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METAPHOR AND METONYMY IN EUPHEMISMS IN QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

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Abstract. Though well recognised as devices used in the formation of euphemisms, metaphor and metonymy as such remain under-researched in current literature. Our study examines the use of euphemistic language in the official speeches and statements of the former British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. The goal is to identify euphemisms and explain the metaphors and metonymies used in their formation, drawing on the Conceptual Metaphor and Metonymy Theory and Critical Metaphor Analysis. Metaphor and metonymy account for the formation of most of the analysed euphemisms. We argue that the analysed metaphors are motivated by the ideological concepts of (a) the struggle for survival and (b) materialism, as well as by the intent to positively evaluate certain political and everyday endeavours. The analysed metonymies are motivated by the intent to highlight more desirable or less undesirable aspects of events and things.

Introduction

In the field of sociolinguistics, euphemism analysis has gained significant importance. Due to their frequent use, not rarely as a tool of manipulation, euphemisms and their usage, both proper and improper, become particularly relevant to discourse analysis. Instead of using language that might be harmful, speakers reach for acceptable and suitable alternatives, sometimes creating their own, which are, in turn, used and reproduced in everyday discourse due to their wide availability through the media. Many authors have dealt with the topic of euphemisation. For instance, Rawson (1981) states that by avoiding an awkward term, euphemism facilitates social discourse. Similarly, Neaman and Silver (1983) define a euphemism as the substitution of inoffensive or pleasant words for explicit and offensive, thereby obscuring the truth with kinder language (p. 4). Moreover, Crystal (1984) suggests that euphemisms are the most common way of avoiding taboo expressions and that their origin, use, and connotation are considered to be a kind of generally metaphorical linguistic-communicative procedure (p. 8). Additionally, Cameron (1995) argues that a sense of language values makes “verbal hygiene” part of everyone’s language competence (p. 44). The very essence of euphemisms is indirectness, where the main message is actually sent through a hint, through context, and not through precise words or expressions. Euphemisms provide symbolic legitimacy that helps to alleviate the perception of unpleasant contents or attitudes by avoiding negatively toned discourse (Gorčević & Dazdarević, 2016, p. 126). As stated by Allan and Burridge (2006), euphemisms are expressions used as an alternative to orthophemisms³ and dysphemisms (p. 31). While orthophemisms are direct and neutral expressions, or straight talking, dysphemisms are words and phrases with connotations that are offensive either about the denotatum or to the people addressed or overhearing the utterance, or both (Allan & Burridge, 2006, p. 31).

According to Van Dijk (1998), political discourse is characterised not only by its actors and authors, viz. politicians—but also by its recipients in political

³ Orthophemisms are expressions typically more formal and more direct (or literal) than the corresponding euphemism (Allan & Burridge, 2006, p. 33).

communicative events, such as the public, citizens, and other groups or categories, from the interactional point of view of discourse analysis (p. 13). Political euphemism is a tactic used to control information flow, bury controversies, and obscure the consequences of political deeds and activities. The use of euphemism and politically correct language in political institutions has become a communication code requirement. Lutz (2000) describes the problem of doublespeak as a phenomenon of two-faced language; it is a tool and weapon for those who want to fulfil a goal at the expense of others, to present the bad as good, as negatively positive, unpleasantly pleasant, or at least more tolerable (p. 230). This type of language is characteristic of political discourse.

Mihas (2005) argues that metaphor and euphemism deserve special attention because of their prevalence and impact in political discourse. These linguistic devices provide indirectness, significant in modern-day interaction, and give rise to desirable new conceptual and connotative meanings, shaping how messages are understood (p. 129). At the same time, as highlighted by Jakobson (2003), metonymy is a device complementary to and competitive with metaphor.

Though well recognised as devices used in the formation of euphemisms (e.g. Burrige, 2012), metaphor and metonymy as such have not been sufficiently studied. The examination of metaphor and metonymy in the euphemistic language identified in the official speeches and statements of the former British monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, serves as the foundation for this study.⁴ The goal is to identify the euphemisms and explain the metaphors and metonymies used in their formation. The research questions that formed the basis for our analysis are as follows: What conceptual metaphors and metonymies contribute to the formation of the identified euphemisms? What explanations can be offered for the use of metaphor and metonymy?

This paper contains a discussion of the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study, along with a literature review, followed by a description of the research data and methodology, representative analyses of the metaphors and metonymies used to form the euphemisms, and the conclusions.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The theoretical approach to metaphor and metonymy used in this study draws on the Conceptual Metaphor and Metonymy Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) and Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004).

