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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teaching with Tact: Senior High School English Teachers' Narratives on Euphemism-Based Classroom Practices

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: This study explored how senior high school English teachers in Tanza, Cavite, employ euphemism as a classroom communication strategy. Anchored in Goffman's face-work and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, the study examined teachers' experiences, reasons, and perceived effects of euphemistic language in classroom instruction and interaction.

Methods: Using a qualitative narrative inquiry design, data were gathered from nine senior high school English teachers through semi-structured narrative interviews. The narratives were analyzed using Labov's narrative model, supported by within-case and cross-case thematic analysis.

Results: The findings revealed that teachers used euphemism in situations involving the correction of errors, discipline, family concerns, poverty, gender participation, teen pregnancy, academic failure, offensive behavior, and other sensitive topics. Teachers employed softened, indirect, and reframed expressions to protect learners' dignity, reduce embarrassment, maintain classroom harmony, and respond to Filipino cultural values such as *hiya*, *pakikisama*, respect, and relational sensitivity. The study also found that euphemism contributed to a safer classroom climate, increased student participation, and strengthened teacher-student rapport. However, participants emphasized that euphemism may become ineffective when it becomes too vague, over-softened, or unclear.

Conclusion: The study concludes that euphemism-based classroom practice functions as strategic euphemistic mediation, in which teachers balance difficult truths with learners' emotional readiness. Effective euphemism requires clarity, honesty, and sufficient explanation. The findings offer implications for English language teaching, classroom management, teacher training, and culturally responsive communication in Philippine senior high school classrooms, further highlighting the teacher's role in sustaining humane and respectful learning environments.

KEYWORDS

Euphemism, Classroom Communication, Narrative Inquiry, Senior High School English Teachers, Politeness Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Euphemism is a significant feature of human communication because it allows speakers to address sensitive, unpleasant, or socially delicate topics in a less direct manner. Rather than functioning merely as "pleasant words," euphemisms operate as pragmatic and sociocultural tools that help speakers manage politeness, preserve face, and negotiate social relationships (Allan & Burridge, 1991; Goffman, 1967). From this perspective, euphemism is not only a linguistic device but also a socially situated communicative strategy. It reflects how speakers adjust language according to context, audience, cultural expectations, and the possible emotional effect of their words.

In classroom discourse, the use of indirect, polite, and sensitive language is particularly relevant because teacher-student interaction involves authority, feedback, correction, discipline, and care. Studies on classroom politeness have shown that teachers and students use politeness

strategies to maintain respectful interaction and reduce possible face-threatening situations during instruction (Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020). Related studies on euphemism in educational settings also suggest that euphemistic expressions may help teachers deliver feedback, manage sensitive classroom situations, and sustain positive relationships with learners (Bloch-Rozmej, 2023). Thus, euphemism may be examined not only as a language form but also as a pedagogical strategy that supports tactful communication in the classroom.

In the Philippine context, euphemism has been studied mainly in relation to public discourse, media, politics, and literary texts. Lustaños and Lita (2016), for example, examined political euphemisms in Philippine online news articles and found that euphemistic expressions were used to soften sensitive issues and reframe social and political realities in more acceptable terms. This finding shows that euphemism plays a role in shaping how Filipinos understand public issues through language. However, while such studies contribute to sociolinguistic and

pragmatic understanding, they do not fully explain how euphemism is used in actual classroom teaching practices, particularly by English teachers who handle sensitive topics, student correction, and classroom interaction.

Language instruction in the Philippines is also shaped by multilingual, multicultural, and learner-centered realities. Current educational reforms emphasize inclusivity, learner welfare, and responsive teaching. The Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum, for instance, identifies inclusive education as a core principle of the K to 12 Basic Education Program and supports the development of learning environments that are responsive to learners' needs (Department of Education, 2024). In this context, the language choices of teachers become important because classroom communication can either support or hinder learner participation, confidence, and sense of respect. Euphemistic language may therefore be relevant in understanding how teachers communicate difficult ideas while maintaining sensitivity and professionalism.

Recent Philippine language education studies have examined broader classroom language practices such as translanguaging, Philippine English expressions, and the use of Taglish to support comprehension and engagement. For instance, Ocampo (2023) investigated translanguaging and reading comprehension among Filipino ESL learners, while Rentillo et al. (2024) examined regional and domain-based acceptance of Philippine English expressions among younger Filipinos. Bahingawan and Bulatao (2025) also reported that Taglish may support learner comprehension and engagement in classroom instruction. These studies show the growing scholarly attention given to language use in Philippine education. However, they focus more on multilingual practices, language acceptability, and instructional language choice rather than on euphemism as a deliberate communicative and pedagogical strategy.

The theoretical importance of euphemism may also be understood through Goffman's (1967) concept of face-work, which explains how individuals maintain dignity, social approval, and relational balance during interaction. In the classroom, teachers regularly perform face-work when they correct errors, give feedback, manage behavior, discuss sensitive topics, and maintain classroom order without embarrassing or discouraging learners. This makes euphemism relevant to the study of teacher communication because it may serve as a linguistic means of protecting students' face while still achieving instructional goals.

Despite the relevance of euphemism to classroom communication, limited research has documented the lived experiences, reflections, and instructional practices of English teachers who use euphemism in actual teaching contexts. Existing studies provide useful insights into euphemism in public discourse, literary texts, and general teacher-student interaction, but there remains a need for localized classroom-based inquiry that explains how senior high school English teachers understand, apply, and reflect on euphemism in their teaching. This gap is particularly important because English teachers often handle topics that require sensitivity, such as identity, values, social issues, interpersonal relationships, and student performance.

This study seeks to explore the narratives of senior high school English teachers in Tanza, Cavite, regarding their euphemism-based classroom practices. By foregrounding teacher experiences, the study aims to provide a culturally grounded understanding of how euphemism is used in classroom discourse, why teachers use it, and how it shapes teacher-student interaction. Specifically, the study intends to describe how euphemisms are utilized in real classroom settings, examine the motivations and intended outcomes behind such use, and generate insights that may inform teacher education, in-service training, and professional communication practices among educators.

The findings of this study may contribute to the connection between linguistic theory and classroom practice by showing how concepts such as politeness, face-work, and culturally sensitive communication are enacted in senior high school English classrooms. In doing so, the study may offer practical and scholarly insights into how euphemism supports tactful teaching, preserves student-teacher rapport, and promotes respectful engagement with sensitive classroom content.

This study aimed to explore how senior high school English teachers in Tanza National Trade School employ euphemism-based practices in their classroom instruction. Specifically, it sought to examine their personal narratives, motivations, and the perceived impact of euphemistic language on teaching and classroom interactions.

Guided by a narrative inquiry approach, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the participants' experiences in using euphemisms during classroom instruction and interactions?
- What are the reasons behind teachers' use of euphemistic language in these situations: Correcting errors, disciplining behavior, and addressing delicate topics?
- What are the perceived effects of euphemism-based practices on the following aspects: Classroom climate, student engagement, and teacher-student relationships?

1.1 Theoretical Framework

1.1.1 Goffman's Theory of Face and Interaction Rituals

Complementing Politeness Theory is Erving Goffman's Theory of Face and Interaction Rituals (1967), which further illuminates the relational function of euphemism in classroom discourse. Goffman defines "face" as the positive social value individuals effectively claims for themselves during interaction, and "interaction rituals" as the practices individuals engage in to sustain mutual respect and cooperation. Every communicative act, therefore, carries the potential to either uphold or threaten face. In classroom settings, where interactions are continuous and public, the stakes of facework are particularly high for both teachers and students.

