

## THE USE OF EUPHEMISMS IN THE BOOK OF “THE ALCHEMIST” BY PAULO COELHO

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: March 2023 Revised: April 2023 Published: April 2023	<i>Euphemisms are a linguistic phenomenon whereby milder or courteous words are substituted for blunt or unpleasant expressions. This study focuses on the use of euphemisms and related expressions in Paulo Coelho's book, "The Alchemist." Specifically, the research aims to identify the various euphemistic devices employed, ascertain the prevalence of such devices, and explicate their significance within the context of the novel. A descriptive qualitative research design was employed, which involved an in-depth and detailed exploration and analysis of the phenomena under investigation. To obtain the necessary data, a comprehensive review of relevant literature and library resources was conducted. The results revealed that Paulo Coelho's "The Alchemist" contains several euphemisms that serve to enhance the overall tone and mood of the narrative. The study further identified four distinct types of euphemisms in the novel, namely euphemisms used to soften descriptions of physical attributes, mental states, skills, etc., euphemisms used to make disagreeable situations more palatable, euphemisms used in business contexts, and euphemisms used in other contexts. Of these categories, the most common type, accounting for 44.5% of all instances, was found to be euphemisms used to make something sound more pleasant.</i>
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### INTRODUCTION

Literature is a term used to describe written texts that are notable for their careful use of language (Sinaga & Marpaung, 2023). Literature is a piece of writing that is considered to be the smallest element of alphabetical writing and a personal expression of feelings such as experience, idea, motivation, and confidence in the concrete description through the use of language. Human understanding is combined with artistic expression in literature to reflect human thoughts and emotions in beautiful words and forms. Literary works from texts are used in everyday life and can be found in books, newspapers, legal documents, and scholarly writings. Epic, poetry, novel, and drama are the classical literary forms of literature (Marpaung & Rahmadhan, 2021; Sinaga & Marpaung, 2023). Novel or literature analysis is an important component of scientific research. While numerous literature review guides are available, many are limited to the philosophy of review procedures, protocols, and nomenclatures, resulting in non-parsimonious reporting and confusion due to overlapping similarities (Antons et al., 2023). To address the limitations stated above, we take a pragmatic approach to demystifying and shaping the academic practice of conducting literature reviews.

A selection of words must be used while writing or creating a document so that it is clearer, more courteous, and more pleasing to read or hear (Habibi et al., 2022). These days, writing written works is modern. There are several fresh advancements that make writing more eloquent and endearing. The usage of euphemisms is one of these advances. Using euphemisms helps authors and readers make their work more polite and seem sweeter (Biryukova & Serozeeva, 2018). Euphemism is an etymology; it is derived from the Greek term euphemisms.

Which means to sound good or good speech. Euphemism refers to polite or mild phrases which substitute unpleasant ways of saying something sad (Safa, 2020; Ariani et al., 2020). In other words, euphemism makes things sound sweeter than their natural meaning. Euphemisms are - emotionally neutral words or expressions that are used instead of synonymous with the words or phrases presented to that speaking with indecent, rough, or tactlessness. They also take the place of derogatory and archaic names. Euphemisms include occasional individual-contextual replacements of some words by others to distort or mask the authentic essence of that designated (Zarifovna, 2021).

The systematic study of euphemisms is essential for translators and interpreters to understand their types and functions, as they will remain actual in translation for many years (Mohamed et al., 2019). One of the most significant and pressing issues facing our methodology at the moment is the systematic study of euphemism as a whole as a speech layer, revealing all of its speech-inner possibilities and describing its functional-methodological features, particularly its relationship to different functional style types. Euphemisms have drawn both foreign and domestic linguists' attention in general linguistics (Danilina et al., 2019). Understanding the individual quirks of euphemisms, their sorts, and roles is essential for translators and interpreters. As will continue to be true for many years since languages are always developing, new words are added, and translators are always trying to translate words from one language into another.

