Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra
Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1936

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

Euphemisms in the Bajau Language in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District: A Semantic Study

Sisilia Lahasan[1*], Dakia N. Djou[2], Ellyana Hinta[3]
[123]Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Gorontalo, Indonesia
*E-mail: sisilialahasan999@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
Euphemism is a linguistic strategy employed to soften speech and maintain politeness in communication. The use of euphemisms is also present in the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District, reflecting the values of courtesy and the culture of the local community. This study aims to describe the forms, meanings, and functions of these euphemisms, and to explain their potential contribution to Indonesian language instruction in schools. A qualitative approach with a descriptive method was adopted for this research. Data, consisting of euphemistic expressions, were gathered from native Bajau speakers through techniques involving conversation, observation, recording, and note-taking. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and verification, followed by the drawing of conclusions. The findings indicate that euphemisms in the Bajau language manifest in three forms: metaphors, the substitution of one word for another, and circumlocution. The meanings of these euphemisms encompass seven categories of reference: objects or subjects, body parts, professions, illnesses, activities, events, and states or conditions. Furthermore, the functions of these euphemisms include upholding politeness, obscuring specific meanings, and mitigating feelings of embarrassment. The results of this study also offer contributions to Indonesian language education—specifically regarding narrative texts in "Phase E" (the first year of the senior secondary level)—by providing supplementary material that illustrates the use of polite diction and expressions appropriate to the context of a story. It is hoped that this research will enrich the study of semantics while simultaneously supporting the documentation and preservation of the Bajau language.

Keywords: euphemisms, Bajau language, semantic study

Eufemisme dalam Bahasa Bajau di Desa Torosiaje Kecamatan Popayato: Sautu Kajian Semantik

ABSTRAK
Eufemisme merupakan salah satu bentuk strategi berbahasa yang digunakan untuk memperhalus tuturan dan menjaga kesantunan dalam komunikasi. Penggunaan eufemisme juga ditemukan dalam bahasa Bajau di Desa Torosiaje, Kecamatan Popayato, yang mencerminkan nilai kesopanan dan budaya masyarakat setempat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk, makna, dan fungsi eufemisme serta menjelaskan kontribusinya terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia di sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data berupa tuturan eufemisme yang diperoleh dari penutur asli bahasa Bajau melalui teknik cakap, simak, rekam, dan catat. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahap reduksi data, penyajian data, serta verifikasi dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa eufemisme dalam bahasa Bajau ditemukan dalam tiga bentuk, yaitu metafora, satu kata untuk menggantikan kata lain, dan sirkumlokusi. Makna eufemisme mencakup tujuh referensi, yaitu benda atau subjek, bagian tubuh, profesi, penyakit, aktivitas, peristiwa, dan keadaan. Adapun fungsi eufemisme meliputi kesopanan, menyamarkan makna, dan mengurangi rasa malu. Hasil penelitian ini juga berkontribusi terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia, khususnya teks naratif pada Fase E, sebagai bahan pendukung untuk memberikan contoh penggunaan diksi dan ungkapan yang santun sesuai konteks cerita. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memperkaya kajian semantik sekaligus mendukung pendokumentasian dan pelestarian bahasa Bajau.

Kata kunci: eufemisme, bahasa Bajau, kajian semantik

Submitted	Accepted	Published
06/11/2026	13/11/2026	20/11/2026

Citation	Lahasan, S., Djou, D. N., & Hinta, E. (2026). Euphemisms in the Bajau Language in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District: A Semantic Study. *Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra, Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026, 5021-5032*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1936

Publisher
Raja Zulkarnain Education Foundation

https://pembahas.dialeks.id/index.php/jp
p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355
Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra
Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1936

INTRODUCTION

Interaction in everyday life takes place through the use of language as a means to convey various ideas, feelings and information. In its use, language not only functions as a means of conveying messages, but also reflects social, cultural values and politeness norms that apply in society. Therefore, speakers tend to choose certain forms of expression so that the message conveyed can be well received without creating an unpleasant impression. According to Pramesti et al. (2025:398) the use of polite language can foster mutual respect, maintain harmonious relationships, and increase trust between individuals. This shows that the success of communication is not only determined by the content of the conversation, but also by the choice of words and the way the message is delivered. One form of language use that reflects efforts to maintain politeness is euphemism.

