

# The Analysis of Political Euphemism in Joe Biden's "State of The Union" Speech

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the strategic use of political euphemism in Joe Biden's 2023 *State of the Union Address*. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of Allan and Burrige (1991), the research identified the types and analyzed the communicative functions of euphemistic expressions. Employing a descriptive qualitative design supported by frequency counts, the primary data were collected from the official speech transcript. The analysis revealed a total of 70 euphemism instances. The findings show that circumlocution is the most frequently occurring type (36%), suggesting a dominant strategy of using indirect and extended expressions. Conversely, the most dominant communicative function is softening unpleasant realities (61%), indicating that the speech primarily leveraged euphemism to mitigate sensitive political issues and downplay potential criticisms, such as economic challenges and policy shortcomings. These findings demonstrate that euphemism is employed by the political leader not merely for politeness but as a deliberate rhetorical tool to shape public perception, manage sensitive topics, and strategically reinforce the political agenda. This research contributes to the fields of pragmatics and political linguistics by providing insights into the strategic nature of language in political discourse.

**Keywords:** political euphemism, State of the Union Address, discourse analysis, Allan and Burrige framework

## INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential part of human life because it helps people share ideas, feelings, and experiences in their daily interactions. Through language, individuals can express who they are, connect with others, and build meaning from the world around them. Trinh et al. (2017) explain that language serves three main functions. The first is the ideational function, which helps people describe and understand events, experiences, and their surroundings. The second is the interpersonal function, where language is used to interact, build relationships, and influence others. The final function is the textual function, which allows messages to be structured clearly so they make sense and can be communicated effectively. These functions

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show that language is not only a tool for speaking or writing, but also a system that helps humans interpret meaning, negotiate social roles, and create coherence in communication. As Crystal (2003) notes, language is central to human life because it shapes thought, identity, and social relationships, making it inseparable from how individuals experience and understand the world.

As mentioned before, language is a communication system which has a social function and is used to convey specific ideas, feelings, and intentions. It is important to understand that language use is not always neutral. In certain contexts, especially when it deals with power, public policy, or the relationship between the government and society, language can serve as a tool to influence, frame reality, and create social perceptions. This form of language use is known as political language. According to Tian (2006), language in politics is not merely a vehicle of communication, but a tool to persuade, legitimise actions, and shape public opinion. Thus, political language not only conveys information, but can also build images, reduce public resistance, and cover up or soften the true meaning of an action or policy. One of the most common linguistic strategies found in political discourse is the use of

In communication, especially in formal or sensitive contexts, people often do not express ideas in a direct or literal way. Instead, they choose softer, lighter, or more socially acceptable expressions to avoid offending, shocking, or creating emotional discomfort. This kind of intentional language modification is known as *euphemism*. The term *euphemism* originates from the Greek words “eu”, meaning *good* or *well*, and “pheme”, meaning *speech* or *speaking*. Originally, the word referred to “speaking with good omens,” suggesting polite or respectful language (Allan et al., 2012). Over time, the meaning evolved to describe expressions used to replace those considered harsh, taboo, or unpleasant. Euphemism plays a significant role in communication because it allows speakers to address difficult topics, such as death, conflict, disability, war, or political failure, without sounding rude or alarming. According to Allan et al. (2012), euphemism is used to protect both the speaker and the listener by maintaining social harmony, politeness, and emotional comfort. This means euphemism is not merely a linguistic embellishment but a social strategy that reflects cultural values, power relations, and politeness norms within a society.

In many contexts, euphemism may simply function as politeness, such as saying *passed away* instead of *died* or *correctional facility* instead of *prison*. However, in domains where language is tied to power, particularly in politics, euphemism takes on a more strategic role. Researchers such as Crespo-fernández (2014) argue that euphemism in political discourse is often used not only to avoid offence, but to shape public perception, manipulate interpretation, or soften morally questionable actions. Through euphemism, controversial policies can appear reasonable, failures can seem acceptable, and sensitive issues can be reframed in a more favorable light. Because of this unique function, euphemism becomes highly prevalent in political speeches where leaders must communicate complex or controversial messages to diverse audiences while maintaining credibility, authority, and public approval. Therefore, analyzing euphemism in political discourse, especially in speeches delivered by influential figures such as the President of the United States, can

reveal how language is used to construct meaning, manage public sentiment, and strategically frame national and global issues.

