. (See Conversation 3). Another one is the expression *in fairness* evaluates the speaker's opinion through the word. It shows that the speaker adds favorable comment after evaluating the person and have just criticized his appearance. (See Conversation 4). The two expressions, which is the *dynamite* and *mitsa*, evaluate the size if the genitalia of the man which the character is talking about. (See Conversation 10). *Usapan ng mga tao „to* is a criticize function. The speaker of the euphemism used the expression to criticize the receiver of the statement. (See Conversation 7). This function is a form of expression that critically condemn something. Given the example by Astuti (2014) in his study, "your performance is not *really good* tonight". *Malakandila ang mga daliri* and the

Natuluan ng kandila (ang mga daliri) categorized as modalize. The first expression shows that having a candle-like finger has a possibility of being a good pianist. The function is to modalize the observation of being a pianist expressed by the notion “daw”. (See *Conversation 8*). While the second statement gives perspective of the factuality of being not good pianist. It expresses the speaker’s conception of having a hard, short hands is meant to be a bad pianist, therefore it modalizes the categorical situation observation of being a pianist expressed by the notion “daw”. (See *Conversation 8*). Researchers categorized the two expressions as Modalize, for the speakers gives attitude that having such fingers gives basis in being a pianist. As what Mazidah, (2001) have stated, the speaker's attitude regarding the truth of his sentences is conveyed through modalize. The statement *busy po masyado* falls under reject/refuse/deny. It refuses to say yes in the question asked by Mang Biyo. (See *Conversation 11*). This is under the Political Euphemism of Moon (in Rusman, 2000), which refuse/reject/deny is a matter of refusing to agreeing or considering to something. Lastly, the statement *hindi kailangan ng utak dito*, disguise and avoid what is meant to convince the receivers of the statement. (See *Conversation 12*) This shows that speaker wants to firmly convince the receivers and let them believe the truth of his offer

CONCLUSION

Findings

1 Euphemisms in *Remington and the Curse of Zombading* (2011) and *Die Beautiful* (2016)

The euphemisms found in the movie *Remington and the Curse of Zombading* (2011) under metaphor were; *ng ganun*, *confirmed*, *Diana Rose*, *in fairness*, *magbooking*, *kaligayahan*, and *usapan ng mga tao* „to, for idioms; *malakandila ang*

mga daliri, natuluan ng kandila, and hyperbole; *dynamite;mitsa, busy po masyado, hindi kailangan ng utak dito*. Following euphemisms were categorized according to their types in the movie

Finding no. 2 Functions of Euphemisms in *Remington and the Curse of Zombading* (2011) and *Die Beautiful* (2016)

The euphemisms found in the movie **Euphemisms in *Remington and the Curse of Zombading* (2011)** were categorized in the functions (1) Order; “*ng ganun*” (2) Inform; “*confirmed*”, “*magbooking*”, “*kaligayahan*” (3) Evaluate; “*Diana Rose*”, “*in fairness*” and “*dynamite;mitsa*”

(4) Criticize; “*usapan ng mga tao „to*” (5) Modalize; “*malakandila ang mga daliri*”, “*natuluan ngkandila*” (6) Reject/Refuse/Deny “*busy po masyado* (7) Convince; “*Hindi kailangan ng utak dito*”.

Conclusion

1. It is evident that general euphemisms have been really practiced in Filipino movies. Based in the findings, there are numerous euphemisms in Philippine Culture commonly used in portraying Filipino movies that falls under the types of euphemisms; metaphors, idioms and hyperbole. There were 13 euphemisms categorized under metaphors (different from literal meaning), 4 idioms (single unit whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts), and lastly, 7 hyperbole (exaggeration). A total of 24 euphemisms found in the two movies *Remington and the Curse of Zombadings* and *Die Beautiful*. Hence, there are many euphemisms can be practiced in different non-literal sense for rhetorical or vivid effect
2. The functions of euphemism in Philippine Culture portrayed in Filipino movies has variations. It was seen that aside from the real function of euphemism which is to soften the harsh words and not the hearer to loss of face, there is variation of

functions of euphemisms and were evidently used in the Filipino movies. These functions are made to inform (conveys new information), evaluate (conveys opinions and attitude), modalize (conveys attitude towards truth and utterance), convince (persuade), criticize (for giving criticisms), order (giving instructions), and refuse (to deny or reject). These are identified functions of euphemisms that were used in the analysis of the Filipino Movies *Die Beautiful* and *Remington and The Curse of the Zombadings*. The most functions of euphemisms used in the two movies are to inform and to criticize. In essence, euphemisms are not just to substitute words to not offend the receiver but also to inform, criticize, and such, expressing the negative expression about something.

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