Euphemism is a language strategy used to replace words or expressions that are considered rude, unpleasant, or potentially offensive with a more subtle form. Christmatara (in Puspitasari et al., 2019: 140) explains that euphemism is a method of replacing words or expressions that are considered unpleasant with a more subtle form so that the message can be conveyed politely according to the context of its use. The use of euphemisms is generally related to mentioning sensitive matters, such as death, illness, bodily condition, or social issues. For example, the word die is replaced with the expression passed away or passed away to make it sound more polite. The use of expressions like this is not only found in Indonesian, but is also found in various regional languages which have politeness rules in accordance with the cultural values of the people who speak them.

One of the regional languages ??that employs euphemisms is the Bajau language, as spoken by the community in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District, Gorontalo Province. In their daily lives, the Bajau people use specific expressions to convey matters considered sensitive or inappropriate to state directly. The use of such expressions is rooted in the community's commitment to maintaining politeness, showing respect for the person being addressed, and preserving the harmony of social relationships. Nevertheless, the use of euphemisms within the Bajau language in Torosiaje Village has not been extensively studied from a scholarly perspective—particularly regarding their forms, meanings, and functions. Consequently, these euphemistic expressions—which remain active within the community—have yet to be systematically documented, including the specific communicative contexts in which they are employed. Therefore, this phenomenon warrants further study to provide insight into the use of polite language, while simultaneously documenting the linguistic and cultural richness of the Bajau people.

This phenomenon is evident in various expressions used by the Bajau community in their everyday communication. For instance, when referring to someone who has passed away, they do not necessarily use the word *matey*—which means "dead"—but instead opt for the phrase *suda missa' ne iyya*, meaning "he/she is no longer with us." This choice reflects the speaker's effort to address the event of death in a more delicate manner. A similar approach is applied when discussing health; the word *piddi*—meaning "sick"—can be replaced by the expression *nggai ala' ssa badanna*, which translates to "not feeling well." Such choices demonstrate that the Bajau people possess a unique way of softening their messages, especially when discussing unpleasant circumstances. This phenomenon illustrates that the use of euphemisms extends beyond mere word choice; it is deeply connected to the meanings and values ??of politeness that govern the community's social life. This phenomenon requires examination through a linguistic approach capable of explaining the relationship between linguistic forms and the meanings they convey. One branch of linguistics that studies linguistic meaning is semantics. Zahra

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p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

et al. (2024:159) explain that semantics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of linguistic meaning, while Chaer (cited in Lestari, 2022:2) states that semantics examines meaning as well as the relationship between linguistic signs and the entities they represent. This semantic perspective is relevant to the study of euphemisms, which involve not only the selection of specific linguistic forms but also the meanings conveyed through particular expressions. A euphemism is a way of softening speech by replacing words or phrases considered harsh, taboo, or potentially offensive to others (Qolbi, cited in Keith and Burridge, 2025:42). The use of euphemisms also serves to maintain politeness and protect the feelings of the interlocutor (Latif et al., 2023:1326). Thus, semantic analysis can be employed to uncover the meanings of euphemistic expressions, while the study of euphemisms helps clarify the forms and purposes of such expressions within communication.

The study of euphemisms encompasses three aspects: form, meaning, and function. Keith and Burridge (cited in Sulistia, 2024:454) classify euphemisms into 16 forms, including metaphors, circumlocutions, and the substitution of one word for another. These forms serve as part of the foundation for analyzing the forms of euphemisms in this research. In addition to form, the meaning of euphemistic expressions is examined based on their referents. Wijana and Rohmadi (in Ramadhani, 2020:357) classify euphemism references into seven categories: objects or subjects, body parts, professions, diseases, activities, events, and states. Meanwhile, the functions of euphemisms are analyzed based on three categories: serving as a politeness strategy, obscuring meaning, and mitigating embarrassment. These three aspects are employed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the use of euphemistic expressions in the Bajau language in Torosiaje Village.