Teachers often engage in face-saving practices when correcting errors, disciplining behavior, or addressing delicate topics. Euphemism is one of the most effective tools in this regard, as it allows teachers to perform "face-work" on potentially face-threatening acts. For instance, instead of bluntly pointing out a student's academic failure, a teacher might say, "You have areas for improvement," thereby preserving the student's sense of competence. Such euphemistic framing reflects Goffman's notion that communicative exchanges are not just about transmitting information but also about maintaining the ritual order of interaction, where dignity and respect are continuously negotiated.

Goffman's theory also emphasizes that facework is reciprocal; not only do teachers protect students' faces, but students also help sustain teachers' authority and credibility by responding appropriately to euphemistic cues. For example, when a teacher indirectly signals disapproval through a euphemistic phrase, students are expected to recognize the implied message and adjust their behavior without confrontation. This reciprocal facework creates a ritualized pattern of classroom communication that sustains harmony and order.

In the Philippine educational context, Goffman's framework is especially relevant because of the cultural premium placed on respect for authority figures, such as teachers, and the avoidance of direct confrontation. Euphemism thus serves as a cultural-linguistic ritual that aligns with the values of respect, relational harmony, and conflict avoidance. In effect, euphemism becomes more than a linguistic tool; it is an interactional resource that ensures the smooth functioning of classroom life.

1.1.2 Politeness Theory

Politeness Theory, developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), posits that communication is inherently face-threatening because speakers often need to impose, correct, criticize, or request something that may challenge the hearer's autonomy or self-image. To address this, individuals employ politeness strategies to minimize threats to "face", which is defined as the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for themselves. In the classroom, where power asymmetry between teacher and students is inevitable, euphemism operates as a strategic form of negative politeness, mitigating imposition and preserving student autonomy, and positive politeness that emphasizes solidarity and respect.

Teachers, for instance, may soften disciplinary language by using euphemisms such as “let’s adjust our behavior” instead of directly saying “stop misbehaving.” This subtle linguistic choice reduces the risk of embarrassing students publicly while still fulfilling the pedagogical need for discipline. Similarly, when addressing sensitive academic content such as topics in literature that involve sexuality, death, or violence, teachers may reframe terms in more culturally appropriate or less abrasive ways. This enables them to meet curricular demands without violating social taboos or making students uncomfortable.

What makes Politeness Theory particularly significant for this study is its explanation of how euphemism functions as a pragmatic buffer in classroom discourse. It is not merely about being “nice” but about strategically balancing authority with sensitivity. For Filipino teachers, whose classroom communication is deeply influenced by cultural values of *hiya* (shame) and *pakikisama* (smooth interpersonal relations), the use of euphemism resonates with the broader cultural expectation to maintain politeness in hierarchical relationships. In this sense, euphemism becomes a pedagogical politeness strategy that allows teachers to preserve both their instructional goals and the emotional dignity of their students.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the qualitative-narrative model of senior high school English teachers’ narratives on euphemism-based classroom practices in Cavite. This illustrates teachers’ narratives on euphemism use from the central focus, reflecting the narrative inquiry approach where participants’ lived experiences are the primary source of knowledge. From these narratives emerge the reasons for using euphemisms, which reveal the underlying motivations such as cultural norms, politeness, tact, and the need to avoid embarrassment. The narratives also point to the perceived effects of euphemism-based practices, particularly in shaping the classroom climate, influencing student engagement, and nurturing teacher-student relationships. Surrounding this process is the analytical lens of narrative inquiry, which guides the collection, interpretation, and meaning-making process. Unlike quantitative models that emphasize variables and outcomes, this framework highlights the interconnections between teachers’ lived stories, the motivations behind their practices, and the effects perceived within the educational environment.

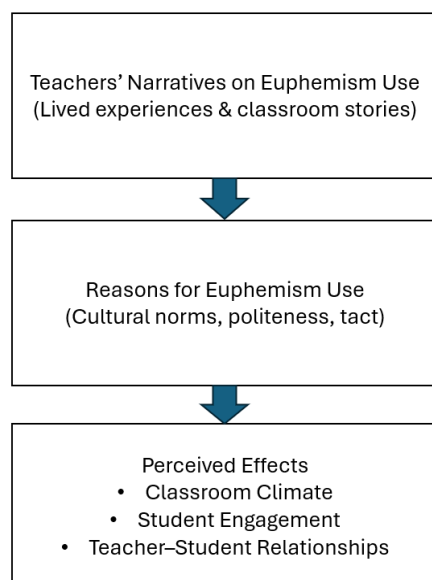


Figure 1 Research Paradigm

1.2.1 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This qualitative-narrative study focused on nine (9) grade 11 senior high school teachers of the schools division office of cavite province that implements the strengthened curriculum, teaching the effective communication of department of education (DepEd) during the academic year 2025–2026. The participants should: (a) be currently

teaching English at the senior high school level with at least two years of teaching experience, (b) have demonstrated awareness or intentional use of euphemism in teaching or classroom communication, and (c) have a willingness to share narratives and insights in a reflective and detailed manner. It covered their classroom experiences, strategies, and reflections related to euphemism-based teaching. The study will not include euphemism use in non-English subjects or among students themselves. It also does not aim to measure the psychological or cognitive effects of euphemism on learners but rather emphasizes teacher narratives.

1.2.2 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will help and benefit the following groups:

Senior High School Students: The study offers direct benefits by helping them understand and use euphemism thoughtfully. This not only improves their vocabulary but also develops their ability to discuss sensitive topics with care, evaluate meaning critically, and adapt language use in socially appropriate ways. By engaging with euphemism, students learn to consider perspectives, show respect, and communicate more tactfully.

Teachers: The study provides a research-based instructional model that they can use to enrich their English classes. Many teachers are looking for practical, culturally relevant ways to promote critical thinking and communication skills in line with the Department of Education’s 21st-century learning goals. By demonstrating effective methods for teaching euphemism, this research can serve as a guide for lesson planning, classroom activities, and assessment strategies that go beyond memorization toward genuine understanding and application.

School Administrators and Curriculum Planners: The findings of this study may offer valuable insights into curriculum development. Integrating targeted language instruction that promotes cultural awareness and higher-order thinking aligns with national educational priorities and global competencies. The study can support initiatives to make learning more learner-centered, culturally sensitive, and responsive to real-life communication needs.

Researchers: This study helps address a local research gap by providing empirical evidence about the role of euphemism-focused instruction in developing students’ critical thinking and communication skills. While many studies in the Philippines explore general communication strategies, few have specifically examined euphemism as a teaching tool in secondary education. This research thus contributes to the growing body of knowledge on effective language teaching strategies in the Philippine context.

Society: The study promotes the development of young people who can engage in respectful, thoughtful, and culturally aware communication. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the ability to navigate sensitive topics with empathy and critical thinking is essential for fostering understanding, reducing conflict, and building inclusive communities. By teaching students to soften words while sharpening minds, the study supports the cultivation of socially responsible and communicatively competent citizens.

Master of Arts in English Language Teaching (MAELT) Program: This study reflects the program’s core values of research-informed instruction, sociolinguistic awareness, and reflective pedagogy. By investigating the use of euphemism as a teaching strategy, the study deepens the understanding of how linguistic features can influence classroom dynamics and learner engagement. It also serves as a model for graduate-level qualitative research rooted in real teaching contexts. Graduate students in the MAELT program may benefit from the methodological design, thematic analysis, and narrative approach used in this study as they conduct their own research on discourse, teaching strategies, and language use in the Philippine classroom setting.

