



Political Language under Pragmatic Scrutiny: A Euphemistic Analysis of Boris Johnson Three-Tier Covid-19 National Lockdown Announcements

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Article History	Abstract
Received: 26 Aug 2023 Revised: 12 Sept 2023 Accepted: 29 Oct 2023	<i>More than a year elapsed since the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak all over the world including the United Kingdom. Unprecedentedly, several measures were accounted for in all life domains in order to contain the spread of the virus and adhere to its pervasive nature in a hopeful attempt for survival. So far, Politics and politicians have been under scrutiny from several sectors in society to counteract the ferocity of the Coronavirus extend and its detrimental effects on the normal flow of life. In UK, British citizens desperately anticipated behind their screens the news briefings in which the Prime Minister Boris Johnson updates his people on the high-level of Covid-19 stats that launched a decision towards UK confinement. Therefore, the present research aims at pragmatically analyzing Johnson's three-tier national lockdown announcements during Covid-19 outbreak vis-à-vis the use of the highlighted 13 types of Euphemism along with its six functions. Thus, the objective of the study is to uncover the functional power Euphemism displayed in the PM speeches based on the frequent use of Euphemism. It therefore follows a quantitative-qualitative analysis of the three lockdown announcement speeches which revealed that six types of euphemism were used to imply positive intentions, whereas four types served a negative function and meaning.</i>
CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0	Keywords: Boris Johnson, functions of euphemism, pragmatic analysis, types of euphemism.

1. INTRODUCTION

In its sui generis nature, political language could be considerably manipulative as well as ideologically disruptive when addressed towards a highly-urgent social and political issue. This can be tailored to the pressure under which politicians are placed and through which they are battling to devise strategies and solutions that might satisfy the social claims. Recently, Covid-19 outbreak with its uncatered-for waves became a continuing concern within the World and the UK politics where all preplanned measures to contain the virus became questionable and incredulous. The adamant disposition of the social mass on urgently containing the virus in order to minimize its impact on social practices tolls the bell for politicians to contain the urgencies and respond to the mass's needs.

As a representative of the British government and politics, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson has held several news briefings to announce the national lockdown in regard of the recent happenings brought about by the Coronavirus spread in different parts of the UK. In general, his briefing speeches adopted a mitigated language variation in which pragmatics features take place and regenerated multiple forms and intentions. Hitherto, three-tier UK national lockdowns were announced in various intervals that compelled the British PM to be the locus of interest of the media where he felt in debt of constantly explaining the situation. At the peak of each Covid-19 wave in the UK, the few words uttered by the PM in front of the cameras in order to announce the confinement

period were regarded as an effective strategy to avoid poignancy of social and political events as well as to instill people's awareness of the safety measures to stick by.

The objective of this study is to shed light on the use of all types of Euphemism in the three announcements of the British PM Boris Johnson in his news briefings about the UK Coronavirus national lockdown. On the one hand, it explains the thirteen types of Euphemism with regard to the political language politicians refer to when addressing a social or a political event. It even aims at bridging the gap between political strategies, language, and pragmatics in a complementary interrelationship that goes hand in hand with political and linguistic objectives. On the other hand, the study is an attempt to unravel the functions under which politicians use euphemistic expressions with their various types in addressing their speeches. It also investigates the secret power of Euphemism in mitigating the impact of socio-political issues and thereby serving political interests. Hence, the present research is carried out to answer the following:

1. What types of Euphemism are the most referred to in Boris Johnson announcements?
2. For what pragmatic purpose does Boris Johnson refer to euphemism in his announcements?

he above questions lead us to question the purpose behind the common use of Euphemism in political language and how politicians resort to this strategy to contain social claims and dodge the effects that might spring from. To conduct this study and to reach traced objectives, we hypothesize that Boris Johnson Covid-19 national lockdown announcements are characterized by the excessive use of types of Euphemism with negative functions to disclaim the full responsibility of controlling the Coronavirus widespread in the country; or Boris Johnson Covid-19 national lockdown announcements display rationality in positively using types of Euphemism for the function of lessening the social and psychological impact of the virus spread in the country.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Politics and Language

