



## Dysphemism in the Novel *A Portion of Chicken Noodles Before Dying*: Analysis of Meaning, Form, Function, and Classification

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### ABSTRACT

The novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* represents the realities of the characters' lives through the use of a firm, direct, and harshly nuanced style of language. One of the prominent linguistic features in this novel is dysphemism, which is employed as a stylistic device to openly depict conflict, emotional outbursts, and social criticism. In linguistic studies, dysphemism is not merely understood as the use of coarse expressions, but rather as a linguistic strategy that serves aesthetic and pragmatic functions in constructing literary meaning. Therefore, an analysis of dysphemism in this novel is essential to reveal the deepening of characterization and the social messages conveyed by the author. This study aims to describe the forms, classifications, and functions of dysphemism in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*. The research was conducted through a library-based study, with the novel serving as the primary data source. The research population comprises all linguistic units found in the novel, while the research sample consists of words, phrases, and expressions containing dysphemistic elements. The research instruments include data cards and a dysphemism classification guideline based on stylistic and pragmatic theories. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively using content analysis techniques through the stages of identification, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that dysphemism in the novel can be classified into four forms: insults, mockery, negative labeling, and pejoration. These dysphemistic expressions function to realistically represent the characters' emotions, construct characterization, strengthen plot dynamics, and convey social criticism both implicitly and explicitly.

*Keywords: dysphemism, figurative language, novel*

## Gaya Bahasa Disfemisme dalam Novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*: Analisis Makna, Bentuk, Fungsi, dan Klasifikasi

### ABSTRAK

Novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* merepresentasikan realitas kehidupan tokoh melalui penggunaan gaya bahasa yang tegas, langsung, dan bernuansa keras. Salah satu unsur kebahasaan yang menonjol dalam novel ini ialah disfemisme, yang dimanfaatkan sebagai perangkat stilistika untuk menampilkan konflik, luapan emosi, serta kritik sosial secara terbuka. Dalam kajian linguistik, disfemisme tidak semata-mata dipahami sebagai ungkapan kasar, melainkan sebagai strategi kebahasaan yang memiliki fungsi estetis dan pragmatik dalam membangun makna karya sastra. Oleh karena itu, analisis disfemisme dalam novel ini menjadi penting untuk mengungkap pendalaman karakter dan pesan sosial yang disampaikan pengarang. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk, klasifikasi, dan fungsi disfemisme dalam novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*. Penelitian dilakukan melalui studi kepustakaan dengan menjadikan teks novel sebagai sumber data utama. Populasi penelitian mencakup seluruh satuan bahasa dalam novel, sedangkan sampel penelitian berupa kata, frasa, dan ungkapan yang mengandung unsur disfemistis. Instrumen penelitian berupa kartu data dan pedoman klasifikasi disfemisme berdasarkan teori stilistika dan pragmatik. Analisis data dilakukan secara kualitatif dengan teknik analisis isi melalui tahapan identifikasi, pengelompokan, penafsiran, dan penarikan simpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa disfemisme dalam novel ini terbagi ke dalam empat bentuk, yaitu makian, ejekan, pelabelan negatif, dan peyorasi. Disfemisme tersebut berfungsi untuk merepresentasikan emosi tokoh secara realistis, membangun karakter, memperkuat dinamika alur, serta menyampaikan kritik sosial secara implisit maupun eksplisit.

