

An Analysis of Euphemism in the Selected Literary Texts



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ABSTRACT: Euphemism is a commonly used literary device in various forms of literature. It serves to soften or mask harsh, sensitive, or unpleasant words or concepts, often substituting them with more polite, indirect, or socially acceptable expressions. Euphemism can be found in novels, poems, plays, and other literary works. Euphemism can be used to reflect and comment on societal norms, cultural values, or political contexts. By examining the language choices made by characters or narrators, readers can gain insights into the power dynamics, prejudices, or social expectations of a particular time or place. Euphemism can expose the tensions between appearances and realities, challenging readers to question prevailing beliefs or institutions. The method of current research used qualitative research to analyse the data from literary texts. The instrument used in this study was document analysis. The paper is divided into different sections and a conclusion. Section one follows the introduction. Section two discusses the literature Review. Section three studies method, "Macbeth" and "Othello" summary and population. Section four explains the analysis and the results. Section five presents the conclusion, and references. After collecting the data, the researcher finds out different types of euphemisms utilised in the 'Macbeth and Othello' plays were written by Shakespeare.

KEYWORDS: Euphemism, literary texts, *Macbeth* and *Othello* plays

1. INTRODUCTION

A Euphemism is "a word or expression used to talk about something unpleasant, blunt, or offensive without mentioning the thing itself. Euphemism is a mild and inoffensive word or phrase that is used in place of something that could be found offensive or displeasing. Euphemisms are found throughout art and culture and are extremely common in advertising" (Khan,2018,p.6).

The expression "euphemism" originates from Greek, where the prefix "eu" refers to "good" or "well," the stem "pheme" refers to "speak," and the suffix "-ism" refers to "action or result." "Euphemism," also known as "speaking well" or "good speech," is a phrase that replaces a harsh or unpleasant term with a more pleasant one in order to reduce the severity of the harshness of the original word (Patterson, 2021, p. 2).

The euphemistic language refers to topics that some people may find uncomfortable, distressing, or humiliating to discuss, such as sex, the human body, or death, using polite, pleasant, or neutral words and expressions (Alhussaini,2007,p. 326).

A euphemism is "a palatable way of saying something that may otherwise be upsetting or offensive. Good writers often employ euphemisms to address sensitive subject matter with the right degree of tact" (Beizae,2019,p.8).

Euphemism is the replacement of a phrase that could offend or imply anything disagreeable with something pleasing or inoffensive. Stated differently, the use of metaphorical language in everyday encounters helps us steer clear of a lot of possible issues and misconceptions (Beizae,2019,p.8. 9).

A Euphemism is "an innocuous word or expression used in place of one that is deemed offensive or suggests something unpleasant. Some euphemisms are intended to amuse, while others use bland, inoffensive terms for concepts that the user wishes to downplay. Euphemisms may be used to mask profanity or refer to taboo topics such as disability, sex, excretion, or death in a polite way" (Almoayidi,2018,p.9).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 91), euphemism is defined as the act of replacing a potentially objectionable or disagreeable term with a more pleasing or inoffensive one. Utilising this form of metaphorical language might help avoid misinterpretations in everyday talks.

According to Longman (1995,p.533), in writing, euphemism is "a useful literary device for writers. This figure of speech allows a writer to address potentially sensitive, offensive, or unpleasant subjects in a more delicate or less damaging manner than literal words or phrasings would be."

The negative euphemisms cause a decline in energy and strength. By neutralizing the impact of taboo terminology and eliminating everything that individuals would rather not discuss directly, it takes a protective stance. Therefore, terminology that individuals would rather not use is replaced with negative euphemisms. 'Harvesting' is one example, rather than 'killing'; 'collateral

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damage' is another; 'connection' is another word for 'sexual relationship'; 'intestinal fortitude' is another word for 'guts' (Henry, 2006, p. 1).

In addition, euphemisms can add to the poetic nature of writing as a means of describing something in a more figurative manner. They can also elevate a writer's prose (Khan, 2018, p.6).