One of the most influential writers of our time, Paulo Coelho is the author of 30 international bestsellers, including *The Alchemist*, *Brida*, *Veronika Decides to Die*, *Manual of the Warrior of Light*, and *Eleven Minutes*. He is a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and a United Nations Messenger of Peace. Paulo is the recipient of 115 international prizes and awards, among them, the Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honor). Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1947, he soon discovered his vocation for writing. He worked as a director, theater actor, songwriter, and journalist. In 1986, a special meeting led him to make the pilgrimage to Saint James Compostela (in Spain). The Road to Santiago was not only a common pilgrimage but a turning point in his existence. A year later, he wrote *The Pilgrimage*, an autobiographical novel that is considered the beginning of his career.

Euphemism analysis has long been used in literary studies, particularly in taboo language. Several researchers have conducted research that focuses on interpreting the language. Especially, researchers are describing taboo language in euphemisms contained in the language (Khan et al., 2023); (Mohamed et al., 2019); (Zahid Saidil Morsalin & Hayat Adnan, 2022). Moreover, there are some researcher that focuses on translation of euphemisms contained translation techniques applied (AL Qahtani, 2020) and also used in English political euphemisms and its social functions (Zhao & Dong, 2010).

Hence, this study focuses on the type of euphemisms and the meaning of the whole book 'The Alchemist' by Paulo Coelho. Therefore, three research questions were formulated in this study: (1) What is the meaning of euphemisms used in "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho? (2) What are the types of euphemisms used in "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho? And (3) What is the common type of euphemisms used in "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho?

Indeed, this book has been the subject of prior studies. The analysis of my study, however, sets it apart from other research in a fresh way. It concentrates especially on euphemisms. The majority of the material I've read from earlier researchers' studies solely discusses the identification of bound morphemes as a case of postmodern spiritual resurrection in fiction, writing, and sentence structure in Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist*. There is also a discussion about how this work should be analyzed in its Indonesian and Persian translations. However, nobody has talked about how *The Alchemist* novel uses euphemisms.

## **Sociolinguistics**

Euphemisms' cultural connotations with the aid of a sociolinguistic perspective. There are some discrepancies between these two languages when euphemisms in various categories—such as old age, death, family ties, occupation, and others—are compared and analyzed (Yusupova Batirovna, 2022). Despite the fact that euphemism is a common phenomenon across many languages, western cultures have diverse social mores, historical processes, and cultural traditions. There are a number of obvious differences, particularly in customs and ideas. It is clear that there are distinctions between euphemism use and its cultural connotations. Euphemism effectively conveys a nation's cultural characteristics.

## **Euphemism**

Euphemism refers to polite or mild phrases which substitute unpleasant ways of saying something sad (Safa, 2020; Biryukova & Serezeeva, 2018). Making things sound sweeter than they are. Euphemisms are words or phrases that we use to replace less pleasant words or phrases. It typically has more of a positive connotation than the original phrase and is often less offensive. Common euphemisms are often used for unpleasant situations. Euphemisms are used to describe many other things too (Help Teaching.com “What are Euphemisms?”). Thus, it can be used when talking about someone’s size, mental state, abilities, and more. In other words, whenever someone wants to be less offensive or “soften the blow,” they use a euphemism.

A euphemism is a statement that replaces words or phrases that might be seen as harsh or unfavorable. Euphemisms can be employed in a variety of contexts. It can help someone avoid being overly pushy and encourage polite conversation while genuinely offering a useful resource (Ariani et al., 2020). People frequently still comprehend the meaning of euphemisms even though they are not used as frequently anymore (Lingga & Rangkuti, 2021). In other words, depending on the situation and objectives, euphemisms can be employed for a number of different purposes. Euphemisms are frequently employed for three reasons: to minimize harm, to prevent conflict, and on occasion, to further rhetorical effects.

