Current attitudes to ageing as reflected in the names of Australian aged care facilities

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One of the most evolving areas of euphemisms in present-day society is ageing; our main hypothesis is that this process can be accurately studied through an analysis of the naming practices of aged care facilities. Accordingly, we examined the names of aged care facilities in the Melbourne region (Australia) from 2013 and compared this to the names used in 1987. We found that the 2013 sample showed a much greater degree of euphemistic usage as compared to the 1987 data. More specifically, the names in the 2013 data had a tendency to use the euphemistic strategy of full omission, and most often relied on conceptualizing the facility as either an upper-class family home or a holiday resort. Such strategies and conceptualizations were much less frequent in the 1987 data.

Keywords: aged care, retirement facility, ageing, euphemism, metaphor, metonymy, naming strategies

1. Introduction

In 1994, Alexandre Kalache was appointed as Director of the World Health Organization's Health of the Elderly program. His very first act was to change the name of the department to "Ageing and Life Course Programme". Kalache was convinced that the label "elderly" carried negative undertones, as it "put a segment of the population in a box" (May 2012: 9). "Ageing," however, seemed a more appropriate term because—in Kalache's view—it felt more "active" and included the whole society (ibid.).

This simple act of name change casts the spotlight on a rather exciting linguistic phenomenon which Pinker (2002: 213) has referred to as the "euphemistic treadmill." The expression refers to the commonplace observation that euphemisms have a rather short lifespan. As Pinker remarks, people have concepts, and not words, in their heads. When a concept is given a new name, the concept tarnishes the name over time; therefore, the effect of the new name wears off rather quickly, which means that new euphemisms need to be constantly generated.

Needless to say, there are plenty of subject areas which are rife with euphemistic expressions (see Allan and Burridge 1991 for an overview); one of the most evolving areas of euphemisms in present-day society is ageing. As Kalache (2012) explains, baby boomers are now reaching retirement age, and wish to remain active and productive for many more decades—thereby redefining the concept of ageing considerably: "Never before have we seen a cohort hitting the age of 65 who are so well informed, so wealthy and in such good health … [we] are … *redefining what it means to age*" (emphasis added).

Following Kalache's claims, the main hypothesis of the present paper is that ageing is currently undergoing a major redefinition, that is, reconceptualization, and that this process can be best analyzed by examining the words and expressions—the vast majority of them euphemistic and/or figurative—that are used in connection to ageing. In order to test this hypothesis, we analysed the naming practices of "aged care facilities"[1] (yet a further euphemism) in Melbourne, Australia. Although the analysis of the naming practices of aged care facilities seems to be an obvious choice in order to better understand the process of linguistic—and hence conceptual—change surrounding a taboo subject such as ageing, very little has been done within this field. The most detailed study to date has been carried out by Felton (1969); it looked at the naming practices of American retirement facilities and pointed out that there had been a definite increase in the use of more appealing names (such as *villa*, *manor*, *lodge*, etc.) from about the 1940s onwards, which "reflect, in part, the broadened attitude toward retirement and the living facility for the aged" (p. 287; see also Nuessel 1992 for an overview). No such research has been conducted for Australian facilities, and certainly nothing within the context of the present-day "longevity revolution" (Kalache's term). In order to alleviate this gap in scholarly research, we examined the current names and naming practices of aged care facilities in the Melbourne region, and then compared these to the naming patterns used in 1987. We hypothesized that the 2013 sample would show a much greater degree of euphemistic usage as compared to the 1987 data by using a wider array and a larger proportion of appealing names.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The second section describes the corpus and the process of data selection, while the third and fourth sections concentrate on the analyses of the 2013 and 1987 datasets, respectively. The last, fifth section, concludes.

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[1]   By "aged care facilities" we mean permanent homes for the elderly.

2. Methodology

2.1. The data

The database consists of the names of aged care facilities found in Melbourne, Australia from 2013 and 1987, respectively. The 2013 data come from an online database of residential aged care facilities, http://www.agedcareonline.com.au/ (data retrieved in March 2013). First we have retrieved all the aged care facilities that were located in the Greater Melbourne area—this resulted in a master list of 682 items. However, this list also included services and organizations which were not primarily residential. Furthermore, there was considerable amount of chaos with regard to the names of these facilities/services—often it was unclear what exactly the official name of the facility was and what it referred to. For example, Cumberland View Aged Care, which appeared on our master list, was the name of an organization (and not a residential facility *per se*) in charge of two facilities, Cumberland View Nursing Home and Cumberland View Retirement Village. Therefore, we picked a random sample of facilities by selecting every tenth item on the master list—this resulted in a restricted dataset of 68 items.[2] As a next step, we checked the individual websites of the selected facilities to confirm their names. If we were not able to find the website of a facility on the random sample list, we went onto the next facility on the master list. The final list of the 2013 data can be found in Appendix 1.

While the 2013 data need no particular justification, the selection of 1987 as a basis for our comparison rests upon the following two reasons: 1) this was the year when Rowe and Kahn (1987) introduced the concept of "successful ageing" in gerontological literature;[3] 2) a ca. twenty-five year span is adequately long to investigate subtle changes in naming customs within such a euphemistic area as ageing. The 1987 data come from the Melbourne Yellow Pages of that year, from the sections listed under "Nursing Homes" and "Retirement Communities and Homes." There was no separate "Aged Care" section in the volume, and some entries under these headings included institutions either without clear specialization

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[2] In order to test the viability of the sample, we have created a second sample list as well, selecting every twentieth facility (and starting with the second facility on the master list to avoid having the same facilities as in the first random sample). We then analysed the names of this second sample list as well, which depicted similar (though not identical) results as our first sample.