Writers must comprehend that excessive utilisation of euphemisms might lead to confusion and loss their meaning for readers. Furthermore, the use of euphemisms in literary works can often result in a more vulgar, unpleasant, or insulting tone compared to using plain and literal language. Thus, authors should meticulously and judiciously use euphemisms in order to achieve maximum effectiveness (Jamet, 2018, p.3).

1.1 Research Questions

1. What is euphemism?
2. What are the uses and functions of euphemism?
3. What are the types of euphemisms in the selected literary texts?

1.2 Aims of the Study

1. To find out euphemism.
2. To investigate the uses and functions of euphemisms.
3. To identify euphemisms in the selected literary texts.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is hopefully significant to the researchers and students of linguistics as it sheds light something about the concept of euphemism and shows its importance in the selected literary texts.

1.4 The Definitions of Keyterms

1. Politeness is a linguistic strategy that mitigates the use of incorrect language in conversation. It facilitates a more comfortable and spontaneous interaction for all participants and is regarded as a matter of etiquette. This form of euphemism frequently results in the use of annoying expressions such as "It is exceedingly delightful to make your acquaintance!" It is advisable to avoid including this in your writing (Almoayidi, 2018, p.8).
2. Diplomatic discourse is a true form of art. The utilisation of negotiation skills, good nerves, strategic thinking, and the usage of euphemisms as suitable alternatives for potentially controversial words or phrases, highlights the significant importance that euphemisms hold in the realm of politics. Diplomacy, as Winston Churchill aptly stated, is the skillful practice of instructing someone to proceed towards an undesirable destination in a manner that elicits their request for guidance. This career necessitates acquiring the skill of employing words in a distinct manner, assigning them novel connotations within the realm of international relations. It is akin to having the ability to communicate in a different language (Jamet, 2018, p.1). No changes were made to the user's text as it is already straightforward and precise.
3. Abstractions serve to make familiar truths more acceptable, such as using the word "pregnancy termination" instead of "abortion" or "casualties of war" instead of "killed." On numerous situations, individuals may find it necessary to employ what are commonly referred to as "white lies," which serve to subtly conceal unpleasant truths. We employ this form of euphemism to maintain control over the situation, mostly to prevent any form of emotional outburst. For example, we commonly use the phrase "before I go" instead of "before I die," which imparts a more tranquil tone to that remark. It is a commonly used language approach, found in both casual interactions and literary works (Beizae, 2019, p.10).
4. Litotes is a figure of speech that uses understatement to highlight the complete opposite of the true situation. Despite its initial complexity, litotes can be easily elucidated by instances. For instance, "not really the brightest" can be understood as synonymous with "stupid," "not a prom queen" can be interpreted as "ugly," and "not bad at all" can be equated to "excellent." The essence of the situation lies in the irony, as writers are not genuinely attempting to ridicule something. On the contrary, this method allows them to eloquently communicate new features or thoughts. The use of litotes will not easily go overlooked for the added detail (Patterson, 2021, p.3).
5. The spin of euphemism involves the utilisation of language or terminology that mitigates or conceals the genuine essence of something, with the intention of rendering it more agreeable or less objectionable. Euphemisms are frequently utilised to mitigate or soften delicate or unpleasant subjects and can be applied in diverse domains, including politics, marketing, or ordinary discourse. The use of euphemism is prevalent in situations where honesty or directness may be seen as harsh or rude. It can serve as a means for influencing public sentiment, controlling public image, or sidestepping conflicts. However, it can also be subject to criticism for deliberately obscuring the truth or avoiding accountability (Fitriani, 2019, p.22).