⁴ This study is a continuation of our previous research on the topic of euphemisms, which presented data on euphemisms in various registers (Gorčević & Dazdarević, 2016; Gorčević et al., 2021).

Conceptual Metaphor

According to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), metaphor is a mental mechanism through which a less familiar, generally abstract conceptual domain (a distinct area of experience) is understood in terms of a more familiar, typically concrete one, based on their correlations in our experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). The first domain is referred to as the target domain, while the second is called the source domain. The target is partially structured by the source (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Defined this way, metaphor is also called conceptual metaphor, understood as “a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system,” in contrast to linguistic metaphors, which are metaphorical expressions, i.e., surface realisations (words, phrases, sentences) of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203). For example, the metaphor (A PURPOSEFUL) LIFE IS A JOURNEY, where JOURNEY is the source domain and LIFE the target domain, is instantiated in: *He’s gone through a lot in life. He’s never let anyone get in his way. I’m at a crossroads in my life* (Lakoff, 1993, p. 223). The source domains are often rooted in our bodily experiences, giving rise to potentially universal metaphors, because human brains, bodies, and environments are of the same kind (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; see also Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Thus, CMT emphasises the role of embodiment and interaction between bodies and the environment in shaping our understanding of the world. Besides the bodily basis of metaphor, other types of experience can ground metaphors, like situational (physical, social, cultural) context, discourse context, and conceptual context (Kövecses, 2015).

CMT has garnered significant support and stimulated a wealth of research in cognitive linguistics, psychology, and related fields. The theory is chiefly criticised for neglecting the nuances and variations in how metaphors are used in real language, overlooking the role of communicational and cultural factors and context, and also for dubiousness as to whether conventional linguistic metaphors indicate active metaphorical thought (cross-domain comparisons in cognition) (see, among others, Gibbs, 2017, Chapter 1; Steen, 2011). Nevertheless, CMT is compatible with recent developments in cognitive linguistics that seek to refine the theory by addressing its limitations (e.g. Kövecses, 2015; 2020). Also, there are developments that contrast with CMT (Steen, 2017).

Conceptual Metonymy

As a mental mechanism, metonymy, also called conceptual metonymy, is different from its linguistic expressions. Like metaphor, it also arises from correlations in our experience, but in this case, the source/vehicle and the target (things, events, or properties) belong to the same domain, frame,⁵ or idealised cognitive model

⁵ “A frame is a schematisation of experience (a knowledge structure), which is represented at the conceptual level and held in long-term memory and which relates elements and

(ICM),⁶ such that the source provides mental access to the target (Kövecses, 2006, p. 99). In metonymy, both the source and the target are deemed conceptually present but are highlighted to different degrees (Panther & Radden, 1999, p. 11), so the target does not substitute for the source. It has been argued that the conceptual prominence of the target is the crucial criterion for metonymy (Panther & Thornburg, 2004).

The difference between metaphor and metonymy is still debated. The distinction might not be clear-cut (Sullivan & Sweetser, 2009) but perhaps a continuum ranging from literal language through metonymy to metaphor (Dirven, 2003). If we employ the domain approach, metonymy is a single relation within a domain, while metaphor involves (multiple) cross-domain mapping. Metonymy is traditionally conceived in terms of contiguity, in contrast to metaphor, which is viewed as involving similarity. Metonymic relations are mostly bidirectional; thus, we have EFFECT FOR CAUSE, where EFFECT is the source and CAUSE the target (e.g., *healthy complexion*), and CAUSE FOR EFFECT, where it is the other way around (e.g. *healthy exercise*) (Radden & Kövecses, 2007).

Meaning can be conveyed in a succinct and impactful way using metonymy, which relies on shared cultural knowledge, which can be abundant (Littlemore, 2015, p. 122). The better explored functions of metonymy include referential function, highlighting, anaphoric and exophoric reference, illocutionary functions, and building of relationships and discourse communities, while the less explored but still important roles of metonymy include its use in vague language, hedging, evaluating and positioning, humour and irony, and also in euphemisms (Littlemore, 2015).

Metaphor and Metonymy in the Formation of Euphemisms

As regards the devices used in the formation of euphemisms, metaphor and metonymy are classified under the overarching category of analogy, i.e., “generalization of forms to new situations” (Burrige, 2012, p. 72), or semantic change (e.g., Moritz, 2018, p. 57). Metaphor is considered to be the most common analogy device (Burrige, 2012, p. 74), yet few works deal specifically with

entities associated with a particular culturally embedded scene, situation or event from human experience” (Evans, 2007, p. 85). For example, the car frame would include interconnected aspects such as driver, fuel, engine, transmission, wheels, and their types (Evans, 2007, p. 86).

