

# Euphemisms in Emily Bronte's "Wuthering Heights" and Colleen Hoover's "It Ends With Us"

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Odjel za anglistiku  
Sveučilišni preddiplomski studij Anglistike

**Josipa Matić**

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Završni rad

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Zadar, 2023.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of social interactions, individuals often find themselves in situations where they need to employ different language choices for effective communication. Nevertheless, certain words can carry negative connotations, impoliteness, or awkwardness when expressed directly, leading to uncomfortable communication. To circumvent such discomfort and soften the impact of potentially hurtful words, humans have developed the concept of euphemisms. Euphemisms in the English language represent a linguistic phenomenon deeply ingrained in human society. Euphemisms play a crucial role in ensuring that social interactions proceed smoothly. Regarding their origin, the word “euphemism” can be traced back to a Greek term that means “speaking favorably”. As a result, the fundamental purpose of euphemisms is to replace potentially offensive or harsh words or phrases with more gentle and inoffensive alternatives. Euphemism primarily functions as a tool of politeness, contributing to the development of more amicable communication. Consequently, it finds widespread use in our everyday interactions as a means of expressing uncomfortable or sensitive subjects.

The use of euphemisms is not only a practical tool but also a subject of scholarly interest. Scholars have shown a deep fascination with euphemisms and have made significant contributions to understanding these subtle linguistic expressions. Their research spans various domains, including everyday conversations, cross-cultural communication, science, literature, business, and even in the language used in media such as newspapers and advertisements.

The purpose of this paper is to undertake a comprehensive examination of the utilization of euphemisms in two distinctive literary works, specifically Emily Bronte's “Wuthering Heights” from the 19th-century and Colleen Hoover's contemporary novel “It Ends With Us”. By delving into these novels from different eras, the aim is to explore how authors employ euphemistic expressions to address sensitive topics and reflect the societal norms, values, and taboos of their respective time periods. This research endeavors to contribute to the broader understanding of linguistic choices within literature and how these choices evolve over time. In the context of this thesis, the research questions and hypotheses formed will guide the exploration of euphemisms within the selected novels. As posited by Hypothesis 1 it is expected that euphemisms found in both “Wuthering Heights” and “It Ends With Us” will primarily align with the themes presented in the novels. The majority of the euphemisms identified in “Wuthering Heights” will mainly revolve around the topic of death, while euphemisms found in the novel “It Ends With Us” will be discovered in areas linked to relationships. Following the hypothesis 2, euphemisms will be more prevalent in “Wuthering Heights” due to the societal

norms and taboos of the 19th-century Victorian era that often necessitated indirect language. In contrast, “It Ends With Us” is expected to contain fewer euphemisms, as contemporary literature allows for more direct discussions of sensitive topics. Should these hypotheses be confirmed through the analysis it will provide us with a more profound insight into how authors employ euphemisms to align with the themes of their works.

## 2. EUPHEMISMS

The term “euphemism” comes from Greek *eúphēmos* which, translates as “uttering sounds of good omen”, “fair-sounding”, or “auspicious”, *eu-* meaning good, and *phēmos-* speech (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). There are many other definitions of euphemisms. Cameron (1995) provides a definition of euphemism as a deliberate use of language to sidestep or reduce the negative associations connected to words that directly address sensitive or taboo subjects. Burrige (2012) defines euphemisms as words or expressions that sound pleasant or, at the very least, are not offensive. These are used by speakers or writers when they want to achieve a specific communication goal in a particular context without using potentially sensitive or harsh language. Similarly, according to Lutz (2000), a euphemism is a term or expression that is presented in a neutral or positive manner and serves the purpose of concealing a harsh, offensive, or uncomfortable reality. These definitions together underscore how euphemisms play a significant role in controlling language and communication, particularly in situations where being sensitive or polite is of utmost importance.

Crystal (2002) defines taboo language as words or phrases that people deliberately avoid using in polite society due to their perceived harmful, embarrassing, or offensive nature. For instance, words related to death are considered harmful, while those tied to the supernatural or vague superstitions might cause discomfort. Crystal suggests that taboo words are categorized based on their potential to cause embarrassment, such as terms related to sexual acts, their outcomes, or offense, like words related to bodily excretions or various forms of physical, mental, and social abnormalities. Typically, taboo words are substituted with more technical terms, often conveyed through euphemisms. Stockwell (2002) links the concept of euphemisms with taboo subjects and goes on to specify that topics like sex, death, war, defecation, and various forms of social discomfort are considered taboo areas. Conversely, Crystal (2002) notes that taboo language is employed when individuals intentionally steer clear of direct references to taboo subjects. This often involves substituting the taboo term with a more technical or euphemistic expression. This practice is particularly prevalent in fields such as medicine, where terms such as “vagina” and “penis” might be avoided in direct speech, and instead, euphemistic medical terms, such as “genital” and “pudendum”, are used to discuss these anatomical areas indirectly.

Euphemisms play a pivotal role in enhancing the fluidity and harmony of everyday conversations by acting as linguistic tools. Those who employ euphemisms in their communication must possess strong speaking skills, as they are tasked not only with conveying



information but also with delicately navigating the emotions and perspectives of their audience. This necessitates a thoughtful consideration of others' feelings and viewpoints, particularly when discussing topics that could potentially affect someone's emotional state. Euphemisms are most frequently employed in discussions involving sensitive subjects such as death, religious concepts, sex, and money. These linguistic adaptations serve to prevent the emergence of impolite or offensive remarks that might arise in conversations touching upon taboo subjects. Additionally, they aim to foster smooth and uninterrupted communication. The use of euphemisms often occurs organically and subtly in everyday interactions, especially when addressing social matters typically regarded as sensitive. This practice helps maintain a respectful and considerate tone in discussions without causing discomfort, disruption, or offense to others.

In essence, euphemisms provide a means to discuss unpleasant or discomfoting topics while allowing individuals to label these subjects in a manner that may make them appear less harsh or more appealing. Euphemisms hold significant importance within society, as they contribute to the glorification of public spaces and the presentation of trivial matters in a more positive light. This renaming of reality to align with societal norms and expectations is a common practice that shapes the way we communicate about various aspects of life (Wardhaugh, 2006).

## **2.1. TYPES OF EUPHEMISMS**

According to Rawson (1981), euphemisms can be categorized into two distinctive groups: positive and negative. Positive euphemisms serve to amplify and magnify, making the subjects they describe seem larger or more significant than they actually are. Rawson (1981) further states that both British and American individuals, particularly those in contemporary American society, often use the technique of exaggeration as a means to euphemistically address anything unpleasant or offensive. This is typically done to prevent discomfort or to maintain a sense of politeness. Positive euphemisms manifest in various forms, including occupational titles that boost employees' sense of prestige in their work environment and protect their self-esteem. For instance, terms like “custodian” are used instead of “janitor”, “counsel” as a substitute for “lawyer”, “help” in place of “servant”, and “working girl” as an alternative to a more offensive term “whore”. Moreover, there are institutional euphemisms used such as “full-bird” instead of “colonel”, “the honorable” instead of “judge”, and others that transform less appealing or stigmatized terms into more respectable-sounding ones. For instance, these euphemisms change

“madhouses” into “mental hospitals” and “small business establishments” into “emporiums”, “parlors”, “salons”, and “shops”. These positive euphemisms serve to soften the language and make it more socially acceptable, often with the aim of preserving dignity and maintaining a polite discourse.