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background

The term euphemism originates from the Greek terms *eu*, meaning “well,” and *phēmē*, meaning “speaking.” It refers to the practice of using favorable or positive words to replace harsh or unpleasant ones. Euphemisms are useful when individuals are unable to express their true intentions because those intentions are prohibited, offensive, or sound unpleasant. The Oxford English Dictionary provides a definition of euphemism as (1). The concept in question is euphemism, which entails the substitution of a word or phrase with a more favorable or less objectionable connotation, rather than adopting a harsher or more unpleasant term that accurately conveys the intended meaning. An illustration of this phenomenon is when a milder word or expression is employed as a replacement for one that is more offensive or disagreeable. Euphemism is a rhetorical device that entails the replacement of a word or phrase with a milder or less direct expression.

Allan and Burridge (1991,p.11) define euphemism 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.”

Euphemism, as defined by Allan and Burridge (1991, p.11), refers to the use of a substitute term that is considered more favorable in order to prevent any potential damage to one’s reputation or to avoid causing offense to the audience or any other individuals involved.

Cameron (1995,p.73) defines euphemism as “a term used deliberately to avoid or soften the negative associations of words that deal directly with taboo subjects.”

Burridge (2012,p.66) describes euphemisms as “sweet-sounding, or at least inoffensive, alternatives for expressions that speakers or writers prefer not to use in executing a particular communicative intention on a given occasion.” Lutz (2000,p.231) states euphemism as “an inoffensive or positive word or phrase designed to avoid a harsh, unpleasant, or distasteful reality.”

Hughes (2006,p.151) defines euphemism as “the use of deliberately indirect, conventionally imprecise, or socially ‘comfortable’ ways of referring to taboo, embarrassing, or unpleasant topics.”

Brain (1979,p. 83) characterises euphemism as a verbal instrument of overcompensation that involves “a reluctance to face reality.”

2.2 Function of Euphemism

2.2.1 Euphemism as a Communicative Tool

A euphemism is a term or expression that is used to describe something unpleasant or humiliating instead of one that is seen to be harsh or blunt. In ordinary discourse, euphemisms are frequently employed to defuse awkward situations. Although euphemism is a universal idea, it is communicated in some civilisations in accordance with customary standards (Siddiqui, 2014, p. 3).

To communicate with other individuals, a person has to select suitable words as well as the appropriate speech strategy. One of the most important strategies is “euphemism” which is utilised to minimise any face threatening.

Individuals from different cultures communicate with one another in a variety of different ways when they interact with one another. A great number of norms that are stipulated by speakers of certain cultures are responsible for the development of such variants. One kind of communication that is utilised by speakers is referred to as “euphemism,” which may be defined as “the extension of ordinary words and phrases to express unpleasant and embarrassing ideas” (Siddiqui, 2014, page 34).

A euphemism is “a polite word or expression that anyone uses instead of a more direct one to avoid shocking or upsetting someone,” according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995, p. 533). As stated by Rawson (1981, p. 9). Some people, even those who take great satisfaction in their ability to communicate clearly, find it difficult to go a day without utilising the “euphemisms,” which are “powerful linguistic tools that are embedded so deeply in our language.” Euphemism, in fact, is seen as a component of politeness and deals with how to avoid being overly direct or impolite to others.

Brown and Levinson (1987,p.91) concentrate on “face” as an important element in politeness and they refer to it as “face-risk-minimisation”. Enright (2009,p.13) confirms that the use of euphemisms can show taste in language and at the same time it can lead to confusion.

Allan and Burridge (2006,p. 237-238) clarify how people communicate euphemisms in their social interaction and they mention how social, linguistic and psychological aspects are integrated in this strategy.

According to Ayto (1993, p. 1), euphemisms may be used effectively while speaking with people by employing a few words or long sentences. When employing euphemism, it’s critical to consider the “social context” as doing so will allow speakers to communicate appropriately.

This implies that euphemism and social context shouldn’t be separated. Euphemisms enable us to soften otherwise unpleasant or difficult topics when we communicate, particularly to young audiences or anyone who may find the subject matter offensive or upsetting.

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Euphemism is a very important topic which needs more investigation to find out how euphemism is used in healthcare settings, in teenagers' chats, and also in illiterate people's communication (Fitriani,2019,p.5).

