

# IDEAS Euphemisms 27 Mar

*by Alvia Alvia Bb*

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## EXPLORING EUPHEMISMS IN BRIDGERTON: DIAMOND OF THE FIRST WATER

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### Abstract

The development of language affects speech cultures and modes of communication. Politer terms were created to avoid misunderstanding. This phenomenon is called euphemism. Employing euphemisms while discussing sensitive topics can help people express their ideas politely. This present study aims to determine the types of euphemism used in a famous television series entitled Bridgerton. The research was conducted only on the first episode of the series. This qualitative research employed content analysis as the research methodology. The research findings showed six types of euphemism identified, namely substitution, litotes, metonym, hyperbole, synecdoche, and colour-based metaphor for x-phemism. Nevertheless, this research was only analyzing the first episode of the series. Hence, the results might have differed in other episodes. Future researchers who are interested in the same topic may find other types of euphemisms that this research cannot cover.

**Keywords:** Bridgerton, euphemism, misunderstanding, speech culture

### Introduction

Language is an essential aspect of human life. Without language, there would be no social life (Sari, 2020). As languages constantly evolve through time, everybody is starting to have their style in using language (Bahtiar, 2020). Someone's attitude and behavior could also be seen through the language which they use (Bachriani, Yassi, and Rahman, 2018). Furthermore, society's development across time has impacted language development, which permits the evolution of speech culture and means of speech (Zarifovna, 2021). However, often during communicating, people are faced with a condition where they encounter sensitive topics which are hard to express (Harley, 2020). To overcome this, people usually use a more subtle term or word to avoid misunderstanding.

The phenomenon where people use a more subtle word during communication is called euphemism. Euphemism is a common phenomenon in our daily conversation. Euphemism happens when people use a more modest word to avoid misunderstanding (Crespo-Fernández, 2018; Dalamu, 2018; He, 2018; Jing-Schmidt, 2019). People use euphemisms almost all the time without even realizing it. Euphemism can differ based on societies, social classes, or communities (Hong,

2019). It is also used to avoid the speaker's embarrassment (Faoziah, 2017). Through euphemism, it will be easier for people to discuss sensitive and taboo topics (Jia, 2018). Using euphemism, communication can run more smoothly (Dalamu, 2018). Nowadays, euphemisms also make significant progress in many areas (Wang, 2018). It can be found in several fields, such as advertisement, politics, business, education, and even entertainment. Third, identify the gap between the recent studies and your focused study's current empirical and theoretical aspects. This could be written in one or two paragraphs.

Various studies on the use of euphemisms have previously been done. First, Kiling and Jurianto (2016) researched how euphemisms were formed in one of the Indonesian television shows. There were five selected videos used as the research objects. Their findings revealed that the euphemisms were formed through seven ways: verbal play, litotes, clipping, hyperbole, general-for-specific, substitution, and circumlocution. Second, Octavia, Lukmana, and Bachari (2021), through their research about euphemism used in verbal abuse conversations, discovered that there were four types of euphemism used during the conversations. The types of euphemisms were abbreviations, substitute, metonymy, and understatement. Substitutes had the highest frequency of occurrence than the other types. Third, Tuerah (2021) researched euphemisms used in English language teaching. The research was conducted at the English education department. The analysis revealed twenty types of euphemism expressions used by the lecturers and students. The expressions were used to create a friendly relationship between the lecturers and students during the teaching and learning process. Lastly, Dewi, Huda, and Supriyatno (2019) researched euphemisms found in Indonesian online newspapers, focusing on the political segment. There were two different online newspapers used in the research. The research findings showed that from the twenty-three political articles chosen, there were nine different types of euphemisms identified. The euphemisms were used to avoid harsh or taboo words in the section.

This paper aims to analyze the types of euphemism found in the first episode of the television series entitled Bridgerton. One research question was formulated, namely: What types of euphemism are used in Bridgerton: Diamond of the First Water?

### **Types of Euphemisms**

According to Allan (2012), euphemism consists of several types, such as remodeling, clipping, acronym, abbreviation, omission, metonymy, synecdoche, circumlocution, litotes, hyperbole or overstatement, substitution, appearance-based metaphor, colour based metaphor for X-phemism, sound-based metaphors or onomatopoeia, smell, taste, and touch-based X-phemism, and verbal play. Metaphors and metaphorical interpretations are used as euphemisms in verbal play. The difficulty in perceiving the true term's meaning is an issue with this type of euphemism because of the symbolism. But on the other hand, it can also emphasize the actual definition. A rose, for example, is a euphemistic emblem for the blood of a freshly split hymen.