The use of euphemism is closely related to the concept of framing in political discourse. Lakoff (2014) argues that political actors do not simply communicate information, but intentionally select linguistic expressions to shape how society understands and responds to particular issues. For instance, phrases like *economic adjustment* rather than *crisis*, or *military intervention* instead of *war*, demonstrate how euphemism can operate as a framing tool that softens negative associations. Through these strategic lexical choices, politicians can repackage controversial or sensitive policies into narratives that appear more acceptable, neutral, or morally justified to the public.

Among the various forms of political communication, public speeches hold a central position. They serve as official platforms for national leaders to present political agendas, justify policy directions, and address both domestic and international audiences. One of the most influential political speeches is the *State of the Union*, the annual address delivered by the President of the United States to Congress and American society. This speech outlines major national issues such as economic performance, healthcare policy, national security, and foreign affairs. Because the speech is formal and highly persuasive, the *State of the Union* often employs euphemistic language to make sensitive or controversial issues more publicly acceptable.

The *State of the Union* address delivered by President Joe Biden on February 7, 2023, contains various sensitive themes such as post-pandemic economic recovery, international conflict, national defence, and domestic reform. Many of these topics are politically contested and carry the potential for criticism. In such contexts, euphemism becomes an effective tool to construct a favorable political image, maintain public trust, and minimize negative interpretation. As stated by Hamilton (2009), euphemism serves as a rhetorical strategy that allows political leaders to build moral legitimacy and reduce public resistance by framing complex or controversial issues in a more acceptable form.

Research on euphemism in political discourse has been conducted in various contexts. For example, Fu (2023) found that euphemism in Chinese political speeches often functions to obscure sensitive topics and maintain government authority. In the Indonesian context, Mulyasari et al. (2022) showed that euphemism in political news discourse serves to soften statements, reduce confrontation, and maintain communicative harmony. Meanwhile, Kafi & Degaf (2021) focused on Donald Trump's State of the Union address and revealed that euphemism functioned not only as a lexical substitution but also as a persuasive tool that shaped ideological positioning within policy communication. However, studies focusing specifically on euphemism in Joe Biden's *State of the Union* address remain limited, especially those employing the classification framework proposed by Allan & Burrige (1991). Therefore, this research is conducted to fill the gap by analyzing the types and functions of euphemisms used in Biden's 2023 *State of the Union* speech.

Thus, this study aims to identify the types of euphemisms and analyze their communicative functions in the speech through the theoretical framework of Allan & Burrige (1991). The analysis is limited only to euphemistic expressions in the selected speech and does not extend to other rhetorical devices or other *State of the Union* addresses.

By conducting this analysis, it is expected that the study will contribute to the understanding of how language is strategically used in political communication and provide insight into the role of euphemism in shaping meaning, constructing political narrative, and influencing public perception. Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to provide benefits for linguistic studies, especially in the fields of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and political linguistics as well as serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in the linguistic strategies used in political speech.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the use of euphemism in Joe Biden's 2023 State of the Union Address. According to Mishra & Alok (2017), qualitative research is appropriate when the aim is to explore meanings, concepts, and patterns in naturally occurring data. This approach was selected because the study focuses on interpreting linguistic phenomena in their natural context rather than measuring them statistically. However, frequency and percentage counts were included to support the interpretation and describe the distribution of euphemism types and functions in numerical form.

The primary data of this research consist of euphemistic expressions taken from the 2023 State of the Union Address delivered by Joe Biden on February 7, 2023. The speech transcript was obtained from the official White House website. To ensure accuracy and contextual understanding, this study also uses the video recording of the speech uploaded by VOA Indonesia on their official YouTube channel. The video is used to confirm pronunciation, intonation, emphasis, gesture, and contextual delivery that may indicate communicative intention. The combination of transcript and audiovisual material allows the data to be interpreted more accurately and comprehensively.