2.2.2 Euphemism in Writing

A Euphemism is a suitable term that is substituted for a word or phrases that might be deemed rude or unsuitable. Euphemisms are frequently employed in literature and everyday speech to replace language that some readers may deem offensive.

Euphemistic language is frequently utilised in literature, particularly in earlier works, to express ideas without running the danger of having them rejected due to offensive language (Deguzman, 2021, p. 7).

Euphemism is a valuable literary tool for writers. This rhetorical device enables a writer to discuss sensitive, controversial, or unpleasant topics in a more tactful and less harmful manner than using actual words or phrases. Furthermore, euphemisms may enhance the poetic quality of the writing by providing a technique of explaining things in a more metaphorical way. In addition, they have the ability to enhance a writer's style of writing.

It is crucial for authors to comprehend that excessive utilisation of euphemism might lead to confusion and dilute the intended meanings for readers. Furthermore, the use of euphemisms in a written piece can often result in a more vulgar, distasteful, or objectionable tone compared to using straightforward and literal language. Hence, authors should meticulously and judiciously use euphemisms to ensure their effectiveness (Burridge, 2021, p.14).In scholarly or journalistic writing, euphemisms have the ability to protect or manipulate the facts. They have a tendency to decrease accuracy or increase misrepresentation. The use of euphemistic language in journalism will result in the examination of the writer's bias and the dissemination of false information. It might cast doubt on the credibility of the publication. Traditionally, euphemisms in journalism have frequently been a subtle way of conveying propaganda (Almoayidi, 2018, p.17). Euphemisms in creative writing can be employed deliberately, using the same approach as other elements of creative writing. Euphemisms in nonfiction and technical writing, particularly in journalism, are likely to generate skepticism among readers.

2.2.3 There are Four Ways in Which Euphemism can be Used in Writing:

1. Avoid taboo; if you are writing about a subject that is considered taboo, using euphemisms can go a long way toward helping you to convey information without hurting the sensitivities of your readers
2. Provide variety; euphemisms give you several ways to express the same thing in different ways. Consider employing euphemisms to give your work more diversity if you are writing something that calls for repeated use of a term or phrase.
3. Give insights into characters; the euphemisms they choose to use or avoid while discussing delicate topics reveals a lot about them. Consider the euphemisms a fictional character would use to address a topic in a discussion if you are attempting to give them more depth. There are many vivid euphemisms in the English language that may be used in speech to give characters a distinct and realistic voice.
4. Humor, euphemisms are often used ironically for comedic effect. Using euphemisms effectively can help create dramatic irony or undercut the severity of your writing and provide some levity (Zaim,2014,p.23).

2.2.4The Most Important Types of Euphemism

According to Warren in Samoskaite (2011) states that euphemisms are classified into four categories, based on both structural and semantic features of euphemisms:

1. Word formation devices :

- a. Compounding.

Example : "social disease."

- b. Derivation.

Example : "(bad breath) is coined from the Latin halitus(breath)."

- c. Blends :

Example : "as in motorcade (motor + cavalcade)."

- d. Acronyms.

Example: SOB (Son Of Bitch)

- e. Onomatopoeia.

Example: The word bow or wow for `describe the dog.

2. Phonemic modification :

- a. Black slang: in this black slang the words are spelled from right to left.

For example : enob' [bone/erect penis] and 'epar' [rape]. The words are reversed to avoid explicit mention.

- b. Rhyming slang: in Rhyming slang phonemic similarity is used.

For example : "darn" can be used instead of "damn" and 'Bristols' [breasts], a shortened, and further euphemised, version of 'Bristol cities' [titties] which becomes a 'semi-concealing device'.

- c. Phonemic replacement: 'shoot' [shit], i.e., one sound of the offensive term is replaced with double 'o'. and "divil or divel" for replaced the word "devil" or "gad", "gosh",

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“golly” for “god”

d. Abbreviation (shortening): ‘eff’ (as in ‘eff off!’) [fuck (off)].

