

# EUPHEMISMS IN INDONESIAN AND MANDARIN LANGUAGES: A CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** This study describes and compares euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin languages. This is a qualitative study with the contrastive approach. Data were collected through observation and note taking and went through comparative-contrastive descriptive analysis. The results show that there are 14 areas where euphemisms are commonly used in Indonesian and Mandarin languages. Euphemisms are used in words or terms, phrases, and clauses in both languages to show politeness and promote harmony in communication—perks of using euphemisms include conflict-mitigation and corroboration of one’s cultural identity. Understanding euphemisms helps foreign students speak better Indonesian language in accordance with the cultures applied in the country.

**Keywords:** *BIPA, comparison of languages, euphemism, Indonesian and Mandarin*

Languages and cultures are closely correlated. Languages develop along with the cultures that contain values of society that use the languages. Language is used by considering society values and is greatly affected by cultures in the society, and as the result, there are different values believed by certain society, but they do not apply in other societies. Thus, there are things considered good or bad, right and wrong, etc. This what makes a paradigm exist in a society so that there is something prohibited or forbidden by social customs or norms. This idea is also called “taboo language”.

According to Fromkin (1993), one way to avoid using taboo words is by replacing them with other words having a better sense and value. This strategy is called euphemism. It refers to words or phrases that replace taboo words or are used to avoid something terrifying or unpleasant to happen. Using euphemisms, certain society accept the things said more easily because they are relevant to the cultures that apply. Mualafina (2017) argues that euphemism is not merely a refinement of language, but it also directly or indirectly refers to a tangible form of social rules regarding language that may or may not be used

in society (Mualafina, 2017). When there is a socially taboo language used, euphemism comes as a "savior".

Languages, cultures, and nations are also closely correlated. Zulkifli et al. (2019) states that a society that speaks politely represents the developed nations' civilization. Language is not merely a means of communication because it builds cultures and serves as someone's perspective about the universe. Euphemism is used to maintain social relations, to prevent saying something offensive, and to avoid bad lucks as certain cultures believe that disasters, calamities, and epidemics may happen to someone saying taboo words (Mualafina, 2017). Therefore, euphemism is often associated with using languages politely to communicate with other human beings and being mindful to unwritten rules of a culture.

Indonesia and China are two countries whose societies are known to be polite. Therefore, euphemism is commonly used in the languages of both countries. It is in line with the idea stating that euphemism is the use of polite expressions to replace the rude one (Laili, 2016; Almoayidi, 2018; Sunarni & Jonjon, 2017). Various forms of euphemism are common in communication, and their forms should be comprehensively understood by Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers/*Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing* (BIPA) learners, especially those whose first language is Mandarin because they need to speak Indonesian language properly and in accordance with Indonesian cultures.

Besides Indonesian and Mandarin, euphemism studies can also be carried out in two regional languages originating from one country. Wahab et al., (2020) conducted research on Malay and Iban euphemisms in Sarawak. Both regional languages come from Malaysia. In the study, they compared euphemisms based on some categories, namely femininity and masculinity, anger/curse, hatred, disease, death, and fear of animals and ghost. Data on politeness or euphemism obtained from societies of both countries show the language uses based on certain categories and contexts. The words are used to show politeness. Therefore, euphemism is used because of the culture of educating children to talk politely so that they can avoid using rude words. In a study conducted by Sabarua (2019), it was found that the euphemism used by teachers is a strategy to avoid saying words that have violence, racism, harassment, or

unpleasant meanings which can have a negative impact on student development. Euphemisms used in various mass media and literary works are a manifestation of language, one of which is used to disguise and avoid conflicts (Puspitasari et al., 2019; Septiana & Rahmawati, 2021; Jayanti et al., 2019; Saputri et al., 2019). Those studies show that there are actually efforts to refine language in the context of language politeness and conflict avoidance.