*Kata kunci: gaya bahasa, disfemisme, novel*

Submitted  
14/01/2026

Accepted  
21/01/2026

Published  
23/01/2026

Citation	Putri, L. Y., Azizah, N., Utthia, R., Putri, W. C., Sahara, Y., & Zuve, F. O. (2026). Dysphemism in the Novel <i>A Portion of Chicken Noodles Before Dying</i> : Analysis of Meaning, Form, Function, and Classification. <i>Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra</i> , Volume 5, Nomor 1, Januari 2026, 273-280. DOI: <a href="https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i1.1135">https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i1.1135</a>
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Publisher  
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction to scientific writing generally includes five important elements, one of which is a theoretical study that serves as the basis for analysis. In the context of literary works, language cannot be viewed solely as a means of conveying the storyline, but rather as a primary element that plays a role in constructing meaning, presenting emotions, and creating an aesthetic experience for the reader. Ratna (2011) states that literary language functions as a symbolic system that allows authors to represent social, psychological, and cultural realities in a complex manner. Through the choice of certain diction and language styles, authors are able to depict the social conditions surrounding the characters, express the inner turmoil experienced, while simultaneously directing the development of the story as a whole. In stylistic studies, language is understood as an artistic choice made consciously to produce certain effects, both emotionally and ideologically (Keraf, 2010). Nurgiyantoro (2018) and Elmustian & Jalil (2015) emphasizes that language style in literary works is not neutral, but rather reflects the author's attitude and perspective on the reality he presents. One linguistic strategy frequently found in contemporary literature is the use of dysphemism, which is the selection of expressions with harsh, derogatory, or negative connotations to emphasize a stronger meaning (Allan & Burridge, 2006). Chaer (2013) explains that dysphemism functions as an expressive means to emphasize the speaker's attitude and create certain emotional effects in communication, including in literary texts. In literary works, dysphemism is often used to present situations full of stress, suffering, and internal conflict. Negative expressions allow the author to convey the character's emotions directly and honestly, without going through a process of softening the language. Endraswara (2013) states that the use of expressive language that deviates from conventional norms can actually strengthen conflict and create an authentic impression in literary narratives. In line with this, Leech (1969) emphasizes that the use of negative connotations is one form

of effective language exploitation in increasing the expressive power of a text. Therefore, dysphemism cannot be understood simply as a violation of politeness, but rather as a stylistic device that serves to deepen the intensity of emotions and clarify the characters' attitudes towards the reality they face. The use of dysphemism shows an increasingly strong tendency in modern Indonesian literature, especially in works that attempt to represent life realistically and far from idealized images. Sumardjo and Saini (2010) argue that modern literature often uses straightforward, everyday language as a reflection of society's social conditions. Spontaneous and sometimes harsh language reflects a social reality full of pressure, inequality, and uncertainty. Within this framework, dysphemism functions as a marker of emotional realism, namely the author's attempt to present human inner experiences honestly and openly. Language no longer acts as a cover-up for reality, but as a medium that reveals the often-overlooked bitter side of life. The novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* is one literary work that utilizes dysphemism consistently and meaningfully. Through an expressive narrative style close to everyday language, this novel presents the lives of its characters as they are. Wiyatmi (2013) stated that the use of diction with negative connotations can emphasize the psychological condition of the character and strengthen the dynamics of conflict in the story. In this novel, dysphemism is used to describe the inner state of the characters who are in a depressed situation, filled with anger, disappointment, and deep emotional turmoil. The choice of language that is not filtered conventionally allows the reader to understand the inner dynamics of the characters directly, thus creating a more intense and authentic emotional connection between the text and the reader. In addition to functioning as a means of emotional expression, dysphemism in this novel also plays a role in forming the narrative structure. Expressions with harsh nuances strengthen the dialogue, clarify the power relations between characters, and encourage the development of the story's conflict. Endraswara (2013)



added that language deviations used contextually can provide aesthetic and rhetorical value in literary works.

Based on this background, the formulation of the problem in this study is what forms of dysphemism are used in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati?*, what is the function of the use of dysphemism in character formation and conflict development in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati?*, and what is the meaning of dysphemism in creating emotional realism in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati?*.

In line with the formulation of the problem, this study aims to describe the forms of dysphemism used in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*, analyze the function of dysphemism in character formation and conflict development, and reveal the meaning of dysphemism in creating emotional realism. Theoretically, this study is expected to contribute to the development of stylistic studies of Indonesian literature, especially in understanding the use of dysphemism as a linguistic strategy. Practically, this study is expected to be a reference material in learning Indonesian language and literature and improve readers' ability to understand the use of language styles critically in literary texts. This study is also relevant to previous studies, such as those conducted by Wiyatmi (2013) and Chaer (2013), which show that dysphemism has an important role in strengthening emotional expression and conflict in literary works, so that this study has academic relevance while offering novelty in terms of the object of study and focus of analysis.

## METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis design. Fraenkel et al. (2012), Darusalam & Hussin (2016), and Razak (2017) said that qualitative methods are commonly used in social science research, including language and literature. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focuses on interpreting the meaning of language, describing the context of use, and deeply understanding linguistic phenomena as

they appear in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* (Chicken Noodles Before Dying). A content analysis design was used to systematically examine the use of dysphemisms through an examination of their form, function, context, and classification in relation to character development and the story's meaning. This method is considered relevant because it allows researchers to uncover the hidden meanings behind the author's deliberate use of harsh or negatively connoted words as a stylistic strategy.

The data sources in this study consist of two types: primary and secondary data. The primary data consists of the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*, specifically excerpts from dialogue, narrative, and sentences containing dysphemisms such as swear words, insults, derogatory expressions, or other negative expressions. Secondary data were obtained from stylistic theory, linguistics books, journal articles, and previous research discussing dysphemism and style. All research data consists of linguistic units in the novel, including words, phrases, and sentences that exhibit dysphemistic characteristics and are relevant to the research focus.

Data collection was conducted through documentation, directly examining the novel text as a written document. The data collection process began with an initial reading to understand the storyline and characterization. This was followed by intensive and repeated reading of sections potentially containing dysphemistic expressions. Each form of offensive or negative expression was systematically identified and recorded in a data table containing the quote, page number, speaking character, and conversational context. The documentation technique was chosen because it allows the researcher to work carefully and thoroughly, ensuring accountability for each finding.

Data analysis in this study employed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and filtered quotes

that truly contained dysphemistic elements, then summarized important information such as the type of dysphemism, the characters using it, and the circumstances in which it occurred. The reduced data is then presented in tables and narrative descriptions, including classifications of dysphemism types, the characters' tendencies to use them, the contexts in which they appear, and specific patterns found in the text. From this presentation, researchers draw conclusions regarding the function of dysphemism in building character, portraying emotion, intensifying conflict, and emphasizing the story's atmosphere. Conclusions are verified by rereading the data and comparing it with theory to ensure consistent interpretations.

Data analysis is maintained through theoretical triangulation, diligent observation, peer debriefing, and detailed contextual notation. Theoretical triangulation is achieved by comparing research findings with various linguistic and stylistic references to ensure a strong theoretical basis for interpretations. Diligent observation is demonstrated through repeated readings and careful exploration of all sections of the text. Peer review is used to test objectivity and reduce interpretative bias, while recording the context of dialogue is done to maintain consistency and transparency of the analysis.

The entire research process is conducted systematically, starting with determining the focus of the problem, collecting and classifying data, analyzing the types and functions of dysphemism, verifying it with relevant theories, and formulating the final findings in the form of an argumentative scientific description.

## RESULT

### 1. Forms and Classification of Dysphemism in the Novel "Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati"

The analysis of the entire novel's text shows that dysphemism is used intensively and systematically by the author. Dysphemism appears in the form of words, phrases, and expressions,

and is generally used when characters are in strong emotional situations, such as anger, disappointment, mental stress, and social conflict. Based on its linguistic characteristics, dysphemism in this novel can be classified into four main forms.

#### 1.1 Swearing as a Form of Direct Emotional Expression

Swearing is the most dominant form of dysphemism found in the novel. Swearing is used by characters to spontaneously channel negative emotions, especially when experiencing frustration, anger, or psychological stress. The data shows that swearing appears not only in dialogic interactions between characters but also in inner monologues that reflect the characters' internal conflicts. The use of swearing indicates high emotional intensity, indicates reactive and impulsive tendencies, and serves as a means of verbal emotional release. The repetition of insults in the speech of certain characters indicates that this form of dysphemism is part of the author's linguistic characterization.

