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Investigating Euphemisms and Their Pragmatic Functions in Iraqi Arabic Facebook-Mediated Communication

Rami Essa Isaac [1]

Department of English,College of Education for Humanities,University of Al-Hamdaniya [1]

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Correspondence:
Rami Essa Isaac
rami.almusa@uohamdaniya.edu.iq

Abstract

Euphemisms are linguistic choices used in place of disagreeable expressions to appear polite and avoid embarrassment, not only in oral or written communications but also in Facebook-mediated ones. This study is carried out to investigate euphemisms, their semantic formations, and their pragmatic functions on Facebook posts and comments by Iraqi Facebook users. Drawing on 68 euphemisms collected through observation technique in a three-month period, the researcher adopted a descriptive qualitative approach, relying on Warren (1992) and Changhuai Lu's (2004) models. The study concludes that the Iraqi Arabic users of Facebook semantically construct euphemisms using particularisation, implication, metaphor, metonymy, reversal, understatement, and overstatement. It also concludes that these euphemisms perform different pragmatic functions: avoidance, politeness, elegance, and humour, except the disguise function, and that euphemisms are context based, made for particular purposes

مجلة التربية للعلوم الانسانية

مجلة علمية فصلية محكّمة، تصدر عن كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية / جامعة الموصل

دراسة التعبيرات المُلطّفة ووظائفها البراغماتية في التواصل العربي العراقي عبر الفيسبوك

رامي عيسى إسحاق [1]

قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية التربية للعلوم الإنسانية، جامعة الحمدانية [1]

الملخص	معلومات الارشفة
التعبيرات المُلطّفة هي اختيارات لغوية تُستخدم بدلاً من التعبيرات غير المحببة للظهور بمظهر مهذب وتجنب الإحراج، ليس فقط في التواصل الشفهي أو الكتابي، بل أيضاً في التواصل الذي يتم عبر الفيسبوك. أُجريت هذه الدراسة لدراسة التعبيرات المُلطّفة ، وتكويناتها الدلالية، ووظائفها البراغماتية في منشورات وتعليقات مستخدمي الفيسبوك العراقيين العرب. بالاعتماد على 68 عبارة مُلطّفة جُمعت من خلال اسلوب الملاحظة على مدى ثلاثة أشهر ، اتبع الباحث منهجاً وصفياً نوعياً، معتمداً على نموذجي وارن (1992) وتشانغهواي لو (2004). وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن مستخدمي الفيسبوك العراقيين العرب يُنشؤون التعبيرات المُلطّفة دلالياً باستخدام التخصيص، والتضمين، والاستعارة، والمجاز، والعكس، والتقليل من شأن الشيء، والمبالغة فيه. ويخلص أيضًا إلى أن هذه التعبيرات المُلطّفة تؤدي وظائف براغماتية مختلفة: التجنب، والتأدب، والتأنق، والفكاهة، باستثناء وظيفة التنكر ، وأن التعبيرات المُلطّفة تعتمد على السياق، ومصممة لأغراض معينة	

1. Introduction

Human beings attempt to be kind and unoffensive not only in their daily face-to-face conversations but also in their social network sites. They do so by using euphemisms which are linguistic tools employed to avoid unpleasant, disturbing or taboo ideas and topics and keep a harmonious relationship between speaker/writer and listener/reader. Since the need for euphemisms is generally both social and emotional and since they are part of language customs, they are also employed by users of the common social media platform Facebook. However, the use of these euphemisms in Iraqi Arabic Facebook-mediated communications, both in posts and comments, is difficult to comprehend and recognise; there are euphemisms which have unclear semantic constructions, and their pragmatic functions seem vague. This is the problem that the current study attempts to solve. Therefore, the study aims at examining semantic formations of euphemisms and their pragmatic functions in Facebook-mediated communications of Iraqi users. It tries to find answers to the following research questions: (1) What types of semantic constructions of euphemisms are used? (2) What pragmatic functions do these euphemisms have?