Euphemism is important to master when we learn a second or foreign language because understanding euphemisms in the first language and target language will make communication easier. *BIPA* students are required to understand euphemisms of the target language in order to avoid saying offensive words to speaking partners during learning practices. It will be easier to understand euphemism if both target and first languages are compared to find the similarities. The comparison is an effort to acquire the target language better. Therefore, this study aims to facilitate *BIPA* students who speak Mandarin as their mother tongue to be able to identify the euphemisms in Mandarin as well as Indonesian as the target language. Those *BIPA* students will then have language and cultural awareness that make it easier for them to learn the language contextually. This study focuses on 1) euphemisms used in Mandarin and Indonesian languages, and 2) similarities and differences of both languages in terms of euphemism use.

## METHOD

This qualitative research used the contrastive approach that compared the structure of mother tongue (B1) and the language acquired or learned after it or second language (B2) (Tarigan, 1988). The method used in this study was the Comparative-Contrastive Descriptive Analysis. It is a method used to describe the sentence structure of two languages separately to be compared in order to find the similarities and differences. It also refers to the method used to describe the sentence structure separately to compare and identify the similarities and differences of both languages to be able to solve problems. The source of data used in this study is qualitative data obtained from sentences containing euphemisms both in Mandarin and Indonesian languages. The techniques used in this study were observation and note-taking. Observation was done in the context of

Indonesian and Mandarin language use. The researchers identified euphemisms through literature review of both languages, took notes of the words, and put them in categories to be data being compared. Data used in this study went through descriptive comparative-contrastive analysis. This study was conducted in Yogyakarta for three months, from March to May 2020.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

## Result

### *Types of Euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin Languages and Contrastive Analysis*

Based on the review of study, there are eight types of euphemisms in Indonesian language and thirteen types of euphemisms in Mandarin language. Each type is used in daily life and are similar in many ways or different at all. Based on the contrastive analysis done, the findings are presented below.

**Table 1. The Comparisons of Euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin Languages**

Language Area	Indonesian Language	Mandarin Language
Health	Cancer "CA" Syphilis "GO" Deaf "Tunarungu"	STD 花柳病 "flower and willow tree disease" Cholera 子午痧 "morning and afternoon disease"
Sex	Sexual intercourse "hubungan intim"	过夜/sexual intercourse "spending the night" 本垒打 "home run" 颠鸾倒凤 "phoenix and dragon somersault"
Human Excreta	Fart "buang angin" Pee "buang air kecil"	排气 "fart" kencing 放水 "pee"
Body Parts	Genitals "kemaluan" Women's reast "buah dada"	下面 "lower parts" 上面 "upper parts"
Religion	Pork dishes "B2"	-
Death	death "meninggal dunia" "wafat" "mangkat" "pulang ke Tuhan"	去世 "dead" "go to a place where it is always fun"
Dangerous Animals	Tiger "kakek/grandfather" Snake "akar/root" Tiger "Kyai/leader of Islamic boarding school"	Rats 灰仙 "Grey Goddess" Weasel 黄仙 "Yellow Goddess"
Less Valuable Profession	prostitute "wanita tunasusila" Housemaid "pramuwisma" "asisten rumah tangga"	prostitute 援交女 "girls supporting communication" babysitter 家政员 "household management staff"
War and Disaster		Civil war-人民解放战争 "war ro liberate people" Flood 龙王发怒 "the dragon king is mad"
Family and Marriages	-	marriage 终身大事 "the most prominent thing in life"
Interpersonal Relationship and Special Designations	-	Father in law 泰山 "mountain Tai " Siblings 手足 "hand and foot "
Finance and Economy	-	Debt 负资产 "wealth deficit" Deficit 手头紧 "tight hand"
Crime and Punishment	-	Imprisoned 进去 "get in" Get out of jail 出来 "get out" Prison 高墙 "high walls"

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 Quality and  
Character
 

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Someone obedient 耳朵软 "soft ears"

Euphemism is a characteristic of all languages. In Indonesian and Mandarin, there are euphemisms which are used in the same areas. However, there are more areas of euphemism in Mandarin than in Indonesian language. The eight areas that commonly use euphemisms in the Indonesian language are health, sex, body excreta, body parts, religion, death, dangerous animals, and professions. While euphemisms in Mandarin are used in more areas, namely disease and disability, sex and fertility, secretions and excretions, body parts and physiological changes, death and funeral, animals and plants, professions, war and disaster, family and marriage, interpersonal relationships and designation, finance and economics, crime and punishment, as well as qualities and character. Below is explanation about each area where euphemisms are commonly used in both languages.