[3] The term "successful ageing" entered gerontological terminology in 1987 (Rowe and Kahn 1987) to denote the idea that an ever-increasing number of older people were leading an active and healthy lifestyle and were still contributing to society; the term has since become a mainstream expression.

(such as "special accommodations" or "centres") or not exclusively for the aged (such as private hospitals or institutions for the mentally disabled). These have been left out of the database. In sum, the final 1987 list amounted to 184 entries; see Appendix 2.

2.2. The methodological framework

With regard to the semantic analysis of the data, we have relied on a combined approach of 1) previous research on euphemistic usage (especially Allan and Burridge 1991; Burridge 2012); and 2) cognitive linguistic methodology. The latter has been especially successful in the description and analysis of figurative language use (Benczes 2006a), including the analysis of euphemisms (e.g., Benczes 2006b; Gradečak-Erdeljić 2005; Portero Muñoz 2011). In the cognitive linguistic view, abstract concepts are understood mostly via more concrete entities, more specifically via metaphorical and metonymical projections. These metaphorical and metonymical projections or mappings are manifested in language, in the various (figurative) expressions that we use when talking about abstract concepts. For instance, we can understand the abstract target domain of LIFE by a number of different, more concrete source domains, such as a JOURNEY (e.g., have a *head start* in life) or a STORY (e.g., the *story* of one's life) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kövecses 2006).

3. Analysis of the 2013 data

Regarding our 2013 sample of 68 aged care homes, the first question that we were interested in was how many facilities had any reference to their function in their name (i.e., whether the facility's name included terms such as *aged care*, *nursing home*, *retirement unit*, etc. or any other term that can be linked to aged care). The relevance of this question is related to our hypothesis, i.e., that in the past thirty years, the naming customs of aged care institutions have become increasingly euphemistic, and one such indication of this trend is to leave out any reference to "aged care" from the name of the institution altogether. Table 1 sums up the results.

What is immediately evident from the data that only 25 facilities (37%) had some sort of reference to their function in their name; the majority of facilities, more specifically 43 of them (63%), gave no indication whatsoever of their function (these will be analyzed separately later on in the paper; see section 3.1). The most common expression relating to aged care was *nursing home*; it occurred in the names of seven facilities and amounted to more than 10% of the data. This appearance of *nursing home* in the 2013 data is especially interesting in the light of the fact that nowadays it is seldom used officially. The 1997 Aged

Table 1. Reference to function in the names of aged care facilities in the 2013 sample.

Reference to function in name of facility	No. of examples (% of total)	Examples
nursing home	7 (10.2%)	Mon Repos Nursing Home, Carinya Nursing Home
aged care	6 (8.8%)	Scottvale Aged Care, Lilydale Aged Care
hostel	3 (4.5%)	Outlook Gardens Hostel, Edmund Rice Hostel
retirement village	3 (4.5%)	Heathglen Retirement Village, Highvale Retirement Village
home	2 (3%)	Claremont Home, Olivet Aged Persons Home
residence	2 (3%)	Mark & Dina Munzer Community Residence, Mary MacKillop Residence
retirement unit	1 (1.5%)	Hedley Sutton Community Retirement Units
village	1 (1.5%)	Keilor Village
no reference	43 (63%)	Stephenson House, Bentley Manor
Total	68 (100%)	

Care Act of Australia reformed the terms that were previously used to identify the various types of aged care facilities; the Act dropped *nursing home* and *hostel* altogether, and introduced the more euphemistic-sounding "high level care" and "low-level care," respectively (although these terms do not appear at all in the names of the facilities in the dataset). While the semantic frame of *nursing* evokes ill or disabled people in a hospitalized setting, *care* is a very general, yet positive term that brings forth pleasant associations that are otherwise conceptually not prominent in an expression such as *nursing home*. Note that both modifiers (*high* and *low*) are also euphemistic by virtue of their generality—the metonymic process of selecting a more general concept to stand for a more specific one in order to lessen the impact of the message is a routine strategy in euphemisms (Allan and Burridge 1991: 17–18; Gradečak-Erdeljić and Milić 2011: 151).

The second most common reference to function in the names of the 2013 facilities was *aged care*, which appeared in the name of six facilities (8.8%). Apart from the head element (*care*), the modifier, *aged*, is also euphemistic; since the 1400s, it has been used to refer to the latter part of life (Covey 1988). In reality, we start ageing from the moment we are born; therefore, the use of *aged* to refer to "old age" can be considered as a part-for-whole metonymy where the whole scale of our lives—the ageing process—is used to refer to one particular part of this scale, old age.

The other, pre-1997 term beside *nursing home* that was commonly used in the aged care sector was *hostel*, which appeared three times (4.5%) in the 2013 data. What is interesting here is that while both *nursing home* and *hostel* can be considered as outdated, appearing only

in a handful of the 2013 names, no other specialized term has taken their place—as just noted, neither *high-level care* nor *low-level care* (expressions introduced by the Aged Care Act) appears in any of the 2013 data. While six names in our sample include the very general *aged care* (which might cover both high and low levels of care), it does not seem to have gone into a more general use as a substitution for the terms *nursing home* and *hostel*.