Politics is commonly hackneyed as the struggle for power between different parties in order to conduct specific ideas, interests, and actions. In this respect, language plays a decisive role. As a matter of fact, language dominates over different political actions and events. Thereupon, the study of political language has been a focal point for decades; as linguists and discourse analysts strived to untangle the distinct features, aspects, and qualities of the eloquence politicians tend to include within their speeches. According to the novelist Angela Carter "Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation". [1] In fact, language is a crucial and prevailing factor in political discourse, broadly, and political speeches narrowly. It gives us a transparent lens through which we see political reality. However, political language has lost its natural essence, nowadays, as its explanatory power has turned to a threatening to the genuineness of life events. It is, indeed, very common that political interaction frequently requires a sort of impressive language bent on a set of persuasive arguments that are supposed to portray a political reality. Politicians usually tend to use conversational tactics and strategies with which they can manipulate language and handily transmogrify people's minds and beliefs. In this vein, Orwell wrote in his essay *Politics and the English language* that "political language -- and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists -- is designed to make lie sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind". [2] Therefore, the language of politics is determined to be vague, complex, and much more a goal-oriented.

Euphemism

Being the subject of its epoch, euphemism dug its path to be a dominant part in social intercourse and a positive strategy in building and maintaining relationships. Euphemism is a Greek term of two constituents; the first is 'eu' which means 'good or well' and the second is 'pheme' which refers to 'speech', regardless of the suffix 'ism' which is attributed to the act of doing something (Macmillan Dictionaries). [3] Broadly speaking, euphemism can be presented as written or verbal utterances, stretches of words that act as a protector screen to militate against flippant and offensive language. According to Wilson, euphemisms are "words with meaning or sounds thought somehow to be nicer, clearer or more elevated and so used as substitutes for words deemed unpleasant, crude or ugly in sound or sense".[4] Along with the same line, Allan and Burrige defined euphemism as "alternatives to dispreferred expressions, and are used in order to avoid possible loss of face".[5]

[1] Angela Carter, *Nights at the circus*, (New York, Viking, 1983), 77.

[2] Orwell, George. *Politics and the English Language*, (2013), .

[3] *Macmillan English Dictionary*, (2009).

[4] Kenneth Wilson, *The Columbia guide to standard American English* (New York, Columbia University Press 1993), 84.

[5] Keith Allan and Kate Burrige, *Euphemism & dysphemism: Language used as shield and weapon* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991), 11.

In other words, euphemisms are expressions that are used to eschew other expressions that are deemed beyond the pale. They are used to avert abhorrent, abominable, and unhappy words and expressions where they replace them with more acceptable, friendly, and less outrageous ones. Eschholz stated that “a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication”. [6] Crisp added:

Euphemisms are not, as many people think, useless verbiage for that which can and should be said bluntly; they are like secret agents on a delicate mission, they must airily pass by a stinking mess with barely so much as a nod of the head. Euphemisms are unpleasant truths wearing diplomatic cologne. [7]

Euphemism is part and parcel of every language and culture; people resort to this strategy as a linguistic shelter to protect them from the effrontery of explicit words and events and embellish their wordings.

It is agreed that euphemism is universal and not constrained to any specific language or culture. This is because of the decisive role euphemism plays when it defers to peoples’ emotions by exploiting the available potency of language. Brown and Levinson claimed that “Euphemisms are a universal feature of language usage”. [8] However, the universality of the term does not prevent differences from coming out to the surface which, in turns, might emerge from different beliefs, styles, behaviors, and customs. These differences rarely cause problems of misunderstanding when trying to achieve a cross-cultural interaction. Though euphemism may differ from one community to another, the main fields where euphemism is summoned are generally indistinguishable encompassing death, sex, and body parts. Death, for instance, is an avoidable social norm that should be lightened and dealt with more cautiously as it is a compelling psychological subject.