### Health

Both in Indonesia and in China, people need to be careful when talking about someone's health. Because health is sensitive topic, euphemisms are commonly used. Certain types of diseases will get a bad stigma in society or are considered serious and deadly.

In Indonesia, cancer is considered a very serious disease. When the word "cancer" is said, patients and their family will feel despair, so the term "CA" is used. Then, in Indonesia, having syphilis is considered embarrassing, so the term "GO" is used to replace syphilis. Similarly, in China, certain diseases will bring shame and disgrace or unpleasant to hear, such as baldness, STD, and cholera. In Mandarin, baldness is replaced by '地中海Mediterranean Sea' because a bald person's hair is similar to how the Mediterranean Sea looks. STD is replaced with the term '花柳病flower and willow tree disease' because when people hiring a prostitute, they sleep with flowers and willow trees'眠花宿柳', and that many sex workers are infected with STDs. Cholera is often called '子午痧'morning and afternoon disease' because cholera patients have a fever in the morning and die in the afternoon of the same day.

In addition to disease, euphemisms are used to talk about disability. Almost all civilized

societies will not feel comfortable mentioning another person's disability and the person who is called disabled will also feel offended. Refined and more polite words are used to refer to people with disability. In Indonesian language, the term that replaces the inability of people to hear (deaf) is *tunarungu*, people who cannot speak are called *tunawicara*, and people who cannot see are called *tunanetra*. In China, to refer to those having disabilities of walking, people say 腿脚不方便 "their feet are uncomfortable". The sentence has a better impression and will not offend people with health condition.

Chinese people consider health as a private topic. For example, when two not too close people talk, they will never discuss about each other's health. In China, there is an idiom 讳疾忌医 that means "hiding their illness, not wanting to consult to doctors".

### Sex

In Indonesian culture, discussions about sex are often accompanied by awkwardness as it is taboo to talk about it. Even in this third millennium era where everything is advanced and developed, talking about sex is uncommon. Words related to sex are considered inappropriate or impolite to express, so words, for example "*hubungan seks*/sexual intercourse" are often refined with "*hubungan intim*/intimate relationship". Likewise, various words that have to do with sex are usually replaced to be more subtle or disguised.

The same situation also occurs in China. Things about sex and fertility are considered inappropriate or impolite to discuss. Having sex in Mandarin is often called 过夜 'spending the night'. If someone wants to ask a close friend whether or not he had sex with his girlfriend, he will use a term used in soft ball, namely 本垒打 'home run'. In this sports game, home run is a hit with the highest score and shows the most impressive climax moment. Having sex is also called 颠鸾倒凤 'dragon and phoenix somersault' because the dragon represents males while the phoenix the symbol of females. Then, being pregnant is 有喜 happiness, while in Indonesian language it is called "*berbadan dua*/two bodies".

In Indonesian and Mandarin languages, euphemisms to show sex are used in spoken

languages. In written language, Mandarin has more terms for sex than Indonesian language. There are many terms to replace taboo words meaning sexual intercourse with more romantic words taken from poems and folklores. Meanwhile, in Indonesian language euphemisms of the word sex is not often found in written language because it is still considered uncommon to write about it.