The study hypothesises that since people are social and emotional communicators who tend to make their communications kind and who tend to look polite and unoffensive in their social interactions, they are inclined to employ euphemisms of various semantic constructions in their Facebook communications with various pragmatic functions so as to make their posts and comments sound more pleasant and to avoid upset and embarrassment.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Euphemism: Overview

The application of euphemism is a very normal and frequent language phenomenon and consequently has drawn great attention in a variety of contexts, especially in political affairs (Xiaorui, 2019: 1184). Astuti (2014: 9) and Khanfar (2012: 4) view euphemism as the substitution of a mild or pleasant expression for one which is offensive to good manners or to delicate ears, or for one that may offend or suggest something unkind, unpleasant or embarrassing. Similarly, Xiaorui (2019: 1184) states that it is a word or phrase that is used in place of a disagreeable or offensive term, adding that when a phrase becomes a euphemism, its literal meaning is often pushed aside, and that it is used to hide unpleasant idea, even when the term

used for it is not necessarily offensive. For Leech (1974: 53), it is mainly employed to avoid displeasure or annoyance which is likely to occur when discussing a taboo topic related to or has connection with religion, death, politics or any unkind social issue. Euphemistic expressions are intended by the speaker to be less offensive, disturbing or troubling to the listener than the actual word or phrase they substitute. As a result, euphemisms are frequently used all over the world by speakers of various languages to soften the impact of concepts which are potential to cause offence and social disapproval (Sebastian, 2013: 2). In this regard, Rawson (1983: 3) states that euphemisms simplify social discourse in a specific way by avoiding annoying terms. In order to do so, speakers use mild, vague, or roundabout expressions rather than blunt, precise and often true ones.

2.2 Formation of Euphemisms:

One of the different ways or devices to create and construct euphemisms is by a semantic innovation. In this innovation, Warren (1992: 133) states that a new meaning for some words is established. Euphemisms can result from some semantic features, which deal with the semantic basis of the origin of euphemisms. Warren says that this innovation consists of the following:

1. Particularisation: this describes the way that interpreting words in a certain context can construct a new meaning as there exists a certain type of euphemism that involves creating new contextual meaning. Particularisation involves the use of a general term that is needed to be particularized in the context to make sense, e.g. 'innocent' for 'virginal' or 'satisfaction' for 'orgasm'. In both, the reader/listener needs inference based on context to comprehend them.
2. Implication: in this type of euphemism, in order to arrive at the intended meaning, several steps are needed. This intended meaning has to be deduced from something even though it is not explicitly or obviously stated, as in 'go to the toilet' ("urinate and/or defecate"), or 'loose', which gives the interpretation of 'unattached', and consequently arrives at the interpretation of 'sexually easy'.
3. Metaphor: it is a figure of speech describing something or an action in a certain way which is not true in the literal sense of the word, but serves to clarify an idea by making a comparison. Some dimensions of conventional meaning, also regarded as dimensions of contextual meaning, are included in metaphor. For example, in 'egg head' meaning 'an intellectual person', both heads and eggs are seen to have oval shapes.

4. Metonymy: like metaphor, metonymy is a figure of speech, which is also known as a 'general-for-specific' relationship, because between contextual meaning and conventional meaning there is a co-occurrence relationship. It is a word or phrase replaced by another one depending on a relation between the two things signified. For instance, the word 'bottle' can be used as a metonymy for 'drinking alcohol'.

5. Reversal: this involves the opposite meaning of what someone said. The word's conventional meaning is appropriate to the contextual meaning providing it is reversed. For example, 'early' (late) or 'blessed' (damned). Both 'early' and 'blessed' can refer to something bad by using opposites, depending on the context.

6. Understatement: in this type of euphemism, the word's conventional meaning matching with the contextual meaning is diminished or reduced when some features of the meaning are applied, an in 'sleep' (die).

7. Overstatement: also known as exaggeration, the word's conventional meaning fits or is suitable with the contextual meaning by recognising how exaggerated the degree to which certain features of the meaning apply is. For example, a window cleaner might be overstated as a 'visual engineer'.

2.3 Pragmatic Functions of Euphemisms

The role euphemisms play in a real-life context is known as the pragmatic function of euphemism. These functions play a major part in people's lives. The employment of euphemisms becomes a way to avoid using expressions that people unlike to hear and change them to other expressions that are more acceptable, making the conversation of both parties polite and more respectful. Euphemism also serves to disguise the original appearance of the issue and to reduce the sense of disgust that people may have (Changhuai Lu, 2004: 121-122). According to Changhuai Lu (2004: 122-125), euphemism has the following pragmatic functions:

1. Avoidance function: it functions to avoid particular expressions that seem to be embarrassing or unlucky. Euphemisms are used to avoid or reduce people's original intentions, and people employ certain kinds of expressions that other people are more willing to accept. For instance, when talking about death, people can use 'to go to a better place' or 'long sleep', instead of 'die'.