#### 1.2 Mockery as a Form of Demeaning Others

In addition to insults, another form of dysphemism found is mockery. Mockery appears in the form of words and phrases used to belittle the personal qualities or social standing of another character. This type of dysphemism commonly appears in conversations involving conflict, sarcasm, or relational tension. The use of mockery reflects the speaker's rejection and dislike of the interlocutor, while also displaying a cynical and dismissive character. Through mockery, conflicts between characters become more pronounced and disharmonious social relationships are clearly depicted.

#### 1.3 Negative Labeling as a Means of Character Development

Negative labeling is dysphemism manifested through the assignment of derogatory terms or labels to other characters. These labels are used repeatedly and consistently by certain characters,



thus creating distinctive speech patterns. The use of negative labeling serves to emphasize the speaker's character, convey stereotypes they believe in, and reinforce the bitter tone of the story. This form of dysphemism reflects how characters interpret the social reality around them and demonstrates an evaluative attitude toward individuals and the environment.

#### 1.4 Pejoration as Implicit Dysphemism

In addition to direct dysphemism, indirect forms of dysphemism are also found, such as pejoration, which occurs when words are lexically neutral but shift in meaning to negative ones due to the context of use and narrative situation. The dysphemistic meaning is not expressed explicitly through harsh words, but rather is constructed through semantic pressure, irony, and the story's atmosphere.

### 2. The Function of Dysphemism in Character Development and Story Meaning

Besides demonstrating variety in form, dysphemism in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* also serves a function closely related to character development and narrative structure. Data analysis shows that the use of dysphemism contributes significantly to establishing emotional dynamics, conflict, and social meaning in the story.

#### 2.1 Realistic Representation of Character Emotions

Dysphemism is utilized to depict the characters' emotional states directly and authentically. Harsh expressions emerge when characters experience psychological stress, anger, or despair. Through dysphemism, the intensity of the characters' inner conflict, emotional vulnerability, and psychological burden can be more clearly grasped by the reader.

#### 2.2 Consistent Character Development

Dysphemistic language choices serve as markers of character traits. Characters who

frequently use profanity are portrayed as aggressive or easily provoked, while characters who tend to use negative labels exhibit cynical and skeptical attitudes. The consistent use of dysphemism helps readers identify characters through the diction used, the frequency of offensive language, and the social context in which it is used.

#### 2.3 Strengthening Conflict and Storyline Dynamics

Dysphemism plays a role in strengthening the atmosphere of conflict and driving the storyline. The use of offensive language makes conflict scenes feel more vivid and realistically represents social interactions. The presence of dysphemism increases narrative tension, emphasizes drama, and influences the dynamics of relationships between characters.

#### 2.4 Conveying Social Criticism and Irony

Dysphemism also functions as a medium for conveying social criticism and irony. Sharp expressions are used to reflect the inequalities, disappointments, and ironies of life experienced by the characters. Through dysphemism, the author presents a critical stance on social reality and inserts symbolic meanings that enrich the story's meaning.

### DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that dysphemism in this novel is present in various forms, including insults, ridicule, negative labeling, and devaluation. From a stylistic perspective, this diversity of forms indicates that the author utilizes dysphemism as an aesthetic strategy to create emotional intensity and authenticity in the characters' language. This view aligns with Allan and Burrige (2006), who stated that dysphemism is a lexical choice deliberately used to strengthen the speaker's attitude towards the reality they face. However, from a sociolinguistic perspective, this variation of dysphemism functions not only aesthetically but also represents the social background and power relations between

characters. This finding supports Rahmawati's (2020) research, which shows that dysphemism in contemporary literary works is often used to depict social tension and relational conflict. Compared to that research, this study's strength lies in the sharpness of its classification of dysphemism, which includes implicit forms such as pejoratives. However, its limitation lies in the scope of the data, which is only sourced from one novel, so the generalizability of the findings is still limited. The predominant use of swearing and insults in the novel can be understood from two different perspectives.