Negative euphemisms have a contrasting function compared to positive ones. They aim to deflate or diminish, acting as a form of linguistic protection that counters the influence of taboo or sensitive language. Essentially, negative euphemisms work to remove from the language those aspects or subjects that people prefer not to address directly. There are two terms used to describe negative euphemisms: “traditional euphemisms” or “narrowing euphemisms”. These forms of euphemism have a deep-rooted history and are closely tied to societal taboos. In essence, a euphemism and the related taboo are two intertwined aspects of the same concept. While they both refer to the same thing, the euphemism presents a much milder and more socially acceptable aspect compared to the often harsh or uncomfortable nature of the taboo itself. In this way, negative euphemisms act as a linguistic tool to mitigate the impact of sensitive subjects, making them more palatable for discussion while adhering to societal norms and politeness.

Rawson (1981) introduces the idea that the categories of positive and negative euphemisms can be subdivided into unconscious and conscious euphemisms. Unconscious euphemisms consist largely of phrases that were initially created as euphemisms, but their origins have faded into obscurity over time. As the name implies, these euphemistic expressions are employed without any deliberate intent to obscure meaning or avoid certain topics. They have become ingrained in language through long usage and are spoken without awareness of their original euphemistic purpose. For example, terms like “graveyard” have evolved into more commonly used expressions like “cemetery”, and “disease” has been replaced with “indisposition”. In these cases, the original euphemistic motivation has become blurred over generations of use, and the terms are now used naturally and automatically without any conscious intention to soften or mask their meanings. These unconscious euphemisms demonstrate how language evolves over time, with euphemistic origins fading away while the expressions themselves persist as standard vocabulary.

Conscious euphemisms, as highlighted by Rawson (1981), operate within more deliberate and nuanced categories. In these instances, speakers possess a conscious awareness of the appropriateness of their chosen language as they communicate with others, and the listeners also grasp the implied meanings of these expressions. For instance, when a person offers

condolences to a man who has lost his wife, the word “loss” is understood to signify “death”. In conscious euphemisms, there is a mutual understanding between the speaker and the listener that certain words or phrases carry deeper meanings or allude to sensitive topics. This shared awareness allows for a level of communication that maintains social norms and respects the emotional sensitivities of the conversation participants. The conscious selection of euphemistic language demonstrates a thoughtful consideration of both the message being conveyed and the context in which it is being communicated.

Kurkiev (1977, as cited in Sadullaeva, Mamatova, & Sayfullaeva, 2020) classifies euphemisms into five categories: euphemisms that are based on superstition, euphemisms that arose from a sense of fear, euphemisms that appeared on the basis of mercy, euphemisms that appeared on the basis of shyness, and euphemisms that appeared on the basis of politeness.

Allan and Burridge (1991) also identified several specific types of euphemisms. The first type involves idioms, which deal with meanings other than their literal connotations. Many idioms take on a euphemistic nature when addressing sensitive or uncomfortable topics. For instance, “a bun in the oven” denotes a pregnant woman, and “kick the bucket” signifies the idea of someone dying.

The second type is circumlocution, which is referred to as indirect or roundabout communication. It is the act of using many words to describe a concept that may be expressed with fewer words. It entails employing a lot of words or overly sophisticated terminology to convey a basic idea. When someone wishes to avoid being straightforward about a subject, whether out of courtesy, avoidance, or ignorance, they frequently use circumlocution. For example, when someone says “he is between jobs”, it is a way of expressing that he is currently unemployed without using the direct term. Similarly, using “she is in her golden years” instead of saying “she is old” employs circumlocution to convey the idea of old age in a more indirect and perhaps more polite manner.

The third refers to litotes which is a form of expression where affirmation is conveyed through the use of a negative statement contrary to the intended meaning (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). For example, employing phrases like “the performance was not bad” to indicate that the performance was quite good, or saying “he is not a bad cook” to imply that he is a decent cook.

The fourth type refers to the usage of technical jargon in place of commonly used terms. For example, adopting technical vocabulary like “treponemal disease” or “luetic disease” might make diseases like syphilis less unpleasant.

The fifth type is referred to as acronym and abbreviation. An acronym is a word created by taking the initial letters or groups of letters from each component or significant part of a compound expression, while an abbreviation is a shorter form of a written word or phrase that is used instead of the entire word or phrase (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). According to Rawson (1981), words that might cause discomfort when spoken in public become tolerable when abbreviated to their initial letters, as exemplified by “BS” representing “bullshit”.

## **2.2. FUNCTIONS OF EUPHEMISMS**

Burridge (2012) divided euphemisms into six categories based on their functional differences:

- 1) the protective euphemism – to shield and to avoid offense,
- 2) the underhand euphemism – to mystify and to misrepresent,
- 3) the uplifting euphemism – to talk up and to inflate,
- 4) the provocative euphemism – to reveal and to inspire,
- 5) the cohesive euphemism – to show solidarity and to help define the gang, and
- 6) the ludic euphemism – to have fun and to entertain.

The lines between these roles are frequently unclear, and a single euphemism might fulfill numerous functions.

According to Burridge (2012), the protective function of euphemisms is described as an intention “to shield and avoid offense”. Euphemisms of this nature come into existence when faced with the challenging task of discussing various subjects in specific contexts where open conversation about these topics would be uncomfortable or undesirable. Euphemisms serve as linguistic tools that provide an avenue to discuss topics that might otherwise be considered taboo or sensitive. These topics encompass a wide range, including private body parts, bodily functions, sex, anger, dishonesty, intoxication, mental health, illness, and mortality, among others. For instance, in cultures where a slender physique is favored, euphemisms are frequently employed to discuss individuals who are overweight, using terms like “big” as a euphemism for “fat”.

Underhand euphemisms are strategically employed not merely to hide offense, but with the deliberate intent to obscure the subject and deceive. In a way, all euphemisms possess an element of deception. While no euphemism can entirely mask the truth, there are situations in which using a euphemism is deemed more acceptable than employing straightforward language, particularly when discussing sensitive or prohibited matters. However, when delving

into the realm of specialized jargon in fields like the military, politics, and medicine, a different layer of deception and camouflage often emerges. This form of language, often referred to as “doublespeak”, appears to deepen the layers of disguise. William Lutz (1989) defines doublespeak as a form of deceptive language that obscures true meaning, often making negative or undesirable things sound positive or acceptable. It can also be used to evade responsibility or manipulate perceptions, ultimately hindering clear and honest communication and limiting critical thinking. According to Burrige (2012), doublespeak involves replacing the word “death” with phrases like “a substantive negative patient care outcome”, “a diagnostic misadventure of the highest magnitude” and “a terminal episode”, “dying” with “terminal living”, and “killing” with “unlawful deprivation of life”. These instances have led some individuals to adopt a critical perspective on the term “euphemism”. They see it as a derogatory label for language that intentionally obfuscates meaning and carries a sense of moral ambiguity. Essentially, it refers to specialized language designed to perplex and conceal uncomfortable or everyday truths. Such occurrences have prompted a reevaluation of the core concept of euphemism. To many, the term now holds a negative connotation, indicating language that is perceived as morally unclear and intentionally cryptic. Essentially, euphemisms are often linked to specialized language meant to confound and shroud unpleasantities or common realities. This change in perception has resulted in the term “euphemism” being employed as a negative label for language intentionally convoluted and crafted to create confusion.

According to Burrige (2012), uplifting euphemisms involve the practice of speaking in a manner that elevates or magnifies the subject of discussion. Many euphemisms essentially act as stand-ins for words that speakers prefer to avoid at a specific moment due to their potential to portray something in a more positive light. In using uplifting euphemisms, we often find ourselves engaging with jargon, a specialized language specific to a particular trade, profession, or group, including subjects that might be considered taboo. An illustration of uplifting euphemism lies in the term “engineer”, which can be paired with a range of modifiers that indirectly suggest the social roles associated with it. For instance, “domestic engineer” may be used for a parent who manages the household and cares for their children at home, while “sanitation engineer” could refer to someone responsible for garbage collection.