Euphemisms are commonly employed to avoid directly addressing subjects that can be deemed unpleasant or humiliating, such as death, sexual activity, or bodily excretion. They may be created with sincere intentions or with ulterior motives intended to mislead and confuse people (Yusupova Batirovna, 2022). The most typical euphemisms for death and dying are employed. People could use phrases like "his time was up," "she passed away," or "she was called home before her time" in place of "he died."

When it is employed to make a harsh, unpleasant, or unpalatable reality more tolerable and pleasant, euphemism becomes an accepted and established practise in accordance with the ethical concerns incorporated in its use (Albashir & Alhaj, 2015). Alternatively said, euphemism can be used in casual speech. Help individuals understand word order and pronunciation in different cultural contexts euphemisms based on contexts and interpretive meaning.

## **Type of euphemism**

There are four types of euphemisms: first is euphemisms to make sound sweeter. To make sounds sweeter means that the words are polite and less harsh and common. To make the word into figures of speech, and parables so that no one is offended. For example, I’ve been laid off, to be I’ve been fired. Second is euphemisms in an unpleasant situation. An unpleasant situation means that the situations painful, or annoying in some way, the set of things that are happening and the conditions that exist at a particular time. For example, describe death to be dying. Third is euphemisms in business. Euphemisms business often use when people are not doing well, or they have to fire people. e.g. the company is downsizing to be the company is conducting employee reductions. The fourth is other euphemisms. Other euphemisms are used when talking about someone’s size, mental state, abilities etc. e.g. he’s carrying a few extra

pounds to be he's fat. Euphemisms by origin, euphemism taboos, historical euphemisms, and functional euphemisms (Zarifovna, 2021). Responding to or expressing a person's actions, words, or phrases that appear illogical but being courteous, and respecting the conventions of etiquette perhaps some polite words should be substituted. Furthermore, the decision to use a phrase in a euphemistic manner or to replace it with a suitable alternative relies on the speakers (or writer's) legal standing as well as their wish to express their reaction to the incident (Lingga & Rangkuti, 2021).

The study of euphemisms has long been a staple of literary analysis, especially when it comes to banned words. The interpretation of euphemisms in forbidden language is the subject of studies by a number of scholars. Some studies focus on the definition of euphemisms found in taboo language is specifically being described by researchers (Amendoira & Nascimento, 2023; Khan et al., 2023). Also, euphemisms and dysphemism strategies in Donald Trump's speech at SOTU 2020 described by researchers (Kafi & Degaf, 2021).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study focused on analyzing the used of euphemisms as one type of figurative language. The data source is qualitative, and the method of analysis takes the form of a process of describing, illustrating, analyzing, and summarizing the events or phenomena researched with the purpose of explaining in depth and detail linked to the topic under investigation. Descriptive analysis is used to thoroughly and precisely characterize the phenomena under study. The information was obtained through reading a variety of literary works and the library catalog in order to offer a comprehensive problem.

Besides, this study also focused on analyzing the meaning of each euphemisms in Paulo Coelho's book. This study analyzed every word in Paulo Coelho's book, which contained euphemisms and types of euphemisms are used in selected word by word in book by Paulo Coelho entitled, "The Alchemist" from his One of the most influential writers of time, Paulo Coelho is the author of 30 international bestsellers, including *The Alchemist*, *Brida*, *Veronika Decides to Die*, *Manual of the Warrior of Light*, and *Eleven Minutes*. He is a member of the Brazilian Academy of Letters and a United Nations Messenger of Peace. Paulo is the recipient of 115 international prizes and awards, among them, the Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honor). Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1947, he soon discovered his vocation for writing. He worked as a director, theater actor, songwriter, and journalist. In 1986, a special meeting led him to make the pilgrimage to Saint James Compostela (in Spain). The Road to Santiago was not only a common pilgrimage but a turning point in his existence. A year later, he wrote *The Pilgrimage*, an autobiographical novel that is considered the beginning of his career. Observation method was applied in collecting data for this study.