Home, however, did appear in the name of two facilities. One of the lexicalized senses of *home* is "a residential institution providing care, rest, refuge, accommodation, or treatment" (*OED*). This sense of *home* can be considered as a euphemism based on a metaphor, whereby the aged care facility is conceptualized as the primary sense of the word *home*, i.e., a permanent place where one lives with his/her family, "with reference to the feelings of belonging, comfort, etc., associated with it" (*OED*). Within this metaphor, both the residents and the people employed by the facility are members of a single family, where the residents are the children and the employees are their caregivers. Nevertheless, despite these seemingly positive connotations, *home* does not seem to be a popular choice when it comes to the names of contemporary aged care facilities. In all likelihood we are dealing with contamination from its longer version, *nursing home*. Aged care providers might well be cautious of giving a facility the name *home* for fear of it bringing up the less positive connotations of *nursing homes*, and their dubious reputation as "'halfway' houses between society as we know it and the cemetery" (Garvin and Burger 1968: 11).

This trend is observable in the name of Olivet Aged Persons Home, which—while retaining *home* in its name—also has the euphemistic-sounding *aged persons* as a modifier. Needless to say, *person* in itself is an intriguing choice—when a couple of decades ago compounds ending in *-man* were deemed as sexist, the practice was to replace the problematic constituent with *-person*. This resulted in sexually neutral alternatives such as *chairperson* (see Allan and Burridge 1991: 44 for further examples). One possible reason for the Olivet facility's naming choice might be the fact that due to the (over)use of *person* in formerly "sexist-sounding" expressions, it has now become equated with politically correct usage, and is considered as a term that does not offend any particular group. At the same time, another possible motivational source for *persons* is that, according to the *OED*, *persons* "emphasizes the plurality and individuality of the referent" (as opposed to *people*, which is the usual choice and has no such connotations). This connotation of individuality and plurality is in stark contrast to the connotation of *nursing home* (i.e., illness, disability, reliance on the care of others, etc.).

Both *retirement village* and *village* cropped up in the 2013 data (3 and 1 instances, respectively). These naming strategies were quite frequent in the 1987 data; thus, they will be analyzed in section 4. *Retirement unit* is a less-established name; it appears only once in our random sample. Nevertheless, as compared to *nursing home* and *hostel*, it can be considered quite euphemistic, as it also employs a number of euphemism-creating strategies. The general-over-specific metonymy is present in its first constituent; *unit* is a very general term that can refer to any particular kind of accommodation. By virtue of its generality, it implies a less permanent place than a more specific term such as *home*, *house*, or even *village* for example, thereby suggesting that the facility is only a temporary place of dwelling and not a permanent one. Note that this is in stark contrast to the also very general-sounding *residence*, which showed up twice in the data, as *residence* implies a permanent place of living (*OED*). With regard to *retirement*, a general-over-specific metonymy is at work, as retirement does not necessarily imply old age—there are plenty of occupations where people retire at a relatively young age (such as professional sports). Therefore, general retirement from a career or employment stands for one particular type of retirement—reaching the age of pension. Furthermore, the use of *retirement* represents a conceptual shift: it shifts our focus of attention from the people usually affected by this state (i.e., older people) to the state itself (the *OED* provides the meaning of *retirement* as "the period of a person's life after retiring from office or employment"). In other words, the state of retirement becomes foregrounded, while the people affected by retirement become backgrounded.

Last but not least, nearly a third (63%) of the aged care facilities of the 2013 data did not contain any reference in their name to their function (these will be separately analyzed below). This is a rather interesting trend, as it highlights the taboo nature of old age (which also extends to aged care facilities). Not mentioning explicitly the function of a facility is as euphemistic as it can possibly get; this practice is similar to the use of omission in language (Allan and Burridge 1991: 17), when a taboo word is either simply left out of the speech situation or is substituted by an *mhm*, *er-mm*, etc. Therefore, what the above analyses indicate is that there is clear tendency for present-day aged care facilities to use a range of euphemism-creating strategies in their names, with the aim of diverting the attention from their main function—providing permanent housing and care for the aged—via generalizations (such as using very general-level terms such as *care* or *unit*) or part-for-whole metonymies (as in the case of *aged*). Such strategies help to background the real function of these facilities, with the result that a cognitive distance is created between the intended message

and the hearer. This cognitive distance helps ease society's guilt for segregating the older generation "into urban ghettos" (Nuessel 1982: 274).

3.1. Full omission

The majority (63%) of the examples in the 2013 data have used the strategy of full omission. What is interesting about these examples is that here, too, there is a certain diversity in how the facility is named, and the various types of names evoke different conceptualizations. As can be seen from Table 2, the most frequent term that cropped up in the sample was *manor*. According to the *OED*, *manor* is "a mansion or country residence … occupied by the owner of the estate". Clearly, an aged care facility is *not* a country estate—why is it named thus? What is happening here is that the use of *manor* uplifts the concept in the aim of placing it in a more attractive perspective. Burridge (2012: 69) refers to such linguistic phenomena as the "uplifting euphemism." By virtue of "inflating" (ibid.) the concept of an aged care facility to the level of a country residence or mansion, *manor* very successfully conceals the true function of the building.