3. Loan words :

a. French: ‘mot’ [cunt] ‘affair(e)’ [extramarital engagement] and ‘lingerie’ [underwear].

b. Latin : ‘faeces’ [excrement] and ‘anus’ [ass-hole].

c. Other languages: ‘cojones’ [testicles] is a Spanish loan word.

4. Semantic innovation :

a. Particularisation

b. Implication

c. Metaphor

d. Metonymy:

e. Reversal (Irony)

f. Understatement (litotes):

g. Overstatement (hyperbole):

2.3 Previous Studies

Yıldız (2021) discusses the utilisation of euphemisms by university students in Turkey in their daily Language usage. The study's description of the euphemisms was based on the linguistic forms of euphemisms as described by Warren and widely acknowledged in the literature. The participants' choice of euphemisms was determined through a process of questioning them in simple and relevant circumstances, based on the examples provided in the definitions of euphemism. The situations mentioned were using the restroom, delivering news of someone's demise, and experiencing an increase in body mass. In the study involving 383 participants, it was found that metonyms were the most commonly used method when referring to going to the toilet and using loan words. Metaphors were the preferred method when announcing someone's death, and implications were the chosen form of communication when discussing weight gain. Please provide more information or a specific request.

The study highlights the semantic nature of euphemism, with its linguistic use being more prominent in the final stage of formation, while its pragmatic aspect plays a more significant role during the formation process, which can vary depending on the participants and the subject. Thus, it may be said that the definition of euphemism should encompass sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and semantics. Merely considering linguistic formation is insufficient; semantic and conceptual formation should also be taken into account, depending on the hidden idea of reality. According to Chi (2013), the research is named "An Analysis of Euphemism on Jakarta Post Newspaper." The analysis was conducted using Allan and Burridge's theory, which categorises euphemisms into thirteen types: metaphor, idiom, circumlocution, acronyms and abbreviations, general-for-specific, hyperbole, litotes, learning terms or technical jargon, rejection, dysphemism, euphemism, metonymy, synecdoche, and associative engineering. In conclusion, Euphemisms essentially serve the purpose of concealing disagreeable concepts in order to prevent social embarrassment during conversation. In addition, euphemisms are employed in words, phrases, or sentences. According to the prior data analysis, euphemisms were identified in the Jakarta Post newspaper during March 2020, namely in issues 5 through 12.

The newspaper employs several forms of euphemisms, including idioms, acronyms, abbreviations, and metaphors. Ultimately, the use of euphemisms, particularly in the realm of the media, has significant importance and offers several benefits. This is because those who employ euphemisms want to substitute harsh terms or words in order to circumvent transgressions. Furthermore, euphemisms serve the dual purpose of consistently altering the terminology used to describe things and repackaging them in a manner that enhances their perception, while also being connected to patterns of language usage. In summary, euphemism is an effective means of preserving one's dignity and concealing unpleasant truths. Euphemisms serve the purpose of not only creating a positive perception among the general population, but also of obscuring distressing realities.

Warren (1992) seeks to provide a comprehensive account of the specific ways in which university students in the United States employ euphemisms in their daily language. This description aims to explore the different uses and applications of euphemisms in the United States, highlighting their diverse and dynamic nature. In order to accomplish this objective, the research will focus on the following question: "How does the use of euphemisms in the United States impact the language used by young people?" The specific subset related to this issue is: "What are the linguistic styles employed by university students aged 18-25 in the use of euphemisms?" "Do the styles employed exhibit gender variation?" and "Do the linguistic formations for euphemism formation differ depending on the subject?" In order to address these inquiries, an examination of the literature was conducted to explore the notion of euphemism. Subsequently, the various language construction methods were elucidated. Afterwards, the technique of collecting and analysing data was explained, and the outcomes were assessed.