Burrige (2012) delves into the concept of provocative euphemisms, which essentially involve a form of double entendre. These euphemisms strategically veil just enough information to evoke intrigue. An example of such euphemisms is their deliberate use by political satirists in both spoken and written forms. This manner of euphemism, when wielded by a political

satirist, is intended to provoke thought and reactions from the audience. Burrige (2012) draws a connection between provocative euphemisms and what she labels as politically correct (PC) euphemisms. In her perspective, these two forms are interconnected. While politically correct euphemisms challenge biases and assumptions embedded in language, they differ from other euphemisms that primarily attempt to mask or avoid uncomfortable realities. Instead of concealing facts, PC-inspired euphemisms aim to challenge and transform language-based assumptions. Their purpose lies in diminishing the stigma attached to negative societal beliefs. Provocative euphemisms transcend mere politeness or preservation of dignity. Even the more prevalent euphemisms, often employed as methods of saving face, occasionally carry more significance than simply concealing harsh truths. Euphemisms related to death, for instance, encompass diverse perspectives, such as portraying death as a journey (“pass away”).

Euphemisms possess the capacity to foster a sense of unity within specific groups. Particularly in scenarios involving unconventional behavior, these linguistic devices serve the purpose of maintaining confidentiality within the group, often evolving into a form of coded language. Burrige (2012) coins this phenomenon as the “social cohesive function” of euphemisms. In situations where certain euphemisms are designed to shroud information regarding illicit activities, they simultaneously play a role in safeguarding the group's interests while functioning as a form of identification within the group itself. Additionally, euphemisms that elevate the perceived status of the subjects they refer to can contribute to enhancing the group's collective identity. Notably, slang terms pertaining to drugs and drug usage stand as prime examples. Within these contexts, individuals who use substances like cocaine might adopt euphemistic labels such as “cokehead”, “cokey”, or “snowblower” as part of their self-identification. In essence, euphemisms extend beyond mere linguistic subtleties; they shape social dynamics and connections among specific groups. By creating shared terminologies and coded expressions, euphemisms contribute to a cohesive bond among group members while simultaneously reinforcing or concealing aspects of their collective identity and behavior.

Euphemisms can also have a playful and humorous dimension. As noted by Burrige (2012), many euphemisms have their origins in the desire to amuse. These kinds of euphemisms, often referred to as “ludic euphemisms”, are a prevalent feature in our everyday interactions. Everyday people ingeniously employ ordinary sounds, letters, words, and phrases to craft expressions that evoke amusement. Unlike other euphemisms that aim to conceal or portray reality more favorably, ludic euphemisms are designed to generate comical paraphrases. A prime example of a ludic euphemism is the use of the term “White Christmas” as a substitute

for the word “cocaine”. In such instances, the euphemism serves to create a playful and humorous twist on a potentially sensitive or taboo subject. Ludic euphemisms demonstrate language's capacity to elicit laughter and enjoyment through creative wordplay, contributing to the lighter side of communication.

According to Ham (2001), the primary purpose of euphemism is to maintain good relationships with people by avoiding offense and communicating effectively when the speaker or writer must handle taboo topics. Brown and Levinson (1987) established “face theory”, arguing that there are two faces: a positive face that promotes others' self-image, and a negative face that allows people to behave freely without constraints. We may relate the purpose of euphemisms with “face theory” based on this point; employing euphemisms serves the purpose of saving the positive face in human interactions. As proposed by Crespo (2005), the connection between politeness, euphemism, and face is rooted in the notion that euphemism functions as a means of exhibiting politeness and safeguarding the face of both the communicator and the recipient, whether it is the speaker-listener dynamic or the writer-reader interaction. This connection is visible in the interdependence of these three aspects, which aligns with the broader goal of maintaining effective communication while avoiding the danger of damaging the recipient's feeling of face and dignity.

In her study, Pan (2013) highlighted four additional functions of euphemisms. The first function pertains to politeness, where euphemisms come into play when individuals need to discuss unpleasant subjects. In such cases, people opt for milder or more courteous expressions. The use of euphemisms serves a dual purpose: maintaining politeness and preventing potential hurt feelings, allowing the acceptance of such topics in a pleasant manner. For instance, the word “old” can be sensitive, so euphemistic alternatives like “senior citizens” are employed, conveying the same concept in a positive light.

The second function is what Pan (2013) refers to as the “gloss-over” function. The evolution of euphemisms is closely tied to language sensitivity. Throughout human history, as people began to differentiate between what is considered beautiful and ugly, kind and evil, they have also developed a sense of shame associated with topics like sex and certain parts of the body. Over time, as society has evolved, the range of words and topics deemed sensitive has expanded. This expansion of lexical sensitivity creates a space for the gloss-over function of euphemisms. Even in the modern world, when discussing sexual acts, people may still experience embarrassment. As a result, they often resort to euphemisms to soften the impact of

these conversations. For instance, terms like “sleep with”, “go to bed with”, or “make love” are used to convey the same meaning but in a more discreet and socially acceptable manner.

The third function of euphemism is to serve as a means of avoiding taboo subjects. Within this function, numerous English euphemisms are connected to topics that are considered taboo. Taboo concepts are present across all languages, and euphemisms offer a way to substitute terms that might lead to feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, or public shame. For instance, the word “die” is often replaced with the euphemistic expression “pass away”. This substitution allows individuals to discuss the concept of death without invoking the potential discomfort associated with the direct term.

The fourth function of euphemism involves disguising or masking certain situations. Euphemisms can be employed to amplify or exaggerate circumstances in order to mitigate potential negative consequences. However, it is important to note that euphemisms are not always used with noble intentions. Instead, they can lead to confusion and the concealment of the truth. In some cases, politicians might resort to euphemisms to create an illusion or manipulate language for their own purposes. For example, the term “war” is deliberately avoided, and instead, terms like “operations” and “interventions” are used to describe situations involving armed conflict or military actions.

### **2.3. COMMONLY EUPHEMIZED TOPICS**

Euphemisms tend to be applied more frequently to subjects that evoke feelings of fear, including topics like death, aging, and war. They are also commonly employed for matters associated with propriety, such as discussing sexuality, referencing body parts, bodily functions, and profanities. Additionally, euphemisms find their place in addressing topics that require a sense of delicacy, like personal appearance (Kunerth, 1986). The prevalence of euphemisms varies across different societies and historical eras. The extent to which they are favored for communication shifts based on cultural norms, societal values, and the prevailing attitudes of a particular time period. Euphemisms, therefore, reflect the nuanced interplay between language, culture, and evolving sensibilities.

Death remains a consistently sensitive topic that spans time, cultures, and societies. Due to the inherently delicate nature of the subject, euphemisms are extensively utilized. When faced with the task of conveying news about the passing of a loved one, individuals often opt to speak of someone's “passing on” or “passing away” instead of directly using the term “dying”. This choice aims to cushion the impact of the news and provide a way to manage the emotional



challenge presented by death. Death is a fear-based taboo that transcends temporal, religious, cultural, and societal boundaries. The discomfort surrounding death is universal; the presence of deceased bodies evokes unease rather than comfort. The shroud of mystery enveloping death contributes to the ongoing difficulty in comprehending its intricacies, a factor that compounds the discomfort associated with discussing it. According to Allan and Burridge (1991), the continual use of euphemisms in discussions about death can be attributed to the presence of the following anxieties: the fear of losing loved ones, the dread of the body's decay and breakdown, the apprehension regarding what occurs after life ends, and the fear of encountering malevolent spirits or departed souls.