2. Politeness function: it refers to the consideration that people have for each other's face in communication, and in this regard, using a euphemistic expression will not result in a situation where the other person feels awkward or uncomfortable, and as a result the conversation will be made to go smoothly. As an example, the expression 'unable to hear' seems more polite than 'deaf'.

3. Elegance function: this function indicates the politeness problem in communication, and it achieves the politeness effect usually because of the ambiguity caused by divergences from the words' meaning, so that the communicative interlocutors eliminate vulgarity and avoid irritation in verbal communication, and they make other interlocutors feel elegant by making elegant expressions. For example, 'break the wind' is more likely to be used than 'fart'.

4. Disguise function: this function has the feature of the discrepancy or dissimilarity between the surface meaning and the actual unspoken meaning. These discrepancies can be shown between the word and what is signified; between appearance and reality; between the function of communicative language and the disguised essence. This function of euphemism, which has an ambiguous and deceptive colour, has become a device to deceive politicians and exploiters. A case in point is the Iraq war, in which the United States devised many euphemisms to 'make up' the war so as not to trigger citizens' hatred of the war. For instance, 'pre-emptive action' was used instead of 'invasion'.

5. Humour function: in everyday life, it is inevitable that people face difficult or embarrassing situations. In this case, the best organizer or regulator is humour. Therefore, in some embarrassing and awkward circumstances, gentle euphemistic expressions are possibly employed to help people get out of difficulty and escape from embarrassing situations, thus creating a harmonious atmosphere for making friendly relations. For instance, a well-known painter at a banquet liked to get back to his hometown, in which his students were holding a banquet. One of those who came the party was a singer. He painter approached the singer and said to him, "Sir, you are a gentleman. I am a villain. I will honour you first." All the people were astonished. The singer was not able comprehend what he was doing. With a smile, he asked, "What did you say?" The painter smiled and said, "You are a gentleman. You work with your mouth, while I am a villain, working with my hands." All of the atmosphere was very warm.

2.4 Previous Studies

A study by Dawood et al. (2023) focused on the use of strategies of euphemisms by AI speakers, and it examined the formality degree and effect of gender of using these euphemistic strategies. For the purpose of achieving these aims, the study developed a discourse completion test, which was distributed to 160 university students of Iraq, and it used a qualitative and quantitative approach to analyse the data. The findings revealed that participants employed various euphemistic strategies, and

that the strategy of deletion was the most frequent one when discussing topics like death. The study further concluded that gender and the formality degree play a significant role in using euphemistic strategies.

Jdetawy (2019), in his sociolinguistic study of euphemisms, aimed at clarifying the nature of euphemisms by conducting a contrastive analysis of euphemisms in Arabic and English, adopting Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1978, 1987). The study concluded that euphemism is a universal, social, cultural as well as phycological phenomenon in all natural languages. Moreover, similarities and differences in the use of euphemisms in both languages can be attributed to cultural and religious values and beliefs. Similarity in the use of euphemisms in both languages exists in topics like death, and differences occur with regards to emphasis and details of complex metaphors as well as to politeness degree in which euphemisms in Arabic have a higher degree of politeness than in English.

Mahdi and Eesa's (2019) research was concerned with the use of euphemisms and their meanings and types in Iraqi political context and how different world leaders and politicians employ euphemisms to manipulate their audience regarding Iraqi situations. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach to analyse data collected from world leaders' political speeches. The research found that political speeches have various euphemistic utilisations, which have different meanings and natures. It was also found that some common features characterise speech contexts such as the British context plays on cognitive and mental factors, while the American context plays on patriotism and employs historical and religious symbols with regard to Iraqi situations.