In all aspects of language, as euphemism is part of all languages, it is very needful and useful in the English language as well. In the same manner, English euphemism supplies honorable aims and speakers apply this strategy with good intention which is not to harass or affront someone and to use pleasant expressions. The standards by which English society works appear to be the apparent clarification of its harmony and consensus about using euphemism in daily life. Basing on medical research as a proof, Keyes and Herr call this automatic use of the strategy a “euphemizing instinct”. [9]

Objectives of Euphemism

Making a good form of things, literally, can be a convention, a needed dexterity, or a mission in social life. A case in point is euphemism, a strategy that can be used for two entirely distinct purposes across different cultures and various situations. Euphemism as defined is a medium of both compliance and manipulation. In some contexts, they are employed to escape humiliation and the direct citation of offensive and displeasing language. In other contexts, they are useful to magnify the significance and the status of people and happenings. They are even used to alleviate and improve the sequel of consequences of events or facts, for example, *wife-beating* is referred to as *domestic violence* or *spousal abuse*. This form can be mainly found in political and military contexts where morally and legally undesirable events are mollified to become complaisant and harmless. For instance, political and military expressions like ‘tea party’ and ‘birthday party’ are mitigating to describe forms of torture, shedding the blood of innocent and unarmed people in a war is called *collateral damage*, *invasion* is referred to as a *rescue mission*, and *bombings* as *surgical strikes*.

In political language, euphemism is a sword of two edges; it can be used for honest or malicious aims. According to Rawson, “when euphemisms are used to purposely conceal our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears, and shames, they become ‘doubletalk’ designed to mislead and are convenient words for people who lie about what they are doing”. [10] He also claimed that both the addresser and the addressee, when approving to these forms of euphemisms, are considered both participants in the intrigue. Euphemisms are commonly used to conceal the conduct that trespasses social standards or ‘political correctness’. Political language is fraught with euphemisms that are used to veil reality or to distort truthful brutal events; many political topics and themes call for creating new forms of euphemisms running away from the embarrassments and the effrontery of occurring events. In general, euphemisms can be used for the amelioration of what appears to be unacceptable or the deception and manipulation of events that seems to be inevitable according to the actual situation or context.

Types of Euphemism

[⁶] Paul Eschholz, *Language awareness: Readings for college writers* (Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 512.

[⁷] Quentin Crisp, *Manners from heaven: A divine guide to good behavior* (New York, Harper & Row, 1984), 138.

[⁸] Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (Cambridge shire, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 216.

[⁹] Keyes, Ralph and Herr, Stephen. “Connected Thoughts”. *The Antioch Review* (2010): 234-235.

[¹⁰] Hugh Rawson, *A dictionary of euphemisms & other doubletalk: Being a compilation of linguistic fig leaves and verbal flourishes for artful users of the English Language*, (New York, Crown, 1981), 28-29.

During the last few decades, several research works emphasized the use of Euphemism that landed itself better in political language as an influential strategy. The latter dressed in various forms that were eventually classified by linguists into standard types and thereby reckoned as effective pragmatic tools to deliver meaning. As part of the whole, Allan and Burridge introduced 13 types of Euphemism that are explained and referred to in conducting the present research study [4]:

Metaphor. Metaphors are also referred to as figurative expressions where an analogy takes place between two elements in language having no less than one similar semantic or symbolic characteristic. As a regular type of Euphemism, metaphors can be used to describe both pleasant and unpleasant actions and events under a concealed meaning by rather referring to a more softened language. A case in point is using the expression *to go to the happy hunting grounds* to refer to *dying* which exemplifies going to a much better place.

Hyperbole. Hyperbole or overstatement is a Euphemistic expression which became widely used in politics and that has an extensive power of ameliorating the unpleasant and shunning flippant language. Thus, this type of euphemism considerably depends on semantic and linguistic exaggerations where the intended meaning is overstated by resorting to more positive connotations. Using the overstatement *flight to glory* is an illustrative example of hyperbole which means *death* in which the meaning of heaven is exaggerated in the term *glory*.