In the past, limited understanding of human anatomy, organs, and different ailments led individuals to discuss health conditions in a vague and euphemistic manner. The lack of comprehensive knowledge about the human body gave rise to a tendency to view diseases as enigmatic and possibly supernatural phenomena. This perception, in turn, fostered a language surrounding diseases that were notably abundant in euphemistic expressions (Allan & Burridge, 1991). In contrast to the past, significant advancements in technology and modern medicine have unveiled a great deal about the causes and symptoms of many diseases. These remarkable strides have transformed previously devastating illnesses into treatable conditions that no longer pose a widespread threat to entire populations. However, despite these medical breakthroughs, there remain certain diseases, such as cancer and AIDS, that continue to instill fear, prompting people to employ euphemistic terms when discussing them. Due to its widespread prevalence in the Western world, there exists a certain reluctance to address cancer directly. Instead, euphemistic expressions like “The Big C”, “CA”, and descriptions such as “a long/prolonged/incurable disease” are commonly employed as substitutes when discussing this ailment (Allan & Burridge, 2006). Deciphering the specific disease behind a patient's cause of death is not a challenging task, particularly when analyzing the euphemistic language utilized in obituaries where the ailment is not explicitly stated. Euphemisms such as “died after a prolonged illness” or “a long battle against illness” remain prevalent, often signifying that the individual succumbed to cancer. Conversely, if someone's passing is characterized as sudden, it is probable that they died due to a heart attack.

The topic of sex has consistently been viewed as a private matter, rendering it unsuitable for public discussion. Similarly to death and illness, there is a striking commonality when it comes to the widespread use of euphemisms throughout various cultures and time periods: the subject of sex is also consistently euphemized. However, the motivations underlying

euphemisms related to sex differ significantly from those connected to fear. In the case of euphemisms about fear, such as death and illness, the primary aim is to mitigate the discomfort and emotional weight of these subjects. Conversely, when it comes to sex, people appear to derive pleasure from crafting and deciphering allusions to various forms of physical intimacy. Consequently, euphemistic expressions referring to sex often exhibit a high degree of creativity and amusement. These euphemisms reflect the playful and sometimes cheeky nature of discussions surrounding sex, where language is used to communicate without being overly explicit while still conveying the intended meaning. This phenomenon highlights how euphemisms can serve both functional and enjoyable purposes in communication. Keyes (2010) asserts that contemporary discussions about sex are notably more open and candid in comparison to previous eras, particularly when contrasted with the reserved attitudes prevalent during the Victorian period. The terms “white meat” and “dark meat” initially emerged as euphemisms during the Victorian era to refer to breasts and thighs. Additionally, during that time, sexual intercourse was referred to using its overarching term “the act” (Kunerth, 1986). Euphemisms for “sexual intercourse” can be categorized based on the aspects they emphasize in the perception of the act. Among these are dyadic euphemisms, which underscore the involvement of two people, such as “be with”, “play around with”, and “be intimate with”. Another group of euphemisms revolves around the act of having, including expressions like “have a go”, “have a good time”, and “have an affair with”. Some focus on the notion of getting, as seen in phrases like “get into bed with” and “get down with”. Others highlight achieving, like “make it”, “go all the way”, and “score”. Still, more euphemisms accentuate the aspect of having fun, such as “have fun” and “fool around”. Certain euphemisms underscore closeness, like “make love with” and “be intimate with”, while others involve the denotation of “bed”, as seen in “go to bed”, “get someone in the cot”, and “share a pillow with”. Similarly, some euphemisms incorporate the connotation of “food”, for example, “go fishing” and “be sinking the sausage”. Additionally, a prevalent general-for-specific euphemism for “copulation” is the use of the pronoun “it” (Allan & Burridge, 1991).

In earlier times, pregnancy and childbirth were subjects that were often discussed using euphemisms. However, contemporary attitudes have led to greater openness in these discussions. As noted by Algeo and Butcher (2013), the term “pregnant” was avoided in formal contexts. Instead, individuals might have used phrases like “with child”, “going to have a baby”, “in a family way”, or “enceinte” to refer to a pregnant woman. The process of giving birth was referred to as a “delivery” during the confinement period or, in more formal language, an

“accouchement”. These euphemistic expressions were employed in the past to address these topics delicately and respectfully.

In contemporary polite circles, individuals tend to use euphemisms when discussing the need to use the bathroom. Direct references to bodily functions are generally avoided. Instead, people often excuse themselves to visit the restroom or to “freshen up”. In the case of women, a common euphemism is to mention that they need to “powder their nose” when heading to the ladies' room. This use of euphemistic language helps maintain a level of decorum in conversations related to personal bodily needs (Allan & Burrige, 1991).

As certain subjects that once required euphemisms have become less sensitive, new areas have emerged where euphemisms are deemed necessary. These encompass a wide range of fields, extending from food, economics, social sciences, politics, and work, to matters concerning diseases, mortality, and causing death. Within the realm of social sciences, notable shifts in terminology can be observed. For instance, what were once referred to as “drug addicts” are now described as “chemically dependent” individuals. Similarly, individuals with lower intellectual capabilities are now often labeled as “exceptional students”. Terms used to characterize economically challenged nations have also evolved, transitioning from “underdeveloped” to “developing” to “emerging” nations, all of which fall within the classification of the “Third World” (Kunerth, 1986).

### 3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON EUPHEMISMS

Research on euphemisms has, for a long time, captivated the interest of scholars, as euphemisms serve as linguistic windows into societal norms and values. Euphemisms, or the substitution of mild or vague expressions for more direct or potentially harsh ones, have been a subject of fascination due to their role in reflecting evolving cultural sensitivities. By analyzing the creation and utilization of euphemisms, researchers gain valuable insights into the dynamics of language, communication, and societal attitudes.

Alireza Hojati's (2012) study titled "A Study of Euphemisms in the Context of English-speaking Media" aims to explore the commonly employed euphemisms found in Anglophone media. The study focused on a limited but notable selection of Anglophone television news channels, which included Al Jazeera English, France 24 English, and BBC World News. These channels were chosen randomly and observed at various time points. Through a qualitative analysis, the author categorized the use of euphemisms in Anglophone media into different themes: military (239), poverty (182), economy (165), sex (88), disability (67), and death (59). Notably, the utilization of euphemisms was found to be most prevalent in the military context, while euphemisms related to death were comparatively less common. As a result, the author suggests that euphemisms serve multiple functions, including concealing unpleasant truths, legitimizing actions, and providing justifications, particularly within the realms of politics and the military. The conclusion of Hojati's research emphasizes that the findings have been considerably influenced by the period of data collection and the specific type of media employed.

Tarigan and Marpaung (2023) conducted a study that specifically examined the euphemisms employed within the book "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho. The goal of researching these euphemisms was to see how they were used to transmit words in a more kind and pleasing manner. In "The Alchemist", researchers identified four distinct categories of euphemisms. These categories are employed to make the language sound more pleasant in various contexts: to soften the tone (44,5%), to alleviate uncomfortable situations (25,3%), for business purposes (4,8%), and to address characteristics like someone's size, mental state, or abilities (14,3%). The data show that the euphemisms employed in this study are more likely to sound pleasant. Specifically, there were 63 instances of euphemisms aimed to create a pleasing tone. Business euphemisms are the least prevalent, appearing in only three instances. This highlights that the dominant euphemisms in "The Alchemist" are those that make the language sound more pleasant.