Another study is conducted by Khanfar (2012). Th study focused on the etymology and function of euphemisms, and paid attention to the tools of forming and classifying euphemisms in Standard and colloquial Iraqi Arabic and other Arab countries. The study showed that euphemisms in Arabic are a common linguistic phenomenon that Arabic speakers rely on in their everyday communications. It also revealed that euphemisms are clear techniques in the Holy Quran, the fact which shows that such etiquettes are deeply-rooted in the culture of Arabs. Moreover, the use of euphemisms is mixed with irony, humour and mocking, and that Arabic has some euphemisms borrowed as loan words.

3. Methodology

The data of the current study were gathered by the researcher from different Iraqi male and female Facebook users' pages, including posts and comments. The researcher could elicit 68 examples involving euphemisms through observation during three months. These examples were first carefully observed over Facebook, and then were written down with English translation. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach to analyse the data, drawing upon Warren's (1992) perspective on formation of euphemisms and Changhuai Lu's theory on pragmatic functions of euphemisms (2004). The euphemisms were classified into their types of formation and their pragmatic functions, and were descriptively discussed depending on Warren and Changhuai Lu's models.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

What follows is a presentation of the discussion of euphemisms, which is categorised according to the labels of formation of euphemisms. The selected euphemism is discussed twice in each category: first, according to the formation and then according to the pragmatic function.

4.1 Particularisation

'Abu Speicher' 'ابو سبايكر' is a comment in reply to a post on the Karbala Al-Khabar Facebook page, where the post says "Al-Maliki tweets about the position of the coordination framework on the formation of the government". Speicher is a military camp that held Iraqi young volunteers who joined the camp for military training in preparation for defending the lands of Iraq from the terrorist attacks of ISIS during the reign of former Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki. Camp Speicher was attacked on 12 June 2014 by ISIS, and thousands of Iraqi young volunteers were brutely killed. The euphemism 'Abu Speicher' is considered a particularisation because in the particular context of Camp Speicher and its massacre, the reader can infer that the name is indirectly used to refer to Nouri Al-Maliki. So, it is used to avoid mentioning Nouri Al-Maliki. Thus, the name of Nouri Al-Maliki is hidden, and consequently the commenter's face is not threatened. Moreover, the name 'Abu Speicher' cannot be understood so or refer to Nouri Al-Maliki if the reader doesn't know the massacre or the accident. Some other examples taking the form of particularisation include:ابشركم طلعنا (I have good news for you. We got out.), اكثر واحد 56 (Most of them are 56), لقاء الزنبوك مع الخشم (Zanbok's meeting with Al- Khashim),

هذا يعتبر احد منظري الشيخ ابو العدس (Who is this? This is the sheikh abo Al-Adas), هذا منو؟ جيوش الليموني ومفكري محور المقاومة الاسلامية بالعراق ومن ملهمي (This is one of the atrophy and intellectuals of the Islamic resistance in Iraq and the mission of the lemon armies), المنتخب صار اعرض (The team has become wide), الله يرحمه لهذاك الرجال جان الضابط يعرف اصله وفصله (May God have mercy on that man who taught the officer his origin and position), هذا حاله حال ابو دبي زرق ورق (This is like abu Dubai, blue and paper), and حالها حال ديالى مدمرة من سالفة حدودها ويا الارجنتين (Like Diyala, devastated and sick of its borders with Argentine).