Research on euphemisms has been conducted by several previous scholars. In her study titled "Euphemisms in the Editorials of the *Tribun Pekanbaru* Newspaper," Sri Lestari (2021) examined the forms and functions of euphemisms within mass media discourse. Sanasia (2022), in a study titled "Euphemisms in the Bugis Language in Lemito District, Pohuwato Regency," investigated the forms and functions of euphemisms within a regional language. Furthermore, Agus Budi Prasetya (2024)—in his research titled "The Use of Euphemisms in the Political Dialogue of the *Mata Najwa* Talk Show Episode '3 Presidential Candidates Discuss Their Ideas' and Its Relevance to Listening Instruction for Discussion Texts in High School (Phase E)"—examined the forms, types, functions, and meanings of euphemisms, as well as their relevance to Indonesian language instruction. These three studies demonstrate that euphemisms can be found across various contexts of language use, including mass media, community communication, and political dialogue. While sharing a common focus on the study of euphemisms, the present research differs in its specific linguistic subject and location: the Bajau language in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. This study simultaneously examines the forms, meanings (based on their references), and functions of euphemisms, thereby contributing to the documentation and enrichment of semantic studies concerning regional languages. Based on the description above, this study focuses on four key issues: the forms of euphemisms in the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, the meanings of these euphemistic expressions, their functions, and the potential contribution of the research findings to Indonesian language instruction in schools. The study aims to describe the forms, meanings, and functions of euphemisms and to explain their contribution to Indonesian language education. This contribution pertains to the use of diction, expressions, and linguistic politeness, which can serve as examples for understanding and employing language appropriately within specific communicative contexts—particularly in the study of poetic and narrative texts. Furthermore, this research is

expected to benefit researchers and readers by enriching their knowledge of semantic studies; it serves the local community by helping to document and preserve the Bajau language; and it provides educators and students with additional learning resources regarding the use of polite language and the richness of regional languages.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Razak (2017), Amin (2021), Afiduddin & Saebani (2002) describes that a qualitative approach is commonly used in various social research studies.

The descriptive method aims to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate account of the findings in the field—specifically the forms, meanings, and functions of euphemisms in the Bajau language, analyzed through the lens of semantics. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of euphemistic expressions within the social and cultural context of the Bajau community, rather than through numerical data. The research findings are also analyzed to explain their contribution to Indonesian language instruction in schools. The study was conducted in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District.

The research data consist of euphemistic expressions in the Bajau language—including words, phrases, and sentences—used as substitutes for terms considered harsh or inappropriate. The data were obtained from native Bajau speakers in Torosiaje Village, specifically traditional leaders, community figures, and local residents who served as key informants. Data collection was carried out using four techniques: the conversational technique, involving unstructured dialogue between the researcher and informants (Mahsun, 2017:94); the observational (listening) technique, which entails monitoring the use of the Bajau language during daily conversations and social interactions (Mahsun, 2017:91); the recording technique, using audio recording equipment to capture natural, spontaneous speech and ensure the authenticity of the data; and the note-taking technique, employed alongside recording to document euphemistic expressions, as well as their accompanying contexts, situations, and nonverbal cues.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (cited in Zulfirman, 2022:149), which comprises three stages. First, data reduction: relevant expressions are selected, summarized, translated into Indonesian, and categorized, while data unrelated to the research focus are excluded. Second, data presentation: findings are presented narratively and in tables, including the classification of euphemism types (metaphors, single-word substitutions, and circumlocution) along with examples and their translations. Meanings are analyzed based on their referents—following the framework of Wijana and Rohmadi (covering objects/subjects, body parts, professions, illnesses, activities, events, and states)—while their functions are explained based on how they are employed within speech. Third, verification and the drawing of conclusions through an inductive approach. At this stage, the data, classifications, and interpretations undergo iterative review. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn by moving from specific data toward a general conclusion, in accordance with the research problem formulation. The results of the analysis regarding the forms, meanings, and functions of euphemisms are also used to explain the research's contribution to Indonesian language instruction in schools.

RESULTS

1. Forms of Euphemisms in the Bajau Language

Based on the research findings, three forms of euphemisms were identified in the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District: metaphors, the use of one word to replace another, and circumlocution.

1.1 Metaphorical Euphemisms

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e-ISSN : 2809-6355

Metaphorical euphemism is a form of linguistic softening that employs comparisons or figurative expressions to replace terms considered less refined, thereby making speech sound more polite and avoiding offense to the listener. The research identified five instances of metaphorical euphemism in the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village. An example of the use of metaphorical euphemism can be seen in the following conversation.