College of Education (COED-PUP): The findings of this study are to cultivate critical, ethical, and socially responsive educators. By focusing on the lived experiences of public-school teachers in Cavite, the study affirms COED-PUP’s dedication to promoting public school realities

as valid and rich sites of academic research. It contributes to COED's growing repository of scholarly work that addresses local educational issues, linguistic challenges, and cultural sensitivities. Moreover, it serves as a resource for faculty members and graduate advisers guiding student researchers toward context-based and practice-oriented inquiry.

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the study. It outlines the research design, describes the respondents and sampling procedure, explains the research instrument used for data collection, and details the procedures followed in gathering and analyzing the data.

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative-narrative inquiry design, which is considered the most appropriate approach for examining the lived experiences of senior high school English teachers in their use of euphemism-based classroom practices. Narrative inquiry focuses on how individuals make sense of their experiences through stories, allowing the researcher to capture the depth, complexity, and contextual nature of human actions and meanings. In this study, it enabled an in-depth exploration of how teachers narrate, interpret, and reflect on their use of euphemistic language in real classroom interactions, particularly when addressing sensitive or challenging situations.

Grounded in the work of Clandinin and Connelly (2016), narrative inquiry views experience as storied, emphasizing that individuals understand and construct their realities through narratives shaped by personal, social, and cultural contexts. This perspective is especially relevant in educational research, where teaching is not merely a technical activity but a deeply relational and context-dependent practice. Through this approach, the study goes beyond describing teachers' linguistic choices and instead uncovers the meanings, intentions, and values embedded in their use of euphemism. Teachers' narratives reveal how they negotiate their dual roles as authority figures and empathetic facilitators, using tactful language to balance discipline, instruction, and care.

To further strengthen the narrative analysis, this study is also informed by Labov's (1972) structural model of narrative, which provides a systematic way of examining how stories are organized and conveyed. Labov's framework, comprising elements such as abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda, guides the analysis of teachers' accounts by identifying how they structure their experiences and highlight significant moments in classroom interaction. This allows the researcher to examine not only the content of the narratives but also how teachers emphasize particular events, justify their actions, and express their evaluations of euphemism use in specific situations.

In addition, the study integrates insights from Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive process theory of writing, which views meaning-making as a recursive and reflective process. Although originally developed to explain writing, this framework is applicable to narrative inquiry as it highlights how individuals organize thoughts, draw from memory, and construct meaning through language. In the context of this study, it helps explain how teachers articulate their experiences of using euphemism in how they plan, recall, and interpret classroom events, and how these cognitive processes shape the narratives they produce. This perspective enriches the analysis by linking teachers' linguistic choices to their internal reasoning, decision-making processes, and reflective practices.

By integrating narrative inquiry with these theoretical perspectives, the study recognizes that euphemism is not merely a linguistic device but a meaning-making practice embedded in teachers' lived experiences. The use of narrative as a method allows for the collection of rich, detailed, and context-sensitive data that capture the motivations, challenges, and perceived effects of euphemistic communication in the classroom. This approach is particularly relevant to the local context of Cavite, where cultural values, school environment, and student diversity influence how teachers employ tactful language in their daily interactions. Narrative inquiry provides a powerful lens for understanding how euphemism is enacted, justified, and reflected upon, offering deeper insights into its

role in shaping classroom discourse and relationships.

2.1.1 Narrative Inquiry and Data Generation Methods

The study was anchored in qualitative narrative inquiry, particularly in the analysis of personal and professional stories. Narrative inquiry is suitable for educational research because teaching is a relational and context-based practice. Teachers' stories reveal their decisions, emotions, values, challenges, and reflections in actual classroom situations.

In this study, narrative inquiry was used to examine how senior high school English teachers in Cavite describe their use of euphemism in classroom communication. The inquiry focused on teachers' actual experiences in giving feedback, correcting learners, discussing sensitive topics, managing classroom behavior, and maintaining respectful interaction. Through this tradition, the study sought to understand euphemism as a classroom communication strategy shaped by language, culture, and teacher judgment.

2.1.2 Analytical Framework: Labov's Narrative Model

To guide the analysis of the teacher narratives, this study used Labov's Narrative Model. Labov's model provides a structural way of examining oral narratives by identifying how stories are organized and how speakers communicate the meaning of their experiences. Labov's framework includes six narrative elements: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda, which is shown in Table 1.

The model was useful because it allowed the researcher to examine both the content and the structure of teachers' stories. It helped identify not only what happened in the classroom but also how teachers framed the event, justified their language choices, and reflected on the meaning of euphemism in their teaching practice.

2.2 Sources of Data

The primary source of data was the semi-structured narrative interview with senior high school English teachers. The interviews were designed to elicit stories about actual classroom experiences involving the use of euphemism, indirect language, softened expressions, or tactful communication.

Supplementary sources of data included the following:

- Reflective notes from participants, when available, regarding their experiences in using euphemisms in teaching.
- The researcher's field notes, which documented observations during the interview process, including nonverbal cues, recurring ideas, and contextual details.
- The researcher's reflexive journal, which recorded the researcher's assumptions, decisions, reflections, and potential biases throughout the study.
- These sources were used to support triangulation and strengthen the credibility of the qualitative analysis.

2.3 Instrumentation

The primary instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researcher and validated by experts in language education and qualitative research. The guide included open-ended questions designed to prompt stories, such as:

2.3.1 Experiences with Euphemism in the Classroom

- Can you recall a specific classroom situation where you used euphemistic language to handle a sensitive or delicate topic? Please describe what happened.
- What words or phrases did you choose, and why? How did your students respond?
- In what ways do you think euphemism helped (or hindered) the communication process in that situation?

Table 1 The Six Elements of Labov's Framework were Used in this Study

Labov's element	Meaning	Application
Abstract	A brief summary of what the story is about	Identified the main classroom situation narrated by the teacher, such as correcting a learner or discussing a sensitive topic
Orientation	Provides the setting, participants, time, and context of the story	Described who was involved, where the classroom event happened, and what teaching situation led to the use of euphemism
Complicating action	Presents the main event, problem, or turning point in the narrative	Identified the sensitive or challenging classroom moment that required tactful communication
Evaluation	Shows the narrator's feelings, judgment, interpretation, or reason for telling the story	Examined how teachers explained their reasons for using euphemism and how they interpreted its effect on learners
Resolution	Explains how the situation ended or was addressed	Identified the outcome of the euphemistic communication, such as reduced embarrassment, improved participation, or continued misunderstanding
Coda	Brings the story back to the present and often includes a concluding reflection	Captured the teacher's final insight, lesson learned, or present view about euphemism in teaching

2.3.2 Motivations and Considerations

- What are your reasons for using euphemism when teaching?
- Are there particular topics (e.g., sex education, death, poverty, and politics) where you consciously shift your language to be more tactful?
- How do factors like student maturity, classroom environment, or school culture influence your language use?

2.3.3 Reflections on Euphemism-Based Practices

- How would you describe the impact of euphemism on your students' learning or emotional responses?
- Have you ever regretted using euphemism, or found it to cause confusion or misinterpretation?
- In your opinion, what makes the use of euphemism effective or ineffective in the teaching context?