### **Method**

This qualitative study used content analysis to answer the research question.

According to Krippendorff (2019), content analysis treats the collected data as a means of communications that are created and spread to be read, acknowledged, interpreted, reflected, and act out based on the meanings to the receivers. Through this method, the writers were able to draw the meanings of the euphemisms based on the characters' dialogues in the movie. To gather the data, first, the writers watched the movie and read the movie's script. Then, the writers identified and analyzed the euphemism words based on the categories of euphemisms, namely remodeling, contractions, upgrades, downgrades, deceptions and obfuscations, substitution, appearance-based metaphor, a color-based metaphor for x-phemism, sound-based metaphors, smell, taste, and touch-based x-phemism, and verbal play. To categorize the collected data, the writers used a simple descriptive table.

The data source of this research was a television series, namely Bridgerton. This television series contained eight episodes, with 58 minutes duration per episode. The series was written by Chris Van Dusen and produced by Shonda Rhimes. The series consisted of two seasons. The writers only used the first episode from season one for this study, namely Diamond of The First Water. The first episode of the series was chosen as the research object because the dialogues contained lots of euphemistic words.

To collect the data, first, the researchers watched the first episode of the series. The researchers also read the script to ensure the data taken were all accurate. Next, the researchers identified the euphemism words used in the characters' dialogues. Then, she analyzed the euphemism words based on the categories of euphemism. Lastly, the findings were put into the respective categories by the researchers.

## Results

There were several types of euphemisms found in the dialogue of the characters. Here are the lists of euphemisms found in the Bridgerton: Diamond of The First Water.

Table 1. Types and Meanings of Euphemisms

No	Types of Euphemism	Euphemisms Term	Meaning	Frequency of Appearance
1	Litotes	Being ruined	A woman who has sex outside marriage	1
2	Metonymy	Marriage market	Matchmaking event for groups of single people	2
3	Substitution	Sorrowful	Sad	1
4	Substitution	Tasteless mama	A mother who has bad fashion sense	1
5	Hyperbole	Squeeze my waist into the size of an orange	Slim waist	1
6	Substitution	Widow	A woman who lost her husband	1

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7	Substitution	A shockingly prolific family	because of death and not remarried Highly productive family	1
8	Litotes	Simpered and minced	Feeling discomfort	1
9	Synecdoche	London's marriage-minded misses	Women who are eager to get married	1
10	Litotes	Quite a distinction	Very different	2
11	Litotes	High in the instep	Arrogant	1
12	Substitution	Scribbling woman	A woman writer	1
13	Litotes	Shepherding four young ladies	Matching four young ladies to marry	1
14	Substitution	Miserable	Very unhappy	1
15	Substitution	Scandal	Action that is legally or morally wrong	3
16	Litotes	She has a mere four-figure dowry	She is poor	1
17	Litotes	Incomparable	Nothing can be compared to her	1
18	Hyperbole	A diamond of the First Water	A very beautiful woman from First Water	2
19	Metonymy	The Market	Nickname for groups of single women	1
20	Litotes	An act of charity	Forced to help her husband	2
21	Substitution	Rumourmonger	A person who likes to spread gossip	1
22	Substitution	Blemishes	Flaws that ruin the appearance of someone	1
23	Metonymy	The season	Certain months where matchmaking event were held	3
24	Substitution	Presentable	Looks good to be shown to others	1
25	Substitution	Affair	Sexual relationships between two different married people	3
26	Litotes	Words I do not hear often	Seldom to be said	1

27	Hyperbole	A sight for my sore eyes	Looking very handsome	1
28	Substitution	Disorderliness	Not organized as it should be	1
29	Litotes	Eligible lady of breeding	Lady who is qualified for marriage	1
30	Litotes	Bloodthirsty mamas	Mothers who really want their daughters to get married	1
31	Litotes	Undignified	Lack of dignity	1
32	Substitution	Wary	Be cautious	2
33	Substitution	Chaperone	A companion	1
34	Substitution	Lavish	Luxurious	1
35	Substitutions and Colour based Metaphor for X-phemism	The bucks and pinks	A man who dresses very fashionable but witty	2
36	Substitution	Gallant	Noble	1
37	Litotes	A woman's honour	Virginity	1
38	Litotes	Marital act	Sex	1
39	Litotes	A cheat	Someone who likes to cheat from their partner	1
40	Substitution	Eccentric	A strange behaviour	1
41	Substitutions	Gentlemen	Men who behave politely	4
42	Substitutions	Evermore	Forever	1
43	Litotes	Musings	Gossiping	1
44	Substitutions	Willow	Elegant	1
45	Litotes	Scandalmonger	A person who likes to spread scandal	1
46	Substitutions	Bizarre	Very unusual	1
47	Hyperbole	Madly in love	In love	1
48	Metonymy	A Ton	High-class society	1
Total				62