From a literary psychology perspective, swearing and insults reflect the emotional state of characters under high psychological stress. Harsh language emerges as a spontaneous form of expression that has not undergone emotional filtering. This view aligns with Yule (2010), who stated that crude expressions often represent the speaker's emotions most honestly. On the other hand, from a pragmatic perspective, swearing and insults function as speech acts that directly impact relationships between characters. Insults, in particular, are used as a tool to demean the interlocutor and assert the speaker's social position. This aligns with Sari's (2021) findings, which state that dysphemism in fictional dialogue serves as a means of negotiating meaning and social dominance. The strength of this study lies in its ability to link swearing and insults to the context of dialogue and inner monologue, allowing for the function of dysphemism to be seen in both the interpersonal and intrapersonal realms. However, this study has limitations in quantitative acuity, as it does not present a statistical comparison of the frequency of dysphemism occurrence. The negative labeling and pejoratives found in the novel also demonstrate a significant function in character development and conveying social criticism. From a stylistic perspective, negative labeling functions as an indirect characterization technique, in which a character's nature and attitude are constructed through language choices, rather than through explicit narrative descriptions. This view aligns

with Tarigan (2013), who asserts that style is an important element in literary character formation. Conversely, from a critical discourse perspective, negative labeling and pejoratives can be understood as the author's means to implicitly voice social criticism. The reduction in meaning of neutral words indicates irony and dissatisfaction with the character's life reality. This supports Leech's (1969) theory, which states that deviations in meaning are used in literary texts to create rhetorical and symbolic effects. The strength of this study lies in the in-depth contextual analysis, so that the meaning of dysphemism is not separated from the narrative situation. However, its limitation is that it has not included comparative variables such as euphemisms, so the analysis of language style is not fully comprehensive. The function of dysphemism in constructing conflict, plot dynamics, and social meaning can also be viewed from two perspectives. From a narrative perspective, dysphemism strengthens the dramatic tension and encourages the development of the plot, as the conflict becomes more vivid and emotional.

Without the use of dysphemistic language, the conflict in this novel potentially loses its dramatic power. From a pedagogical perspective, dysphemism can be utilized as learning material to demonstrate the relationship between language, emotion, and social context in literary works. The strength of this research lies in its academic and pedagogical relevance, as the results can serve as a reference in learning stylistics and literary appreciation. However, its limitation is the lack of empirical testing of the application of the research findings in a learning context, so its pedagogical benefits remain conceptual. Overall, this discussion demonstrates that dysphemism in the novel \*Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati\* functions not only as an expression of offensive language, but also as an aesthetic, psychological, and social device that builds character, conflict, and the meaning of the story. Based on these arguments, further research is recommended to expand the scope of study, add linguistic variables,



and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive analysis of dysphemism in literary works.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of dysphemism in the novel "Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati" (Chicken Noodles Before Dying) is a linguistic strategy that plays a crucial role in character development, conflict reinforcement, and the conveyance of the story's meaning. Dysphemism in this novel appears in various forms, including insults, ridicule, negative labeling, and pejoratives, which are used consistently in both dialogue and narrative. This diversity of forms indicates that dysphemism is not used randomly, but rather is closely related to the characters' emotional states, social relationships, and the conflict dynamics that develop throughout the story. Functionally, dysphemism is used to realistically present the characters' emotions, indirectly construct character through language choices, strengthen the atmosphere of conflict and plot dynamics, and convey social criticism and irony regarding the realities of life faced by the characters. Thus, dysphemism in this novel functions not only as a form of language expression with a harsh nuance, but also as an aesthetic and narrative device that enriches the story's meaning. These findings confirm that the analysis of dysphemism in literary works needs to be conducted contextually, taking into account stylistic, psychological, and social aspects, so that the function of language in constructing messages and the reader's experience can be fully understood.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank the lecturers who provided direction, guidance, and moral support during the research and writing process of this article. He also thanks the educational institutions that provided academic support, enabling the successful implementation of this

research. All of these contributions were instrumental in supporting the smooth running and completion of this research.

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