

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Television programs serve an exceptionally wide range of genres for the audiences as time goes by. The variation of genres allows the audiences to get prior expectations over what will be discussed within the program. The genres also facilitate the audiences with important frame of reference that might help the audiences to identify, select, and interpret TV shows that are scheduled (Danesi 2009). As stated by Kispal-Kovacs and Mirrlees (2012) in the book entitled *The Television Reader: Critical Perspectives in Canadian and US Television Studies* in the third part about television genre, the genres of television include sitcom, science fiction, cop/crime show, reality TV, TV news production and news parody, TV War and TV Sports (Kispal-Kovacs and Mirrlees 2012). The topics discussed within the genres stretch from sports, comedy, science, crime, entertainment, personal experience, lifestyle, to politics (Chandler 1997).

Indonesian television program also covers politics as one of the discussed topics. Besides reporting political events, the issue of politics is usually being talked through in-depth interview with some experts or the politicians themselves. Televised political interview itself is understood as platform to provide easy and accessible ways to identify, understand, and evaluate social and political issues and differentiate among the individuals and groups that strive to solve related problems and their measures (Feldman, Kinoshita and Bull 2015). The political

issue that is brought into surface is usually the issue that is much-talked and hotly debated. The interviewees are usually asked to give response to certain matters related to them. In addition, the interviewees' task is to reply to the questions to best effect for both themselves as individuals and for the political groups or institutions that they represent (Clayman and Heritage 2002). There are some programs that discuss politics in Indonesia in the form of interview. Some of the instances are *Apa Kabar Indonesia Pagi*, *Apa Kabar Indonesia Malam*, and *AFD Now*.

One of the television programs that focuses on discussing political issue is *AFD Now*. It is a program under the channel of CNN Indonesia which is hosted by Alfito Deannova Gintings, a senior news anchor and a director of CNN Indonesia. The episodes consist of exclusive interviews with some of Indonesian experts and politicians regarding particular issue in politics, governance, and criminal act. *AFD Now* belongs to political interview as it is conducted in the form of formal interview with politicians in a closed space without audiences. It is based on the definition of political interview which is in-depth and formal kind of interview with major political representatives within an independent program that takes place in official room or television studio without any presence of audience (Martinez 2000).

*AFD Now* becomes the centre of attention in this study based on several considerations. One of which is its position as the program under the channel of CNN Indonesia that will conceivably serve reliable and accurate source of information. It is proven by the "TV Station of The Year" title that is given by

*Citra Pariwisata Awards*. Moreover, the host of *AFD Now* is Alfito Deannova Gintings, a senior anchor and chief editor of Detik.com. His long track record in the world of journalism is reflected in the sharp and witty questions thrown to the interviewees. The last reason is that *AFD Now* occupies such facility for the interviewees to convey their thoughts in the setting of formal interview in which it is rarely applied in the other programs. Among the episodes of *AFD Now*, the episode of *Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD* is chosen to be the subject of the research.

In regards to the episode in *AFD Now*, this research examines one of the episodes of *AFD Now* entitled *Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD* in which Alfito has session of interview with Mahfud MD. They discuss several recent issues in politics that occur in Indonesia. The topic ranges from issue of polarization in Indonesia due to presidential election to the case of Novel Baswedan who appears to be threatened and criminalized when carrying out his duty. This episode is selected because the number of viewers reaches 213.000 views, showing high curiosity of public on this issue. Moreover, the discussed topics such as polarization issue and Novel Baswedan case are sensitive and controversial. The topics are controversial because they trigger a lot of public's debate on how to overcome those problems. The topics are also sensitive as the topics about harmful act of crime and conspiracy is included in the interview. Considering the coverage of such issues, this study is intended to look at the phenomenon from the lens of euphemism.

The interviewee in the episode is Mahfud MD. He is an Indonesian well-known politician who has long been active in the realm of Indonesian politics. His career in politics started in his appointment in both positions of Minister of Defence and Minister of Justice and Human Rights in 2000. He is also appointed as the chairman of Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia (MK) in 2008-2013 period. His current occupation is Minister in Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs (Kemenkopolkam). He is an expert in constitutional law and he is often asked to convey his thoughts regarding several political issues in Indonesia. His controversial statement towards several political issues in his social media account becomes hot topic in the country (Rastika 2020). Thus, his utterances become interesting to analyze from euphemistic point of view as he might possibly be utilizing euphemistic expressions to respond to several sensitive issues in politics. Another thing to point out is that the disclosure of the real meaning of some euphemistic expressions used by Mahfud MD might be useful for the adding insight of Indonesian citizens.