### **Human Excreta**

Human waste or something that the body excretes is considered dirty so it is not polite to express it directly. In terms of excreta, Mandarin and Indonesian languages has similarities. In Indonesian language, farting is called “*buang angin*/throw the wind away”, while in Mandarin it is called 排气 ‘throw the wind away’. Indonesian language uses “*buang air kecil*/dump a little water” to replace the verb pee. In Mandarin, it is called 放水 “dumping the water”. Using the word ‘poop’ does not show politeness, so the word the ‘feces’ is used. In Indonesia, when a student wants to go to the restroom, he will say, “*Permisi, saya ingin ke belakang*/Excuse me, I want to go the back.”. This is also a model of euphemism in Indonesian language which is affected by the ancient culture where toilets are built in behind the houses.

In the use of euphemisms related to human excreta, Indonesian and Mandarin languages have similarities, as they both directly refer to the secretions and excretions. Moreover, both languages show that euphemisms to talk about this topic. No major differences are found in the use of euphemisms associated with human excreta.

### **Body Parts**

In both languages, some parts of the body considered rude or taboo to be said. Because people feel ashamed when talking about those body parts, the terms for those parts of body are refined. To refer to female genitalia the word “*kemaluan*” is used in Indonesian language. Then, to refer to women’s breast “*buah dada*/breast fruits” is used. Meanwhile, to refer to male genitalia “*burung*/birds”, “*senjata*/weapons”, or “pistols” are used. The word “*anu*” is often used to replace the genitals, for both males and females. Chinese people also feel embarrassed when talking about genitals and physiological changes. Women’s breasts are

often replaced by the word 上面 ‘upper parts’, while female genitals are called 下面 ‘lower parts’. To replace the word menstruation, Indonesians use the term ‘*datang bulan*/monthly guest’ because this condition occurs monthly. Meanwhile, in Mandarin language, the terms 来大姨妈 ‘the aunt is coming’ or 亲戚来了 ‘the family is coming’ are used to replace the ‘menstruation’.

### **Religion**

Every religion teaches values and norms that must be obeyed by its believers. Someone believing in a certain religion feels comfortable and happy in carrying out religious rules. Indonesia is a country with various ethnics, religious, customs, and cultures. In certain community groups, words that are closely related to certain religions can only be used in formal religious ceremonies/events. Besides, in Islamic teachings, halal food takes an important part in society. Muslims are prohibited to consume pork or products with pork, but people often hesitate to say the words “pork”. Thus, the terms “B2” or “*Bab1*/chapter 1” are used to refer to food with pork in it. Meanwhile, in Mandarin language, foods made of pork are common.

### **Death**

Death is an unavoidable law of nature. Indonesian and Chinese people try to avoid direct reference to unpleasant things, such as death and funerals. When people talk about “death,” there is always pain, fear, or anxiety felt. Therefore, there are many euphemisms to replace those words. In Indonesian language, the word “dead” is often refined with “*meninggal dunia*”, “*wafat*”, “*mangkat*”, or “*pulang ke pangkuan Tuhan*/going home to God’s lap”. Those words show levels of politeness and should be used based on contexts. The religiosity value is found in the term “*kembali ke pangkuan Tuhan*” or “called by the God Almighty”. Chinese people use the word 去 世 ‘passed away’ to say that someone is dead. Old people often used “他去了 极 乐 之 地。” Someone is going to a nice place’.

The word “buried” in Indonesian language is “*dikembumikan*/back to the earth”. Meanwhile in Mandarin language, the word 宝 穴 ‘a cave full of fortune is used’. There differences of terms between Mandarin and Indonesian languages because customs related to death are different.

### ***Dangerous Animal and Plant***

Dynamism and animism influenced Indonesians and Chinese for thousands of years. Taboos relating to animals in Indonesian and Mandarin are both caused by the fear of animals that are considered dangerous. Animal names are also taboo in certain situations. When hunting in the forest, people in Indonesia do not say "tiger" because people are afraid that the tiger will hear them and attack them. Therefore, the word tiger is often replaced with the word "grandfather". In Sumatra, hunters use "akar/root" to refer to snakes and "Kyai" to refer to tigers. Those animals are considered dangerous so that there are euphemisms for their names.