Circumlocution (periphrasis). One more type of Euphemism that plays an indispensable role in altering the pejorative meaning of any language is circumlocution. The term refers to the excessive use of abundant language to refer to a single meaning where fewer expressions would serve the purpose. Circumlocution is employing longer expressions rather than certain terms in conveying a simple meaning. They illustrated its use by referring to *garbage* as a *postconsumer secondary material*; or *solid human waste* as a euphemistic substitute for *feces*.

Acronym. As a linguistic form that could be used in all public domains, acronyms could also be taken as a Euphemistic strategy in political language. Hence, an acronym is reading the initials of several words in an expression to form a readable term that can be pronounced as one word. There are numerous illustrations of acronyms both formal and informal. The former could be used to refer to names of organizations or long scientific terms like in the examples *UNESCO* for *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural organization*; or *SARS* for *Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome*, whereas the latter could be found on the internet as way of shortening language and saving time like in *LOL* which means *Laughing Out Loud*. [11]

Omission. Using omission is another form of cutting out negative connotations which is a type of Euphemism. As the term refers to, omission is excluding a part of an expression that might indicate a taboo word like in the example *I need to go* which omits the taboo word *loo*. This type of Euphemism can also be used in typing on social media or sending electronic messages where the omission touches all the letters in the word except the initial. The word *Shit* is a vulgar language that could be typed as *S---* to mitigate its derogatory effect.

Synecdoche. This vastly known and used type of Euphemism is based on word substitution and can be classified into two further strategies; the general-for-specific and the part-of-the-whole. The former emphasizes a general idea which might embrace various sub-ideas including the intended meaning like in *going to bed* for *having sex*, whereas the latter adopts a partial reference to an idea and disregards other contextual ideas that might add more general meaning like in the example *I've got cold* which overlooks having cough, fever, or shiver along with it.

Litotes (understatement). Litotes are considered to be in vogue for their uncomplicated use that could be accessible to any lay-speaker of English language. The term signifies the use of the opposite word which is generally formulated using a prefix to refer to a specific term. For instance, we might use the word *dishonest* to refer to *liar*; *unstable* as a replacement for *crazy*; *untidy* for *messy*.

Idiom. Idioms are highly-acknowledged linguistic and euphemistic strategy for their powerful connotation and influential role that might bring about considerable change to the speaker's fluency. They are a group of two or more words that altogether form a single meaning which can never be established when words are used separately. Idioms are commonly used in all receptive and productive language skills and are emphasized for a more euphemistic and figurative language when tackling unpleasant topics. For example, we might use the expressions *break a leg* and *fingers crossed* to wish someone luck instead of just saying *good luck*.

[11] *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/culture>

Jargon. Jargons are roundabout strategies that are employed by politicians to conceal forward meaning and sound more professional. They refer to the use of technical terms related to specific subject speciality that a lay-person would find challenging to decipher. Jargons could be either formulated using advanced rather than usual terms in the English language or by borrowing certain words especially from other ancient languages such as the case of Latin and Greek. For instance, we might refer to money counterfeit as *money laundry*.

Metonymy. Metonymy is one of the strongholds politicians refer to in order to prevaricate the effrontery language might display. It is a way of shortening the word density in an expression by using fewer parts that could summarize the whole meaning without affecting its semantic connotation. An actual illustration of metonymy is expressing your admiration for Shakespeare books and novels by saying *I read Shakespeare*.

Clipping. Clipping is the last type of Euphemism highlighted as an efficient tool in attenuating the pernicious forms of language that might violate the social and cultural norms. The word refers to dropping a part of a longer word or expression that might provide the same meaning but with less threatening effect on social image. A well-known example is the word *brassiere* which is a woman's underwear and which can be clipped as *bra*.