## Research Design

A qualitative descriptive research methodology was used for this study and a narrative analysis method was used in determining the findings of this study. Narrative analysis method focuses on the language and discourse used in a narrative, as well as the social and cultural context in which it is situated. In narrative analysis method, researcher may examine the use of specific words or phrases, the tone and style of the narrative, or the ways in which social and cultural norms are reflected in the narrative. In doing this study, the researchers gathered the data from a range of books and do library research to get the information. The literature for this study was gathered not just from books but also from periodicals, reference works, and the internet. The book by Paulo Coelho is the focus of this study. To hunt for offensive wording, the researchers scanned the euphemisms line by line. The data was then organized in a table based on the different categories and meanings of euphemisms.

The who, what and where of phenomena are revealed through a variety of data-gathering techniques used in qualitative descriptive research (Turale, 2020). Three stages were taken in

this study's data collected by the researchers. This study uses three procedures to analyze the meaning of the forbidden language in a collection of euphemisms from Paulo Coelho's book: 1) determine the number of euphemisms words contained in used in language; 2) determine the categories of euphemisms; and 3) recognize euphemisms.

### Data Analysis

The data was implemented by observing the used of euphemisms in the Paulo Coelho's book. This study used some steps or technique, for analysing the data, first read the book line by line to look for euphemisms. The researchers then put it in a table and classified based on the types and meanings of euphemisms. Second, identifying how many euphemisms are contained and identifying the types of euphemisms used in the book, and the last is recognizing book in order to interpret percentage of used euphemisms collection from "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

The study discovered that Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist" has 4 (four) different forms of euphemisms. The meanings of euphemisms, their types, and the percentages of those categories that are often used in the book were utilized to generate the table. The 63 euphemisms included in this analysis include 28 to make something sound sweeter, 18 to make something unpleasant seem better, 3 to make something sound better in business, and 9 others (used to describe someone's size, mental condition, talents, etc.).

Table 1  
The meaning of euphemisms

Euphemisms	Page	Meaning	Euphemisms	Page	Meaning
Ruined	3	Laid	Foreheads to the ground	38	Prostrated
Flock	3	Herd	Took up the chant	38	sing along
Sheared	5	Shaved	Wept	39	cried
Nourishment	7	Food	Without a cent	40	no money
Over dozens of years	10	more than decades	Mused	42	ponder
Inexhaustible	10	Endless	Resume	42	ponder
Frightened	12	Scare	Adjusted his clothing	47	fix his clothing, customize his clothing
Irritated	14	Annoyed	Put some money aside	51	savings, save
Dryly	16	Flatly	Get away from the business of the display	53	changes the topic of conversations
Ashamed	17	Embarrassed	Ruefully	53	sad
World's greatest lie	18	biggest lie	Filled with tears	54	moved
Leafing	18	Flip	Have down up	56	has ended
Chanting	18	Song	Seducer of men	57	Tempters
Ignorant	19	lack, less	The city was still sleeping	60	early in the morning, the city is still quiet
Incredible	19	amazing	Wind up	68	finish
Probably	20	possible	Mounted up	72	installed
Leaned over	20	bow	Sun was at its strongest	72	sun hot, sun burning
Yearn	21	miss	Make up his mind	90	make decisions
Achieve	22	reach	Time stood still	92	time stopped
Townspople	22	city dwellers	Evokes love	93	awaken love
Vanished	25	disappear, gone	The setting sun	99	the sun has set
Anxiety	26	worry	Eying the boy	105	targeting

Euphemisms	Page	Meaning	Euphemisms	Page	Meaning
Lame	27	disabled	Immensely relieved	111	very relieved
Slaughter	27	massacre	Not let up	111	do not stop
Veiled	28	hooked	Reiterated	115	Repeated
Omen	28	sign	Daunting	115	Scary
Startled	29	surprised	Life out	116	live in the desert
Insist	30	force	Ride out	116	Drive
Abashed	33	shy, embarrassed	Stopped abruptly	117	stopped suddenly, stunned
Angry stream of words	37	Anger	One is loved because one is loved	122	someone is loved for being loved
His heart squeezed	38	offended	Reaccustomed	123	get used to it
Fell to their knees	38	kneel			

Researchers discovered 63 euphemisms from Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist" in this table. For instance, changing the term wrecked from the book to be laid to make the sound nicer, changing flock to be herded, changing shorn to be shaved, and others.