⁶ “An ICM is a relatively stable mental representation that represents a ‘theory’ about some aspect of the world and to which words and other linguistic units can be relativised. In this respect, ICMs are similar to the notion of a frame, since both relate to relatively complex knowledge structures” (Evans, 2007, p. 104). Lakoff (1987), who developed the concept of ICM, illustrates it using Fillmore’s example of the word *bachelor*, which is defined in relation to the ICM of marriage, which includes information about typical monogamous marriage and marriageable age, covering typical situations (but not, say, priests or long-term unmarried couples).

metaphorical euphemisms. From the conceptual metaphor perspective, Crespo-Fernández (2008; 2015) examines sex-related euphemisms (and dysphemisms), while Crespo-Fernández (2006), Silaški (2011), and Owiredu (2020) address euphemisms for death and identify the following metaphors: DEATH IS LOSS, DEATH IS SLEEP, DEATH IS A JOURNEY, DEATH IS A PERSON, DEATH IS A JOYFUL LIFE, DEATH IS A REST, DEATH IS A REWARD, DEATH IS THE END. Metonymical euphemisms have also been the subject of a very small number of works, such as Gradečak-Erdeljić and Milić (2011), and Moritz (2018), which examine metonymy in political discourse in relation to its situational context, framing, and pragmatic function. Gradečak-Erdeljić and Milić (2011) stress the productiveness of the PART OF THE SCENARIO FOR THE WHOLE SCENARIO and PART OF THE SCENARIO FOR THE PART OF THE SCENARIO metonymies, while Moritz (2018) identifies the EFFECT FOR CAUSE, CAUSE FOR EFFECT, PART FOR WHOLE, WHOLE FOR PART, and DEFINING PROPERTY FOR CATEGORY metonymies. Burridge (2012) discusses the “whole-for-part (or general-for-specific) and part-for-whole substitutions” (p. 73).

Research Methodology

A corpus analysis provided the foundation for the study’s methodological framework. The research corpus included a set of Queen Elizabeth II’s official statements released on the official website of the British Royal Family⁷ between 3 January 2017 and 7 September 2022. The set consisted of 15,448 words. The final list included 66 identified euphemisms.

Elizabeth II ruled the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth nations from 1952 to 2022. Numerous biographies and detailed academic studies have been written about the Queen, demonstrating her significant influence on both British and world history. In *Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch* (Bedell Smith, 2012), she is portrayed as a resilient and adaptive leader, who has managed to maintain the relevance of the monarchy in contemporary times. Pimlott (1996) delves into her political acumen and her ability to navigate complex constitutional issues. Throughout her reign, she delivered numerous inspirational and noteworthy speeches and statements, intended to present general values, unite people around important and meaningful issues, and inspire faith and hope. She appealed to national spirit, selflessness, appreciation, duty resolution, pride, self-discipline, compassion, helping others, and unity. She respected others while dutifully representing her own nation, which significantly bolstered British diplomacy.

⁷ <https://www.royal.uk/media-centre/speeches>

Queen Elizabeth II's speeches and statements had a profound effect not only in the UK but also in many other countries. They are notable for her careful use of language, reflecting her unique role and the changing times throughout her reign. She was aware of the value and importance of language, understanding that a bridge between people may be constructed with just a few well-chosen words. She often employed rhetorical devices to emphasise her points and engage listeners (Craiker, 2022), and euphemisms were one of the most effective "weapons" from her language arsenal.

The identified euphemisms were analysed to find the linguistic metaphors and metonymies (metaphoric and metonymic expressions) that contribute to their formation. In order to analyse Queen Elizabeth II's speeches for euphemisms, we looked for patterns where she employed more genteel or less direct language, especially in areas where a more straightforward approach might have been expected. Identifying euphemisms involved looking for instances where Queen Elizabeth II used more neutral, indirect, or polite language to address potentially sensitive or controversial topics. They were identified by considering the following criteria: (a) *indirectness*—avoiding a direct, possibly harsh term, and substituting a milder or less direct one for it; (b) *politeness*—maintaining decorum or avoiding offending listeners (particularly relevant in royal speeches, where a respectful tone is crucial); (c) *avoidance of controversy*—the employment of euphemisms to steer clear of topics that might be seen as divisive or contentious; (d) *cultural sensitivity*—the choice of euphemisms may reflect cultural norms and sensitivities; and (e) *contextual clues*—the context in which a term is used can help to identify euphemisms.