Remodeling. This specific Euphemistic strategy is used to manipulate the pronunciation of a certain word by creating a phonologically similar term but with a totally different meaning to cover its pejorative nature. This strategy is mostly recognized for the phonological alteration and distortion of the uttered word. A common example is the use of the word *shoot* to mean *shit* which is not culturally or socially acceptable.

Reduplication. Reduplication is a highly-functional strategy that contributes to the euphemization of taboo language in particular with more pragmatically acceptable terms. It is the verbal repetition of a letter or a part of the word to formulate a meaningful term with polite connotation where the derogatory meaning is substituted. One example is a substitution for the word *testicles* is *twiddle-diddle* where the last syllable is duplicated and the face-threatening term is secreted.

Functions of Euphemism

The concept of Euphemism as a pragmatic device has gradually evolved to cover a set of functions speakers intend when referring to unpleasant language. Kate Burridge [12] introduced six fundamental functions Euphemism might hold within its folds in reserving social image and cultural norms. According to its highlighted objectives, the present study classifies Kate's six functions into two major ones; positive Euphemism for mitigating the impact of language and negative Euphemism for disavowing from responsibilities:

Positive euphemism

The protective euphemism – to shield and to avoid offence. One of the major features for using Euphemism is to protect the linguistic formality of the situation within which speakers cooperate to keep communication mobilized. It provides a shield for interlocutors to dodge poignant language in topics that would be pragmatically and linguistically implausible to tackle. Thus, protective euphemism caters for the manipulation of offensive language by taking a linguistic side road to the intended meaning that would be acute if spoken straightforward. For instance, referring to private body parts, diseases, negative feelings, sexual intercourse, religion, death and so on needs a great deal of linguistic friendliness in order to evade emotional sensibility and instability.

The cohesive euphemism – to show solidarity and to help define the gang. The cohesive Euphemism is meant to extend the understanding of taboo language across societies and various cultures. Thus, this function shares unacceptable taboo that is underlined by distinct cultural norms in the form of mitigated language. It therefore applies solidarity to the acquisition of novel linguistic deviations in a society by familiarizing outsiders of its limitations and social conventions. Because what seems to be acceptable in one community could be rejected in another, Euphemism plays the role of conveying taboo language connotation under a disguised linguistic form.

The ludic euphemism – to have fun and to entertain. Euphemism is also believed to have an amusing nature when referring to offensive language which is generally a creative way of dealing with taboos. Instead of selecting a commonly-used euphemistic expression to substitute a taboo word, people tend to create an analogical language that could entertainingly convey the same meaning. An illustrative example of naming a *serial killer* is *a person with hard-to-meet needs*.

[12] Kate Burridge, "Euphemism and Language Change: The Sixth and Seventh Ages", *Lexis*, 7 (2012): 67-71.

Negative euphemism

The underhand euphemism – to mystify and to misrepresent. Another useful function which is commonly employed in politics and rhetoric is the underhand Euphemism. The latter serves the purpose of adding vagueness and indirectness to the intended meaning by not covering the whole truth or misrepresenting facts in a given context. Much uncertainty might be the result of using this function as it obviously plays with the offensive meaning to the degree of losing its credibility. Euphemistic expressions like *collateral damage* to refer to unplanned killing of innocents and *friendly fire* for death accidents taking place within the same force are treated with unsupported laxism under a linguistic cover that reveals the opposite.

The uplifting euphemism – to talk up and to inflate. It is considered a human nature to rack our brains in an attempt to seek high status and reach an acknowledged dignity within the community we live in. The same case is for politicians or speakers in any sector who use the uplifting function of Euphemism. This function can be tailored to the use of jargon where people in specific domains tend to employ technical terms that no layperson could establish meaning to. Therefore, using alternatives that are considerably complicated rather than merely subduing to the commonly-used language is a strategy with two-pronged purposes; the first is to afford a sense of dignity to the speaker in a certain field by having peculiar terms or expressions in referring to ordinary language, whereas the second is to conceal the true meaning of the term for those who are not familiar with the jargon being implied. An illustrative example is the term *export duties* which euphemistically signifies the taxes that must be paid in favour of goods shipped from another country.