The Chinese replaces animal names with euphemisms to avoid jeopardy. Rat is replaced by 灰仙 'grey goddess' while weasel is replaced by 黄仙 'yellow goddess'. In Indonesia, some also use the word "putri/princess" to mention rats politely. In Indonesia, the term plants are not considered taboo, while in China the corpse flower is considered bad. The word corpse flower is refined as 大王花 'flower of the king'.

### ***Less Valuable Profession***

To convey a sense of honor when saying one's profession, Indonesian people also often use euphemisms. There are several jobs or professions considered bad in society's view. In Indonesian and Chinese society, prostitution is a bad job. In Indonesia, the word prostitute is replaced by "wanita tunasusila/prostitutes" (abbreviated as WTS), while in Mandarin the word prostitute is replaced by 援交女 'girl supporting communication'. Another job considered less prestigious is housemaid. In Indonesian there is a term pramu-wisma or now better known as a household as-sistant to replace the word housemaid. For baby-sitters, Indonesian often borrows the English term "babysitter". Meanwhile in Mandarin, babysitters are refined into 家政员 'household management staff'. In Indonesian, the term "pramuniaga/sales-person" is also used for the profession of a shop assistant, even people who do not have a job or are unemployed are also called "tunakarya/unemployed" because the word unemployed is considered less valuable. In the political area, for officials who are no longer in their position, there is a refinement in Mandarin. The official who stepped down the political stage would be called

退居二线 'returning from the front line', while it does not exist in Indonesian.

### ***War and Disaster***

This field is found in euphemisms in Mandarin. Chinese people often hide the facts of war and disasters with euphemisms. Since a long time ago, the Chinese people have cherished peace. In addition, they believe in animism that language also has a soul. If we talk about war and disaster, it will complete it. Therefore, words about war and disaster are highly taboo. After mentioning disaster, the Chinese even spit saliva on the ground to dispel the catastrophe. Euphemism is also considered as a repellent of danger.

The civil war between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang that took place in China after World War II was refined using 人民解放战争 'war to liberate the people' by the Chinese Communist Party's. Meanwhile, the Kuomintang called it 戡乱战争 'war of error correction'.

For natural disasters there are also some subtleties of words. When a flood occurs, the Chinese say: "龙王发怒了!" 'The dragon king is mad!' because it is regarded as a water god. In Indonesia, there is a term "the coughing mountain/gunung sedang batuk" to replace an erupting volcano because a direct mention of an erupting volcano will cause dangerous consequences.

### ***Family and Marriage***

In Chinese society, family and marital issues are such sensitive themes that they are often refined with euphemisms. In Chinese, marriage is often replaced by 终身大事 'the most prominent thing in life'. If a woman from the Li family would marry to a man from the Yang family, people would say 恭喜李家和杨家结成百年之好 'congratulations Li family and the Yang family builds a good relationship for a hundred years'. The statement is common in China as a prayer and a kind thing to say. When relatives or friends do not meet, Chinese people will say the words "You look ten years younger." This is considered a polite and common statement in Chinese society.

### ***Interpersonal Relationship and Special Designations***

Chinese people values politeness and harmony, so they pay great attention to interpersonal relationships and designations. In kinship, someone will mention specifically to his father-in-law. Father-in-law was replaced by the word 泰山 'Gunung Tai/Mount Tai' because it is the most noble and sacred mountain in China. In addition, people believe that saying one's father-in-law 泰山 'Mount Tai' can convey respect. In family relations, the parents of the husband or wife are highly respected in China. In kinship, the word brother is replaced by 手足 'hand and foot' because it has a very close relationship.