A similar effect can be observed in the case of *house* and *hall* as well, both of which are often used in the names of larger family residences—as supplied in the definitions of the *OED*: *house*: "a building for human habitation, typically and historically one that is the ordinary place of residence of a family"; *hall*: "residence of a territorial proprietor." In fact, *manor*, *house*, and *hall* might also draw on the FAMILY metaphor (after all, all three buildings are typically family residences), which might make the facility even further attractive (i.e., the residents are members of a family—in fact, of an upper-class family, which implies a life

Table 2. Types of names used in the full omission examples of 2013.

Type of name	No. of examples (% of total)	Examples
manor	7 (16%)	Casey Manor, Trinity Manor
gardens	6 (14%)	Kew Gardens, Monash Gardens
house	5 (12%)	Darley House, Hampton House
lodge	3 (7%)	Edwards Lodge, Elswick Lodge
park	2 (5%)	Eliza Park, Hestia Noble Park
"foreign" names	2 (5%)	Casa Serena, Embracia in Reservoir
hall	1 (2.2%)	Benetas Broughton Hall
view	1 (2.2%)	Princeton View
lakes	1 (2.2%)	Waterford Valley Lakes
terrace	1 (2.2%)	Glenhuntly Terrace
close	1 (2.2%)	Goodwin Close
other	13 (30%)	Greenhaven, Millward
Total	43 (100%)	

of comfort and luxury).[4]

The picture is slightly different with *lodge*. While *manor*, *house* and *hall* evoke a sense of permanence, there is no such element in the frame of *lodge*. In fact, according to the *OED*, a *lodge* is always a temporary accommodation—for this reason it can be often found in the names of hotels as well. *Lodge* evokes a vacation scenario, which entails only a temporary stay in a facility. In this case the euphemism misrepresents reality, as moving into an aged care facility is usually a permanent act.

A number of examples in our sample used *gardens*, *park*, *lakes*, or *view* in their name. What is exciting about these examples is that the name focuses on a more subsidiary or secondary aspect of the facility, i.e., its location, and consequently backgrounds the residential facility itself. Furthermore, anything located in gardens or parks is bound to be lavish. Note that the definition of *gardens* is "ornamental grounds, used a place of public resort" (*OED*). Interestingly, one of the facilities in the sample is called Kew Gardens, which is identical to the name of the world-famous botanical gardens situated in the United Kingdom. Probably, the choice for this name was by no means accidental; the proprietors of the aged care facility wished to build on the positive connotations that the original Kew Gardens might evoke in people (and which has nothing to do with aged care!).

There were also two examples in the data—Casa Serena and Embracia—which used foreign-sounding names. The motivation behind such naming strategies might be the automatic association that we have of such names with foreign locations—that is, they evoke a holiday scenario. Moreover, due to the near-identical phonology, both of the names call to mind English words with positive concepts—*serenity* in the case of Casa Serena, and *embrace* in Embracia. Such concepts, coupled with the holiday frame, can create a very appealing image of the facility, which thus becomes more rather like a holiday resort. Last but not least, there was a significant number of facilities in the sample that focused on their location; their name was the area in which they could be found in (e.g., Glenhuntly Terrace, Goodwin Close, Greenhaven, etc.). Words such as *terrace* and *close* are common descriptors in (typically well-to-do) street nomenclature, and such names underspecify their function by not referring to it in any way.

All in all, definite trends can be observed in the names of aged care facilities in the 2013 data. The vast majority of the facilities opted for names that did not contain any explicit

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[4] Note that the names of these facilities often use proper nouns that have an upper-class "ring" to them: Cheltenham Manor, Trinity Manor, Darley House, Broughton Hall, etc.

mention of aged care. Facilities that chose full omission usually aimed at uplifting the facility by evoking either a luxurious environment (as in the case of *manor*, *hall*, *gardens*, etc.) or a holiday scenario (as in the case of *lodge* or foreign-sounding names). Both methods rely on metaphorical conceptualizations, whereby residents are understood as members of an upper-class family or as vacationers, respectively. The reason behind these conceptualizations might be explained by the fact that people have very different needs and requirements when searching for the ideal aged care facility. The conceptualizations satisfy opposing demands: the FAMILY metaphor highlights community and permanence, while the HOLIDAY metaphor emphasizes individuality and transience.

4. Analysis of the 1987 data

The picture is rather different in the 1987 data. The most conspicuous difference that can be observed in Table 3, as compared to Table 1, is that the ratio of *nursing homes* versus no explicit reference to aged care in the facilities' names has basically switched. In the 1987 data, roughly 82% of the facilities are depicted as *nursing homes*, while only 7% of the facilities use the euphemistic strategy of full omission. The prevalence for *nursing home* in the 1987 data can be explained by the fact that prior to the 1997 Aged Care Act, *nursing home* was the generally used term for a live-in facility. Nevertheless, its disappearance from use in the 2013 data clearly signals that in the past three decades *nursing home* has become a tarnished name.

Table 3. Reference to function in the names of aged care facilities in the 1987 sample.