The provocative euphemism – to reveal and to inspire. Provocative Euphemism is believed to land far away from distorting objective reality but rather employed to instigate awareness of the unrevealed truth under a covering story. It is also believed to counteract the stereotypical norms society lined and imposed on social intercourse in virtue of battling against moral and cultural deviations. A case in point is the novel *Animal Farm* written by *George Orwell* as an inspirational kid's story which covers the ultimate objective of the satirical language the story embeds about politics and politicians.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study adopts a quantitative descriptive along with a qualitative analytic approach towards research by following a pragmatic view in content analysis focusing on the types of Euphemism introduced by Allan and Burrige (1991) along with the functions each reveals (Burrige, 2012). It emphasizes the analysis of Boris Johnson speeches when announcing UK national lockdown following the three waves of the Covid-19 outbreak. The content of the speeches is collected from three audio-visual materials posted on You Tube on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) news channel where the PM's address text was published later on the Telegraph online newspaper. Thus, the three speeches were broadcasted live from Downing Street each at a specific time that was revealed to the press hours before the briefing.

The first speech was broadcasted on Monday evening 23 March 2020 for about 6 minutes and 16 seconds (06:16) where PM Boris Johnson imposed a complete national lockdown because of the Coronavirus infections rate. The other briefing about the second national lockdown which is 11 minutes and 38 seconds (11:38) long took place on Saturday 31 October 2020 because of the second Covid-19 wave that touched UK and all parts of the world. Determinedly, the PM found no alternative but to announce the national confinement followed by a set of strict safety measures to be implemented. The last announcement was on Monday 4 January 2021 lasting for 8 minutes and 36 seconds (8:36) in which Boris Johnson insisted on staying home till March for new instructions to be considered.

4. FINDINGS

Types of Euphemism

We accounted in the table below for the frequency of using all types of Euphemism in Boris Johnson's three national lockdown announcements. In general, 98 euphemistic terms and expressions were used in his speeches where the total number of frequencies displayed accounts for the most used types of Euphemism in the three briefings.

Table I Use of Euphemism in Boris Johnson lockdown announcements

N	Types of Euphemism	1st	2nd	3 rd	Total	
		Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	%
1.	Metaphor	3	3	2	8	8.1%

N	Types of Euphemism	1st	2nd	3 rd	Total	
		Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	%
2.	Hyperbole	3	0	2	4	4%
3.	Circumlocution	4	5	6	15	15.3%
4.	Acronym	1	3	2	6	6.1%
5.	Omission	0	1	0	1	1%
6.	Synecdoche	3	2	5	10	10.2%
7.	Litotes	2	0	1	3	3%
8.	Idiom	5	9	5	19	19.3%
9.	Jargon	7	14	5	26	26.5%
10.	Metonymy	4	1	0	5	5.1%
11.	Clipping	0	0	0	0	0%
12.	Remodeling	0	0	0	0	0%
13.	Reduplication	0	0	0	0	0%
Total		32	38	28	98	100%

In the table above, Boris Johnson employed ten types of euphemism in his three announcements; 9 types are used in the first announcement mostly jargon and idioms where just omission, clipping, remodeling, and reduplication are excluded. The second lockdown speech marked the excessive use of jargon followed by idioms and no use of hyperbole, litotes, clipping, remodeling, and reduplication were not considered. In the third lockdown announcement, circumlocution was at the peak of use equally followed by jargon, idioms, and synecdoche, whereas five types of Euphemism were abandoned which are: omission, metonymy, clipping, remodeling, and reduplication.

In general, the three national lockdown announcements displayed the abundant use of jargon in the first place with 26.5%, followed by the use of idioms with 19.3%. Circumlocution was also in vogue in Boris Johnson's speeches with 15.3% along with 10.2% for synecdoche. Moreover, all three announcements marked the entire absence of clipping, remodeling, and reduplication.