'Abu Speicher' as a euphemism can pragmatically suit the function of avoidance. 'Abu Speicher' is utilised to avoid mentioning the name Nouri Al-Maliki, and also avoid saying that Nouri Al-Maliki was the cause of the massacre that resulted in thousands of causalities. So, the commenter resorted to the expression of 'Abu Speicher' which is known to all Iraqis within their context, but is less disturbing, less harsh and indirect. Some other examples of this pragmatic function include: انتقل الى (Motasem Al-Nahar separated from his wife), انفصال معتصم النهار عن زوجته (He moved to the mercy of God), رحمة الله اصرت الارض على احتضان جسدك (The earth insisted on embracing your body), اذا اكو بوخة هو الناتو (If there's one talkative, it is NATO), خطية والله المالكي كبران. (Poor Al-Maliki, he has grown up. Where is God to وين الله وياخذ امانته take his soul), صبر خمسة أيام ولم يصبر عليه الموت,(He waited for five days and death didn't wait him), طالبي اللجوء على الحدود (Asylum seekers at the borders), شيوخ كريستال (Crystal sheikhs), وسيبدأ والدي بأخذ جرعات الكيمياوي (My father will begin to take chemical doses), دخل لقص معدته فخرج جثة هامدة (He entered to have his stomach cut and came out dead), ارتفاع ضحايا فيضانات البرازيل الى 176 (Flood victims of Brazil increased to 176), ابشركم الموصل قادرة على نفض غبار المعركة(I have good news for you, we got out), طلعنا Mosul is able to flick the dust of the battle), هذا حاله حال ابو دبي زرق ورق (This is like abu Dubai, blue and paper), ناس تصارع على كراسي وناس كاع تموت (Add fuel to the fire), زاد الطين بلة (People wrestle over chairs and people die), الليرة التركية تهوي إلى مستوى تاريخي جديد (The Turkish lira is falling to a new historical level), الدول الالكترونية (Electronic governments), وجهان لعملة واحدة (The two sides of the same coin), اكثر واحد 56 (Most of them are 56), هذا منو؟ الشيخ ابو العدس (Who is this? This is the sheikh abo Al-Adas), الله يرحمه لهذاك الرجال جان الضابط يعرف اصله وفصله (May God have mercy on that man who taught the officer his origin and position), حالها حال ديالى مدمرة من سالفة حدودها ويا الارجنتين (Like Diyala, devastated and sick of its borders with Argentine), هو العمامة صارتأخطر (The turban is more dangerous than crystal), أي تصعيد ومراهنة بدماء من يشارك من الكرستال فيها يتحمله قادة هذا الإطار التنسيقي (Any escalation and betting on the blood of those who

participate in it will be borne by the leaders of this <u>coordinating framework</u>), داعش (Frame) جماعة الاطار (<u>Isis separates a colonel's head from his body</u>), يفصل رأس عقيد عن جسده (Rayan <u>is gone</u>, but he insisted on ريان <u>رحل</u> لكنه أصر أن يوقض الكثير من العبر (group), and awakening many lessons).

4.2 Implication

'The two sides of the same coin' 'وجهان لعملة واحدة' is a reply to a post of the Iraq journalist Steven Nabil, where the post says "Iranian foreign minister meets his counterpart from the Taliban government". In this comment, 'the two sides of the same coin' is an implication used for being a euphemism, because the Iranian foreign minister and his Taliban counterpart look alike in their evil acts. The Iranian foreign minister represents Iran, and it has been known to most Iraqis that Iran, almost over the last two decades, has intervened in the issues of Iraq and caused great damage to Iraq. As for Taliban, it is also known that the Taliban government is a terrorist group; a brutal, fundamentalist religious group that held power over most of Afghanistan during the late 1990s, and it has been famous of its brutal, evil acts. Therefore, both are the same in how they govern, how they control people and other countries, and how their influence has been evil and bad. They are literally two sides of the same coin; they are two sides of the same way of governing. It is a euphemism in the sense that it is employed to look indirect. Other implication examples include: انفصال معتصم النهار عن زوجته. (Motasem Al-Nahar <u>separated</u> from his wife.), زاد الطين بلة (<u>Add fuel to the fire</u>.), وسيبدأ والدي بأخذ جرعات الكيمياوي (<u>My father will begin to take chemical doses</u>), ناس <u>تصارع</u> على <u>كراسي</u> وناس كاع تموت (The two sides of the same coin), وجهان لعملة واحدة (People <u>wrestle over chairs</u> and people die.), اذا اكو <u>بوخة</u> هو الناتو (If there's one <u>talkative</u>, it is NATO.), and ارتفاع <u>ضحايا</u> فيضانات البرازيل الى 176 (Flood <u>victims</u> of Brazil increased to 176).

Pragmatically, the expression 'the two sides of the same coin' has an avoidance function in that the commenter intended not to say directly and explicitly that the Iranian foreign minister and his Taliban counterpart are both bad. He tried to avoid saying they are both the same in what they do and how their governments are. He uses a saying that completely serves as a veil for his indented meaning and to whom he intends this saying.