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection followed a systematic and ethical process. First, the researcher secured permission from the appropriate school authorities and obtained ethical clearance or approval as required by the institution. After approval, qualified senior high school English teachers were invited to participate in the study. Second, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, the nature of participation, the expected duration of the interview, and the rights of the participants. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Third, informed consent was obtained from each participant. The researcher assured the participants that their identities would be kept confidential and that pseudonyms or codes would be used in the presentation of findings. Fourth, semi-structured narrative interviews were conducted. The interview questions encouraged the participants to share actual classroom stories involving euphemism use. Follow-up and probing questions were asked to clarify details, deepen responses, and encourage reflection. Fifth, the interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. The recordings were transcribed verbatim to preserve the participants' exact words and meanings. Sixth, the transcripts were reviewed and organized for analysis. The researcher also wrote reflexive notes after each interview to document initial observations, possible assumptions, and emerging insights.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analyzed through qualitative narrative analysis using Labov's Narrative Model as the main analytic guide. Narrative analysis is concerned with how stories are constructed and interpreted, and Riessman's work explains that narrative analysis may examine different forms of storied data, including thematic and structural approaches.

The analysis followed these steps:

First, the researcher read the interview transcripts several times to become familiar with the participants' stories. This stage allowed the researcher to gain an overall understanding of the narratives before coding.

Second, narrative segments were identified. These were portions of the interview where participants described specific classroom experiences involving euphemism, indirect language, tactful correction, sensitive discussion, or teacher-student interaction.

Third, each narrative segment was analyzed using Labov's six elements: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. This helped the researcher examine how each teacher organized the story and what meaning was attached to the experience.

Fourth, within-case analysis was conducted. Each participant's narrative was examined individually to understand the unique experience, context, motivation, and perceived effect of euphemism use.

Fifth, cross-case analysis was conducted. The researcher compared the narratives across participants to identify recurring patterns, similarities, differences, and meaningful contrasts.

Sixth, emerging themes were developed based on the participants' narratives. The themes were aligned with the research questions and focused on the use of euphemism, reasons for euphemism use, and perceived effects on classroom communication.

Seventh, the researcher interpreted the findings using the study's theoretical and conceptual anchors, particularly euphemism, classroom communication, cultural context, politeness, and face-work.

2.6 Bracketing and Researcher Reflexivity

Bracketing was used to minimize the influence of the researcher's personal assumptions, expectations, and prior knowledge about euphemism and classroom communication. Since qualitative research involves interpretation, the researcher acknowledged that personal

beliefs may influence how data are understood. To address this, the researcher practiced reflexivity throughout the study.

Before data collection, the researcher wrote a reflexive statement identifying personal assumptions about euphemism, such as the belief that softened language may help preserve student dignity. During data collection and analysis, the researcher kept a reflexive journal to monitor possible bias, record decisions, and distinguish participant meanings from the researcher’s interpretations.

Bracketing did not mean completely removing the researcher’s perspective. Rather, it involved making the researcher’s assumptions visible and controlled so that the participants’ narratives remained the central basis of analysis.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in accordance with the highest standards of ethical responsibility, ensuring respect for the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from each respondent through a written consent form that clearly explains the purpose of the study, the nature and procedures of participation, the voluntary character of involvement, and the participants’ right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Participants were given adequate time to review the consent form and ask questions before agreeing to take part in the research.

To protect confidentiality and anonymity, all personal and identifying information was carefully safeguarded. Participants’ names and other identifiable details were replaced with codes or pseudonyms in all transcripts, reports, and publications. Data collected from interviews and other sources were securely stored in password-protected files and locked storage, accessible only to the researcher and authorized academic personnel. These measures ensured that participants’ identities and responses remain confidential throughout and after the completion of the study.

Given that the discussion of euphemism may involve sensitive classroom experiences or personal reflections, the researcher exercised respect and sensitivity during data collection. Participants were informed that they may decline to answer any question that makes them uncomfortable or may terminate the interview at any time. The emotional well-being and psychological safety of participants will be prioritized, and interviews will be conducted in a manner that promotes trust, openness, and mutual respect.

Prior to the conduct of the study, ethical clearance was secured from the appropriate Ethics Review Board of the College of Education, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, as well as approval from the school head of Tanza National Trade School. By upholding these ethical safeguards, the study aims to create a respectful, honest, and empowering research environment for participants while contributing meaningful and ethically grounded insights to the MAELT program, COED-PUP, and the broader field of English language pedagogy.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Anchor Code 1: Experiences in Using Euphemisms During Classroom Instruction and Interaction

The first statement of the problem asked about the participants’ experiences in using euphemisms during classroom instruction and interactions. The participants’ responses show that euphemism was commonly used during classroom moments involving family background, poverty, gender participation, pregnancy, student behavior, financial hardship, and other topics that could cause embarrassment, shame, or discomfort. These experiences were narrated as critical classroom incidents where the teacher had to decide how to express a difficult message without harming students’ dignity (Table 2).

Across the participants, euphemism was experienced as a practical classroom response to socially delicate moments. Participants did not describe euphemism as an isolated vocabulary choice. Rather, they

Table 2 Data Matrix for Anchor Code 1: Experiences

Participant	Extract
A	Discussing household and family structure, Participant A avoided directly asking who came from a single-parent household and used “different types of families,” “families with unique circumstances,” and “families with varying dynamics”
B	During an Oral Communication group activity, Participant B noticed that girls dominated the discussion and assigned boys note-taking roles. The teacher reframed the issue by saying, “everyone has a chance to share” and “contribute equally”
C	In a discussion on poverty, Participant C used “financially challenged” instead of “poor” to help students discuss social issues with compassion and professionalism
D	When students discussed parents who rarely communicated with them, Participant D avoided saying that some parents neglect their children and instead said that parents may be “preoccupied with work or responsibilities”
E	Participant E used institutional and personal softening, such as “for completion” instead of saying a student failed, and “personal problem/family issue” in cases involving pregnancy or dropping a class
F	During a discussion on teen pregnancy and family responsibility, Participant F used “early responsibilities” and “unexpected life situations” instead of more blunt or clinical expressions
G	In Practical Research 2, Participant G reframed survey items about income and job loss as “household support systems” and “family resource adaptations” to avoid shame in questions about finances
H	When a student publicly said that a classmate had been “kicked out of their house,” Participant H reframed the situation as “personal transitions at home” and used “family challenges” instead of “broken home”
I	Participant I recalled using “light words and explanation” when a student did something seriously offensive so that the student would not feel deeply hurt while the class was guided toward a solution

Table 3 Participant-Level Themes for Anchor Code 1

Participant	Theme
A	Inclusive reframing of family diversity
B	Equity-oriented redirection during collaborative interaction
C	Respectful discussion of social stigma
D	Empathic mediation of family-sensitive disclosure
E	Institutional softening of academic and personal difficulty
F	Developmentally sensitive framing of sexuality and responsibility
G	Culturally responsive reframing of research ethics
H	Privacy-protective reframing of family crisis
I	Situational emotional de-escalation through light wording

narrated it as a teacher's decision made in the middle of a classroom interaction. Participant A used euphemism when discussing family structures, Participant C used it when discussing poverty, Participant F used it when discussing teen pregnancy, and Participant G used it in research ethics where questions about income could trigger shame. These experiences show that euphemism operates at the intersection of language, culture, and teacher judgment (Allan & Burridge, 2016).