Here was the frequency of occurrences of euphemism in the movie Bridgerton: Diamond of The First Water.

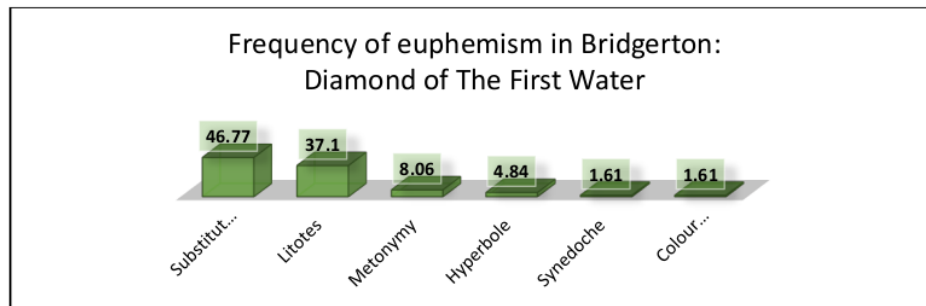


Figure 1. Frequency of Euphemisms Occurrences

### Discussion

The analysis showed that not all of the euphemism categories were present in this episode. There were only litotes, substitution, metonym, hyperbole, synecdoche, and colour-based-metaphor for x-phemism depicted in the characters' dialogue. Substitution had the highest percentage of all. It amounted to 46.77%, followed by litotes with 37.10%. The third rank was metonymy with 8.06%. The last three ranks were hyperbole with 4.84%, synecdoche with 1.61%, and colour-based metaphor with 1.61%. Some of the examples from each category are discussed below.

It was reasonable that substitution placed the first rank in the movie. The setting of movie was placed during the regency period. Most of the characters came from high-class society. The movie's main plot was also a matchmaking event, where many mothers tried to marry their young and single daughters to the wealthy dukes. The mothers were trying hard to brag their daughters off to catch the attention of the dukes. However, they still tried to choose their words appropriately, as they all came from high-class society. Hazirdinov, Ihtiyorjon, and Lee (2021) stated that the use of euphemism could be determined based on the speaker's cultural behavior. The mothers and almost all of the characters in the movie used euphemisms to avoid using any words that could embarrass them for being undignified. Usually, the characters employ euphemisms to speak about sensitive topics (Kiling and Jurianto, 2016).

There were several categories of euphemism portrayed in the movie. The first one was substitution. The first example from this category was 'sorrowful'. It was classified as a euphemism because it was used to substitute the word 'very sad'. Sorrowful and very sad had the same meaning. The narrator of the movie used the term to describe the life of one of the characters in a pleasant way (Faoziah, 2017). According to Allan (2012), substituting a term with another term within the same language could be categorized as a substitution. Another example from this category was 'chaperone'. In the movie, 'chaperone' refers to a companion. Every young lady needed to come with a chaperone during the ball, which was usually their father or brother. As the character who said the word was a nobleman, he called himself a 'chaperone' instead of a companion. His choice of words showed his social class. Based on Allan's (2012) theory of euphemism, this phenomenon could be classified as substitution, where the word 'chaperone' substituted 'companion'. One more example from this category was 'eccentric'. 'eccentric' here refers to one of the dukes who had a strange behavior. He behaves differently than others. His choice of

clothing was also unusual. One of the characters used the term 'eccentric' was used by one of the characters to describe the eccentric duke's appearance. Because 'eccentric' was used to substitute or make the word's meaning seem nicer, it can be categorized as a substitution. Through euphemism, the character was able to convey his opinion without making it sound offensive (Kafi and Degaf, 2021). The offensive term could be replaced with a similar term but sound nicer (Mohammed & Majeed, 2018).