Table 2  
Type of euphemisms.

Types	Euphemisms	Meaning
To make the sound sweeter	Ruined	laid
	Flock	herd
	Sheared	shaved
	Nourishment	food
	Frightened	scare
	Irritated	annoyed
	Ashamed	embarrassed
	Leafing	flip
	Ignorant	lack, less
	Incredible	amazing
	Leaned over	bow
	Achieve	reach
	Vanished	disappear, gone
	Anxiety	worry
	Lame	disabled
	Veiled	hooked
	Omen	sign
	Startled	surprised
	Wept	cried
	Mused	ponder
	Resume	continue
	Ruefully	sad
	Disembark	down
	Reiterated	repeated
	Inexhaustible	endless
	Dryly	flatly
	Chanting	song
	Yearn	miss
	Townsppeople	city dwellers
	Slaughter	massacre
Insist	force	
In an unpleasant situation	Seemed irritated	looking annoyed
	Angry stream of words	anger
	His heart squeezed	offended
	Fell to their knees	kneel
	Foreheads to the ground	prostrated

Types	Euphemisms	Meaning
	Without a cent	no money
	Adjusted his clothing	fix his clothing, customize his clothing
	Get away from the business of the display	changes topic of conversations
	Filled with tears	moved
	Have down up	has ended
	Seducer of men	tempters
	The city was still sleeping	early in the morning, the city is still quite
	Wind up	Finish
	Mounted up	installed
	Eying the boy	targeting
	Life out	live in the desert
	Abashed	shy, embarrassed
Business	Took up the chant	sing along
	Make up his mind	make decisions
	Ride out	Drive
Other euphemisms (used when talking about someone's size, mental state, abilities, etc)	Stopped abruptly	stopped suddenly, stunned
	Time stood still	time stopped
	Evokes love	awaken love
	The setting sun	the sun has set
	Immensely relieved	very relieved
	Not let up	do not stop
	Daunting	Scary
	One is loved because one is loved	someone is loved for being loved
	Sun was at its strongest	sun hot, sun burning
	Reaccustomed	get used to it
	Put some money aside	savings, save

The researchers discovered four different types of euphemisms. Euphemisms are used to make words seem nicer, such as "nourishment" to refer to food. Feared to be afraid, embarrassed to be ashamed, and more. Second-degree euphemisms include, "Seemed irritated to be looking annoyed," "His heart clenched to be offended," "Foreheads to the ground to be prostrated," and similar expressions in uncomfortable situations. For instance, third euphemisms in business make up his mind to be able to decide, ride out to be able to drive, and abruptly stop to be able to stop or be astonished. Other euphemisms are the last one (used to describe someone's size, mental condition, abilities, etc.). Example Invokes love to awaken love, reaccustomed to become used to it, Time stood still to be time halted, and many more.

Table 3  
The common type of euphemism.

Types	Total words	Percentage
1. To make the sound sweeter	28	44,5%
2. In an unpleasant situation	16	25,3%
3. Business	3	4,8%
4. Other euphemisms (used when talking about someone's size, mental state, abilities, etc.)	9	14,3%

Making a sound more pleasant is the euphemism that appears the most frequently in Paulo Coelho's novel "The Alchemist" (44,5% of the time), followed by an uncomfortable circumstance. 25,3%, 4,8% of business euphemisms, and 14,3% of other euphemisms (used to describe someone's size, mental health, talents, etc.) are all business euphemisms.