The data also show that the participants used euphemism to manage possible face-threatening situations. This connects with Goffman's concept of face-work, which explains that interaction involves the protection of one's social dignity and the dignity of others (Goffman, 1976). In the classroom, teachers occupy a position of authority; therefore, their words may either protect or threaten students' self-image. The participants' narratives support the reviewed literature that treats euphemism as a face-saving and relational tool in communication (Crespo-Fernández, 2018).

However, the experiences were not uniformly positive. Several participants stated that euphemism may be confusing when the softened expression becomes too vague. Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, and H all acknowledged in different ways that euphemism must be balanced with clarity (Huang, 2020; Warren, 2018; Taguchi, 2021).

Composite Narrative: A senior high school English teacher enters the classroom aware that students carry different family backgrounds, economic conditions, personal beliefs, and emotional sensitivities. During instruction, a sensitive situation emerges: a discussion touches on family structure, poverty, teen pregnancy, student behavior, or financial hardship. The teacher senses that direct wording may embarrass a learner, expose private circumstances, or create tension in the class. Instead of using blunt expressions such as "poor," "failed," "broken home," or "unplanned pregnancy," the teacher chooses softened expressions such as "financially challenged," "for completion," "family challenges," "personal transitions at home," "early responsibilities," or "household support systems." The immediate result is a more careful discussion in which learners appear less defensive and more willing to participate. Yet the teacher also recognizes that softened language can confuse students if it is not explained. Through the experience, the teacher learns that euphemism is most useful when it protects dignity without hiding truth (Table 3).

3.2 Anchor Code 2: Reasons Behind Teachers' Use of Euphemistic Language

The second statement of the problem asked for the reasons behind teachers' use of euphemistic language in correcting errors, disciplining behavior, and addressing delicate topics. The participants' answers indicate that their reasons were not merely stylistic. They used euphemism for emotional protection, cultural and relational sensitivity, learner readiness, classroom harmony, and professional responsibility (Table 4).

The first major reason for using euphemism was emotional protection. Participants repeatedly referred to avoiding embarrassment, reducing fear, preventing discomfort, and creating a safe classroom atmosphere. This pattern is visible in Participant F's use of "early responsibilities" and "unexpected life situations," Participant H's use of "family challenges," and Participant E's preference for private, softer correction (Bloch-Rozmej, 2023).

The second reason was cultural and relational sensitivity. Participant G explicitly connected euphemism to Filipino values such as *hiya* and *pakikisama* (Reyes, 2020; Bautista & Velasco, 2023). Participant D connected euphemism to family respect, while Participant A connected it to the diversity of family structures. In the Philippine classroom, euphemism becomes a culturally responsive strategy because it helps teachers discuss sensitive realities without publicly exposing learners.

The third reason was pedagogical and professional responsibility. Participants did not use euphemism only to avoid difficult conversations. Many used it to teach students how to communicate more responsibly. Participant C explained that students should learn that some words can be sensitive and that respectful language promotes kindness and empathy. Participant B used euphemism in workplace role-play to teach tactful criticism. This finding connects to the reviewed literature that frames euphemism as part of pragmatic competence and classroom communication (Table 5).

At the same time, the participants emphasized that euphemism should not replace clarity. Participant B reported that the phrase "areas for improvement" caused students to think they were already doing well. Participant E observed that some students may become complacent when language is too soft. Participant F stated that excessive softening may blur the seriousness of an issue (Warren, 2018; Huang, 2020). These responses show that the reason for euphemism is not concealment but careful communication. The teacher's task is to soften the delivery while preserving the message.

Table 4 Data Matrix for Anchor Code 2: Reasons

Participant	Extract
A	The teacher used euphemism because sensitive topics can “soften the impact and prevent emotional distress.” Student maturity, classroom environment, and school culture shaped the level of formality and directness
B	The teacher used euphemism to create a safe and respectful environment, address sensitive topics without causing discomfort, and teach tact and empathy in communication
C	The teacher used euphemism to discuss topics respectfully and make students comfortable enough to express their thoughts freely, especially in topics such as death, poverty, and gender-related discussions
D	The teacher used euphemism so students would feel emotionally secure enough to participate and to model polite, emotionally careful communication about complex family issues
E	The teacher used euphemism to create a safe, respectful, and comfortable classroom environment and to build trust by approaching students personally rather than through fear
F	The teacher used euphemism to protect emotional well-being, avoid embarrassment, sustain respect, and remain culturally sensitive in topics that may conflict with family beliefs or personal values
G	The teacher used euphemism as a bridge that respects Filipino cultural norms such as hiya and pakikisama, especially when students discuss family finances and hardships
H	The teacher used euphemism to prevent embarrassment, maintain privacy, and handle hard topics using words that are clear, fair, useful, and respectful
I	The teacher used euphemism “to lighten up the emotions” during difficult classroom situations

Table 5 Coding of Reasons by Classroom Situation

Situation	Participants’ narratives	Code
Correcting errors	Participants B, E, and H referred to feedback, grades, “areas for improvement,” “for completion,” and “behavioral concerns”	To reduce embarrassment while still guiding improvement
Disciplining behavior	Participants B, E, H, and I described indirect redirection in group dominance, private correction, behavioral concerns, and seriously offensive behavior	To avoid public humiliation and restore order without escalating tension
Addressing delicate topics	Participants A, C, D, F, G, and H discussed family structure, poverty, parental communication, teen pregnancy, finances, and family crisis	To protect privacy, respect cultural sensitivities, and support open discussion

Composite Narrative: A senior high school English teacher uses euphemism because classroom language can either build or damage student confidence. When correcting errors, the teacher avoids words that may sound final or humiliating and instead uses terms that point to growth and revision. When disciplining behavior, the teacher chooses private and respectful language rather than public accusation. When addressing delicate topics such as poverty, death, sexuality, family problems, or mental health, the teacher adjusts the language according to students’ maturity, emotional readiness, and cultural background. The teacher’s reason is not to hide the truth but to make difficult truths teachable. Over time, the teacher realizes that euphemism must be paired with explanation. Tact becomes effective only when students still understand the real message (Table 6).

3.3 Anchor Code 3: Perceived Effects of Euphemism-Based Practices

The third statement of the problem asked about the perceived effects of euphemism-based practices on classroom climate, student engagement, and teacher-student relationships. The responses suggest that euphemism contributes to emotional safety, participation, and rapport, but it may also produce misunderstanding when the softened message is not made explicit (Table 7).

The participants perceived euphemism as helpful in creating a safe, respectful, and emotionally secure classroom climate. Participants A, D, E, F, H, and I described reduced anxiety, comfort, a healthy atmosphere, and emotional ease. Participant B connected euphemism to inclusivity.

These responses indicate that euphemism can soften the classroom atmosphere, particularly when the topic may otherwise create discomfort, embarrassment, or tension (Mercer & Howe, 2019).

The data also show that classroom climate is not only a matter of lesson content but also of teacher language. When teachers adjust their wording, they influence whether the classroom becomes threatening or supportive (Taguchi, 2021). Euphemism functions as a face-saving tool that mitigates potential emotional threats and promotes positive social interaction, supporting emotional engagement and mutual respect in the classroom (Table 8).

The participants reported that euphemism encouraged students to participate, ask questions, revise work, and share opinions more freely. Participant G provided a strong example: students responded positively to the reframing of sensitive research questions and became more engaged in revising their survey items. Participant F similarly reported that students asked thoughtful questions and shared views more freely after the teacher used gentler language during a discussion on teen pregnancy.