Researcher: *Aya takakaleku nia kono a'a nangkoi mano sasangang, tottoho ko aka iru Aya* (Auntie, I've heard that someone steals chickens every night—is that true?)
Informant: *ee dahako naha battiru, raha ta kale* (Eh, Don't say things like that; it doesn't sound good.).
Researcher: *Bona naha ayi baka Aya?* (Lalu harus disebut apa, Tante?)
Informant: *Kasar ke iru ana', lomong naha panangkoi ko tahanu* ***tangang marummos*** *ne* (Those words sound harsh, son. If you call a thief you just call him a naughty hand).

The expression *tangang marummos* ("naughty hands") in the conversation excerpt above is used when discussing acts of theft, avoiding a direct reference to the perpetrator as a *panangkoi* ("thief")—a term considered harsh. By framing the act through the image of "naughty hands," the reference to a thief is rendered more subtle. Because it employs a figurative comparison to soften the expression of meaning, this phrase is classified as a metaphorical euphemism.

1.2 Single-Word Euphemisms Replacing Other Terms

A single-word euphemism—where one word replaces another—is a form of linguistic softening achieved by substituting a term deemed impolite or sensitive with a more refined alternative. The research identified 12 instances of such single-word euphemisms within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village. Examples of their usage can be seen in the following conversation.

Researcher: *Nginey ko bagey iru ninggkolo ma iga lalang?* (Why is that person sitting on the side of the road?)
Informant: *Sala-sala' luppa nginong, iyya du takatonang a'a* ***panginong*** (It looks like he's been drinking; he is, in fact, known to be a drinker.).

The term panginong ("drinker") in the conversation excerpt above is used when referring to someone sitting by the roadside, presumably after having consumed alcoholic beverages. Using this term makes the reference to a "drunkard" sound more refined, as it characterizes the individual simply as a "drinker." Since it replaces a less polite term with a more delicate one, this expression falls under the category of single-word euphemism—where one word is substituted for another.

1.3 Circumlocutory Euphemism

Circumlocutory euphemism is a form of linguistic softening achieved by conveying an intended meaning through a longer, indirect expression, thereby making the utterance sound more polite and refined. The research identified 16 instances of circumlocutory euphemism in the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village. An example of its usage can be seen in the following conversation.

Researcher *nginey kita Puto marabeang si Fikri?* (Why did you scold Fikri, Uncle?).
Informant: *itu anana'* ***lamong dipatuntupang sapuli nggai mattua'****, sohoku nyelo jasjus iyya tappa selona masako* (This kid never understands when things are explained to him; I told him to buy Jasjus, but he ended up buying Masako instead.).

The expression *lamong dipatuntupang sapuli nggai mattua*' (meaning: "no matter how many times it is explained, they still don't understand"), found in the conversation excerpt above, is used to describe a child's difficulty in grasping instructions given to them. Using this phrase makes

the label "stupid" sound more subtle, as it is framed instead as a struggle to comprehend an explanation. Because the intended meaning is conveyed through a longer, softened phrase, this expression is classified as a circumlocutory euphemism.

2. Meanings of Euphemistic Expressions in the Bajau Language

The meanings of euphemistic expressions in the Bajau language are categorized into seven types of references: objects or subjects, body parts, professions, illnesses, activities, events, and states or conditions. Some examples of these meanings, as identified in this study, are presented below.

2.1 Objects or Subjects

References to objects or subjects pertain to the individuals or entities being discussed. The research identified five instances of euphemisms in the Bajau language—as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District—that fall under the category of object or subject references. Examples of such references can be seen in the following sentences.

*Sala-sala' luppa nginong, iyya du takatonang a'a **panginong** du* (It seems he has been drinking; he is, in fact, known to be a drinker.)

The referential meaning of the subject in this expression is conveyed through the term panginong ("drinker"), which refers to someone who has a habit of consuming alcoholic beverages. This term serves as a substitute for paniggo' ("drunkard"), making the reference to the individual sound more refined and less likely to offend the person being addressed.

2.2 Body Parts

The referential meaning of body parts relates to the physical components of the human body.

The research findings identified two instances of euphemisms that refer to body parts within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. Examples of such references can be seen in the following sentences.