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the main instrument. As stated by Subagyo & Kristian (2023), the researcher plays a central role in collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data. In this study, the researcher identified euphemistic expressions, classified their types, and interpreted their communicative functions using Allan & Burrige's (1991) framework. Supporting instruments included the speech transcript, note-taking sheets, and coding tables used to organize and categorize the data systematically.

Data collection was carried out through several stages. First, the researcher accessed and downloaded the official transcript of Biden's 2023 State of the Union Address. Second, the transcript was read repeatedly in order to understand the content and locate potential euphemistic expressions. Third, the researcher watched the video recording of the speech from VOA Indonesia's YouTube channel several times to observe the context and delivery. Each euphemistic expression found in the speech was marked and recorded in a data table. Finally, the expressions were grouped according to Allan and Burrige's categories. This procedure ensures that the data were collected accurately.

After the euphemistic expressions were collected, the data were analyzed through three stages. First, each expression was categorized according to Allan & Burrige (1991) seven types of euphemism. Second, the communicative functions of each euphemism were identified based on contextual meaning. Third, the results were quantified by counting the

frequency of each type and feature. To express the distribution of euphemism types and functions, the percentage of each category was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Frequency}}{\text{Total Occurrence}} \times 100$$

The results were rounded to the nearest whole number to ensure clarity in presentation. The findings were then presented in tables and described narratively to support interpretation.

## RESULTS

In the State of The Union speech, 126 euphemism samples were analyzed. There are 70 samples of seven types of euphemism and 56 of four functions identified in Allan and Burridge's theory (1991) are present. The most frequently occurring type of euphemism is circumlocution (25 occurrences), followed by metaphor (13 occurrences), jargon (11 occurrences), acronym (7 occurrences), understatement and deletion (each 6 occurrences), borrowing from foreign language with only two occurrences. The most frequently occurring function of euphemism is softening unpleasant realities (34 occurrences), followed by showing politeness and respect (9 occurrences), avoiding taboo or offensive expressions (8 occurrences), and lastly maintaining social harmony and optimism with five occurrences.

*Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Euphemism Types in Biden's 2023 State of the Union Speech*

<b>Types of Euphemism</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Circumlocution</b>	25	36%
<b>Metaphor</b>	13	18%
<b>Jargon</b>	11	16%
<b>Acronym</b>	7	10%
<b>Understatement</b>	6	9%
<b>Deletion</b>	6	9%
<b>Borrowing From Foreign Language</b>	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	70	100%

The quantitative results reveal a clear distribution of euphemism types used in Joe Biden's 2023 State of the Union speech. As shown in Table 4.1, circumlocution is the most frequently used form of euphemism, accounting for 36% of the total data (25 occurrences). This suggests that Biden frequently used indirect and extended expressions to soften or obscure sensitive issues, particularly topics related to national policy and international conflict. Metaphor (18%) appears as the second most common type, followed by jargon (16%) and acronym (10%). These findings indicate that the speech employed several implicit rhetorical strategies and institutional terminology, likely intended to present political agendas more strategically and reduce potential negative interpretation among the public.

Meanwhile, understatement and deletion both occur at the same frequency (9%). These forms reflect deliberate minimization or omission of explicit information, demonstrating efforts to downplay controversial issues or avoid direct reference to potentially sensitive terms. Borrowing from foreign language is the least frequent type with only 2% of occurrences, indicating that linguistic importation was not a dominant euphemism strategy in this speech. The visual representation in Figure 4.1 also supports the numerical pattern in the table, demonstrating a noticeable gap between highly frequent types such as circumlocution and less dominant categories such as understatement, deletion, and borrowing. Overall, the data suggests that Biden strategically employed euphemism primarily through linguistic expansion and conceptual abstraction rather than lexical substitution from external language sources.

*Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Euphemism Function in Biden's 2023 State of the Union Speech*

<b>Features of Euphemism</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Softening Unpleasant Realities</b>	34	61%
<b>Showing Politeness and Respect</b>	9	16%
<b>Avoiding Taboo or Offensive Expressions</b>	8	14%
<b>Maintaining Social Harmony and Optimism</b>	5	9%
<b>Total</b>	56	100%

The data presented in Table 2 show that euphemistic expressions in Joe Biden's 2023 State of the Union Address serve different communicative purposes, with varying degrees of frequency. The most dominant function identified is softening unpleasant realities, accounting for 61% of all euphemism occurrences. This indicates that Biden used euphemistic language primarily to mitigate or downplay sensitive political issues, such as economic challenges, security threats, or policy shortcomings. The dominance of this function reflects a strategic attempt to frame uncomfortable information in a less confrontational and more acceptable manner for the audience, which aligns with the persuasive function of political rhetoric. The second most frequent function is showing politeness and respect, with 16% of the data. Euphemisms in this category were commonly used when referring to marginalized groups, political opponents, or foreign nations. This suggests that Biden attempted to maintain diplomatic tone and uphold political decorum, which is consistent with the expectation that political speeches should convey professionalism and inclusivity.

Meanwhile, euphemisms categorized as avoiding taboo or offensive expressions account for 14% of the findings. This category reflects Biden's effort to avoid direct mention of potentially controversial or emotionally sensitive subjects, such as conflict, disease, disability, or moral judgment. The presence of this function shows that the speech also serves

to protect the speaker and audience from linguistic discomfort, thereby preserving public sentiment. The least frequent category is maintaining social harmony and optimism, with 9% of occurrences. Although fewer in number, euphemisms in this category play an important role in constructing a hopeful narrative and reinforcing national solidarity. Their presence suggests that Biden strategically balanced realism with optimism, using a euphemistic tone to project encouragement, unity, and confidence in the country's future.

Overall, the distribution of the euphemism function demonstrates that Biden's speech employed euphemistic expressions not merely for linguistic variation, but as a deliberate rhetorical tool to shape audience perception, manage sensitive topics, and reinforce political agenda. The dominance of softening strategies reflects the context of governance and public accountability, while the presence of politeness and optimism aligns with the persuasive and unifying nature of presidential discourse. Based on the distribution in Table 1 and Table 2, it can be inferred that euphemism in Biden's speech functions dominantly to soften sensitive or potentially negative political realities, particularly concerning economic, social, and international issues. Meanwhile, the use of euphemism as politeness strategies and for maintaining optimism, although less frequent, shows an intentional attempt to create a positive tone and avoid harsh or confrontational language.

## 1. Types of Euphemism

### 1.1 Circumlocution

Circumlocution is used to avoid direct mention of a subject by replacing it with indirect wording. In the speech, the phrase "my predecessor" appears 13 times, functioning as a repeated circumlocution referring to former president Donald Trump. Instead of naming him directly, Biden consistently uses this indirect term to create distance while still making the reference clear.

Datum 1

*"Many of you in this chamber and my predecessor are promising to pass a national ban on reproductive freedom. My God, what freedom else would you take away?"*

The expression "my predecessor" avoids the potentially inflammatory impact of directly mentioning Trump's name. By repeating this indirect reference, Biden maintains a diplomatic tone while still positioning himself in contrast to the previous administration. This repetition also reinforces rhetorical emphasis without triggering a personal attack.

### 1.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is used to express meaning through figurative language rather than literal description. In euphemistic use, metaphors help soften sensitive or difficult topics by presenting them in symbolic terms

## Datum 2

*“Again and again I see the contest between competing forces in the battle for the soul of our nation.”*

In this example, the word “soul” is used metaphorically. It does not refer to the literal human *soul* or *spiritual essence*, but instead stands for the identity, values, and moral character of the United States. Rather than explicitly stating *“the nation’s political identity is at risk”* or *“our democratic values are under threat,”* Biden uses the metaphor “the soul of our nation” to soften the statement and make it emotionally resonant.

### 1.3 Jargon

Jargon refers to specialized or technical terminology used within a particular field. When used euphemistically, jargon can make issues sound more neutral, professional, or less emotionally.