### ***Finance and Economics***

Economic issues are sensitive themes, so they also need to be taken into account. In Chinese, the word debt is replaced by 负资产 'wealth deficit' so that people with debt feel uncomfortable. The mention of pocket money when someone goes sightseeing in Chinese is called 'waist bag', because the money is usually put in a waist bag. For the rich there is a term that is commonly used. They (rich people) can be called 腰缠万贯 'His waist bag is full of money worth hundreds of thousands'. Meanwhile, if you have no money in Mandarin there is the term 手头紧 tangan ketat /'tight hand'.

### ***Crime and Punishment***

Mentioning the kind of the crime and punishment directly would be considered less tolerant and sympathetic by the Chinese. Therefore, in Chinese the word "imprisoned" is refined into 进去 'get in', while getting out of jail is refined with 出来 'get out'. The words "get in" and "get out" are understood by Chinese people when talking about someone in the context of crime. The word prison is replaced by 高墙 'high walls'. This is more subtle than Indonesian language which says "jail/bars" or "bui". If a person is imprisoned twice, the Chinese usually say “他二进宫了。” 'He entered the palace twice'.

### ***Quality and Character***

Mandarin has a special designation for someone who has advantages and disadvantages. Euphemisms are often used to describe the qualities and characteristics of other people. People who easily follow other people's orders are called 耳朵软 'soft ears' to make it subtle.

People who are not so extrovert are 性格内秀 'introvert but good character'.

### **Discussion**

Based on the classification and description of euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin, the role of community culture greatly creates euphemisms in language. However, euphemism is basically a characteristic of all languages. Euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin have similarities, there are similarities and differences. This is helpful in the approach to learning Indonesian for Chinese people, and the other way around.

Some similarities and uses of euphemisms in these two languages appear in the field of human body parts. Euphemisms related to parts of the body in Indonesian and Mandarin are used in the same situation and have similar meanings, and these words are common spoken by people speaking the two languages. The similarities are also noticed in viewing death.

Similarities in euphemisms related to death in Indonesian and Mandarin are used in the same situation and have the same meaning. In both languages, there is the same expression as "died". This was probably due to belief in the immortality of the soul. For Indonesians, death is something sure. Whatever the religion, Indonesians believe in it. One of them is the belief in Islam which is mentioned in the holy book which says "Every soul will die. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing)." (Surat Ali Imran: 185). This shows that the Indonesian people, who are predominantly Muslim, recognize that death is sure to come. When compared to Chinese society, belief in death also exists in Chinese society.

This religious elements-based culture causes less euphemisms that lead to sex in Indonesian. In the written text, many sex euphemisms are taken from literary works in China. Meanwhile, in Indonesian literature, some use euphemisms, such as Pramoedya Ananta Toer's novel (Saputri et al., 2019). In general, Indonesians rarely talk about this sex-related thing. Meanwhile in China, this has become a widely discussed topic, so there are many euphemisms in that field. Religious factors and norms differentiate euphemisms in certain languages. Al-Khasawneh's research (2018)

shows that Arabic and English also use different euphemisms in terms of beliefs, cultural values, and religion.

Long ago, Chinese people carried out ghost worship. They believed that death was the destruction of the body, and the soul goes to the next phase of life. "Passing away" means that one's soul leaves this world, and then goes to another world. Basically, people's beliefs are the same. It's only that in the euphemism, stating 'death' in Indonesian is "returning to God's lap/pulang ke pangkuan Tuhan" and "summoned by God" which shows that death is believed by the Indonesian people as a close part of religion. Meanwhile, in China this term does not exist because most Chinese people do not believe in the existence of God. According to a Gallup International survey, 61% of Chinese are atheists (people who don't believe in God), while only 7% of people embrace a religion. Therefore, there are far fewer euphemisms related to religion in Mandarin than in Indonesian.