In their study, Lailiyah and Yustisia (2018) aimed to find euphemistic expressions in the novel “The Rainbow Troops” by Andrea Hirata. The findings have revealed the presence of various instances of euphemistic expressions within the data. Authors employ such expressions as a deliberate strategy to illuminate cultural phenomena within their language for readers. Numerous examples of euphemistic usage are evident. To illustrate, authors opt for the term “behind mentally” as a substitute for “idiot”. This choice is motivated by the desire to convey the concept without causing offense or discomfort, in contrast to the potentially negative implications of “idiot”. Similarly, the word “hard-headed” is employed instead of “stubborn”. The utilization of euphemistic expressions by the writer serves as evidence of the organic integration of euphemism within everyday communication.

## **4. EUPHEMISMS IN EMILY BRONTE'S "WUTHERING HEIGHTS" AND COLEEN HOOVER'S "IT ENDS WITH US"**

### **4.1. METHODOLOGY**

The study was conducted during the months of July and August in the year 2023. The primary focus of the analysis revolved around identifying and examining euphemisms present within two novels: Emily Bronte's 19th-century novel "Wuthering Heights" (1847) and Colleen Hoover's contemporary novel "It Ends With Us" (2016). The main goal of this research was to analyze both novels, find euphemistic expressions, and, if they are mentioned in Holder's dictionary of euphemisms (2002), categorize them into corresponding semantic categories as outlined by Holder. Any additional euphemisms not present in the dictionary will be included in the table below. This is going to be studied further by answering the following research questions:

Research Question 1: To which semantic fields do most euphemisms identified in the two novels belong?

Research Question 2: Are euphemisms used more in the 19th-century novel or in the contemporary novel?

Based on the posed research questions, hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 1: Euphemisms found in both "Wuthering Heights" and "It Ends With Us" will primarily align with the themes presented in the novels. The majority of the euphemisms identified in "Wuthering Heights" will mainly revolve around the topic of death, while euphemisms found in the novel "It Ends With Us" will be discovered in areas linked to relationships.

Hypothesis 2: Euphemisms will be more prevalent in "Wuthering Heights" due to the societal norms and taboos of the 19th-century Victorian era that often necessitated indirect language. In contrast, "It Ends With Us" is expected to contain fewer euphemisms, as contemporary literature allows for more direct discussions of sensitive topics.

### **4.2. DATA ANALYSIS**

After analyzing both novels, the results will be presented using tables, in which all euphemisms found in the novels will be displayed. Furthermore, the research questions given will be addressed and answered based on the insights gathered by analyzing the list of euphemisms. The list of euphemisms found in the novel "Wuthering Heights" and confirmed

in Holder's dictionary will be presented in **Table 1**, additional euphemisms from the novel, not present in the dictionary, will be presented in **Table 2**, while euphemisms found in the novel "It Ends With Us" and confirmed in Holder's dictionary will be presented in **Table 3** and additional euphemisms not present in the dictionary will be presented in **Table 4**.

**Table 1**

*Euphemisms found in the novel "Wuthering Heights", confirmed and categorized into semantic fields according to Holder's (2002) dictionary*

| <b>Euphemism</b> | <b>Meaning</b>                                | <b>Semantic Field</b> | <b>Page</b>  |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| Late             | Dead  | Death                 | 43           |
| Loss/lost/lose   | A bereavement                                 | Death                 | 81, 236, 326 |
| Fading           | Dying   | Death                 | 129          |
| Left             | To die  | Death                 | 203          |
| (In the) grave   | Death   | Death                 | 206          |
| Expire           | To die  | Death                 | 207          |
| In heaven        | Dead  | Death                 | 210          |
| The eternity     | Dead  | Death                 | 210          |
| Rest             | The relaxation that is obtained through death | Death                 | 210          |
| Release          | A death                                       | Death                 | 210          |
| Decease          | Dead  | Death                 | 213          |
| Gone             | Dead  | Death                 | 224          |
| Go               | To die  | Death                 | 292          |
| Under the sod    | Dead  | Death                 | 295          |
| Drop off         | To die  | Death                 | 308          |
| Quit             | To die  | Death                 | 357          |
| Departed         | To die  | Death                 | 359          |
| Sleep            | To be dead                                    | Death                 | 365          |
| Underground      | Death   | Death                 | 365          |
| Buried           | To inter (a corpse)                           | Funerals              | 160          |
| (In the) earth   | To inter (a corpse)                           | Funerals              | 202          |

|            |  |                           |     |
|------------|--|---------------------------|-----|
| Interment  | A fancy burial                                 | Funerals                  | 214 |
| Laid       | To inter a corpse                              | Funerals                  | 364 |
| Spirits    | Spirituos intoxicant                           | Intoxicants               | 96  |
| Drink      | An intoxicant or to<br>drink intoxicants       | Intoxicants               | 251 |
| Poorly     | Very seriously ill                             | Illness and Injury        | 315 |
| Ill        | Sick – or worse,<br>even unto death            | Illness and Injury        | 336 |
| Illness    | Mentally unwell                                | Mental Illness            | 156 |
| Execution  | To murder                                      | Killing and Suicide       | 123 |
| Separation | To cease living<br>together as man and<br>wife | Courtship and<br>Marriage | 193 |
| Drunk      | Intoxicated                                    | Drunkenness               | 221 |

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Death:

“No; he is the **late** Mrs. Linton’s nephew.” (p. 43)

“He had room in his heart only for two idols his wife and himself: he doted on both, and adored one, and I couldn’t conceive how he would bear the **loss**.” (p. 81)

“No, Heathcliff’s a tough young fellow: he looks blooming to-day. I’ve just seen him. He’s rapidly regaining flesh since he **lost** his better half.” (p. 236)

“Resign her to God as it is, sir,’ I answered, ‘and if we should **lose** you which may He forbid under His providence, I’ll stand her friend and counsellor to the last.” (p. 326)

“We excused her, to a certain extent, on the plea of ill-health: she was dwindling and **fading** before our eyes.” (p. 129)

“Do you reflect that all those words will be branded in my memory, and eating deeper eternally after you have **left** me?” (p. 203)

“What kind of living will it be when you oh, God! would YOU like to live with your soul **in the grave**?” (p. 206)

“If he shot me so, I’d **expire** with a blessing on my lips.” (p. 207)

“Incomparably beyond and above us all! Whether still on earth or now **in heaven**, her spirit is at home with God!” (p. 210)



“I see a repose that neither earth nor hell can break, and I feel an assurance of the endless and shadowless hereafter **the Eternity** they have entered where life is boundless in its duration, and love in its sympathy, and joy in its fulness.” (p. 210)

“And I partook of the infinite calm in which she lay: my mind was never in a holier frame than while I gazed on that untroubled image of Divine **rest**.” (p. 210)

“I noticed on that occasion how much selfishness there is even in a love like Mr. Linton’s, when he so regretted Catherine’s blessed **release!**” (p. 210)

“Mrs. Linton’s funeral was appointed to take place on the Friday following her **decease**; and till then her coffin remained uncovered, and strewn with flowers and scented leaves, in the great drawingroom.” (p. 213)

“And you needn’t trouble your head to screen me; Catherine is **gone**.” (p. 224)

“We’ll hope there are years and years to come before any of us **go**: master is young, and I am strong, and hardly forty-five.” (p. 292)

“Though Hareton has made him a standing jest for six weeks, and I have used more serious measures, and attempted to frighten him out of his idiotcy, he gets worse daily; and he’ll be **under the sod** before summer, unless you restore him!” (p. 295)