## Datum 3

*“No, I’m not joking. It’s called shrinkflation.”*

The term “shrinkflation” functions as jargon. Instead of directly stating that companies are reducing product size while keeping prices the same, which may sound accusatory or emotionally loaded, Biden uses a technical economic term to explain the issue. The jargon makes the criticism sound factual and economic rather than confrontational or moralistic.

### 1.4 Acronym

Acronyms often function euphemistically by shortening terms that may sound technical, sensitive, or socially uncomfortable when spoken in full sentence.

## Datum 4

*“Fourteen months, 14 months ago, she and her husband welcomed a baby girl thanks to the miracle of I.V.F.”*

The acronym I.V.F. replaces the longer phrase *In Vitro Fertilization*, which refers to the medical process of fertilizing an egg outside the human body. Using the acronym softens the explicit biological and reproductive implications of the procedure. Instead of highlighting topics related to sexual reproduction or medical intervention which may be controversial among certain audiences, the abbreviation makes the term sound neutral, clinical, and policy-oriented.



### 1.5 Understatement

Understatement is a euphemistic strategy that intentionally downplays or minimizes an issue to soften its impact or make the message sound modest rather than exaggerated.

Datum 5

*“It doesn’t make the news, but in thousands of cities and towns, the American people are writing the greatest comeback story never told.”*

The phrase “It doesn’t make the news” functions as an understatement. Biden minimizes the visibility of national improvement by suggesting that progress is simply overlooked, rather than explicitly stating that media outlets ignore or refuse to report positive developments. This indirect phrasing avoids sounding accusatory toward the press or creating direct confrontation.

### 1.6 Deletion

Deletion is a euphemism strategy where a word or detail is intentionally omitted to make the expression less direct, softer, or less confrontational.

Datum 6

*“Like most Americans, I believe Roe v. Wade got it right. I thank Vice President Harris for being an incredible leader, defending reproductive freedom and so much more.”*

Biden employs the phrase “defending reproductive freedom” as a euphemism for the highly controversial issue of abortion rights. Instead of explicitly using the word “abortion”, which may provoke emotional, moral, and political reactions, he frames it as *freedom* as a positively connoted concept aligned with democracy, autonomy, and civil rights. This lexical strategy softens the topic, increases acceptability, and positions the policy as protection rather than interference.

### 1.7 Borrowing from Foreign Language

Borrowing from foreign or technical terminology is a euphemistic strategy where specialized, legal, or non-English terminology is used to replace more explicit or emotionally charged expressions.

Datum 7

*“I signed the PACT Act, one of the most significant laws ever, helping millions of veterans exposed to toxins who now are battling more than 100 different cancers.”*

The term “PACT Act” reflects borrowing characteristics because it adopts a Latin-derived legal register commonly used in U.S. legislative naming. The word “Act” itself comes from the Latin term *actus*, meaning a formal decision or decree, which contributes

to the formal and institutional tone of the expression. The full name, “Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act,” is a technical legal construction rather than everyday language. Instead of explicitly stating that the government is addressing long-term harm from toxic chemical exposure among veterans, a phrasing that could evoke blame, guilt, or negative sentiment. The expression is replaced by a formal legislative acronym.

## 2. Functions of Euphemism

### 2.1 Softening Unpleasant Realities

Softening unpleasant realities refers to a euphemistic strategy in which the speaker presents difficult, harsh, or negative situations using milder, less confrontational language. The purpose is to reduce the emotional impact of troubling information, minimize public anxiety, and maintain a more positive or neutral tone while still addressing sensitive political issues.

Datum 8

*“We’re working tirelessly to bring the hostages home and to secure an enduring ceasefire in Gaza.”*

Biden uses euphemistic framing to soften the gravity of the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Phrases such as “working tirelessly” and “secure an enduring ceasefire” convey effort and optimism without directly highlighting the severity of violence, political tension, or the difficulties involved in negotiation processes. Likewise, the mention of “bring the hostages home” avoids explicit reference to the dangers, suffering, or fatal consequences associated with hostage situations.