Euphemisms that are used a lot in Mandarin, but not much in Indonesian are euphemisms in the fields of family and marriage. It is due to the patriarchal system that has ruled China for thousands of years. Under the patriarchal framework, Chinese society highly values family relationships. They think that only after marriage, a new person can become an adult and start working. Marriage is often replaced by 终身大事 'the most important thing in life'. According to the Chinese, the most important thing in their life is to get married and give birth as soon as possible to sustain their family name. The more children they have, the more luck they have. This is similar to the jargon "Many children, much wealth" in Indonesian society. Euphemisms are also used as educational tools. In this case, children are taught to use subtle language so that they can realize the significance of marriage and family in Chinese culture.

In interpersonal relationships, Indonesian has a designation for family members, but in China it is even more complex. Euphemisms about interpersonal and designations have been institutionalized and systematic since the Zhou Dynasty, namely 1046 BC. This was a means of maintaining the feudal hierarchy in China.

Since Confucianism stated the three main guidelines 君为臣纲，父为子纲，夫为妻纲 'the king leads the courtier, the father leads the children, the husband leads the wife', the hierarchical system was strengthened, social

class distinctions became clearer, and the use of euphemisms was more common. Now, even though a just and equal social system has been established, parents or superiors will not be addressed directly by name in interpersonal communication but will be referred to by a combination of family name and position/profession.

In China there is a unique social awareness, i.e., 重义轻利 'high regard for loyalty and look down on profit'. This creates a unique type of euphemism in Mandarin. The words Junzi and Xiaoren often appear in books written by Confucians. The word Junzi has a meaning of a person whose virtue is highly commendable regardless of his social status. According to Confucianism, Junzi is a virtuous person. On the other hand, Xiaoren was a misbehaving person. Confucius wants all his students to be Junzi, not Xiaoren. The main difference between Junzi and Xiaoren is that a Junzi only understands the truth. On the other hand, a Xiaoren only understands profit. To become a Junzi, one should not think about money and profits, one should not even talk about the word "money". People who often talked about economics and finance topics would be considered a vulgar Xiaoren. Because of this, the words that refer to finance and economics are taboo; a number of euphemisms in the field of economics and finance in Chinese have been used for this reason.

Indonesia and China are located in Asian region, which are demographically nearby and have almost the same eastern cultural background. This causes more euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin which are objectively no different. The euphemisms in these two languages are closely related to the culture that exists in their society.

One of the aims of using euphemisms is the creation of harmonization in language. This harmonization of communication is built from a sense of mutual respect between the interlocutors. Language refinement will avoid the inconvenience of communicating. This is in line with what was stated by Allan and Burrige (in Allan, 2012) which stated that euphemisms are used to avoid speech that hurts someone or speech that is not proper to say.

The tradition of mutual tolerance is a cultural root, both in Indonesia and in China. In addition, the theory of "harmony in difference" allows the existence of differences among individuals. Each person has strengths and weaknesses. The most important thing is to



accept it as it is and to maintain harmony. A person must be tolerant of other people, so in using the language the subtle and good-value words appears. In Chinese culture, one of the main ideas of Chinese Confucian culture is 'harmony in differences, even though they live in harmony, there is no need to pursue consistency; even though there are many differences, one can still get along well.' This theory is considered as a reference and a basic requirement for human beings to live side by side. In fact, tolerance in conveying ideas on euphemisms is also performed by the author in his novel. As found in research (Soraya, 2021), it reveals that Andrea Hirata uses euphemisms to tolerate his readers.

Euphemism is also based on the aim that human reaches peace, safety, and welfare. Euphemisms related to dangerous things, such as the mention of wild animals and disasters, are refined so that humans can avoid them. This shows that euphemisms are used to eliminate fear and worry over bad conditions that can occur.

Many words can trigger social conflict, for example, the mentioning of jobs that are not good, crime, and other designations considered impolite and too vulgar. The use of words directly can be an obstacle and conflict so that the use of euphemisms in language can prevent them. Euphemism was born to avoid social conflicts that arise from language events, including in the realm of politics. Euphemism is a style of language chosen by politicians in conveying arguments for convenience and not offending the interlocutor. Crespo-Fernández (2014) views euphemism from a political point of view as a process of eliminating harsh and offensive expressions with "safe" expressions to minimize violations of existing social norms.