These findings suggest that euphemism can lower affective barriers to participation. When students feel less judged, they are more willing to enter the discussion (Mercer & Howe, 2019). However, engagement is sustainable only when euphemism does not confuse the learners. Participants B and H explicitly reported that overly subtle language may hide the point or cause misunderstanding. Therefore, euphemism supports engagement best when it is paired with explanation (Table 9).

The participants perceived euphemism as a relationship-preserving strategy. Participant E explicitly stated that euphemism helped gain students' trust. Participants A, D, F, G, and H connected euphemism with inclusivity, emotional well-being, respect, and the avoidance of embarrassment (Allan & Burridge, 2016). These responses show that teacher-student relationships are strengthened when students experience correction or sensitive discussion as respectful rather than humiliating.

However, trust also depends on clarity. Several participants warned that euphemism may weaken communication when it hides the

Table 6 Participant-Level Themes for Anchor Code 2

Participant	Theme
A	Euphemism as emotional protection in culturally diverse discussion
B	Euphemism as a tactful correction and inclusive participation
C	Euphemism as a respectful modeling of socially sensitive language
D	Euphemism as empathy-driven family communication
E	Euphemism as trust-building and non-fear-based correction
F	Euphemism as culturally sensitive protection of emotional well-being
G	Euphemism as protection of hiya, pakikisama, and family pride
H	Euphemism as privacy protection and respectful clarification
I	Euphemism as emotional lightening during offense management

Table 7 Data Matrix for Anchor Code 3: Effects on Classroom Climate

Participant	Extract
A	Created a safe space for sharing experiences and reduced anxiety, but required balance with clarity
B	Opened a space for reflection and encouraged a more inclusive environment
D	Made uncomfortable topics more acceptable and helped students feel emotionally secure
E	Created a healthy classroom atmosphere where students could open up
F	Reduced anxiety, increased participation, and promoted empathy
H	Made tough or sensitive topics easier to handle and reduced stress or worry
I	Helped ease the heaviness of the situation

Table 8 Data Matrix for Anchor Code: Effects on Student Engagement

Participant	Extract
A	Allowed students to discuss sensitive topics without feeling threatened or exposed
B	Students understood the message and started participating more actively
C	Encouraged students to talk about social issues with compassion and professionalism
F	Students became more engaged, asked thoughtful questions, and shared views more freely
G	Students eagerly discussed more and revised questions together, increasing engagement and confidence
H	Students became more open, engaged, and comfortable sharing their thoughts

Table 9 Data Matrix for Anchor Code: Effects on Teacher-Student Relationships

Participant	Extract
A	Promoted inclusivity and respectful discussion of sensitive topics
B	Maintained positive relationships by reducing defensiveness and teaching tact
D	Supported emotionally secure participation and respectful communication
E	Helped gain students’ trust, although the teacher noted that too much softening may make some students overly dependent
F	Protected emotional well-being and avoided embarrassment or disrespect
G	Protected hiya and family pride while keeping communication open
H	Prevented students from being embarrassed in front of others
I	Reduced emotional hurt and helped resolve the situation

Table 10 Participant-Level Themes for Anchor Code 3

Participant	Theme
A	Safe discussion with the risk of minimizing serious realities
B	Inclusive participation with the risk of vague feedback
C	Inclusive and respectful engagement through explained euphemism
D	Emotionally secure climate requiring contextual clarification
E	Trust-building communication with possible overdependence or complacency
F	Reduced anxiety and increased participation with caution against over-softening
G	Deeper engagement through culturally aligned and shame-sensitive language
H	Comfortable discussion with possible loss of conceptual accuracy
I	Emotional easing and positive solution through situational diction

Table 11 Sample Data-Codes-Themes-Interpretation Matrix

Data extract	Code	Theme	Interpretation
"families with unique circumstances" / "different family structures"	Inclusive reframing of family structure	Sensitive-topic reframing	Euphemism protects students from public exposure while keeping the discussion inclusive
"everyone has a chance to share" / "contribute equally"	Indirect correction of group imbalance	Tactful behavioral redirection	Euphemism corrects interactional behavior without shaming particular students
"financially challenged" instead of "poor"	Softening of social stigma	Respectful discussion of delicate content	Euphemism helps students discuss poverty with compassion and professionalism
"preoccupied with work or responsibilities" instead of parental neglect	Empathic reframing of family difficulty	Relational protection and emotional mediation	Euphemism reduces blame and supports empathy in family-sensitive discussions
"for completion" instead of failed	Institutional softening of academic failure	Care-clarity tension	Euphemism can reduce shame but must be clarified to avoid academic complacency
"early responsibilities" / "unexpected life situations"	Developmentally sensitive language	Culturally responsive tact	Euphemism opens discussion on sexuality-related topics without judgment
"household support systems" / "family resource adaptations"	Shame-sensitive reframing of financial questions	Culturally grounded classroom communication	Euphemism protects hiya and family pride while maintaining the academic task
"personal transitions at home" / "family challenges"	Privacy-protective reframing	Face-saving classroom care	Euphemism prevents public exposure and maintains student dignity
"light words and explanation"	Emotional de-escalation	Situational tact through diction	Euphemism eases tension when paired with explanation and solution-oriented guidance

seriousness of a problem. This means that relational care cannot be separated from instructional honesty. The participants' narratives point to an important pedagogical principle: teachers can be gentle without being vague, and direct without being harsh (Table 10).

On classroom climate, the participants generally perceived euphemism as beneficial. Participants A, C, D, F, G, H, and I reported that euphemism reduced tension, discomfort, anxiety, or heaviness. These responses show that euphemism can help create a classroom climate where sensitive topics are discussed without immediately producing shame or fear.

On student engagement, the responses show that euphemism may encourage students to participate more openly. Participant B observed better participation after reframing the group task. Participant F noted that students became more engaged and asked thoughtful questions after softened language was used in a discussion on teen pregnancy. Participant G observed that students revised their research questions and talked more freely when sensitive financial terms were reframed. These data indicate that euphemism can lower emotional barriers to participation.

On teacher-student relationships, euphemism was perceived as a way of building trust and rapport. Participant E stated that euphemism helped the teacher gain students' trust. Participant D emphasized that gentle language allowed students to feel acknowledged rather than

criticized. Participant H used euphemism to protect a student's privacy in a tense classroom moment. These responses suggest that euphemism strengthens teacher-student relationships when it communicates respect, care, and nonjudgmental guidance.

The findings also reveal a caution. Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, and H described possible confusion, misunderstanding, excessive softening, or loss of seriousness. Therefore, the perceived effects of euphemism are not purely positive. Euphemism improves emotional climate and relational comfort, but it becomes problematic when students no longer understand the exact meaning, seriousness, or expected action. This leads to the central interpretation of this study: euphemism-based classroom practice is effective when it functions as a bridge between care and clarity, not when it becomes a barrier to truth.