“And small **loss** to his family whenever he **drops off**.” (p. 308)

“He divined that one of his enemy’s purposes was to secure the personal property, as well as the estate, to his son: or rather himself; yet why he did not wait till his **decease** was a puzzle to my master, because ignorant how nearly he and his nephew would **quit** the world together.” (p. 357)

“Kissing her cheek, he murmured, ‘I am going to her; and you, darling child, shall come to us!’ and never stirred or spoke again; but continued that rapt, radiant gaze, till his pulse imperceptibly stopped and his soul **departed**.” (p. 359)

“I dreamt I was sleeping the last **sleep** by that sleeper, with my heart stopped and my cheek frozen against hers.” (p. 365)

“I shall be a great deal more comfortable now; and you’ll have a better chance of keeping me **underground**, when I get there.” (p. 365)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Funerals:

“I was a child; my father was just **buried**, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff.” (p. 160)

“Will you forget me? Will you be happy when I am **in the earth?**” (p. 202)

“The place of Catherine’s **interment**, to the surprise of the villagers, was neither in the chapel under the carved monument of the Lintons, nor yet by the tombs of her own relations, outside.” (p. 214)

““And I bribed the sexton to pull it away when I’m **laid** there, and slide mine out too; I’ll have it made so: and then by the time Linton gets to us he’ll not know which is which!” (p. 364)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Intoxicants:

“He drank the **spirits** and impatiently bade us go; terminating his command with a sequel of horrid imprecations too bad to repeat or remember.” (p. 96)

“And as he had been in the habit of accusing Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, when children, of putting the master past his patience, and compelling him to seek solace in **drink** by what he termed their ‘offald ways,’ so at present he laid the whole burden of Hareton’s faults on the shoulders of the usurper of his property.” (p. 251)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Illness and Injury:

““On the morrow I was sad; partly because you were **poorly**, and partly that I wished my father knew, and approved of my excursions: but it was beautiful moonlight after tea; and, as I rode on, the gloom cleared.” (p. 315)

““It is late!” he said, speaking short and with difficulty. ‘Is not your father very **ill**? I thought you wouldn’t come.’” (p. 336)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Mental illness:

“Both the expressions flitting over her face, and the changes of her moods, began to alarm me terribly; and brought to my recollection her former **illness**, and the doctor’s injunction that she should not be crossed.” (p. 156)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Killing and Suicide:

““I heard of your marriage, Cathy, not long since; and, while waiting in the yard below, I meditated this plan just to have one glimpse of your face, a stare of surprise, perhaps, and pretended pleasure; afterwards settle my score with Hindley; and then prevent the law by doing **execution** on myself.” (p. 123)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Courtship and Marriage:

“I have avoided, up to this period, giving her the slightest right to claim a **separation**; and, what’s more, she’d thank nobody for dividing us.” (p. 193)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Drunkenness:

“He kept himself sober for the purpose tolerably sober: not going to bed mad at six o’clock and getting up **drunk** at twelve.” (p. 221)

**Table 2**

*Additional euphemisms from the novel “Wuthering Heights” not present in Holder's (2002) dictionary*

| <b>Euphemism</b>                       | <b>Meaning</b>        | <b>Semantic field</b>      | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Ended Mr. Earnshaw's troubles on earth | Death                 | Death                      | 54          |
| Resign her to God                      | Death                 | Death                      | 326         |
| On the brink of the grave              | Dying                 | Death                      | 154         |
| Go to the grave/going to his grave     | To die                | Death                      | 96, 296     |
| To decay                               | To die                | Death                      | 199         |
| Her life closed                        | To die                | Death                      | 213         |
| Sleeper/sleepers                       | Dead person           | Death                      | 365, 428    |
| Resting-place                          | Grave                 | Death                      | 163         |
| Lonely hollow                          | Grave                 | Death                      | 325         |
| Other world                            | Afterlife             | Death                      | 213         |
| Box his ears                           | To hit someone        | Extortion and Violence     | 18          |
| Have his share of my hand              | To hit someone        | Extortion and Violence     | 73          |
| Illtreatment                           | Mistreatment, neglect | Illegitimacy and Parentage | 47          |

|                      |                      |                               |     |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Fatherless child     | An orphan            | Illegitimacy and<br>Parentage | 47  |
| Infantile in manners | Childish             | Age                           | 128 |
| Elderly              | Old                  | Age                           | 354 |
| End the matter       | Suicide              | Killing and<br>Suicide        | 163 |
| Her mind wanders     | Mental illness       | Mental Illness                | 163 |
| Bad breeding         | Lack of good manners | Unclassified<br>Entries       | 316 |

Additional euphemisms from the table found in the book:

“But the hour came, at last, that **ended Mr. Earnshaw’s troubles on earth.**” (p. 54)

“I’d rather **resign her to God,** and lay her in the earth before me.” (p. 326)

“And I dying! I **on the brink of the grave!**” (p. 154)

“Mr. Kenneth says he would wager his mare that he’ll outlive any man on this side Gimmerton, and **go to the grave** a hoary sinner; unless some happy chance out of the common course befall him.” (p. 96)

“I swear, on my salvation, he’s **going to his grave,** and none but you can save him!” (p. 296)

“Then, the paleness of her face its haggard aspect having vanished as she recovered flesh and the peculiar expression arising from her mental state, though painfully suggestive of their causes, added to the touching interest which she awakened; and invariably to me, I know, and to any person who saw her, I should think refuted more tangible proofs of convalescence, and stamped her as one doomed **to decay.**” (p. 199)

“**Her life closed** in a gentle dream may she wake as kindly in the **other world!**” (p. 213)

“I dreamt I was sleeping the last sleep by that **sleeper,** with my heart stopped and my cheek frozen against hers.” (p. 365)

“I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the **sleepers** in that quiet earth.” (p. 428)

“I suppose we shall have plenty of lamentations now I see we shall but they can’t keep me from my narrow home out yonder: my **resting-place,** where I’m bound before spring is over!” (p. 163)

“I thought the memory of the hour I came down that glen a bridegroom would be less sweet than the anticipation that I was soon, in a few months, or, possibly, weeks, to be carried up, and laid in its **lonely hollow!**” (p. 325)

“He fixed his eye on me longer than I cared to return the stare, for fear I might be tempted either to **box his ears** or render my hilarity audible.” (p. 18)

“He shall **have his share of my hand**, if I catch him downstairs till dark,’ cried Hindley.” (p. 73)

“He seemed a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to **illtreatment**: he would stand Hindley’s blows without winking or shedding a tear, and my pinches moved him only to draw in a breath and open his eyes, as if he had hurt himself by accident, and nobody was to blame.” (p. 47)

“This endurance made old Earnshaw furious, when he discovered his son persecuting the poor **fatherless child**, as he called him.” (p. 47)

“She was at that time a charming young lady of eighteen; **infantile in manners**, though possessed of keen wit, keen feelings, and a keen temper, too, if irritated.” (p. 128)

“I shed tears, Master Heathcliff, you see an **elderly** woman, and a servant merely and you, after pretending such affection, and having reason to worship her almost, store every tear you have for yourself, and lie there quite at ease.” (p. 354)

“Hush!’ cried Mrs. Linton. ‘Hush, this moment! You mention that name and I **end the matter** instantly by a spring from the window!’” (p. 163)

“**Her mind wanders**, sir,’ I interposed. ‘She has been talking nonsense the whole evening; but let her have quiet, and proper attendance, and she’ll rally.’” (p. 163)

“To sneer at his imperfect attempt was very **bad breeding**.” (p. 316)