*Nginey kita Puto sapuli naga **buli'** ta?* ((Why does the man often touch the backside/buttocks?) The referential meaning regarding a body part in this expression is conveyed through the term buli' (backside/buttocks), which refers to a specific part of the human anatomy—the buttocks. This term serves as a substitute for the word tombo' (buttocks), making the reference to this body part sound more refined and polite.

2.3 Profession

Referential meaning related to a profession pertains to an individual's occupation or role within society. The research findings include one instance of a euphemism categorized under the referential meaning of "profession" within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. An example of this type of referential meaning can be seen in the following sentence.

*Boai, maloy **sandro** aku dabui, batingga si Lita piddi bittana* ("Yes, last night I called a sandro (traditional healer), because Lita had a stomach ache."

The professional reference in this expression is conveyed through the term sandro (traditional healer), which refers to an individual who acts as a traditional healer within the community. This term serves as a substitute for pangatonang ("wise person" or "knowledgeable one"), identifying an individual based on their role or occupation within the society.

2.4 Illness

References to illness pertain to health-related conditions or ailments experienced by an individual. The research identified five instances of euphemisms categorized as references to illness within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. An example of such a reference can be seen in the following sentence.

***Suda nggai bagissa ngita** ne aku, lamong dilubbanang kacamataku nggai ne kantara memongna* (I can no longer see clearly; if I take off my glasses, everything becomes invisible.)

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p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

The referential meaning related to a medical condition in this expression is conveyed through the phrase *suda nggai bagissa ngita* ("no longer seeing clearly"), which refers to an individual's vision impairment. This expression serves as a substitute for the word *gabor* ("nearsighted" or "dim-sighted"), allowing the condition to be described in a more delicate manner that avoids causing offense.

2.5 Activities

Referential meaning related to activities pertains to the actions or tasks performed by an individual. The research findings identified three instances of euphemisms categorized under activity-related referential meaning within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. An example of this type of referential meaning can be seen in the following sentence.

Boai, anu ansini iru ***nyuranang*** *a'a ma billiang ma pasar ansini, iru ko sapuli ma pa billiangna lima sabbu, pa dutaina dadi pitu sabbu ne* (Yes, the story mentioned someone selling goods at the market—items they usually sold for five thousand, they raised the price to seven thousand.

The referential meaning of an activity in this expression is conveyed through the term nyuranang ("telling a story"), which refers to the act of speaking or sharing stories with others. This term replaces nyusor ("gossiping"), allowing the act of talking about someone else to be expressed in a more subtle, refined manner.

2.6 Events

The referential meaning of an event relates to an occurrence or an experience that someone has undergone. The research findings identified two instances of euphemism categorized under the referential meaning of an event within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. An example of this type of referential meaning can be seen in the following sentence.

suda bitta ne kami ma nggai da ruma' ((it has been a long time since we lived in the same house).

The referential meaning of an event in this expression is conveyed through the phrase suda bitta ne kami ma nggai daruma' ("it has been a long time since we lived in the same house"), which refers to a situation where a married couple no longer resides together. This expression serves as a substitute for the word salla' ("divorce"), allowing the event of a divorce to be communicated in a more delicate manner, thereby avoiding offense to the parties involved.

2.7 State/Condition

The referential meaning of a state or condition relates to the circumstances, situation, or attributes of an individual. The research identified 15 instances of euphemisms categorized under the referential meaning of a state or condition within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. An example of this type of referential meaning can be seen in the following sentence.

Ee nda anu ***maluntu'*** *ke iyya a'ana* (well, he is indeed someone who lacks enthusiasm).

The referential meaning regarding a state in this expression is conveyed through the term maluntu' (lacking enthusiasm), which refers to a person's state of having little energy or drive to engage in activities. This expression replaces the word ulo' (lazy), allowing the condition to be communicated in a more refined manner that avoids offending the person being addressed.

3. Functions of Euphemism in the Bajau Language

The research findings indicate three functions of euphemism in the Bajau language: expressing politeness, obscuring meaning, and mitigating feelings of shame.