## Discussion

Based on the findings, there are some euphemisms used in the book “The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho in order to make the words more polite and to make the words in pleasant way. In the book “The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho, the researchers found out that there are 4 (four) types of euphemisms. There are to make sound sweeter, in an unpleasant situation, in business, and other euphemisms (used when talking about someone’s size, mental state, abilities, etc). The percentage of the most common type of euphemism used in the book is to make sound sweeter with 44,5%.

The discussion of death remains a sensitive topic for many individuals, leading to the use of euphemisms as a means of avoiding direct discourse. This avoidance can be attributed to the fear that death evokes in people (Ariani et al., 2020). To facilitate communication and ease the discomfort associated with death-related discussions, individuals may resort to using familiar, less jarring language (Mohammed & Majeed, 2020). Consequently, various euphemistic expressions have emerged to replace blunt references to death, thereby allowing for the expression of views in a more socially acceptable manner. For instance, euphemisms such as "laid to rest" in place of "ruined" and "annoyed" substituted for "irritated" are common examples of such language substitution. Additionally, other euphemisms such as "nourishment" instead of "food," "afraid" in lieu of "feared," and "ashamed" in place of "embarrassed" may also be employed, as noted in previous studies.

Euphemisms in an unpleasant situation means that the situations are painful, or annoying in some way, the set of things that are happening and the conditions that exist at a particular time (Safa, 2020; Ariani et al., 2020). As researchers found on the book “The Alchemist” by Paulo Coelho such as "Foreheads to the ground to be prostrated," and similar expressions in uncomfortable situations. Describing the situation of someone that felt annoyed with something in the story and also “his heart squeezed” to be offended. It expresses their situation that they have hurt feeling against their relationship.

People who speak the same language are assumed to be able to grasp the meaning of a particular term under the sociality of virtual meaning. Under the characteristics, it is known that we do not know which of the word's features are actualized when the scenario is removed from its context (Anvar et al., 2021). As euphemisms in business that found by the researchers on the Paulo Coelho’s book are “make up his mind” means to be make a decisions, “ride out” means being drive and “stopped abruptly” means to be stunned.

We employ euphemisms in a variety of contexts without giving them much thought, but because there are no set criteria, it may be difficult to categorize them. Different standards, guidelines, or concepts can be used to categorize euphemisms. Unconscious and conscious euphemisms can be used to categorize euphemisms, whether they are used in a good or bad context. The euphemistic meaning—whether it is similar to the original meaning or not—is the standard for categorization. Euphemisms that are used unintentionally and without any intention of deceiving or evading, as their name suggests, are known as unconscious euphemisms. Since the thirteenth century, for instance, the more morbid phrase "graveyard" has been replaced by the word of "cemetery" (Inomovna, 2022).

The varieties of euphemisms used in Paulo Coelho's book "The Alchemist" were identified by the researchers in order to respond to the research question no. 1, "What are the meanings of euphemisms used in "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho?" Table 1 displays the analysis. In order to respond to the research question number 2, "What are the euphemisms used in "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho?" Table 2 displays the analysis, and to respond to the research question number 3, "What are some common euphemisms found in Paulo Coelho's "The Alchemist"?" the analysis is displayed is displayed in table 3.

## CONCLUSION

Euphemisms are significant in literary writing based on the findings. Through a literary description or choice, euphemisms can convey their feelings and bad circumstances to the reader. This makes euphemisms more appealing to read since they sound more nice and more courteous. The findings demonstrate that the euphemisms are used in this study is the most tend to sound nicer. There were 63 records found for euphemisms with a pleasing tone. The least common, only appearing in three indicators, are business euphemisms. This demonstrates that the euphemisms that predominate in "The Alchemist" are sweeter-sounding ones. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that the euphemisms used in Paulo Coelho's book "The Alchemist" are as follows: to make sound sweeter (44,5%), to make unpleasant situations sound better (25,3%), to make unpleasant situations sound better in business (4,8%), and to make someone's size, mental state, abilities, etc. sound better (14,3%).

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