Composite Narrative: A senior high school English teacher notices that students respond more openly when difficult messages are communicated with tact (Table 11). The class becomes less tense when sensitive topics are softened, and students appear more willing to speak, ask questions, and reflect. The teacher observes that euphemism can help learners feel respected, especially when dealing with family problems, poverty, pregnancy, behavior, or academic struggles. However, the teacher also notices that some learners may misunderstand the message when the wording becomes too gentle. Some students may think that "areas for improvement" means they are already doing well, or that a softened term removes the seriousness of the issue. Because of this,

Table 12 Overview of Teacher Experiences with Euphemism

Anchor code	Emergent theme	Participants	Essence of finding
Experiences	Euphemism as situated classroom tact	A to I	Teachers narrated euphemism through specific classroom incidents involving family, poverty, gender participation, teen pregnancy, grades, research ethics, and offensive behavior
Reasons	Face-saving, cultural responsiveness, and professional care	A to I	Teachers used euphemism to reduce shame, avoid humiliation, respect cultural sensitivities, and keep correction or sensitive discussion humane
Effects	Emotional safety with clarity as a regulating condition	A to I	Euphemism improved climate, engagement, and rapport, but participants repeatedly warned that over-softened language may cause confusion or hide seriousness

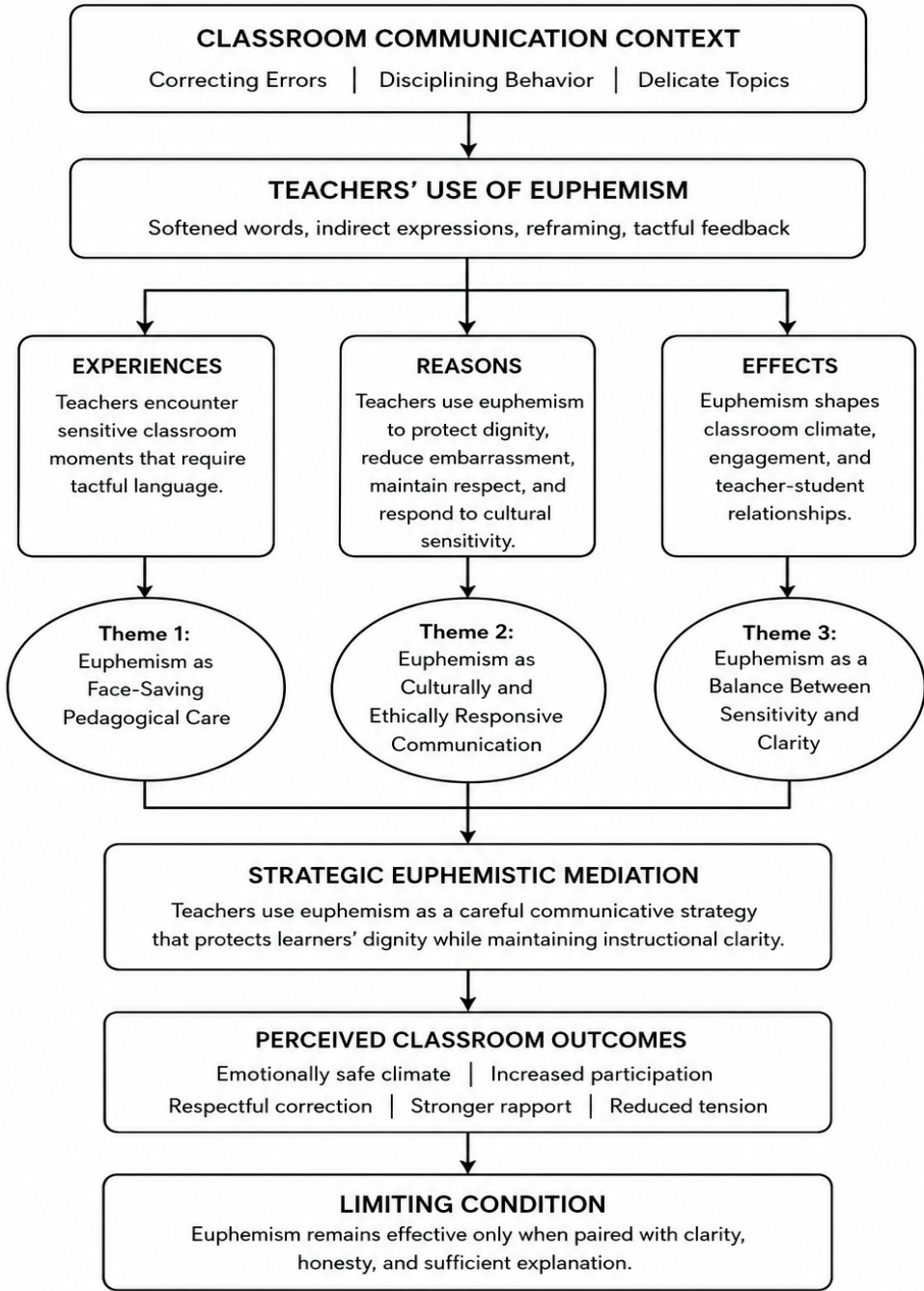


Figure 2 Emergent Conceptual Framework of Euphemism-Based Classroom Communication among Senior High School English Teachers

the teacher learns to use euphemism with explanation. The teacher continues to protect students' dignity but makes sure that the message remains honest, clear, and actionable.

The qualitative narrative analysis generated three major cross-participant themes. The first theme, euphemism as face-saving classroom care, shows that teachers use softened language to protect student dignity and reduce embarrassment in sensitive moments. The second theme, euphemism as culturally responsive classroom communication, shows that teachers adjust language according to Filipino cultural values, learner maturity, family background, school culture, and classroom sensitivity. The third theme, euphemism as a care-clarity balance, shows that euphemism is most effective when it protects emotions while still communicating the real meaning, seriousness, and expected action.

For experiences, teachers narrated euphemism as a practical response to classroom incidents involving sensitive topics, correction, discipline, and student privacy. For reasons, teachers used euphemism to protect emotional well-being, sustain cultural and relational sensitivity, and fulfill professional responsibility. For effects, teachers perceived euphemism as helpful in improving classroom climate, increasing student engagement, and strengthening teacher-student relationships, but only when it was balanced with clarity (Table 12).

The framework illustrates how euphemism-based classroom communication emerges from actual classroom situations where teachers need to correct errors, discipline behavior, or address delicate topics in Figure 2. These situations require teachers to make careful language choices because direct expressions may embarrass students, create discomfort, or damage classroom rapport.

From the participants' narratives, teachers' experiences show that euphemism is commonly used during sensitive classroom interactions. Their reasons for using euphemistic language are connected to emotional protection, cultural sensitivity, respect, and professional responsibility. The effects are seen in the improvement of classroom climate, student engagement, and teacher-student relationships.

The thematic synthesis produced three major themes: Euphemism as Face-Saving Pedagogical Care, Euphemism as Culturally and Ethically Responsive Communication, and Euphemism as a Balance Between Sensitivity and Clarity. These themes lead to the central emergent concept of Strategic Euphemistic Mediation.

Strategic euphemistic mediation means that teachers use softened, indirect, or reframed expressions not simply to avoid difficult language, but to manage classroom interaction with tact. However, the framework also shows that euphemism has a limiting condition. It becomes effective only when it is supported by clarity, honesty, and explanation. If euphemism is too vague, it may confuse learners or weaken the message being communicated.

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary of Findings

4.1.1 Experiences of Teachers in Using Euphemisms During Classroom Instruction and Interaction

The findings revealed that senior high school English teachers experienced euphemism as a useful communicative strategy in managing sensitive classroom situations. Participants used euphemistic language when correcting students' mistakes, addressing personal or family-related concerns, discussing socially sensitive topics, and managing classroom behavior. Instead of using direct or harsh expressions, teachers chose softened, indirect, or reframed language to reduce embarrassment and maintain a respectful atmosphere.