The metaphor identification procedure (MIP) proposed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007) and the Collins English Dictionary (CED) were used to identify metaphors in the Queen's speeches. The relationships between linguistic metaphors and metonymies were analysed and generalised to uncover underlying conceptual metaphors and metonymies. Metaphors and metonymies with the most frequent source and target domains were included in the results. The use of metaphor and metonymy is explained in terms of motivation and effects.

Charteris-Black (2004, Chapter 2) compares the stages of metaphor research to the three stages of Critical Discourse Analysis, as outlined by Fairclough (1995, p. 6): identification, interpretation, and explanation, which are related to Halliday's (1985) language functions. Metaphor identification is concerned with revealing linguistic metaphors in a text, metaphor interpretation involves identifying conceptual metaphors and conceptual keys—metaphors that link sets of conceptual metaphors, and metaphor explanation examines the relationship of metaphors to their social contexts, highlighting their discourse functions.

Results and Discussion

The analysed metaphors were classified according to their source domains into categories such as CONFLICT and COMPETITION/TEST, COMING/CEASING TO POSSESS, and BUSINESS, JOURNEY, and UP. Particular attention was given to metaphors with the target domains of WAR and DEATH, as well as novel and unconventional metaphors. The attention then shifted to conceptual metonymies, in particular, GENERIC IS SPECIFIC, TIME FOR EVENT(S), PART FOR WHOLE, EFFECT FOR CAUSE, and CAUSE FOR EFFECT.

CONFLICT and COMPETITION/TEST metaphors

Charteris-Black (2004) argues that POLITICS IS CONFLICT is one of the most prominent metaphors in political discourse. He bases this metaphor on two conceptual keys that, according to him, underlie much of political discourse: LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL and SOCIETY IS A PERSON (p. 70). He divides conflict metaphors into three subcategories: metaphors of defence, metaphors of attack, and metaphors of struggle (p. 69). Among the analysed euphemisms, POLITICS IS CONFLICT is represented by metaphors of defence, as shown by examples 1 (*safeguard*), 2 (*protected*), and 3 (*threats*), and it can be explained as an extension of literal conflict (warfare) discourse.

- (1) ... [allied] nations working together to *safeguard a hard-won peace*. (3 June 2019)
- (2) ... the Royal Navy ... has *protected* the people of this country and *our interests* around the world. (11 December 2017)
- (3) I have been impressed by the way that you have adapted to *the changing threats to our nation*. Whether responding to the *threats* from the Nazis or the Cold War, domestic terrorism or the cyber sphere ... (25 February 2020)

Considering the devastating impact of the Coronavirus in recent years, which has resulted in millions of deaths and suffering across the world, the examples in the following paragraph present euphemisms. For instance, the expression *unconquerable resolve* could imply the effort to fight the disease *with all available measures*, potentially leading to *various casualties*, while *will (not) overcome* could mean *a defeat with many casualties*. There are metaphors of struggle, namely, COPING WITH ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES IS A STRUGGLE, as in 4 (*unconquerable*), or 5 (*overcome*), where THE CORONAVIRUS IS A PARTICIPANT IN A STRUGGLE (personification).

- (4) ... what is demanded from us all is something more than courage and endurance; we need a revival of spirit, a new *unconquerable resolve*. (5 June 2019)
- (5) We know that Coronavirus *will not overcome us*. (11 April 2020)

We argue that the TEST and COMPETITION metaphors in the analysed euphemisms are also motivated by the Darwinian LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL (OF THE FITTEST) metaphor. This framework involves competition between life forms, accounting for the congruence between the source and target domains in the WAR IS TEST (6, *tested*) and WAR IS COMPETITION (7, *won*) metaphors. In addition to WAR, there are instances of other ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES in the target domain, such as COPING WITH ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES IS A COMPETITION (8, *challenging*; 9, *challenges*). The term *increasingly challenging time* hides the description of highly uncertain periods where outcomes are unpredictable. It refers to times characterised by significant challenges and unpredictability, involving economic difficulties, natural disasters, or global health crises, which further intensify the sense of uncertainty.

(6) [To the Royal Lancers] *Your loyalty and devotion to duty have been tested* over more than three hundred years, and never found to be wanting.