In Mandarin society, the use of euphemisms is used to shape oneself. The use of euphemisms is regarded able to change someone who may have done something wrong to feel respected and forgiven, and then correct their mistakes and become a better person. Also, in the field of family and marriage, euphemisms are used to educate and build character.

Based on various examples of euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin, there are several different linguistic forms. In Indonesian, most euphemisms appear in euphemistic forms that do not require interpretation, while in Mandarin, more euphemistic forms require interpretation. Euphemisms that require context for proper understanding in Indonesian are not many, for example, " ke belakang/backwards". This

euphemism requires context so that its meaning can be captured correctly; it is a refinement to go to the toilet, not a denotative meaning to go to the back area, meaning that speakers need the right context in understanding the meaning of the euphemism.

Euphemisms in Mandarin require more interpretation of meaning. In this case, the context is needed, for example in the word 援交女 'girls supporting communication' which is a euphemism for prostitutes. Without the context of this word, it will be difficult to understand that its meaning is a prostitute. However, euphemism is a form of changing meaning in a language (Meilasari et al., 2019).

The linguistic forms of euphemisms in Indonesian and Mandarin are in abbreviations, words, phrases, and clauses. The form of abbreviations is an alternative to refine the word by making the original word hidden (covered). Syphilis is refined with the abbreviation "GO" which comes from the word "gonorrhoea". In Indonesian, which often appear are synonyms to find words that are considered to have better value of feeling. The euphemism of word "dead" is the various synonyms for it, such as wafat/meninggal/dying, mangkat/passing away, berpulang ke pangkuan Tuhan/returning to God's lap.

Metaphorical forms are more commonly found in Mandarin. Chinese people use a lot of figurative words to create the impression of a more polite language. The refinement of the word sex with the term 颠鸾倒凤 "flip of dragon and phoenix" is an unusual metaphor in Indonesian. The Indonesian metaphor is more illustrative of something that has an element of resemblance, like "root" which means "snake". However, in Mandarin the word "rope" replaces the word "snake" as well.

Mandarin plays more forms of phrases and clauses to form euphemisms. Meanwhile in Indonesian, the phrase formation for refining uses the words not yet, less, not so, not too, which are added to certain words. For example, to say stupid, the refinement can use the antonym which is added by the formative word, such as "not very smart". In addition, idioms are part of euphemism that exists in Indonesian and Mandarin. One of the euphemism efforts in Indonesian is the use of language that is convoluted, not directly targeted, and not straightforward with the intention of maintaining politeness (Mislikhah, 2014). However, this language model becomes more

difficult to understand for learners of other languages.

Understanding euphemisms and linguistic formations will contribute to learning Indonesian or Mandarin. Exposure to the first language and the target language in learning a second/foreign language will be very helpful. Transfer and interference are processes where native speakers of the mother tongue/first language will use B1 elements when they learn the target language/second language (Ghozali, 2018). In the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) class, the understanding of this euphemism is a material at the upper secondary level. This is related to the pragmatic value of language. The learner's mastery of euphemism is a very good language achievement because it can use the target language according to the culture of the community. Euphemism learning will touch the cultural realm of the people. This is important in learning a second or foreign language.

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## CONCLUSIONS

Euphemism is one part of language that makes a person more capable of mastering the language studied more thoroughly to the culture of the people who use the language. In Indonesian and Mandarin there are forms of euphemisms in various fields of life. Euphemisms in Mandarin and Indonesian have many similarities and differences. One of the similarities is it is used in the same situation and has a similar use function and forms which are partly similar to the linguistic formation. The difference is in the dominance of the linguistic formation of euphemisms and the cultural background that forms euphemisms. Euphemisms in Indonesian are strongly influenced by religious aspects and show a clear religious nature of society. Meanwhile, euphemisms in Mandarin are strongly influenced by the cultural tradition of Confucianism and indicate a strong social class character.

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