The participants' experiences showed that euphemism was not used randomly. It was used in situations where direct language might cause discomfort, shame, defensiveness, or emotional tension. Teachers

narrated classroom moments involving poverty, family problems, gender bias, teenage pregnancy, academic failure, offensive behavior, and personal struggles. These situations required careful word choice because the teacher's language could either protect or harm the learner's confidence.

Across the narratives, euphemism emerged as a form of face-saving pedagogical care. Teachers used it to protect students' dignity while still delivering necessary messages. However, the participants also recognized that euphemism must be used carefully because overly vague or indirect expressions may confuse students or weaken the intended meaning.

4.1.2 Reasons Behind Teachers' Use of Euphemistic Language

The findings showed that teachers used euphemistic language for three major reasons: to correct errors tactfully, to discipline behavior respectfully, and to address delicate topics sensitively.

In correcting errors, teachers used euphemism to avoid discouraging students. Rather than directly telling learners that their answers were wrong, weak, or unacceptable, teachers used softened expressions that framed mistakes as part of learning. This helped students receive feedback with less fear and embarrassment.

In disciplining behavior, teachers used euphemism to reduce conflict and avoid public humiliation. When students showed inappropriate behavior, teachers preferred language that corrected the action without attacking the learner's identity. This allowed discipline to remain firm but respectful.

In addressing delicate topics, teachers used euphemism to make sensitive issues more approachable. Topics involving family problems, poverty, pregnancy, gender, personal struggles, and social issues were handled through careful wording. Teachers used euphemism to prevent students from feeling exposed, judged, or emotionally unsafe.

The reasons behind euphemism use were rooted in emotional protection, cultural sensitivity, ethical responsibility, and professional judgment. The participants viewed euphemism as a way of balancing the teacher's duty to communicate truth with the responsibility to protect students from unnecessary emotional harm.

4.1.3 Perceived Effects of Euphemism-Based Practices

The findings revealed that euphemism-based practices affected classroom climate, student engagement, and teacher-student relationships.

In terms of classroom climate, euphemism helped create a more respectful, calm, and emotionally safe learning environment. Teachers perceived that students became more comfortable when sensitive issues were discussed using gentle and considerate language. Euphemism reduced tension and helped maintain classroom harmony.

In terms of student engagement, euphemism encouraged learners to participate more openly, especially during discussions involving difficult or personal topics. Students appeared less afraid to speak, ask questions, or share their ideas when teachers used tactful language. However, the findings also showed that euphemism may reduce engagement if students do not understand the softened terms used by the teacher.

In terms of teacher-student relationships, euphemism helped strengthen rapport, trust, and respect. Students were more likely to view teachers as caring and approachable when corrections and sensitive discussions were delivered with tact. Nevertheless, the findings also indicated that trust may be weakened when euphemism becomes too vague or when it hides the seriousness of the message.

Therefore, the perceived effects of euphemism were generally positive, but conditional. Euphemism supported a healthy classroom environment only when it was balanced with clarity, honesty, and explanation.

4.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: First, euphemism functions as a meaningful classroom communication strategy among senior high school English teachers. It is not merely a linguistic ornament or a way of avoiding direct speech. Rather, it is used as a professional and pedagogical tool for managing sensitive interactions, protecting student dignity, and sustaining respectful classroom communication. Second, teachers use euphemism because classroom language carries emotional, cultural, and ethical consequences. The participants' narratives showed that teachers are aware that their words can either encourage or discourage students. For this reason, they use softened and indirect expressions when correcting errors, disciplining behavior, and addressing delicate topics. Third, euphemism contributes to a positive classroom climate by reducing tension and promoting emotional safety. When used appropriately, euphemistic language allows students to engage with difficult content without feeling personally attacked, embarrassed, or judged. Fourth, euphemism supports student engagement by making classroom interaction less threatening. Students are more willing to participate when teachers communicate with tact and respect. However, engagement may be affected negatively when euphemistic expressions are unclear or unfamiliar to learners. Fifth, euphemism strengthens teacher-student relationships by showing care, sensitivity, and professionalism. The use of tactful language helps maintain trust and rapport between teachers and learners. However, this relationship depends not only on kindness but also on honesty and clarity. Sixth, euphemism is effective only when it is used as a bridge to understanding, not as a barrier to truth. The participants' final reflections showed that euphemism becomes problematic when it hides the real message, weakens accountability, or creates misunderstanding. Therefore, effective euphemism-based communication requires a balance between sensitivity and clarity. Lastly, the study concludes that euphemism-based classroom practice may be understood as strategic euphemistic mediation. This means that teachers use language deliberately to mediate between difficult truths and learners' emotional readiness. In this process, teachers protect student dignity while still maintaining instructional responsibility.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered.

4.3.1 For Senior High School English Teachers

Teachers may continue using euphemism as a tactful communication strategy, especially when correcting errors, disciplining behavior, or discussing delicate topics. However, euphemistic language should always be paired with a clear explanation. Teachers should avoid using expressions that are too vague, overly softened, or confusing to students.

Teachers are encouraged to use euphemism as a way to protect students' dignity without hiding the truth. For example, instead of simply saying that a student's work "needs improvement," the teacher may explain which part needs improvement, why it needs improvement, and how the student can revise it.

Teachers should also be mindful of students' age, maturity level, cultural background, and emotional condition when choosing words. What may sound respectful to one student may be unclear to another. Therefore, teachers should check whether students understand the intended meaning of euphemistic expressions.

4.3.2 For School Administrators and Educational Institutions

Schools may provide professional development activities on classroom communication, feedback-giving, and culturally sensitive language use. These trainings may help teachers develop practical strategies for balancing tact and clarity in classroom discourse.

Institutions may also include euphemism, politeness strategies, and face-saving communication in teacher training programs, especially for English teachers who often handle sensitive texts, social issues, and personal student disclosures.

School leaders may encourage a communication culture where teachers are trained to correct students without humiliation, discipline learners without verbal aggression, and discuss sensitive topics without causing unnecessary discomfort. This may contribute to a more inclusive and learner-centered school environment.

4.3.3 For Curriculum Planners and Teacher Education Programs

Curriculum planners may consider integrating pragmatic competence, euphemism, and ethical classroom communication into English language teaching courses. Since euphemism is connected to real-life communication, it may be included in lessons on oral communication, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, literature discussion, and classroom interaction.

Teacher education programs may also provide pre-service teachers with classroom-based scenarios where they can practice giving feedback, correcting errors, and addressing sensitive issues using language that is both respectful and clear.

4.3.4 For Future Researchers

Future researchers may conduct similar studies with a larger or more varied group of participants from different schools, grade levels, or regions. This may help determine whether euphemism-based classroom communication is practiced similarly or differently across educational contexts.

Future studies may also examine students' perspectives on teachers' use of euphemism. Since this study focused on teacher narratives, exploring learners' experiences may provide a deeper understanding of whether students interpret euphemistic language as helpful, confusing, respectful, or unclear.

Researchers may also investigate euphemism in specific classroom situations, such as feedback-giving, discipline, literature discussions, gender-sensitive topics, or values education. This may help clarify when euphemism is most effective and when direct communication is more appropriate.

Future researchers may explore the relationship between euphemism and other forms of classroom discourse, such as code-switching, humor, translanguaging, and culturally responsive teaching. This may expand the understanding of how teachers use language to manage meaning, emotion, and relationships in the classroom.

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