4.3 Metaphor

One of the Iraqi Facebook users used this phrase 'Crystal sheikhs' ' شيوخ كريستال' as a comment on one of the posts published by the Iraqi journalist Steven Nabil whose post was as follows "Rabeea Sameer Abbood Al-Sudani and Sabah Jabbar Al-Ubaidi have been arrested after being charged of having two guns and two kilos of a material suspected of being crystal." Rabeea Sameer and Sabah Jabbar are sheikhs; they are Iraqi religious leaders and chiefs of an Iraqi tribe or family, thus highly respected, religious figures who are conventionally supposed to be devoid of bad manners. It is known that 'crystal' is another noun for dope, especially cannabis or heroin. It is also considered forbidden and highly bad to take dope. This noun phrase 'Crystal sheikhs' is a metaphor for dope; these sheikhs are compared to crystal, hence dope. They are referred to being drug dealers by using the euphemism 'crystal'. Other examples include: دخل لقص (because they are short, not tall.), لو لأن براغي ومو طويلات) دولة جيس (He entered to have his stomach cut and came out dead), معدنه فخرج جثة هامدة حب (The government is a seed sack.), تنكة مزنجرة (a rusted can), شلون نعالات لاستيك (How plastic slippers), وجهك وتسريحة شعرك ينرادلها دمبك مو رتبة (Your face and your hair style need a drum, not military rank.), حضري نفسك ... الليفة حاضرة عد الريس (Prepare yourself, the fiber is ready at the president.), and هو العمامة صارت أخطر من الكرستال (The turban is more dangerous than crystal.)

'Crystal sheikhs' is pragmatically intended to hide the contextual meaning of drug dealers or hashish. Set within the avoidance function, 'Crystal sheikhs' is utilized as a euphemism to avoid the bad name (drug dealers) or avoid saying they are drug dealers that the government literally subscribes to, although the government publicly forbids drugs.

4.4 Metonymy

In reply to a post by the journalist Steven Nabil on his Facebook page, a Facebook user commented "الحكومة يحتاجلها حكومة" 'The government needs a government' on a post which reads: "A captain in the Ministry of the Interior behaves in a cheerful way and draws his pistol on a citizen in the middle of the street in front of his fellows? the Ministry of the Interior, how many people in the ministry need a lot of work to be cleaned?" Such a comment, without doubt, is a satire on those who are in control of or who rule Iraq, in which there is no discipline and rule obeyance.

The comment writer didn't mention the Iraqi rulers and politicians, but he used a metonymy. He used the first noun 'government' to refer to the rulers and politicians because it is these who are in charge of the government, and he used the second noun 'government' to imply that the current government needs to be replaced by a new government. This is a euphemism used to hide those who are attacked by using a general noun to refer to them. Other examples include: الدول الالكترونية (Electronic governments), جماعة الاطار (Frame group), and اي تصعيد ومراهنة بدماء من يشارك فيها يتحمله قادة هذا الإطار التنسيقي (Any escalation and betting on the blood of those who participate in it will be borne by the leaders of this coordinating framework).

'The government needs a government' fits the pragmatic function of humour because it satirizes the bad situation, discipline, behaviour and chaos in Iraq, which is devoid of security and order. Such a comment brings humour and laughter intended to satirize the current government. Some other examples that fit the humour function are: فدوة للاحزاب (Go redemption to the parties) لو لأن يراغي ومو طويلات (because they are short, not tall), بغداد بيد الايادي النظيفة (Baghdad is in clean hands), لقاء الزنبوك مع الخشم (Zanbok's meeting with Al- Khashim), صدقة لله شكد محبوبين (Charity to God, how lovely they are), خوش حكومة ماشالله (Good government mashallah), دولة جيس حب (The Educated, government is a seed sack), مثقفة ماشالله، الحضارات العراقية ما تعرفين تسلسليهن (Educated, mashallah, you don't know how to sequence Iraqi civilizations), صدك هسة كعدت امورنه على حصان (Mashallah, what really now our affairs are on a horse), ماشالله شنو هالابداع (Mashallah, what creativity this is), حضري نفسك ... الليفة (Iraq is a country of wonders), العجائب العراق بلد (Iraq is a country of wonders), شلون نعالات لاستيك (Prepare yourself, the fiber is ready at the president), حاضرة عد الريس المنتخب (a rusted can), تنكة مزنجرة (good reform), خوش اصلاح (good reform), الحمدلله على نعمة الاحزاب الدينية (Thank God for the blessing of religious parties), صار اعرض (The team has become wide), خوش يغرد البلبل الفتان (The glamorous nightingale is warbling well), مو وزارة ضيم (This isn't a ministry, but an excellent ministry), خوش انجاز (good achievement), وجهك وتسريحة شعرك ينرادلها دمبك مو رتبة (Your face and your hair style need a drum, not military rank), بغداد بأيدي أمينة (Baghdad is in safe hands), هذا النوابغ (The genius Isn't this an achievement or not?), بس ما يفهمون انجاز لو مو انجاز؟! (don't understand), and بارك الله بيك شيخنه (God bless you, our sheikh),