Euphemism is described in the Oxford dictionary as indirect word or phrase that people often use to refer to something embarrassing or unpleasant, sometimes to make it seem more acceptable than it really is. When it comes to politics, euphemism plays a big role in gaining political purposes. It is based on the fact that language in politics is seen as having main goal to achieve some particular purposes such as attaining general agreement, gaining support, injecting idea to people, drawing the attention of possible voters etc (Crespo-Fernandez 2014). Moreover, euphemism can also be used to approach people by rising up the issue

on some sensitive matters to show that the politician is fully aware of those kind of concerns while simultaneously grabbing people's sympathy and throwing counterattack to the other rival (Crespo-Fernandez 2014). Hence, euphemism is considered as a powerful weapon in politics if it is used properly by the politicians.

This study aims to classify the euphemisms found based on the theory of types of euphemism by Allan (2012) and to reveal the functions of euphemism based on the theory of euphemism function by Burridge (2012). Allan (2012) makes classification of euphemism into eleven types including remodeling; contractions; general-for-specific; part-for-whole; substitutions; upgrades, downgrades, deceptions, and obfuscations; appearance-based methapor; colour-based metaphor; sound-based metaphor; smell, taste, and touch based x-phemisms; and verbal play. In addition, Burridge (2012) also formulates the functions of euphemism namely protective euphemism, underhand euphemism, uplifting euphemism, provocative euphemism, cohesive euphemism, and ludic euphemism.

There have been some studies focusing on examining the use of euphemism in politics which are related to this research. Some of the previous studies were conducted by Azkiyah (2008), Munfaati (2008), and Fernandez (2014). They focused on analysing the use of euphemism in politics in written language. Those three studies scrutinise the use of euphemism on the news article which reporting on political matter. Generally, all of them have aim to classify the type, style, and function of euphemisms found in the news about politics. In addition, the study done by Fernandez (2014) has objective to uncover the purpose behind the use of

euphemisms. Meanwhile, there are also some researchers who examine the use of euphemism by politician in doing political practices. They are Wahid (2012) and Ardhan (2017). While the research conducted by Ardhan (2017) mainly concerns on classifying euphemisms into eleven types by based on theory by Allan (2012) and unveiling the functions of euphemisms based on the theory of Burrige (2012), the study done by Wahid (2012) does not only classify the euphemism but also link the use of euphemisms with maxims of politeness strategies. Eventhough the subjects examined in aforementioned studies are different, the goals are kind of similar, which are labelling the kind of euphemisms and revealing each of its functions.

As explained above, several aforementioned related studies were done in written language and eventhough some were done on the basis of verbal language, they examine the verbal language in debate and speech. Thus, this research attempts to challenge different results by doing euphemistic analysis on the interview in which speakers interact in natural setting. Further, the results are expected to give understanding about what is the real meaning of euphemism used by the politician.

## **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

From background of the study, three research questions are formulated below:

1. What types of euphemism are used by Mahfud MD during the interview in CNN Indonesia's Program *AFD Now: Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD* ?
2. What type of euphemism is mostly used by Mahfud MD during the interview in CNN Indonesia's Program *AFD Now: Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD* ?
3. What function of euphemism is mostly used by Mahfud MD during the interview in CNN Indonesia's Program *AFD Now: Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD* ?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

From the statement of problem, this study aims to achieve three objectives below:

1. To identify the types of euphemism used by Mahfud MD during the interview in CNN Indonesia's Program *AFD Now: Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD*
2. To know the most frequent type of euphemism used by Mahfud MD during the interview in CNN Indonesia's Program *AFD Now: Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD*
3. To find out the most frequent function of euphemism used by used Mahfud MD during the interview in CNN Indonesia's Program *AFD Now: Kacamata Politik Mahfud MD*.

#### **1.4 Significances of the Study**

The writer expects that this research will theoretically benefit on the adding knowledge on the sub-field of pragmatics about euphemism. It is also intended to add deeper understanding for those who will adopt this concept for their project in the future. Practically, this study is expected to give enlightenment on the real meaning behind the euphemism used by Mahfud MD. Thus, the in-depth analysis of the euphemism on Mahfud MD might be beneficial for people who are involved in political matter that they could adopt the “right” euphemism to be used for perpetuating their purpose in politics. Further, the explanation may result in better understanding of the citizens regarding the meaning underlying the uphemisms used by the government or politicians.

#### **1.5 Definitions of Key Terms**

1. Euphemism: Smooth expression that is used when coping with something taboo or outrageous or/and when the other party personally has emotional association with the topics (Allan 2012).
2. Types of Euphemism: The classification of euphemism based on its source into eleven categories (Allan 2012).
3. Functions of Euphemism: Six different tasks that a euphemism may perform in particular occasion (Burrige 2012).
4. Politics: The art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy as well as winning and holding control over government (“Politics”. Merriam-Webster.com, Merriam-Webster, n.d Web. 22 November 2019).



5. Political Interview: In-depth and formal kind of interview with major political representatives within an independent program that takes place in official room or television studio without any presence of audience (Martinez 2000).