Functions of Euphemism

In table 2 which is divided into five columns; the first includes all the functions of Euphemism adopted by Kate Burridge [11]. In the following three columns, the frequency of using each function of Euphemism in the three lockdown announcements by the PM were displayed in details. The last column summarizes the total use of the functions employed when referring to the various types of Euphemism in the three speeches.

Table II

The functions of Euphemism in Boris Johnson announcements Main functions of euphemism	N	Sub-functions of Euphemism	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	
			Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	Freq.	%
Positive function	1.	The protective euphemism	14	18	14	46	46.9%
	2.	The cohesive euphemism	1	3	2	6	6.1%
	3.	The ludic euphemism	0	0	0	0	0%
Negative function	4.	The underhand euphemism	10	3	7	20	20.4%
	5.	The uplifting euphemism	7	14	5	26	26.5%
	6.	The provocative euphemism	0	0	0	0	0%
Total			32	38	28	98	100%

As shown in table 2, types of euphemisms found in the three lockdown announcement speeches were classified into two main functions divided into six sub-functions according to the objective they were set to serve. The most prevailing function referred to by the prime minister is the protective euphemism that was described by Burridge [11] as providing a linguistic shield that might protect interlocutor's image and face from offensive or negatively-effective language. It was excessively implied with 46.9% followed by both uplifting euphemism and underhand euphemism with 26.5% and 20.4, respectively. The cohesive euphemism witnessed inconsiderable reference in the PM's speeches with 6.1%. The three lockdown speeches also marked the absence of ludic and provocative functions of euphemism with 0% for both.

5. ANALYSIS

Based on the findings in table 1 and 2, ten types of Euphemism were used with a certain degree in the three announcements which are: metaphor, hyperbole, circumlocution, acronym, omission, synecdoche, litotes, idiom, jargon, and metonymy. Notably, PM Boris Johnson intentionally overlooked the use of clipping, remodeling, and reduplication because of the little functional contribution they might display in his speeches about coronavirus updates in the UK.

The three speeches are characterized by the prevailing use of jargon as the second-top-priority type of Euphemism that might contribute to the disguise of the upfront meaning politicians tend to convey. The use of jargon was intended to inflate their meanings in relation to the political intentions of the PM Boris Johnson which is a pragmatic strategy of hiding behind their true powerful meanings. In the first lockdown announcement, PM Johnson referred to socialization and daily interaction with others, which is crucial in maintaining a balanced psychological and social life, as *gatherings* where he strictly stated *we will stop gatherings*. In this example, the euphemistic expression *gatherings*, which is a political jargon, mitigates the powerful meaning of being sociable and the urge to live a normal social life surrounded by close folks. Another example of jargon was detected in the second lockdown announcement was the term *shielding* which is significantly used in politics to refer to the protection a nation provides in order to shun away danger of any kind from its inhabitants. In this case, the PM employed the term to emphasize its deep meaning which is to keep social distancing and stick by the rules of confinement. Both previous examples might possibly be grasped as outwardly spoken by a layperson without socially or psychologically interpreting them as depriving a human being from his right to interact with others in his community which is the government's responsibility to cater for their needs.

PM Boris Johnson had the intention of using circumlocution, omission, idioms, metaphors, and litotes under the purpose of protective euphemism. The latter displays a considerable concern for the audience's psychological and social beings by establishing a euphemistic shield that might mitigate the impact of the spoken words. He mentioned in his first speech the expression *people needing hospital treatment* which is a circumlocution intended to substitute the term *sick* that serves a less protective and considerate function. He also indulged several idiomatic expressions with hidden connotations including *to stock up* to describe the storing of great amounts of food for a predicted crisis and *be humble in the face of nature* to acknowledge the severity of coronavirus disease and to never take it for granted. In a similar vein, the PM didn't fall back into using metaphors to seek a linguistic shelter in the figurative language from the affronting meaning political speeches endeavor to convey. He therefore described coronavirus as *the invisible killer* in his first announcement to relieve the impact of hearing the common scientific term that most have lost beloved ones because of it. He also landed on using both omission and litotes for the same purpose. The former can be tracked in his expression *there is no alternative* where the rest *to announcing a second national lockdown* was omitted as it implies a strictly-imposed safety measures to be followed in order the survive the pandemic, whereas the latter involved opposites like *unwell* instead of *sick* and *unsafe* to refer to dangerous.