(5 April 2017)

(7) ... [allied] nations working together to *safeguard a hard-won peace*. (3 June 2019)

(8) I am speaking to you at what I know is an *increasingly challenging time*. (5 April 2020)

(9) ... it is heart-warming to see the civic response and generosity of so many businesses, small and large, to *the challenges posed* ... (19 June 2020)

COMING/CEASING TO POSSESS and BUSINESS metaphors

The most common conceptual metaphor among the analysed euphemisms is (VIOLENT) DEATH IS LOSS (10, *have lost*; 11, *lost*; 12, *loss*), an instance of the CEASING TO POSSESS source domain. This metaphor implies that PEOPLE/LIVES ARE (PRECIOUS) POSSESSIONS (see Lakoff & Turner, 1989), which we do not want to *lose*.

(10) I would like to extend my condolences to those *who have lost loved ones* in the attacks [stabblings] that occurred this past weekend in Saskatchewan. My thoughts and prayers are with those *recovering from injuries*, and grieving such horrific losses. (7 September 2022)

(11) It reminds me that as we honour those from many nations, faiths and backgrounds who *lost their lives* ... (11 September 2021)

(12) I am deeply saddened by the *tragic loss of life* and destruction caused by the earthquake in Haiti. (16 August 2021)

Lose primarily means “to part with or come to be without, as through theft, accident, negligence, etc.” (CED, 2009). It implies that death is “something that just ‘happens,’ without the involvement of human agency” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 66), giving the impression that nobody is actually responsible for the stabblings.

The metaphor REGAINING HEALTH IS REGAINING SOMETHING LOST (10, *recovering*) illustrates the COMING TO POSSESS source domain. Another instance of the CEASING TO POSSESS source domain is the metaphor SACRIFICING IS GIVING (13, *gave*), also related to HEALTH/LIFE IS A (PRECIOUS) POSSESSION (see also Example 27).

(13) It is our duty to remember and honour those who served so valiantly and who *gave so much* here at Vimy Ridge and throughout the First World War. (9 April 2017)

Following Prussian General Clausewitz's WAR IS POLITICS (PURSUED BY OTHER MEANS) metaphor, connected to the cost-benefit analysis of war, Lakoff (2013) associates it the POLITICS IS BUSINESS metaphor (p. 6). Together, these two metaphorical frameworks produce the WAR IS BUSINESS metaphor (14 and 15, *cost*).⁸

(14) ... victory came at a heavy *cost* with more than 10,000 *fallen* and wounded. (9 April 2017)

(15) Amongst the joy at the end of the conflict, we also remembered, as we do today, the terrible devastation that it brought, and the *cost borne* by so many. (15 August 2020)

The loss/gain and business framing (see also Ahmad, 2018) illustrate a Western (in a broader sense) worldview, which is primarily oriented toward material possessions, prominent not only in the era of (global) capitalism but also earlier in feudalism. This framing, along with materialist culture, is related to the concepts of losing/winning, i.e., CONFLICT and COMPETITION, and ultimately with the LIFE IS A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL (OF THE FITTEST) metaphor.

JOURNEY metaphors

LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Lakoff & Turner, 1989) or PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS TRAVELLING ALONG A PATH TOWARDS A DESTINATION (Lakoff, 1993) highlight a long-term activity and its purpose, which allow the Queen to remain persuasive in terms of importance and worthwhileness of taking the journey in question, as in Example 16, where she also empathetically admits that the *path is ... not always smooth* but sometimes *bumpy* (though the latter with the hedge *may have felt*). Difficulties are also illustrated in Example 17 (*start; end distant*), where the JOURNEY metaphor is combined with PROSPECTS ARE OUTLOOK (*outlook*) and EMOTIONS ARE ENVIRONMENTS (*bleak*) to portray a landscape of the journey showing how difficult the situation was, for the purpose of giving a message to never give up when the cause is right. Example 18 shows that once the destination

⁸ Beyond euphemisms, *debt*, as in "... we owe an immeasurable *debt* to the British, American and Allied soldiers ..." (3 June 2019), "... we are indebted to members of the emergency services who risked their own lives ..." (25 December 2017), and in Example 23, also illustrates the WAR IS BUSINESS metaphor.

of the journey is reached, one can *slow down*. In Example 19, PARLIAMENTARY LIFE IS A JOURNEY (*landmark*) is combined with NATION (SCOTLAND) IS A PERSON (*grow, prosper*), which highlights the Queen's role as a nurturant patron, closely connected to the people of Scotland.