### 2.2 Showing Politeness and Respect

This euphemistic feature involves expressions that promote politeness, honor, and positive regard toward individuals or groups.

Datum 9

*“Pass the Equality Act, and my message to transgender Americans is this: I have your back.”*

Biden addresses transgender Americans with supportive and affirming language. The statement “I have your back” acts as a respectful and empathetic gesture, softening the sensitive and often polarizing topic of transgender rights. Instead of presenting the issue in confrontational or political terms, the speaker emphasizes solidarity, protection, and acknowledgment.



### 2.3 Avoiding Taboo or Offensive Expressions

Avoiding taboo or offensive expressions, as it reduces the directness of the topic and avoids language that may provoke strong negative reactions among certain audiences.

Datum 10

*“Many of you in this chamber, and my predecessor, are promising to pass a national ban on reproductive freedom.”*

The issue being referenced is abortion; a topic considered morally sensitive, politically charged, and socially taboo in many contexts. Direct references such as *abortion rights* or *access to abortion* may trigger controversy or emotional intensity. The phrase “reproductive freedom” serves as a euphemistic expression that avoids the potentially offensive or taboo term *abortion*. By using a more abstract and positively connoted phrase, Biden reframes the issue in terms of personal liberty rather than the more polarizing medical or moral dimensions of abortion.

### 2.4 Maintaining Social Harmony and Optimism

Maintaining social harmony and optimism refers to euphemistic expressions that aim to promote unity, encourage collective spirit, and generate positive emotional resonance within the audience.

Datum 11

*“We’re the United States of America. And there’s nothing beyond our capacity when we act together.”*

This expression emphasizes unity, collective strength, and national optimism. Biden avoids referencing political division, conflict, or failures, and instead uses uplifting language to promote a sense of shared identity and purpose. Phrases such as “*nothing beyond our capacity*” and “*when we act together*” function euphemistically by diverting attention away from existing social or political tensions and highlighting a harmonious, unified vision of the nation.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that euphemism plays an important role in shaping how Joe Biden delivers sensitive information in his State of the Union speech. The way euphemism appears in the speech suggests that it is used intentionally rather than randomly. The dominance of circumlocution as the most frequent type and softening unpleasant realities as the main function suggests that Biden systematically employs these indirect strategies. Biden softens potentially controversial topics, such as economic issues, conflict, or domestic policies, through indirect and more positive expressions. Allan & Burrige (1991) explanation that euphemism helps speakers avoid harsh, offensive, or threatening

wording while maintaining a positive and acceptable tone, thereby serving as a key mitigation strategy in high-stakes political discourse.

These findings are strongly consistent with earlier studies on political rhetoric and persuasion. For example, (Kafi & Degaf, 2021) found that Donald Trump also used euphemism in his State of the Union Address to make sensitive policy issues sound more appealing. Their study showed that euphemism was used to protect the speaker's image and avoid negative reactions, which aligns with the overall communicative goal observed in Biden's speech. Likewise, (Firdausi Nuzula, 2020) demonstrated that Trump's euphemistic expressions were carefully chosen to influence audience perception and maintain authority. This similarity suggests that euphemism is a common rhetorical strategy among political leaders addressing large public audiences, regardless of their political affiliation or ideology.

However, the specific type of euphemism employed in this study provides a distinguishing characteristic of Biden's rhetoric. While many leaders utilize various lexical substitutions, the high frequency of circumlocution in Biden's speech highlights a strategic preference for structural or syntactic euphemisms. This preference is supported by research focusing specifically on Biden's language choices. (Tymoshchuk, 2023) showed that Biden used euphemisms to frame topics related to the Russia–Ukraine conflict in a less confrontational way, especially when referring to military action and international alliances. Similarly, (Gonzales, 2024) argued that Biden's language choices reflect deliberate rhetorical planning aimed at shaping how the audience understands and emotionally responds to information. This systematic reliance on extended, indirect phrases suggests a strategy of diplomatic distance and conceptual abstraction to address challenges without being linguistically confrontational.