Reference to function in name of facility	No. of examples (% of total)	Examples
nursing home	151 (82.1%)	Kiama Nursing Home, Woodleigh Nursing Home
retirement village	7 (3.8%)	Edith Bendall Retirement Village, Good Shepherd Retirement Village
village	5 (2.8%)	Clarinda Village, Fiddlers Green Village
home	5 (2.8%)	Life Long Homes, Olivet Aged Persons Home
retirement community	2 (1%)	Koorootang Retirement Community, Cumberland View Retirement Community
retirement lodge	1 (0.5%)	Gardiner Retirement Lodge
no reference	13 (7%)	Balmoral Gardens, Meadow Vale
Total	184 (100%)	

Even back in 1987, a number of other naming possibilities also existed beside *nursing home*. *Retirement village*, *retirement community*, and *retirement lodge* are all euphemistic by employing the general-over-specific metonymy (general retirement from a career or

employment standing for one particular type of retirement—reaching the age of pension). The semantic frames of both *village* and *community* evoke relatively small, close-knit groups of people who have common roots or backgrounds (note that one of the senses of *community* is "a body of people who live in the same place, usually sharing a common cultural or ethnic identity"; *OED*). The appeal of this "team spirit" and sense of community can be traced back to the fact that many aged people live by themselves (because, for instance, their children have moved to another place), and both *village* and *community* offer to compensate for the resulting sense of loneliness.

While *village* and *community* both evoke a sense of permanence, *lodge*, in its primary sense, always refers to a temporary place (as already elaborated on in section 3). In actual fact, *village* and *community* on the one hand and *lodge* on the other are based on opposite conceptualizations: while the former foreground permanence and a sense of community, the latter highlights transience and individuality. *Village* crops up relatively frequently on its own as well (in five examples, 2.8%), without any particular modifier. This is an even more euphemistic name than *retirement village*, since it does not specify the common background of the inhabitants (in our case this common background is old age), and takes the process of generalization to the extreme. Yet *village* still attempts to build on the sense of community that *retirement village* also makes use of.

Some of the facilities of the 1987 data had *home* in their name (5 examples, 2.8%). As already elaborated above, *home* is euphemistic by virtue of the metaphorical conceptualization that it builds on. But the figures are still low. Indeed, *home* showed up with a relatively identical ratio in both the 2013 data (3%) and the 1987 data (2.8%). Sullied by earlier discredited practices of the nursing home industry, *home* even at this time suffers from the image of "a last resort for the aged" (Garvin and Burger 1968); it lacks the optimism and promise that new-look *eldercare* is seeking to project. It is curious therefore that one of the examples in this category, Olivet Aged Persons Home, also appeared in the 2013 data, which means that the facility has not changed its name in the course of three decades.

As already highlighted, a very small number of the facilities opted for full omission—only 7% of the 1987 aged care facilities had absolutely no reference to their function in their name. Though the numbers were small, the types of names that were being used in 1987 were already quite similar to the ones that appeared in the 2013 sample. As can be seen from Table 4, the facilities employed common nouns such as *lodge*, *house*, *gardens*, *park* and *grange* to uplift the concept of an aged care residence. A number of observations can be drawn with

respect to the 2013 data. First, *manor* was not used at all in the names of facilities—this seems to be a relatively recent addition to the naming practices of aged care facilities. At the same time, one example used *grange* in its name, which did not, however, appear in the 2013 data set. Second, in 1987 *lodge* was much more frequent and popular among facilities (in 2013 its use shrunk to about 7%). Third, very few facilities opted for a name that focused only on the vicinity or area where the facility could be found in.

Table 4. Types of names used in the full omission examples of 1987.

Type of name	No. of examples (% of total)	Examples
lodge	5 (38.4%)	Stewart Lodge, Brighton Lodge
house	3 (23.4%)	McCulloch House, Toorak House
gardens	1 (7.6%)	Balmoral Gardens
park	1 (7.6%)	Salford Park
grange	1 (7.6%)	Hawthorn Grange
other	2 (15.4%)	Meadow Vale, Aberford
Total	13 (100%)	

All in all, in light of the 2013 data, it can be generally concluded that the naming practices of aged care facilities in 1987 were *less* euphemistic than what they are today. This is evident from the switch in the ratio of the use of *nursing homes* versus full omission. While only 7% of the facilities made absolutely no mention of their function in their names in 1987, nearly 82% of the facilities were depicted as *nursing homes*. In 2013, however, the trend turned; 72% of the facilities used full omission and only 10.2% retained the term *nursing home*. Nevertheless, even back in 1987 evident euphemism-generating strategies could be observed with the use of terms such as *retirement community*, *retirement village*, and *retirement lodge*. On the basis of these data it can be claimed that the process of euphemization of the names of aged care facilities had already begun in 1987.

5. Conclusions

Although there are plenty of subject areas which are rife with euphemistic expressions, one of the most evolving areas of euphemisms in present-day society is ageing. On the one hand, this can be explained by the general trend that affects virtually every euphemism—namely, that over time they become tarnished by the concept they denote and new terms need to be created to replace the old ones. On the other hand, however, ageing is currently undergoing a reconceptualization—thanks to the baby boomer generation, which is just reaching retirement age. Our main hypothesis was that this process of reconceptualization could be analyzed by comparing the current naming practices of aged care facilities with those of 1987.