(16) Many of us already try to follow in his [Jesus Christ's] footsteps. *The path, of course, is not always smooth, and may at times this year have felt quite bumpy*, but small steps can make a world of difference. (23 December 2019)

(17) *At the start [of WW2], the outlook seemed bleak, the end distant, the outcome uncertain*. But we kept faith that the cause was right ... (8 May 2020)

(18) Even Prince Philip has decided it's time *to slow down a little*—having, as he economically put it, “done his bit.” (25 December 2017)

(19) It has been with great pleasure that over the years I have watched Scotland grow and prosper, and have been with you at each stage of your parliamentary life, including on *landmark occasions* such as today. (29 June 2019)

UP metaphors

The UP metaphors typically carry a positive evaluation. The metaphors VIRTUE IS UP (20, *rise above*) and CAPABLE IS UP (21, *rose*; 22 and 23, *have risen*) similarly aim to positively evaluate *true statesmanship* and capability, respectively.

(20) I, for one, hope that this conference will be one of those rare occasions where everyone will have the chance *to rise above* the politics of the moment, and achieve true statesmanship. (1 November 2021)

(21) While there are many sad memories of that terrible time, there is also solace in remembering how your community *rose to the challenge* of rebuilding your lives and supporting each other. (22 February 2021)

(22) In the United Kingdom and around the world, people *have risen magnificently to the challenges of the year* ... (24 December 2020)

(23) We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who *have risen so magnificently to the challenges of the last 18 months* ... (14 October 2021)

Other metaphors for WAR and DEATH

Among the analysed euphemisms, WAR and DEATH are the concepts most frequently represented metaphorically. In Example 24, three conceptual metaphors for WAR are presented. WAR IS A DISEASE (e.g., Fabiszak, 2007) (*immune*) combines with WAR IS A PHYSICAL FORCE (*impact*) to highlight the abnormality and debilitating forcefulness of war. The third, WAR IS A PLAY (*part to play*; compare WAR IS A THEATRE, e.g., Fabiszak, 2007), hides the fact that war is a disastrous event, by highlighting that it is an artistic expression (during wartime, people expressed themselves in various ways), waged for aesthetic/emotional pleasure (perhaps the pleasure of participating in and carrying out national war projects).

The euphemisms *impact* and *parts to play* in the following paragraph obscure the consequences of war devastation and the sacrifices made by those involved.

(24) The war had been a total war; it had affected everyone, and no one was *immune from its impact*. Whether it be the men and women called up to serve; families separated from each other; or people asked to take up new roles and skills to support the war effort, all had a *part to play*. (8 May 2020)

In addition to (VIOLENT) DEATH IS LOSS, other metaphors for DEATH are also conventional and include DEATH IS RESTING, DEATH IS DARK(NESS), and the orientational metaphor DEATH IS DOWN. DEATH IS RESTING (Example 25, *resting*), based on its similarity in appearance, makes death pleasant, more familiar, and less frightening or unsettling (compare *rest in peace*, a phrase used in Christian context). When one's eyes are closed while resting, one sees darkness; similarly, DEATH IS DARK(NESS), as shown in Example 26, contrasts with LIFE IS LIGHT. Physically, DEATH IS DOWN (27, *laid down*, and 28, *fallen*), which is also contrasted with (ETERNAL) LIFE IS UP (Marín-Arrese, 1996).

(25) The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior isn't a large memorial, but everyone entering Westminster Abbey has to walk around his *resting place* ... (24 December 2020)

(26) Many religions have festivals which celebrate *light overcoming darkness*. ... As dark as death can be—particularly for those suffering with grief—light and life are greater. (11 April 2020)

(27) Many people *laid down their lives* in that terrible conflict ... (8 May 2020)

(28) ... victory came at a heavy cost with more than 10,000 *fallen* and wounded. (9 April 2017)

Compared to the term *death*, the expressions *darkness* (26), *lay down their lives* (27), and *fallen* (28), while neutral and non-derogatory, appear considerably more fitting, and so qualify as euphemisms.

Novel and unconventional metaphors

In Example 29, the expression *shone a lamp of hope* illustrates the metaphors HOPE IS LIGHT, SPREADING HOPE IS SHINING A LAMP OF HOPE, and WORLD IS A RECIPIENT OF LIGHT. This expression is motivated by Florence Nightingale being known as “The Lady with the Lamp,” as she used to check on wounded soldiers with a light in hand. Light generally evokes positive feelings and here it symbolises hope, which, like light, can spread from the source (F. Nightingale's lamp) across the world, dispelling despair (darkness). This parallels the significant influence F. Nightingale has had in nursing and humanitarian fields.

(29) As with other nursing pioneers like Mary Seacole, Florence Nightingale *shone a lamp of hope* across the world. (24 December 2020)

Example 30 illustrates doublespeak, as WARSHIP IS A (CARRIER OF) MESSAGE OF PEACE, PARTNERSHIP, AND PROSPERITY. The named warship is more a symbol of military strength than a peace asset. Thus, asserting global military power is framed in terms of global peace and cooperation discourse, which can result in increased public support of the new warship. While it may deter acts of war, the intended message remains ambiguous.