According to Abrams (1993), euphemisms come in two flavors: positive and negative. Positive is moving ahead. It gives the euphemistic goods the appearance of being much grander and more significant than they actually are. This includes adopting rigid job titles in an effort to enhance one's perception of oneself or to win over friends and acquaintances. For instance, "region manager" writing "a sales clerk to replace shopkeeper' shop keeper" is an example of a salesperson. Negative euphemisms, meantime, are fading and deflating. They originate from the language that most people choose to speak. Additionally, they are

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guarded, counteracting the influence of forbidden words and denying the existence of anything that others imply. Take “lame” as an example, and use “breathe fresh air” as a liberating euphemism.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Method

After reading *Macbeth* and *Othello* plays, the researcher collects data from *Macbeth* and *Othello* plays were written by Shakespeare. In this study, the researcher chooses the qualitative method to analyse the data. Daymon and Holloway(2002, p. 14) state that the qualitative method focuses on words rather than numbers, although occasionally numbers are used to indicate the frequency that a theme is found in transcripts or the extent to which a form of action occurs.

3.2 Materials

The data of the present study are taken from Macbeth and Othello is a play written by William Shakespeare and one of Shakespeare’s most famous tragedies, *Macbeth* tells us a tale of greed and lust for power and how the pursuit of such things inevitably leads one to their ultimate downfall. *Macbeth* is a Scottish general who has managed to lead his army to defeat invaders (Delaney,2012,p. 8).

Macbeth is a famously violent play. Interestingly, most of the killings take place offstage, but throughout the play, the characters provide the audience with gory descriptions of the carnage, from the opening scene where the captain describes *Macbeth* and *Banquo* wading in blood on the battlefield, to the endless references to the bloodstained hands of *Macbeth* and his wife. The action is bookended by a pair of bloody battles: in the first, *Macbeth* defeats the invaders; in the second, he is slain and beheaded by *Macduff*. In between is a series of murders: *Duncan*, *Duncan’s* chamberlains, *Banquo*, *Lady Macduff*, and *Macduff’s* son all come to bloody ends. By the end of the action, blood seems to be everywhere (Khazeen,2015,p.7).

Shakespeare uses *Macbeth* to show the terrible effects that ambition and guilt can have on a man who lacks strength of character. We may classify *Macbeth* as irrevocably evil, but his weak character separates him from Shakespeare’s great villains—Iago in *Othello*, *Richard III* in *Richard III*, *Edmund* in *King Lear*—who are all strong enough to conquer guilt and self-doubt. *Macbeth*, great warrior though he is, is ill equipped for the psychic consequences of crime (Letourneau,2018,p. 3).

Othello, a tragedy penned by William Shakespeare, is thought to have been composed in 1603. The short story *Un Capitano Moro* by *Cinthio*, a follower of *Boccaccio*, was initially published in 1565 and serves as the basis for this. The narrative centers on two primary figures: *Othello*, a Moorish commander in the Venetian military, and his deceitful subordinate, *Iago*. *Othello* continues to be often staged in both professional and community theater due to its diverse and ongoing exploration of themes like as racism, love, jealousy, betrayal, retribution, and repentance. Additionally, the play has served as inspiration for various adaptations in opera, cinema, and literature (Hinton, 2019, p.4).

Othello is unusual among Shakespeare's tragedies due to its unconventional structure, resembling that of a traditional Shakespearean comedy. A tragedy is a theatrical production that centers around distressing events and concludes in an unhappy manner. Conversely, a Shakespearean comedy typically explores themes of love and marriage, relies on plots that hinge on deception and disguises, and takes place in a setting removed from conventional society, allowing for the occurrence of supernatural events and the characters' freedom from societal norms. *Othello* encompasses the essential components of a comedy, but deviates from the conventional conclusion of a marriage by culminating in the demise of several characters, notably the tragic figure of *Othello* (Moore, 2020, p.8).