Regarding the data, we expected the 2013 sample to show a much greater degree of euphemistic usage as compared to the 1987 data, by using a wider array and a larger proportion of names that had a more appealing ring to them. Generally, this hypothesis has been borne out by the examination of the data. One of the most interesting trends has been in the switch in the ratio of the use of *nursing homes* versus full omission. Regarding the names in the 2013 sample that used full omission, there was indeed a wide selection of names—typically revolving around either the FAMILY metaphor (which conceptualized the facility as an upper-class family home, as in the case of *manor*, *hall*, or *gardens*) or the VACATION metaphor (which viewed the facility as a holiday resort, as in the case of *lodge*, *view*, or *villa*). What has been emphasized in the paper is that these two conceptualizations cater to essentially two different needs or requirements when it comes to an aged care facility. The FAMILY metaphor emphasizes community and permanence, while the VACATION metaphor stresses individuality and transience.

These findings seem to corroborate the idea of "successful ageing," as first introduced in 1987 by Rowe and Kahn. The naming practices of the 2013 data have generally placed the negative associations of old age (such as decrepitude, dependence and loneliness) into the background, by focusing on the traits that are associated with successful ageing—such as emotional well-being, active lifestyle, and social and community involvement (see e.g. Depp and Jeste 2009). In a youth-oriented culture that eschews direct reference to death and the dying process, it is not surprising to see that its aged care facilities tune down (perhaps even obliviate) the negative characteristics of ageing with their strong hints of retirement, lifestyle choices, friendships, leisure, and the like.

Acknowledgements

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The 2013 data

Type of facility	Name of facility	Location
nursing home	Anzac Lodge Nursing Home	Coburg North
nursing home	Carinya Nursing Home	Frankston
nursing home	Hazeldean Nursing Home	Williamstown
nursing home	Kilverton Park Nursing Home	Malvern East
nursing home	Mon Repos Nursing Home	Essendon
nursing home	Mordialloc Community Nursing Home	Mentone
nursing home	Sherbrooke Private Nursing Home	Upper Ferntree Gully
aged care	Bayview Aged Care	Carrum Downs
aged care	Burwood Hill Aged Care	Burwood
aged care	Clayton Community Aged Care	Clayton
aged care	Lilydale Aged Care	Lilydale
aged care	Scottvale Aged Care	Dandenong
aged care	Yarra West Aged Care Facility	Yarraville
hostel	Edmund Rice Hostel	St Kilda East
hostel	Outlook Gardens Hostel	Dandenong North
hostel	Reservoir Rotary Village Hostel	Reservoir
retirement village	Heathglen Retirement Village	Werribee
retirement village	Highvale Retirement Village	Glen Waverley
retirement village	Meadowvale Retirement Village	Pakenham
home	Claremont Home	South Melbourne
home	Olivet Aged Persons Home	Ringwood
residence	Mark & Dina Munzer Community Residence	Caulfield
residence	Mary MacKillop Residence	Hawthorn East
retirement unit	Hedley Sutton Community Retirement Units	Canterbury
village	Keilor Village	Keilor
no reference (manor)	Aveo Riversdale Manor	Box Hill
no reference (manor)	Bentleigh Manor	Bentleigh

no reference (manor)	Casey Manor	Narre Warren
no reference (manor)	Caulfield Manor	Caulfield South
no reference (manor)	Cheltenham Manor	Cheltenham
no reference (manor)	Medina Manor	Thornbury
no reference (manor)	Trinity Manor	Balwyn
no reference (gardens)	Heritage Gardens	Bayswater
no reference (gardens)	Kew Gardens	Kew
no reference (gardens)	Monash Gardens	Mulgrave
no reference (gardens)	Pine View Gardens	Donvale
no reference (gardens)	Regis Bayside Gardens	Brighton
no reference (gardens)	Rosewood Gardens	Ashburton
no reference (house)	Darley House	Heidelberg West
no reference (house)	Hampton House	Hampton
no reference (house)	Reg Geary House	Melton
no reference (house)	Stephenson House	Berwick
no reference (house)	Sumner House	Fitzroy
no reference (lodge)	Benetas Gladswood Lodge	Brunswick West
no reference (lodge)	Edwards Lodge	Reservoir
no reference (lodge)	Elswick Lodge	Elsternwick
no reference (park)	Eliza Park	Mount Eliza
no reference (park)	Hestia Noble Park	Noble Park
no reference (foreign)	Casa Serena	Moonee Ponds
no reference (foreign)	Embracia in Reservoir	Reservoir
no reference (hall)	Benetas Broughton Hall	Camberwell
no reference (view)	Princeton View	Brighton East
no reference (lakes)	Waterford Valley Lakes	Rowville
no reference (terrace)	Glenhuntly Terrace	Glen Huntly
no reference (close)	Goodwin Close	Blackburn South
no reference	AdventCare Whitehorse	Nunawading
no reference	Arcare Delbridge	Sydenham
no reference	Arcare Greenhill	Epping
no reference	Arcare Hampstead	Maidstone
no reference	Arcare Knox	Wantirna South
no reference	Benetas St George's	Altona Meadows
no reference	Bupa Croydon	Croydon
no reference	Bupa Greensborough	Greensborough
no reference	Craigcare Pascoe Vale	Pascoe Vale
no reference	Greenhaven	Footscray
no reference	Millward	Doncaster East
no reference	Southern Cross Care Springvale	Springvale South
no reference	St Joseph's Tower	Kew