(30) As you [on HMS Queen Elizabeth, the latest aircraft carrier] prepare to take this country's message of peace, partnership and prosperity across the seas and oceans of the world, The Lord High Admiral, The Duke of Edinburgh, joins me in wishing you well in all your endeavours. (11 December 2017)

Metonymy

Euphemisms are often more general and neutral concepts, which can be expressed through GENERIC FOR SPECIFIC metonymy. The most frequent metonymy of this type among the analysed euphemisms is AFFECTED FOR NEGATIVELY AFFECTED, which hides how people were actually affected (31, *have been affected*; 32, *affecting*). Another instance of GENERIC FOR SPECIFIC is CHANGE FOR CHANGE FOR THE WORSE. The expression *climate change* (33) implies a process occurring naturally (e.g., naturalisation in Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 68), as opposed to the negative process caused by humankind itself.⁹ Other cases of GENERIC FOR SPECIFIC include those in examples 24–26. Example 34 (*work*) emphasises the positive impact of MI5 staff activities without disclosing the exact nature of their work. Example 35 (*died*) highlights the soldiers' sacrifice, while Example 36 (*served*) underscores their valiant service to the country. The word *died*, although a neutral term, or an orthophemism, may represent a euphemism since it refers to instances of dying a brutal death (they were killed in the war; natural death was not the cause of their passing). Example 37 (*those who have been on opposing sides*) blurs the severity of the happenings.

(31) My thoughts, prayers, and deepest sympathy are with all *those who have been affected* by yesterday's awful violence [terrorist attack]. (23 March 2017)

(32) The loss of life was both sudden and tragic, *profoundly affecting many people* in New Zealand and around the world. (22 February 2021)

(33) That you left this conference as a community of nations with a determination, a desire, and a plan, to address *the impact of climate change*. (1 November 2021)

(34) I would like to take my visit here today as an opportunity to thank you all [MI5 staff] for the *tireless work you do to keep our country safe*. ...

⁹ The data also include the metaphor EARTH IS A FRAGILE OBJECT, which downplays human responsibility for the planet's condition by suggesting that its *fragility* makes it difficult to sustain: "It is a source of great pride to me that the leading role my husband played in encouraging people to *protect our fragile planet*..." (1 November 2021).

Because of the *nature of your work*, it is without public recognition, so it is on behalf of the country that I say to you all, thank you. (25 February 2020)

(35) They *died* [were killed] so we could live as free people in a world of free nations. (8 May 2020)

(36) ... those who *served* [fought in war] so valiantly ... (9 April 2017)

(37) Since the end of the Second World War, many charities, groups and organisations have worked to promote peace and unity around the world, bringing together *those who have been on opposing sides* [those who warred].

(23 December 2019)

TIME FOR EVENT(S) is similar to WHOLE FOR PART, in that *time* is used to refer to specific events (38, *time*; 39, *day*). However, it can also blur references, making it unclear which events are included or excluded (40, *times*). Similar to *challenging times*, the expressions *that difficult time* and *adverse and uncertain times* substitute for *severe and hard times*.

(38) They will be joined by many others, from New Zealand and around the world, who wish to pause and reflect on *that difficult time* [the earthquakes and their aftermath]. (21 February 2017)

(39) *We fondly remember that proud day* ... (29 June 2019)

(40) Members of the Scottish Parliament, as we all step out from *adverse and uncertain times* ... (2 October 2021)

The PART FOR WHOLE metonymy allows for avoidance of directly referring to uncomfortable aspects of entities and events. One example is 41, where *D-Day Landings* is a common designation that includes not only the landings but also the associated operations and happenings, avoiding direct reference to the deadly events. In Example 42, there is an instance of the OBJECT FOR ACTION metonymy (*targeted*), together with PART FOR WHOLE, as children were not only *targeted* but bombed as well. The euphemism *those targeted* (Example 42) refers to the child victims of the Manchester concert bombing, where 22 people were killed when a suicide bomber attacked an Ariana Grande concert at Manchester Arena in 2017. Example 43 (*these shores*) pictures a characteristic portion of the land, a starting point for soldiers, creating an emotional effect.