Jurnal Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra
Volume 5, Nomor 6, November 2026
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1936

3.1 Function of Politeness

The function of politeness relates to attitudes or behaviors that demonstrate respect toward others through words and actions, in accordance with the norms prevailing in society. The research identified 13 instances of euphemism in the Bajau language in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District, which serve a polite function. One example is the following expression:

Umurang (aged/having years)

The expression *umurang* (aged/having years) falls under the function of politeness because it is used as a substitute for the word toa (old), which might be considered impolite if directed at someone directly. Using this term conveys respect when discussing a person's age, ensuring the language does not come across as demeaning or offensive.

3.2 Function of Obscuring Meaning

The function of obscuring meaning involves the use of language deliberately designed to soften, conceal, or blur the actual reality, preventing it from sounding harsh, frightening, or triggering social conflict. The research identified 8 instances of euphemism in the Bajau language in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. One example is the following expression:

Ngala' (to take)

The expression *ngala'* (to take) serves the function of obscuring meaning, as the speaker avoids the word *nguta*' (debt), which is considered unpleasant. Through this choice of words, the speaker employs a dual meaning that reframes the reality of borrowing items as a simple act of "taking," allowing the information regarding the debt to be conveyed subtly rather than stated in a direct, blunt manner.

3.3 Function of Reducing Embarrassment

The function of reducing embarrassment aims to protect an individual's self-esteem, dignity, or feelings—whether those of the speaker, the listener, or a third party being discussed—ensuring they do not feel cornered, insulted, or humiliated in public. The research identified 12 instances of euphemisms in the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District. One such example is the following expression:

Masi nginginda' pakarajaang (still looking for work)

The expression *masi nginginda' pakarajaang* ("still looking for work") serves the function of mitigating embarrassment; it is used to avoid the direct term *missa' karajana* ("unemployed"), which might otherwise cause the speaker or the person being discussed to feel ashamed. By using this longer, more elaborate phrase, the situation is conveyed in a gentler manner, ensuring that the feelings of the individual being discussed are not offended during social interaction.

4. Contribution of Research Findings to Indonesian Language Instruction

The research findings regarding euphemisms in the Bajau language of Torosiaje Village, Popayato District, can contribute to Indonesian language instruction—specifically within "Phase E" (the curriculum phase for the first year of senior secondary education)—particularly in the study of narrative texts. This contribution relates to the selection of words or expressions used to convey a specific intent. These findings on euphemisms can serve as supplementary material to help students understand that a single idea can be expressed through different word choices or phrases, depending on the context.

In the study of narrative texts, these research findings can be integrated by examining word choices used in storytelling. The identified euphemisms can serve as examples to demonstrate how an idea can be communicated through more refined or gentle language. Students can be guided to compare direct, explicit expressions with their more refined counterparts, observing the differences in the vocabulary employed. Such

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p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

activities can enhance students' understanding of how word choice shapes the way a story is told, in accordance with its specific context.

Utilizing these research findings does not mean that every identified euphemism must be included in the curriculum. Instead, specific examples can be selected based on their relevance to the learning objectives and the subject matter currently being studied. Thus, the results of research on euphemisms in the Bajau language can function as supporting material that provides real examples of the use of diction in certain contexts.

DISCUSSION

Forms of Euphemism in the Bajau Language

The research results indicate that euphemisms in the Bajau language, as spoken in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District, manifest in three forms: metaphors (5 instances), the substitution of one word for another (12 instances), and circumlocution (16 instances). These three forms align with the classification proposed by Allan and Burridge (cited in Yosani et al., 2022:121). Metaphors employ figurative language; word substitution involves selecting more refined vocabulary; and circumlocution conveys meaning through longer, indirect expressions. The prevalence of circumlocution suggests a tendency among speakers to use indirect explanations to mitigate the negative connotations of an utterance. These findings demonstrate that the choice of euphemistic forms within the Bajau community is not merely a matter of lexical variation, but is also driven by the need to maintain politeness in social interactions.

Meanings of Euphemistic Expressions in the Bajau Language

The meanings of euphemisms in the Bajau language encompass seven referential categories: objects or subjects (5 instances), body parts (2 instances), professions (1 instance), illnesses (5 instances), activities (3 instances), events (2 instances), and states or conditions (15 instances). This categorization follows the framework of Wijana and Rohmadi (cited in Ramadhani, 2020:357). The category of "states or conditions" is the most prominent, as it includes the softening of expressions regarding an individual's traits, physical condition, economic status, and social standing. These findings indicate that euphemisms are employed to diminish any potentially derogatory impression when discussing sensitive circumstances. Consequently, the meaning of a euphemism is determined not only by the substitute vocabulary used but also by the social and cultural context in which it is employed.