3.3 Population

The data collected from *Macbeth* are (Act1, Act2, Act 3, Act 4 and Act 5). While *Othello* are (Act 1, Scene 3), (Act 1, Act 2, Act 3 and Act 4). The data were collected through several numbers of steps.s

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here are samples of different types of euphemisms, including politeness, diplomacy, abstraction, litotes, and spin, found in Shakespeare's plays “*Macbeth*” and “*Othello*,” along with an analysis of their significance.

Different Types of Euphemisms in *Macbeth* play as following:

1. Politeness Euphemism:

Extract 1: “Your servant ever” (*Macbeth*, Act 3, Scene 4)

Analysis: *Macbeth* uses polite euphemisms when addressing the murderers he hired to kill *Banquo*. By referring to them as “*your servant*,” *Macbeth* attempts to maintain a polite tone and distance himself from the violent act he has orchestrated. It showcases *Macbeth's* ability to manipulate language to mask his culpability and maintain a façade of politeness.

2. Politeness Euphemism:

Extract 2: “Please you, I’ll go to the door and bid them farewell” (*Macbeth*, Act 2, Scene 3)

In this scene, *Macduff* uses this polite euphemism to refer to the murder of *Duncan*. By saying he will “bid them farewell,” *Macduff* avoids explicitly mentioning the violent act and instead uses a more courteous and indirect phrase. It showcases *Macduff's* attempt to navigate a delicate situation while maintaining a semblance of politeness.

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3. Abstraction Euphemism:

Extract 3: “The primrose way to the everlasting bonfire” (Macbeth, Act 2, Scene 3)

This “*abstraction euphemism*” is used by Macduff to describe the path to damnation or hell. By using the metaphor of a primrose way leading to a bonfire, Macduff softens the concept of eternal punishment and conveys it less explicitly and more abstractly. It demonstrates how language can be employed to convey sensitive or dark ideas indirectly.

4. Abstraction Euphemism:

Extract 4: “The sleeping and the dead/ Are but as pictures” (Macbeth, Act 2, Scene 2)

In this scene, Macbeth uses an abstraction euphemism to describe the act of murder. By comparing the sleeping and the dead to mere “pictures,” Macbeth abstracts the concept of killing and dehumanises the victims, attempting to distance himself from the gravity of his actions. It reflects Macbeth's attempt to rationalise his deeds and numb his guilt.

5. Abstraction Euphemism

Extract 5: “Out, out, brief candle!” (Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 5)

In this scene, Macbeth uses an abstraction euphemism to describe life. By referring to life as a “brief candle,” Macbeth abstracts the concept of mortality and the brevity of human existence. It reflects Macbeth's despair and resignation as he contemplates the fleeting nature of life. The euphemism allows him to detach himself emotionally from the weight of mortality and confront the inevitability of death.

6. Spin Euphemism:

Extract 6: “Bloody instructions, which being taught, return to plague the inventor” (Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 7)

Lady Macbeth uses spin euphemism to convince Macbeth to proceed with the murder of King Duncan. By referring to the act as “bloody instructions,” Lady Macbeth attempts to reframe the act of regicide as a necessary and justifiable action. It showcases her ability to manipulate language to rationalise and manipulate Macbeth's decision-making process.

7. Spin Euphemism

Extract 7: “What, can the devil speak true?” (Macbeth, Act 1, Scene 3)

In this scene, Banquo uses spin euphemism to express his skepticism about the witches' prophecies. By referring to the witches as the “devil,” Banquo attempts to discredit their words and cast doubt on their trustworthiness. It showcases his attempt to manipulate perception and present the prophecies as inherently untrustworthy.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Types of Euphemisms in *Macbeth* Play

Types of Euphemisms (<i>Macbeth</i> play)	Occurrences	Percentage
Abstraction Euphemism	3	43%
Politeness Euphemism	2	28.5%
Spin Euphemism	2	28.5%
Total	7	

Types of Euphemisms in *Othello* play:

1. Diplomacy Euphemism:

Extract 8: “Marry, to ----” (Othello, Act 4, Scene 1)

In this scene, Emilia engages in a *diplomatic euphemism* when she hesitates to reveal Desdemona's infidelity explicitly. The phrase “Marry, to—” allows Emilia to pause and choose her words carefully, demonstrating a diplomatic approach to delicate matters. It showcases Emilia's sensitivity to the potential consequences of her words and her desire to navigate the situation tactfully.