4.5 Reversal

In a comment on a post by the journalist Steven Nabil on his Facebook page that begins with "Appeal from a restaurant owner in Al-Alawi, Baghdad against the police shown in the video after they have committed acts of assault on him", a Facebook user wrote بلد امن وامان 'Safe and secure country'. This example fits reversal or irony because the commentator means the opposite of what he writes; he mocks or satirizes the country of Iraq because he knows, as all Iraqis do know, that Iraq is a country in which there is neither security nor safety. This example is a euphemism in the sense it is a bright shining shield to hide the intended meaning of Iraq being unsecure and unsafe. Some more examples include: فدوة للاحزاب (Go redemption to the parties), صدقة لله شكد محبوبين (Baghdad is in clean hands), بغداد بيد الايادي النظيفة (Charity to God, how lovely they are), خوش حكومة ماشالله (Good government mashallah), مثقفة (Educated, mashallah, you don't know how to ما تعرفين تسلسليهن ماشالله، الحضارات العراقية sequence Iraqi civilizations), صدك هسة كعدت امورنه حصان (Really now our affairs are on a horse), العراق بلد العجائب (Mashallah, what creativity this is!) ماشالله شنو هاالابداع (Iraq is a country of wonders), الحمدلله على نعمة الاحزاب الدينية (good reform), خوش اصلاح (Thank God for the blessing of religious parties), خوش انجاز (good achievement), مو وزارة ضيم (This isn't a ministry, but an excellent ministry), بغداد بأيدي أمينة (Baghdad is in safe hands), بس ما يفهمون النوابغ (Isn't this an achievement or not?), هذا انجاز لو مو انجاز؟! (The genius don't understand), خوش يغرد بارك الله بيك شيخنه (God bless you, our sheikh), and البلبل الفتان، (The glamorous nightingale is warbling well.)

This euphemistic expression 'Safe and secure country' has the humour function because people use such euphemisms to get rid of some embarrassing situations. Here, the commentator makes use of this example to satirize the situation in Iraq and to convey his idea in a funny way to mean that Iraq is an unsafe country.

4.6 Understatement

A Facebook user published a post and wrote "أوقف أحدهم سيارته على الجانب المخصص لذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة وعوقب بطريقة رائعة" "someone stopped his car on the side designated for people with special needs and was punished in a wonderful way" on the Bicycle Enthusiasts Facebook page. The writer intends to mitigate or reduce the effect of the word (disabled), which refers to disabled people, by using 'with special needs' that serves as a substitution and that sounds more pleasant and more polite so that the disabled people are not hurt.

A few other examples involve: انتقل إلى رحمة الله اثر مرض عضال (He moved to the mercy of God because of an incurable disease), انتقل الى رحمة الله (He moved to the mercy of God) ما بدي اسمع مريض نفسي ولا بدي اسمع تحت تأثير المخدرات, (I don't want to hear there is a psychopath, not one under the impact of drugs), اصرت الارض على احتضان جسدك (The earth insisted on embracing your body), صبر خمسة أيام ولم يصبر عليه الموت (He waited for five days and death didn't wait him), العناية المركزة (Intensive care), داعش يفصل رأس عقيد (Isis separates a colonel's head from his body), طالبي اللجوء على الحدود (Asylum seekers at the borders.), ريان رحل لكنه أصر أن يوقض الكثير من العبر (Rayan is gone, but he insisted on awakening many lessons), متلازمة داون (Down's syndrome), نفض غبار المعركة الموصل قادرة على (Mosul is able to flick the dust of the battle), خطية والله المالكي كبران. (Poor Al-Maliki, he has grown up. وين الله وياخذ امانته Where is God to take his soul.), and الليرة التركية تهوي إلى مستوى تاريخي جديد (The Turkish lira is falling to a new historical level.)