Functions of Euphemism in the Bajau Language

This study identifies three functions of euphemism: politeness (13 instances), the concealment of meaning (8 instances), and the mitigation of embarrassment (12 instances). The function of politeness is employed to soften speech that might otherwise cause offense, while the concealment of meaning helps to diminish the negative connotations associated with certain situations or actions. The function of mitigating embarrassment relates to the preservation of an individual's dignity and privacy—particularly when discussing physical conditions, economic circumstances, or family matters. These findings align with the perspective of Puspitasari et al. (2019:145), who categorize the functions of euphemism as politeness, the concealment of meaning, and the mitigation of embarrassment. These same functions are evident in the use of euphemistic expressions within the Bajau language as spoken in Torosiaje Village.

Contribution of Research Findings to Indonesian Language Instruction

The selection of narrative texts is based on the learning objectives for Phase E, which require students to compose narrative texts—incorporating

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1936

conflict development and characterization—while utilizing engaging vocabulary suitable for publication in print or digital media. This learning objective is closely linked to the research findings, as the use of euphemisms demonstrates how different expressions can be chosen to convey a specific intent. This connection serves as a basis for teaching students that word choice in a narrative text must be tailored to the situation, the characters, and the events being depicted.

This reinforces the theory proposed by Eryani (2023) regarding the nature of effective language use, which posits that students must possess the linguistic adaptability to adjust their vocabulary according to the specific communicative context. In the context of narrative writing, the findings regarding euphemisms in the Bajau language provide students with a concrete illustration of how character development and conflict can be constructed through the use of refined language that is adaptive to its social context.

The selection of narrative texts is based on the alignment between learning objectives and the linguistic aspects examined in this study—specifically, the use of word choice in developing a story. This aligns with the perspective of Mulyani et al. (2021), who note that in a text-based approach, students are guided to understand and analyze the structure, linguistic elements, and meaning within narrative texts, thereby fostering contextually relevant productive skills. Nevertheless, not all data regarding euphemisms are used directly; rather, they are selected selectively in accordance with specific learning requirements. According to Adnyana (2024), the text-based approach within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) provides an opportunity to leverage the richness of local culture as a learning resource, enabling students to recognize and appreciate the culture present in their own environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion regarding the forms, meanings, and functions of euphemisms in the Bajau language in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District, the following conclusions can be drawn:

a. The forms of euphemisms in the Bajau language in Torosiaje Village, Popayato District, consist of three types: metaphors (5 instances), the substitution of one word for another (12 instances), and circumlocution (16 instances). The prevalence of circumlocution and single-word substitution indicates that the Bajau community employs longer phrases and alternative vocabulary to soften their speech, spare others' feelings, and maintain social harmony.
b. The meanings of these euphemisms are classified into seven referential categories: states or conditions (15 instances), objects or subjects (5 instances), illnesses (5 instances), activities (3 instances), body parts (2 instances), events (2 instances), and professions (1 instance). These findings demonstrate that euphemisms are used not merely to soften the way things are referred to, but also as a form of social consideration that accounts for the feelings of others.
c. The functions of euphemisms include serving as a marker of politeness (13 instances), concealing embarrassment (12 instances), and obscuring specific meanings (8 instances). The dominance of the politeness function highlights the importance of linguistic ethics within the Bajau community, while the other functions help preserve the dignity of the individuals being discussed and soften the delivery of potentially unpleasant information.

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p-ISSN : 2809-5367
e-ISSN : 2809-6355

d. The contribution of this research to Indonesian language education lies in the potential use of these findings as supplementary material for teaching narrative texts at the high school/ vocational school (SMA/SMK) level (Phase E). Examples of euphemisms can help students understand the use of polite diction in developing plot, characterization, and narrative conflict. Furthermore, this research serves to introduce local wisdom and foster an appreciation for the diversity of regional languages and cultures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses gratitude to their parents, who have consistently provided prayers, support, and encouragement throughout every stage of this journey. Their love and sacrifices served as the motivation for the author to complete this research.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.55909/jpbs.v5i6.1936

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