**Table 3**

*Euphemisms found in the novel “It Ends With Us”, confirmed and categorized into semantic fields according to Holder's (2002) dictionary*

| <b>Euphemism</b> | <b>Meaning</b>                     | <b>Semantic Field</b> | <b>Page</b> |
|------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Move in with     | To cohabit and copulate with       | Mistresses and Lovers | 77          |
| Make out         | To have a sexual relationship with | Mistresses and Lovers | 112         |

|                            |   |                       |             |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| Company                    | A person with whom you have an extramarital sexual relationship | Mistresses and Lovers | 102         |
| Boyfriend                  | A male sexual partner   | Mistresses and Lovers | 128         |
| Girlfriend                 | A female extramarital sexual partner                            | Mistresses and Lovers | 135         |
| Relationship               | An extramarital sexual involvement with another                 | Mistresses and Lovers | 121         |
| Joint                      | A marijuana cigarette   | Narcotics             | 8           |
| Hit                        | An ingestion of illegal narcotics                               | Narcotics             | 9           |
| High                       | Under the influence of narcotics                                | Narcotics             | 9           |
| Pot                        | Marijuana   | Narcotics             | 13          |
| Weed                       | A taboo substance which is smoked                               | Narcotics             | 13          |
| Deceased                   | Dead  | Death                 | 17          |
| Late                       | Dead  | Death                 | 17          |
| Lose/loss/lost             | A bereavement   | Death                 | 16, 17, 181 |
| Passing/passed/passed away | To die  | Death                 | 25, 31, 46  |
| Gone                       | Dead  | Death                 | 32          |
| Sleep with                 | To copulate with  | Copulation            | 20          |
| Make love                  | To copulate with  | Copulation            | 135         |
| One-night stand            | A single night of copulation with a chance partner              | Copulation            | 181         |
| Drunk                      | Intoxicated   | Drunkenness           | 38          |

|            |  |                        |         |
|------------|--|------------------------|---------|
| Inebriated | Intoxicated  | Drunkenness            | 40      |
| Leave/left | To desert (a spouse)                                   | Courtship and Marriage | 50, 186 |
| Date       | A heterosexual companion                               | Courtship and Marriage | 66      |
| Knock up   | To impregnate a female                                 | Pregnancy              | 125     |
| With child | Pregnant   | Pregnancy              | 154     |
| Buried     | To inter (a corpse)                                    | Funerals               | 11      |
| Drink      | An intoxicant or to drink intoxicants                  | Intoxicants            | 65      |
| Cleavage   | The visible division between a clothed woman's breasts | Breasts                | 68      |
| Manure     | The rotted matter incorporating the excreta of cattle  | Defecation             | 81      |
| Turned on  | To excite  | Sexual Pursuit         | 82      |

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Mistresses and Lovers:

“I know we still have six months left on the lease, but he wants me to **move in with** him.” (p. 77)

“I wasn’t too upset because it meant we would probably just **make out** for an hour and a half.” (p. 112)

““You should probably get back to your **company**,’ he says.” (p. 102)

““Ryle Kincaid. I’m Lily’s **boyfriend**.”” (p. 128)

““This is kind of a monumental thing, you know. Me having a **girlfriend**.”” (p. 135)

““I was worried that being in a **relationship** would add to my responsibilities.”” (p. 121)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Narcotics:

“When I don’t answer him, he brings the **joint** back to his mouth and takes another **hit**.” (p. 8, 9)

““You’re making me nervous. Not to mention ruining my **high**.”” (p. 9)

“Stylish, well spoken, and smart. And smokes **pot**.” (p. 13)

“Should doctors be smoking **weed**?” (p. 13)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Death:

“I just didn’t want to do it because I feel like eulogies should be delivered by those who respected the **deceased**.” (p. 17)

“Hello. My name is Lily Bloom, daughter of the **late** Andrew Bloom.” (p. 17)

“I wanted them to know that not only did they just **lose** a child, they just ruined the entire life of the one who accidentally pulled the trigger.” (p. 16)

“Thank you all for joining us today as we mourn his **loss**.” (p. 17)

“He was mad about a patient he’d **lost** that night.” (p. 181)

“I swore I’d never read these again, but with the **passing** of my father, I’ve been thinking about my childhood a lot.” (p. 25)

“Now that my father has **passed** and she’s alone, she’ll probably call me twice as much as she did before.” (p. 31)

“I think I like her more now that my father has **passed away**.” (p. 46)

“Now that my father is **gone** and I never have to worry about my mother again, I was looking forward to spreading my wings, so to speak.” (p. 32)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Copulation:

“I could never **sleep with** someone if I didn’t see it going anywhere.” (p. 20)

“This time we **make love**.” (p. 135)

“He was only into **one-night stands**.” (p. 181)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Drunkenness:

“Marshall, are you **drunk**?” (p. 38)

“I won’t charge you for this, but only because I’m slightly **inebriated**,” he says with a wink.” (p. 40)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Courtship and Marriage:

“I don’t care if she’s too poor to **leave** him and we’d have to move into a crappy apartment and eat ramen noodles until I graduate.” (p. 50)

“And if I’d have just **left**, would that not be going against our marriage vows?” (p. 186)



““You brought a **date**.”” (p. 66)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Pregnancy:

““How am I supposed to try and **knock** you **up** tonight if you aren't a little wasted?”” (p. 125)

““And I know you're with my brother and I'm **with child**, but can we please just take a moment to silently admire the perfection that is that man?”” (p. 154)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Funerals:

““Because I **buried** my father today and gave an epically disastrous eulogy and now I feel like I can't breathe.”” (p. 11)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Intoxicants:

““**Drink**,’ she says. ‘You deserve it!’”” (p. 65)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Breasts:

““His eyes journey down to my **cleavage**.”” (p. 68)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Defecation:

““Cow **manure**? Seriously?”” (p. 81)

Euphemisms from the semantic field of Sexual Pursuit:

““When he was wiping that cow shit on me, it was quite possibly the most **turned-on** I have ever been.”” (p. 82)

**Table 4**

*Additional euphemisms from the novel “It Ends With Us” not present in Holder's dictionary*

| <b>Euphemism</b>    | <b>Meaning</b>                       | <b>Semantic Field</b>  | <b>Page</b> |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Didn't make it      | Died                                 | Death                  | 16          |
| End their own lives | Suicide                              | Killing and<br>Suicide | 6           |
| Toke up             | An ingestion of<br>illegal narcotics | Narcotics              | 9           |

Additional euphemisms from the table found in the book:

“But when I had to walk into the waiting room and tell those parents that their child **didn’t make it**, I didn’t feel an ounce of sorrow for them.” (p. 16)

“I’m more focused on other people, and how they ultimately come to the decision to just **end their own lives**.” (p. 6)

“I’m not going to judge this guy for feeling the need to **toke up** in private.” (p. 9)

### 4.3. DISCUSSION

In the course of this research, a comprehensive analysis of euphemisms in two novels, “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Bronte and “It Ends With Us” by Colleen Hoover, was undertaken. The study revolved around two central research questions: the semantic fields to which most euphemisms belong and whether euphemisms are used more prevalently in the 19th-century novel or in the contemporary novel.