The phrase 'people with special needs' fits the politeness function. A person having a congenital disability is called (a person with special needs) and not (disabled) because by using (disabled), we may hurt the person. Thus, we tend to use a polite expression 'people with special needs' to avoid using embarrassing words that can probably hurt their feelings. Other examples include: اسمه عامل نظافة مو زبال (His name is a cleaner, not a scavenger), الروح لا يرى وان ابصر وبصير القلب لو اغمض عينه يرى ضرير (One with a blind soul does not see, even if he sees, and one with a good heart sees more, even if he closes his eyes), العناية المركزة (Intensive care), العم صلاح من الموصل يعمل في مهنة الاسكافي (Uncle Salah from Mosul works as a cobbler), اسم اقبال يختصر بالنسبة لي (Iqbal's name is abbreviated to me as Khaldoon), (a restaurant waiter) خلدون نادل المطاعم شعب حكم على نفسه بنفسه بأنه شعب اعمى، اصم، ابكم (People have judged themselves to be blind, deaf, dumb), متلازمة داون (Down's syndrome), انتقل إلى رحمة الله اثر مرض عضال (He moved to the mercy of God because of an incurable disease), and ما بدي اسمع مريض نفسي ولا بدي اسمع تحت تأثير المخدرات ولا بدي اسمع أي حاجة (I don't want to hear there is a psychopath, not one under the impact of drugs, nor anything).

 4.7 Overstatement

The sentence 'نأمل أن يتم أعادة تأهيل شارع الرشيد' 'We hope to have Al-Rasheed Street rehabilitated' was posted as a comment on a post by the Iraqi Facebook page Radio Alghad. By using إعادة تأهيل, there is an overstatement for the process of reconstruction of Al-Rasheed Street. It would be mere building by just using 'built', hence a very simple and direct process.

However, it is a highly overrated and polite request and carries more weight just through the use of إعادة تأهيل. Other examples may cover: اسمه عامل نظافة مو زبال (His name is a cleaner, not a scavenger.), ضرير الروح لا يرى وان ابصر وبصير القلب لو اغمض عينه يرى اكثر (One with a blind soul does not see, even if he sees, and one with a good heart sees more, even if he closes his eyes), العم صلاح من الموصل يعمل في مهنة الاسكافي (Uncle Salah from Mosul works as a cobbler), شعب حكم على نفسه بنفسه بأنه شعب اعمى، اصم، ابكم (People have judged themselves to be blind, deaf, dumb), and اسم اقبال يختصر بالنسبة لي خلدون نادل المطاعم (Iqbal's name is abbreviated to me as Khaldoon, a restaurant waiter).

This above example belongs to the type of pragmatic elegance function. The writer used a formal pleasant word 'rehabilitated' 'إعادة تأهيل', which adds a pleasant and elegant atmosphere. Two other examples might be: نتمنى إعادة تأهيل شارع الرشيد (We hope to have Al-Rasheed Street rehabilitated) and هذا يعتبر احد منظري ومفكري محور المقاومة الاسلامية بالعراق ومن ملهمي جيوش الليموني (This is one of the atrophy and intellectuals of the Islamic resistance in Iraq and the mission of the lemon armies).

5. Conclusions

Based on the foregoing analysis and discussion of the collected data, the study has come up with several conclusions:

1. Iraqi Arabic Facebook users construct euphemisms semantically in various ways. They use particularisation, implication, metaphor, metonymy, reversal, understatement, and overstatement to form their euphemisms when communicating online on Facebook.
2. The Iraqi Arabic Facebook-mediated communicators employ euphemisms with various pragmatic functions. The euphemisms used have pragmatic functions such as avoidance, politeness, elegance, and humour, except the disguise function which was not observed to occur. The reason could be that it carries the meaning of deception and it is often related to politics for persuasive purposes., and this meaning is not an intention by the users.
3. Context plays a major role in the construction of the meaning of euphemism. The meaning of a euphemism is context based. It is the social context that leads to the intended meaning of a euphemism.
4. Euphemism is a tool and a choice used to be polite and avoid embarrassment. Thus, general linguistic wordings and constructions are not randomly made but crafted for particular purposes.

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