Additional research further strengthens this understanding of Biden's consistent rhetorical style. (Siregar, 2021) found that Biden used euphemism as part of an ideological framing strategy, highlighting unity and positive values while minimizing negative implications. (Djimet, 2022) observed similar euphemistic strategies in Biden's remarks related to sensitive national events, where language was used to maintain stability and optimism. (Bagaskoro, 2021) also found that Biden's rhetorical style favors connotative and reassuring wording, particularly when addressing topics involving unity and public trust. These multiple recent studies confirm that the patterns observed in the present study, especially the frequent use of structural softening techniques are hallmarks of Biden's established communication strategy when addressing national challenges or issues requiring public reassurance.

When compared with studies conducted in the Indonesian context, such as those by (Mulyasari et al., 2020) and (Jaganegara & Putu, 2023), differences appear in the type of linguistic strategy used. Research on Indonesian political communication shows that lexical euphemisms like metaphor and lexical substitution tend to dominate, especially in written media. In contrast, Biden frequently uses syntactic euphemisms (circumlocution). This difference may be influenced by the nature of the genre; political speeches allow more space for narrative tone, emotional delivery, and persuasive emphasis through extended rhetorical devices, while written media may prioritize brevity and concise lexical choices.

Overall, this discussion shows that euphemism in Biden's speech functions as a strategic tool to build credibility, maintain politeness, and shape public perception. Rather than hiding information, euphemism helps create a more positive framing of political reality. These patterns are consistent with global research on political communication, demonstrating that euphemism remains a powerful rhetorical resource for leaders who must communicate complex or sensitive issues to diverse audiences. The dominance of circumlocution in this address further specifies the rhetorical strategy employed by Biden, marking it as a style prioritizing measured distance and mitigation.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the types and analyze the communicative functions of political euphemism utilized by President Joe Biden in his 2023 State of the Union Address, framed by the theoretical lens of Allan and Burrige (1991). The analysis confirmed that euphemism is employed not randomly, but as a deliberate rhetorical strategy to manage sensitive political discourse.

The findings provide clear answers to the research questions. A total of 70 instances of euphemism were identified, with circumlocution emerging as the dominant type (36%). Furthermore, the most prominent communicative function was softening unpleasant realities (61%). This suggests that Biden's primary linguistic goal was to mitigate public anxiety and manage controversial topics such as economic challenges, policy failures, or international conflicts by using indirect, descriptive, and measured phrases rather than stark, confrontational language.

The results of this study contribute theoretically and practically. From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the view that euphemism functions within both semantic and pragmatic dimensions of political discourse. It supports previous studies showing that euphemism has strategic value in constructing ideology, managing interpersonal relations, and controlling the emotional impact of political messaging. From a practical perspective, this study may assist students, educators, political observers, and language practitioners in understanding how linguistic choices influence public interpretation. The findings also highlight how speeches delivered by political leaders can be analyzed through linguistic frameworks to reveal strategic communication patterns.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the data were limited to a single speech, which means the findings may not fully represent Biden's overall rhetorical style or euphemism usage across different contexts. Second, the analysis relied on a qualitative descriptive approach, which offers depth but not comparative statistical generalization. Third, this study focused only on euphemism and did not explore dysphemism or other rhetorical devices that may interact with euphemistic expression, such as metaphorical framing, persuasion strategies, or emotional appeals.

Based on these limitations, future research could expand the scope of analysis by examining multiple speeches across different time periods or political situations to determine whether euphemism usage remains consistent or context-dependent. Future studies may also benefit from combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, such as corpus linguistics or computational analysis, to identify frequency patterns more precisely. Additionally,

researchers could explore comparative analyses between different political leaders or between spoken and written political discourse to identify cultural, stylistic, and ideological variations. Examining the interplay between euphemism and dysphemism may also provide deeper insight into how political language softens, intensifies, or manipulates meaning in public communication.

Lastly, this study highlights the important role of euphemism in political communication and demonstrates how language functions strategically in shaping public understanding. Euphemism remains a relevant linguistic phenomenon and continues to offer meaningful insights for discourse analysis, political studies, and applied linguistics.

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