The findings of this research supported Hypothesis 1, which posited that euphemisms found in both “Wuthering Heights” and “It Ends With Us” will primarily align with the themes presented in the novels. The majority of the euphemisms identified in “Wuthering Heights” mainly revolved around the topic of death, while in “It Ends With Us”, euphemisms were primarily linked to themes like relationships, death and narcotics. In “Wuthering Heights”, most euphemisms belonged to the semantic field of Death (29), the second field was Funerals (4), the third were Intoxicants (2), Illness and Injury (2), Mental Illness (2), Killing and Suicide (2), Extortion and Violence (2), Illegitimacy and Parentage (2) and Age (2). The fewest number of euphemisms was found in the fields of Courtship and Marriage (1), Drunkenness (1) and Unclassified Entries (1). In “It Ends With Us”, most euphemisms belong to the semantic field of Mistresses and Lovers (6), Death (6) and Narcotics (6). The fourth field with the most euphemisms is Copulation (3), then Drunkenness (2), Courtship and Marriage (2) and Pregnancy (2). Euphemisms found in the fields of Funerals (1), Breasts (1), Defecation (1), Sexual Pursuit (1) and Killing and Suicide (1) were less prevalent. This indicates that the topics of relationships, death and the use of prohibited substances are some of the main taboo topics in this contemporary novel. It also shows how the topic of death remains a sensitive and taboo subject even in modern literature.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that euphemisms will be more prevalent in “Wuthering Heights” due to the societal norms and taboos of the 19th-century Victorian era that often necessitated indirect language. In contrast, “It Ends With Us” is expected to contain fewer euphemisms, as

contemporary literature allows for more direct discussions of sensitive topics. The analysis supports this hypothesis. There were 31 euphemisms found in “Wuthering Heights” which were confirmed in Holder's dictionary and additional 19 euphemisms which makes a total number of 50 euphemisms, while in “It Ends With Us” there were 29 euphemisms found which were confirmed in Holder's dictionary and additional 3 which makes the total number of 32 euphemisms and that is 18 less than in “Wuthering Heights”.

In “Wuthering Heights”, the characters' reliance on euphemisms reflects the societal norms and expectations of the Victorian era. Conversely, “It Ends With Us”, set in a contemporary context, exhibits a more direct approach to discussing sensitive topics, resulting in reduced use of euphemistic language. This finding underscores the shift in cultural norms over time, impacting the role and prevalence of euphemisms in literature.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Euphemisms serve as substitutes for harsh, hurtful, or offensive expressions, allowing us to convey the same message as the blunter equivalents without coming across as inappropriate. They have the remarkable ability to subtly alter the meaning of words and phrases, rendering them more melodious, as their primary purpose is to mask the literal meaning and avoid outright offensiveness. Euphemisms offer a convenient means of reducing tension in conversations and promoting a sense of comfort among all participants. They are also important in literary writing. Euphemisms effectively enable authors to communicate emotions and difficult situations to readers through a carefully chosen description or word choice. This quality enhances the appeal of euphemistic writing, as it lends a more pleasant and considerate tone to the narrative.

This research has thoroughly explored the use of euphemisms within the context of two novels: “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Bronte and “It Ends With Us” by Colleen Hoover. Two research questions and hypotheses guided this research. The findings supported Hypothesis 1. In “Wuthering Heights”, euphemisms were predominantly linked to the theme of death, reflecting the novel's preoccupation with mortality and its impact on the characters. Conversely, “It Ends With Us” featured euphemisms primarily related to relationships, emphasizing the significance of interpersonal dynamics in modern literature. Notably, despite the temporal gap between these novels, the theme of death remained a sensitive and taboo subject in both, underscoring its enduring importance in literary discourse. The finding also supported Hypothesis 2. “Wuthering Heights” contained more euphemisms due to the societal norms and taboos of the 19th-century Victorian era, which often necessitated indirect language. The analysis strongly supported this hypothesis, as “Wuthering Heights” indeed contained a significantly greater number of euphemisms compared to “It Ends With Us”. This contrast highlights how cultural norms and historical context profoundly influence the use of euphemisms in literature. “Wuthering Heights” reflects the conventions of its era, where characters employed euphemisms to navigate societal expectations, while “It Ends With Us”, set in a contemporary context, adopted a more straightforward approach in addressing sensitive topics.

In conclusion, the systematic exploration of euphemisms in “Wuthering Heights” and “It Ends With Us” has offered compelling insights into the significance of these linguistic devices in enriching literary narratives. The research questions and hypotheses have not only provided a structured framework for this study but have also highlighted how language evolves within different cultural contexts.

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## **EUPHEMISMS IN EMILY BRONTE'S "WUTHERING HEIGHTS" AND COLLEEN HOOVER'S "IT ENDS WITH US": Summary and key words**

This paper embarks on an investigation into the realm of euphemisms, shedding light on their crucial function as linguistic tools in the context of social interactions. Euphemisms, characterized by the substitution of offensive words or phrases for potentially inoffensive ones, emerge as crucial tools for fostering effective and sensitive communication. This paper explores the utilization of euphemisms in two literary works: Emily Bronte's "Wuthering Heights", set in the 19th century, and Colleen Hoover's "It Ends With Us", a contemporary novel. By scrutinizing how these authors employ euphemistic expressions to address sensitive themes and reflect the societal norms, values, and taboos of their respective eras, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of linguistic choices within literature and how these choices evolve over time. The research findings supported the first hypothesis, demonstrating that both "Wuthering Heights" and "It Ends With Us" feature euphemisms primarily aligned with the themes presented in the novels. The greatest number of euphemisms, in both works, belong to the semantic field of death, while in "It Ends With Us" there are also many euphemisms belonging to the semantic fields of narcotics and relationships. The second hypothesis, which suggests that "Wuthering Heights" would contain more euphemisms, was supported by the analysis, as "Wuthering Heights" has significantly more euphemisms (50) compared to "It Ends With Us" (32).

**Keywords:** euphemisms, semantic field, literature, Wuthering Heights, It Ends With Us

## **EUFEMIZMI U ROMANIMA EMILY BRONTE „ORKANSKI VISOVI“ I COLLEEN HOOVER „PRIČA ZAVRŠAVA S NAMA“: Sažetak i ključne riječi**

Ovaj rad istražuje područje eufemizama, ističući njihovu ključnu funkciju kao jezičnih alata u kontekstu društvenih interakcija. Eufemizmi, koje karakterizira zamjena uvredljivih riječi ili fraza potencijalno neuvredljivima, se pojavljuju kao ključni alati za poticanje učinkovite komunikacije. Ovaj rad istražuje uporabu eufemizama u dva književna djela: u romanu Emily Bronte „Orkanski visovi“ iz 19. stoljeća i suvremenom romanu „Priča završava s nama“ Colleen Hoover. Analizirajući kako autorice koriste eufemističke izraze u obrađivanju osjetljivih tema i odražavanju društvenih normi, vrijednosti i tabua vremenskih razdoblja kojima pripadaju, cilj ovog rada je doprinijeti dubljem razumijevanju jezičnih izbora unutar književnosti i načinu na koji se oni s vremenom mijenjaju. Rezultati istraživanja potvrđuju prvu hipotezu, ukazujući na to da „Orkanski visovi“ i „Priča završava s nama“ sadrže eufemizme usklađene s temama prikazanim u romanima. Najveći broj eufemizama u oba djela pripada semantičkom polju smrti, dok se u romanu „Priča završava s nama“ javlja velik broj eufemizama koji pripadaju semantičkim poljima narkotika i romantičnih veza. Druga hipoteza, koja je sugerirala da će „Orkanski visovi“ sadržavati više eufemizama, podržana je analizom, budući da roman „Orkanski visovi“ sadrži značajno više eufemizama (50) u usporedbi s romanom „Priča završava s nama“ (32).

**Ključne riječi:** eufemizmi, semantičko polje, književnost, Orkanski visovi, Priča završava s nama