2. Diplomacy Euphemism:

Extract 9: “She did deceive her father, marrying you” (Othello, Act 1, Scene 3)

Here in this text, Brabantio uses a *diplomatic euphemism* when addressing Othello about his marriage to Desdemona. Rather than explicitly accusing Othello of deceiving Desdemona's father, Brabantio frames it as Desdemona deceiving her father by marrying him. The euphemism here allows Brabantio to convey his disapproval while maintaining a somewhat diplomatic tone.

3. Litotes Euphemism:

Extract 10: “I am not what I am” (Othello, Act 1, Scene 1)

In this euphemism Iago uses litotes, a form of understatement, to euphemistically describe himself. By saying “I am not what I am,” Iago creates an ambiguous statement that implies he is not as he appears. This euphemism serves to mask his true intentions and abilities, adding an air of mystery and deceit to his character.

4. Litotes Euphemism:

Extract 11: “I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking” (Othello, Act 2, Scene 3)

Cassio uses litotes, a form of understatement, as a euphemism to downplay his drunkenness. By saying that he has “very poor and unhappy brains,” Cassio euphemistically suggests that he is not in a suitable state for drinking. This euphemism allows Cassio to acknowledge his intoxicated state while downplaying its severity.

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5. Politeness Euphemism:

Extract 12: “To please the palate of my appetite” (Othello, Act 1, Scene 3)

Iago employs this type of euphemism to refer to his suspicion that Othello has slept with his wife, Emilia. By employing this euphemism, Iago softens the accusation, framing it as a desire for personal satisfaction rather than directly accusing Othello of infidelity. It allows Iago to maintain a veneer of politeness while planting seeds of doubt in Othello's mind.

6. Spin Euphemism:

Extract 13: “I do love Cassio well and would do much to cure him of this evil” (Othello, Act 3, Scene 3)

In this scene, Iago uses spin euphemism to manipulate Othello's perception of his intentions. By expressing his love for Cassio and his desire to “cure” him of his alleged vices, Iago masks his true motive of sowing doubt and creating chaos. This euphemism allows Iago to present himself as a concerned friend while concealing his malicious intent.

Table2. Types of euphemisms in Othello play

Types of Euphemisms in Othello Play	Occurrences	Percentage
Diplomacy Euphemism	2	33.33%
Litotes Euphemism	2	33.33%
Politeness Euphemism	1	16.67%
Spin Euphemism	1	16.677%
Total	6	

V. CONCLUSIONS

Euphemisms in literature serve several important purposes and contribute to the overall depth and impact of literary works. Euphemisms allow authors to convey sensitive or taboo subjects in a more subtle and indirect manner more subtly and indirectly. By using euphemistic language, writers can address controversial or uncomfortable topics while maintaining a certain level of decorum and avoiding explicit or offensive language. This nuanced expression adds complexity to the narrative and encourages readers to engage with the text on multiple levels.

Euphemisms can provide insights into the characters' psychology and emotional states. The choice of euphemistic language can reveal their attempts to cope with difficult situations, conceal their true intentions, or rationalise their actions.

This study illustrates how different types of euphemisms are employed in "Macbeth" and "Othello" to convey politeness, navigate delicate situations diplomatically, convey abstract ideas, understate or downplay certain concepts, and manipulate perception through spin. Shakespeare's use of euphemisms adds depth, complexity, and intrigue to the characters' dialogues and provides insight into their motivations and the social dynamics of the plays.

Overall, the use of euphemisms in literature adds layers of meaning, enhances character development, and provides a vehicle for exploring complex and sensitive subjects. Analysing euphemisms allows readers to delve into the intricacies of language, power dynamics, psychology, and cultural context within a literary work.

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