(41) When I attended the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the *D-Day Landings* ... (5 June 2019)

(42) In Manchester, those *targeted* included children who had gone to see their favourite singer. (25 December 2017)

(43) 75 years ago, hundreds of thousands of young soldiers, sailors and airmen *left these shores in the cause of freedom*. (5 June 2019)

The EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy is also present in examples 44–47. Avoiding direct reference to death, Example 44 (*come back*) represents the killed

soldiers—who obviously could not have returned from the war—as agents who could have returned (e.g., if they had fought better). While this is probably not what the Queen meant, the potential implications make the expression less than felicitous. In 45 (*liberation*) and 46 (*freedom*), on the other hand, the effect is preferred for its very positive connotation. Example 47 (*to be around*) illustrates a more subtle way of referring to one's age and expected lifespan. Also present is the reverse metonymy, CAUSE FOR EFFECT, i.e., (ULTIMATE) SACRIFICE FOR DEATH (48, *ultimate sacrifice*), where death is represented as “something purposeful, meaningful, as something almost positive” (Moritz, 2018, p. 66).

(44) ... *those who did not come back from the war* ... (8 May 2020)

(45) ... we owe an immeasurable debt to the British, American and Allied soldiers who began the *liberation* of Europe on 6th June 1944. (3 June 2019)

(46) ... British and American officers worked closely together *to plan the freedom of a continent* ... (3 June 2019)

(47) *You weren't expected to be around that long.* (25 December 2017)

(48) The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior isn't a large memorial, but everyone entering Westminster Abbey has to walk around his resting place, honouring this unnamed combatant of the First World War— a symbol of selfless duty and *ultimate sacrifice*. (24 December 2020)

Conclusion

Metaphor and metonymy account for the formation of most of the euphemisms Queen Elizabeth II used in her official statements, suggesting that these rhetorical devices are very significant and should be further studied in this context. A critical analysis of metaphor and metonymy is affirmed as a suitable framework for explicating the hidden motivations, implications, and effects carried by euphemisms.

The metaphors used are mostly conventional, and many of them, as we argued, are motivated by the ideological concepts of (a) the struggle for survival (of the fittest) and (b) materialism. These concepts are interconnected and fuel the notions of competition, conflict, and loss/gain, which represent the metaphor source domains of the metaphors. Other identified metaphors include those with JOURNEY and UP source domains, which serve to positively evaluate certain political and everyday endeavours. Not surprisingly, war and death are the concepts most often euphemised metaphorically and metonymically. The DEATH IS DARK(NESS) and DEATH IS DOWN metaphors are not found in previous literature on euphemisms, though they are recognised in general metaphor literature.

The most productive metonymy for forming euphemisms was found to be GENERIC FOR SPECIFIC, which features prominently in previous literature.

Similarly, the metonymies PART FOR WHOLE, EFFECT FOR CAUSE, and CAUSE FOR EFFECT, also confirmed in our study, are well documented. Additionally, TIME FOR EVENT proved to be productive. These metonymies are motivated by the intent to highlight more desirable or less undesirable aspects of events and things. Contrary to Burrige's (2012) claim that metaphor is the most common euphemism device based on analogy, our data also show metonymy is quite frequent.

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Метафора и метонимија у еуфемизмима у званичним изјавама краљице Елизабете II

Резиме

Колико год се метафора и метонимија препознавале као често коришћене стилске фигуре у стварању еуфемизама, као такве нису честа тема лингвистичких истраживања. Предмет овог истраживања је еуфемистички језик препознат у званичним говорима и изјавама бивше британске краљице Елизабете II, која је одржала велики број инспиративних и важних говора и дала изјаве у којима је промовисала опште вредности, спајала људе око важних тема и проблема, уливала веру и наду, позивала на несебичност, дужност, понос, самодисциплину и емпатију. Она је била свесна вредности и важности језика који може са неколико речи постати спона међу људима. Неки од тих говора и изјава чине језичку грађу овог истраживања, а пронађени су на званичном сајту британске краљевске породице.

Циљ рада је идентификовати и објаснити метафоре и метонимије које се користе у формирању еуфемизама, ослањајући се на теорију концептуалне метафоре и метонимије, као и на критичку анализу метафора. Метафора и метонимија су процеси одговорни за формирање већине еуфемизама обрађених у овом корпусу.

Долазимо до закључка да је већина анализираних метафора мотивисана идеолошким концептима а) борбе за опстанак; б) материјализма, док су неке метафоре мотивисане намером да се позитивно вреднују одређена политичка и свакодневна стремљења. Анализирани метоними мотивисани су са намером да се нагласе неки мање или више пожељни аспекти догађаја и ствари.

Кључне речи: еуфемизам; метафора; метонимија; политички дискурс; критичка анализа метафора.



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