The second category of euphemism portrayed in the movie was litotes. One of the examples from this category was the term 'being ruined'. This term could be categorized as a euphemism because it refers to a woman who had sex outside the marriage. In one of the scenes, two mothers were gossiping about one of the young girls who was caught getting pregnant weeks after the ball ended. Based on Allan (2012), the terms used by the mothers could be classified as litotes. Instead of saying that the young girl was having sex outside marriage, they used a more subtle term which was 'being ruined'. The euphemism could make the term sounds less harsh (Lingga and Rangkuti, 2021). The choice of words could also show the mother's social class level (Hong, 2019). Then similarly, the terms 'simpered and minced' could be categorized as euphemisms. In one of the scenes, the main character said to her sisters and mother that she felt 'simpered and minced' when she wore her dress. The terms indicated that she felt discomfort because the dress was too tight. This euphemism could also be classified as litotes (Allan, 2012). She tried to put it nicely to avoid making her sisters and mother disappointed because she felt that way. It could also make her choice of words seem elegant, remembering that she was a daughter of viscountess (Qian, 2020). 'Women's honor' was another example of litotes. It refers to women's virginity. Instead of saying it blatantly, one of the mothers chose to say it using a more polite term. According to Faoziah (2017), euphemism could convey unpleasant and sensitive terms.

The third category of euphemism portrayed in the movie was metonymy. According to Allan (2012), metonymy happened when the specific term was changed into a more general term. The first example of this category was the 'marriage market'. 'Marriage market' could be classified as metonymy because it refers to a matchmaking event for groups of single people. Instead of blatantly explaining it as a matchmaking event, the characters used the term 'marriage market' to make it more general and sounder pleasant to be heard. Euphemism was employed to conceal the harsh term (Lailiyah and Yustisia, 2018). The following example from this category was 'the market'. In the movie, this term refers to groups of women who were still single. Because 'the market' was used to make the term more general, it could be classified as metonymy. The last example from this category was 'the season'. This term could be categorized as a euphemism because it refers to specific months where the matchmaking events were held. 'The characters used the season' to make the term more general and not specific. In line with Allen's (2012) theory, this term could be classified as metonymy.

The fourth category of euphemism portrayed in the movie was hyperbole. It could be classified as hyperbole if the term seemed to be exaggerated to sound more important than it actually was (Allan, 2012). The first example from this category was 'squeeze my waist into the size of an orange'. This could be classified as hyperbole because the term refers to a slim waist, but obviously not as slim as an



orange. The character used the term to explain that she could make her waist very slim. The following example from this category was 'a diamond of the First Water'. This term was used to explain the main character's beautiful face. The term means that no one is as beautiful as the main character in the town of First Water. 'Diamond' was used to describe the beautiful and flawless face of the main character. The last example from this category was 'madly in love'. The term 'madly in love' was used to describe the speaker's love for someone. 'Madly' was used to emphasize the love that he had.

The last two categories of euphemism portrayed in the movie were synecdoche and colour-based metaphors. First, the term which could be categorized as a synecdoche was 'London's marriage-minded misses'. It could be classified so because the term was used by one of the characters to make the meaning sound more specific. She wanted to convey that there were so many women in London who were eager to get married. According to Allan (2012), using a more specific word to deliver the speaker's meaning clearly could be categorized as synecdoche. Lastly, the term which portrayed the colour-based metaphor for X-phemism was the bucks and 'pinks'. The term 'pink' here refers to a ridiculous fashion sense. It was used to describe one of the duke's fashion choices. Using color as a figurative speech could be classified as a color-based metaphor for X-phemism (Allan, 2012).

### **Conclusion**

The present research analyzed the types of euphemism used in the first episode of a television series entitled *Bridgerton: Diamond of The First Water*. The categories of euphemism found in the first episode were substitution, litotes, metonymy, hyperbole, synecdoche, and colour-based metaphor for X-phemism. Based on the classification of the data, it could be seen that the occurrences of substitution were amounted to 46.77%, followed by litotes (37.10%), metonymy (8.06%), hyperbole (4.84%), synecdoche (1.61%), and colour-based metaphor for X-phemism (1.61%). The results revealed substitution as the category with the highest frequency of occurrence, followed by litotes at the second place, metonymy at the third place, hyperbole at the fourth place, and both synecdoche colour-based metaphors for x-phemism at the last place. Nevertheless, this research was only analyzing the first episode of the series. Hence, the results might have differed in other episodes. Future researchers who are interested in the same topic may find other types of euphemisms that this research cannot cover.

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