Appendix 2: The 1987 data

Type of facility	Name of facility	Location
nursing home	Aaron Nursing Home	Hughesdale
nursing home	Abalene Private Nursing Home	Elsternwick
nursing home	Alexandra Private Nursing Home	Caulfield South
nursing home	Alimar Private Nursing Home	Essendon
nursing home	Allanvale Private Nursing Home	Laverton

nursing home	Altone Meadows Private Nursing Home	Altona
nursing home	Amaroo Private Nursing Home	Ringwood
nursing home	Androssan Private Nursing Home	Croydon
nursing home	Anna House Private Nursing Home	Moonee Ponds
nursing home	Argyll Private Nursing Home	Glen Iris
nursing home	Arlington Nursing Home	Thornbury
nursing home	Ashleigh Lodge Private Nursing Home	Brighton
nursing home	Balwyn Private Nursing Home	Balwyn
nursing home	Banksia Court Private Nursing Home	Croydon
nursing home	Bayview Private Nursing Home	Sandringham
nursing home	Belvedere Private Nursing Home	Noble Park
nursing home	Benlynne Park Private Nursing Home	Sunshine West
nursing home	Benlynne Private Nursing Home	Frankston
nursing home	Blackburn Private Nursing Home	Blackburn
nursing home	Cambrai Private Nursing Home	St Kilda East
nursing home	Canterbury Private Nursing Home	Canterbury
nursing home	Carisbrooke Private Nursing Home	Canterbury
nursing home	Caroline Private Nursing Home	St Kilda
nursing home	Carrum Private Nursing Home	Carrum
nursing home	Charman Private Nursing Home	Cheltenham
nursing home	Chelsea Park Private Nursing Home	Chelsea
nursing home	Coburg Private Nursing Home	Coburg
nursing home	Creedon Lodge Nursing Home	Ormond
nursing home	Croydon Park Private Nursing Home	Croydon
nursing home	Culroy Private Nursing Home	Reservoir
nursing home	Dalriada Private Nursing Home	Murrumbeena
nursing home	Dandenong Private Nursing Home	Dandenong
nursing home	Darvall Lodge Nursing Home	Noble Park
nursing home	Dawnville Private Nursing Home	Diamond Creek
nursing home	Deloraine Private Nursing Home	Greensborough
nursing home	Denbies Private Nursing Home	Glenhuntly
nursing home	Denross Private Nursing Home	Burwood
nursing home	Doncaster & Templestowe Nursing Home	Lower Templestowe
nursing home	Duretta Private Nursing Home	Windsor
nursing home	Eaglemont Private Nursing Home	Ivanhoe
nursing home	Eastern Districts Private Nursing Home	Croydon
nursing home	Edgelea - Private Nursing Home	St Kilda
nursing home	Findon Private Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	Footscray Private Nursing Home	Footscray
nursing home	Glandore Private Nursing Home	St Kilda East
nursing home	Glen Private Nursing Home	Caulfield South
nursing home	Glenferrie Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	Glenlyn Private Nursing Home	Glenroy
nursing home	Glenora Nursing Home	Coburg
nursing home	Glenroy Private Nursing Home	Glenroy
nursing home	Glenwood Private Nursing Home	Kew
nursing home	Gordon Bruns Private Nursing Home	Brighton
nursing home	Gracedale Private Nursing Home	Camberwell
nursing home	Graceton Private Nursing Home	Ivanhoe
nursing home	Greensborough Private Nursing Home	Greensborough
nursing home	Greenways Private Nursing Home	Northcote
nursing home	Grevillea Court Private Nursing Home	Dandenong

nursing home	Hallam Private Nursing Home	Hallam
nursing home	Hanslope Private Nursing Home	Alphington
nursing home	Harcourt Private Nursing Home	Canterbury
nursing home	Harvey Memorial Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	Hawthorn Private Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	Hazel Mere Private Nursing Home	Montrose
nursing home	Heatherleigh Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	Ivanhoe Private Nursing Home	Ivanhoe
nursing home	Jedasa House Private Nursing Home	Rosanna
nursing home	Jenmar Private Nursing Home	Malvern
nursing home	Kalimna House Private Nursing Home	Malvern East
nursing home	Kalonga Nursing Home	Balwyn North
nursing home	Kambermere Private Nursing Home	Camberwell
nursing home	Kanella Private Nursing Home	Brunswick
nursing home	Karinyah Nursing Home	Camberwell
nursing home	Keilor Downs Private Nursing Home	Keilor Downs
nursing home	Keith House Private Nursing Home	Armadale
nursing home	Kenilworth Nursing Home	Ivanhoe
nursing home	Keswick Nursing Home	Mentone
nursing home	Kiama Nursing Home	Malvern
nursing home	Kiandra Nursing Home	Sandringham
nursing home	Kinkora Court Private Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	Kinross Nursing Home	Surrey Hills
nursing home	Kiverton Park Nursing Home	Glen Iris
nursing home	Latrobe Private Nursing Home	Alphington
nursing home	Lewisham Private Nursing Home	Windsor
nursing home	Lynn Private Nursing Home	Armadale
nursing home	Lynwood Private Nursing Home	Mont Albert
nursing home	Maidstone Private Nursing Home	Maidstone
nursing home	Maroona Private Nursing Home	Glen Huntly
nursing home	Mentone & District Private Nursing Home	Mentone
nursing home	Miranda Private Nursing Home	Brighton
nursing home	Mon Repos Nursing Home	Essendon
nursing home	Moonee Ponds Nursing Home	Moonee Ponds
nursing home	Mordialloc Community Nursing Home	Mordialloc
nursing home	Moruya Nursing Home	Wantirna South
nursing home	Mowbray House Private Nursing Home	Middle Brighton
nursing home	Myola Private Nursing Home	Malvern East
nursing home	North Western District Private Nursing Home	Tullamarine
nursing home	Oakmoor Private Nursing Home	Oakleigh South
nursing home	Parkview Nursing Home	Malvern East
nursing home	Pembridge Private Nursing Home	Brighton
nursing home	Preston & Districts Private Nursing Home	Preston West
nursing home	Prestonia Private Nursing Home	Preston
nursing home	Princeton Nursing Home	Camberwell
nursing home	Radford Private Nursing Home	Reservoir
nursing home	Regent Private Nursing Home	Preston
nursing home	Riversdale Private Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	Riverside Nursing Care	Patterson Lakes
nursing home	Rosden Private Nursing Home	Burwood East
nursing home	Rosehill Private Nursing Home	Bentleigh
nursing home	Rumbalara Nursing Home	Brighton