The underhand Euphemism is another resort for Johnson's speeches where three types of Euphemism fell under this function: synecdoche, metonymy, and hyperbole. First, synecdoche was the most used to cover the weaknesses of the government or the unimportant matters that could not be mentioned yet are crucial from other's perspective. The example in the expression *there won't be enough ventilators, enough intensive care beds, enough doctors and nurses* overlooks similar important equipment for the health care group including medical uniforms, masks, sanitizers, and even ambulances. Second, metonymy as euphemistic strategy had its share in misrepresenting the intended meaning which can be traced to use of the term *approach* instead of the strict safety measures that all Britons must blindly follow. He also showed it in the expression *this country is not alone* to add a sense of consolation to UK people that the universality of the disease flexes acceptance, disregarding the fact that it spreads with changing degrees all over the world and that the UK is in the highest level of danger. The final underhand euphemistic type is hyperbole in the phrase *the miracle of science* which is

overstated to describe the acknowledgeable efforts of science in halting the spread of the disease with no guaranteed or conclusive results about its efficiency.

In general, the cohesive function of Euphemism is the most accepted and acknowledged amongst communities and societies of the world. With its powerful intention of spreading other cultures' uncommon knowledge, it serves as a transmitter of offensive language in the most tender ways. An illustrative example of cohesive Euphemism is acronyms which can be strongly related to a society's culture. PM Boris Johnson used the acronym *ofqual* [13] that stands for Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation to refer to "an educational non-ministerial government" in UK.. He also mentioned the National Health Service in UK using the famous acronym in his speeches and all British politicians *NHS*. [14]

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the findings and analysis of Boris Johnson's three announcement speeches, we deduce that ten types of euphemism out of 13 are used in accordance with four functions of euphemism out of six. Generally, the PM referred to the use of jargon that served to inflate the meanings of ordinary terms spoken by a layperson in an attempt to uplift political language. He also adopted circumlocution, omission, idioms, metaphor, and litotes under the function of protecting the audience from the offensive language the usual terms might imply. Moreover, Boris Johnson was a supporter of synecdoche, metonymy, and hyperbole by considerably including them in his speeches following the underhand function of euphemism that serves to manipulate facts and mystify truths. The fourth function that was an add-on in Boris Johnson briefings about lockdown is cohesive euphemism in which he used acronyms to spread knowledge and awareness of the British health and political organizations. The three speeches also marked the absence of three types of euphemism: clipping, remodeling and reduplication along with 2 functions of euphemism: the provocative and ludic euphemisms because they serve no linguistic or semantic purpose in Boris Johnson's briefings.

7. CONCLUSION

The present study is a pragmatic analysis of political language vis-à-vis the types and functions of euphemism in Boris Johnson's three national lockdown announcement speeches. The analysis uncovered the use of ten types of euphemism from 13 according to Allan and Burridge in addition to four euphemistic functions out of six. The types of euphemism and their complementary functions explored in the briefings revealed that the PM tends to use euphemism equally in both a positive and negative way. On the one hand, the underhand and the uplifting functions of euphemism covering the types: synecdoche, metonymy, hyperbole, and jargon revealed a negative implication of disclaiming responsibility of containing the virus. On the other hand, the types of euphemism: circumlocution, omission, idioms, metaphor, litotes, and acronym that serve a positive implication assisted in mitigating the impact of the coronavirus and delivering lockdown speeches in a smooth and shielded way.

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