nursing home	Sackville Private Nursing Home	Kew
nursing home	Sampford Nursing Home	Caulfield
nursing home	Sherbrooke Private Nursing Home	Upper Ferntree Gully
nursing home	Siesta Private Nursing Home	Moorabbin
nursing home	South Port Community Nursing Home	Albert Park
nursing home	Springfield Nursing Home	Boronia
nursing home	Springvale Private Nursing Home	Springvale
nursing home	St Aidans Nursing Home	Thornbury
nursing home	St Annes Anglican Nursing Home	Hawthorn
nursing home	St Benedicts Private Nursing Home	Sandringham
nursing home	St Elizabeth Private Nursing Home	Malvern East
nursing home	St Helier's Private Nursing Home	Camberwell
nursing home	St Ives Private Nursing Home	East Melbourne
nursing home	St John of Kronstadt Nursing Home	Dandenong
nursing home	St Josephs Nursing Home Community	Hawthorn East
nursing home	St Judes Private Nursing Home	Chadstone
nursing home	St Leeor Nursing Home	Malvern
nursing home	St Leigh Nursing Home	Sandringham
nursing home	St Marks Private Nursing Home	Moonee Ponds
nursing home	St Marys Private Nursing Home	Ivanhoe
nursing home	St Michael's Private Nursing Home	Murrumbeena
nursing home	St Ronan's Private Nursing Home	Armadale
nursing home	Stanleigh Lodge Nursing Home	North Caulfield
nursing home	Studley Park Nursing Home	Kew
nursing home	Sunrise Private Nursing Home	Mulgrave
nursing home	Sunshine Private Nursing Home	Sunshine
nursing home	Surrey Hills Private Nursing Home	Surrey Hills
nursing home	Terry Barker Nursing Home	Macleod
nursing home	The Glen Private Nursing Home	Caulfield South
nursing home	Thomastown Private Nursing Home	Thomastown
nursing home	Vermont Private Nursing Home	Vermont
nursing home	Villa Franca Nursing Home	Werribee
nursing home	Wahroonga Nursing Home	Sandringham
nursing home	Walmsley Friendship Village Private Nursing Home	Kilsyth
nursing home	Werribee Nursing Home	Werribee
nursing home	West Gate Private Nursing Home	Newport
nursing home	Western Private Nursing Home	Footscray
nursing home	Western Suburbs Private Nursing Home	Yarraville
nursing home	Woodleigh Nursing Home	West Preston
nursing home	Wynnstay Private Nursing Home	Prahran East
nursing home	Wyuna Nursing Home	Northcote
nursing home	Yasmar Private Nursing Home	Oakleigh
retirement village	Dandenong Valley Retirement Village	Dandenong
retirement village	Edith Bendall Retirement Village	Pascoe Vale
retirement village	Good Shepherd Retirement Village	Ringwood
retirement village	Oak Grange Retirement Village	Brighton East
retirement village	Oaktree Hill Retirement Village	Glen Waverley
retirement village	Pinetree Retirement Village	Donvale
retirement village	Tarralla Christian Retirement Village	Croydon
village	Clarinda Village	Clayton
village	Emmaus South Village	South Morang

village	Fiddlers Green Village	Berwick
village	Forest Hills Village	Nunawading
village	Highvale Village	Glen Waverley
home	Kirkbrae Presbyterian Homes	Kilsyth
home	Life Long Homes	Bayswater
home	Lumeah Home For The Aged	Preston
home	Mayflower Homes	East Brigthon
home	Olivet Aged Persons Home	Ringwood
retirement community	Cumberland View Retirement Community	Wheelers Hill
retirement community	Koorootang Retirement Community	Melbourne
retirement lodge	Gardiner Retirement Lodge	Glen Iris
no reference (lodge)	Gladswood Lodge	Brunswick
no reference (lodge)	Lilydale Lodge	Lilydale
no reference (lodge)	Stewart Lodge	Brunswick
no reference (lodge)	Boorol Lodge	Kew East
no reference (lodge)	Brighton Lodge	Brighton
no reference (house)	Kulki House	Coburg
no reference (house)	McCulloch House	Clayton
no reference (house)	Toorak House	Camberwell
no reference (park)	Salford Park	Wantirna
no reference (gardens)	Balmoral Gardens	Wantirna South
no reference (grange)	Hawthorn Grange	Hawthorn
no reference	Aberfield	Elsternwick
no reference	Meadow Vale	Pakenham