

**LEADER AND PEOPLE CONCEPTS EMBODIED IN METAPHORS FOUND IN  
PENYAMBUNG LIDAH RAKYAT INDONESIA: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BOOK OF  
SOEKARNO**

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**Abstract**

The paper aims to investigate the kinds of metaphors found in the book *Penyambung Lidah Rakyat Indonesia: An Autobiography of Soekarno*, which is written based on the interview with Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia who pronounced proclamation of Indonesian independence. The identified metaphors are focused on the ones related to the concepts of leader and people. The categorizations are based on Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) distinction of conceptual metaphor: structural, orientational, and ontological. The approach used in this study is qualitative. There are 28 data of metaphors related to the concepts of leader and people found in the autobiography book of Soekarno. Based on the analysis, it shows that the concepts of leader and people which are embodied in the metaphors are that leader is the backbone of a family; he/she is born from and raised by people, which inevitably belong to his people (as their property or what people belong to), and as the leader grows up, the offspring roles becomes more significant as the ear, mouth, and the extension of people's tongue to the utmost. As much important as the leader is, people are also perceived as the nutrition and motor to make the leader alive and keep surviving.

**Keywords:** *conceptual metaphor; leader; orientational; ontological; people; structural*

**INTRODUCTION**

*Penyambung Lidah Rakyat Indonesia* is a book made from interview conducted by Cindy Adams, an American journalist, to Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia (Adams, 2018). In his autobiography, one of the topics discussed about is the relationship between leader and his/her people. What it means to be a leader, what is the meaning of people for a leader and vice versa. All of those are conveyed in a moderately easy-to-understand language. As a well-known orator, he also had a style of language that he used in delivering his ideas, the use of metaphors is one of the choices.

Metaphors, not only as attracting style of language use for orators, it also functions to reveal the conceptual system in our mind through language used. With the function, Siregar (Bahren Umar, 2004) states that metaphors have been widely used to introduce abstract concepts, political discourse, and the views of people in daily life. They give quite a significant impact in conveying the meaning of what the orators have in mind to the people. It is in line with what Perry suggests that metaphors can function as a form of sense-making, and they are used by eminent orators and leaders of the world such as Marthin Luther King in his speech 'I Have a Dream' and Barrack Obama (Perry, 2008). In leadership, those who have the power to sway and move people use metaphors to deliver their messages to make the people follow what they ask for.

The existence of metaphors helps the leaders and orators make sense of their roles and their ideas that they have for their people. Hence, metaphors can be effectively used to see the concepts of leader and people. Different leaders of different nation and culture will usually lead to different concepts of leaders and people. Not only the culture, but sometimes periods of time may instigate different perception and how to concept things. Chinese politician, Shang Yang said people government should be stronger than the people in order to make the state (army) strong, and vice versa (Duyvendak, 2005). It illustrates the condition of two important things in a nation that requires being in the reversed state of each other. In some other countries, like Indonesia, the difference is impossible to be found. Indonesian people may construct different ideas about the concept of leaderships. Soekarno, as the first president of Republic of Indonesia, can be a representative of how Indonesian leader perceives the concept of leader and people in the era when Indonesian people fought for independence until they got their freedom. His ideas can be found in his autobiography book written by Cindy Adams (Adams, 2018).

In his book, sometimes Soekarno did not obviously state the concepts he held about nation, leader, and people through direct explanation. Rather than that, metaphors are used to state a thought or certain concept which is usually abstract by means of other things in the conceptual system. The conceptual system is actually the area of study of cognitive linguistics. Specifically, as it mainly discusses about metaphors, the area of this study lies in semantic cognitive which has metaphor as its main object study.

There have been several studies conducted related to conceptual metaphor. Aldokhayel (2014) investigates the emergence motivations on conceptual metaphors in Arabic and English which can be categorized into two categories, namely emergence motivations and relational motivations (Aldokhayel, 2014). Conceptual metaphor has also been studied on literary works such as on Suzanne Collins' the Hunger Games movie (Kurniawati et al., n.d.), in Andrea Hirata's Tetralogy Laskar Pelangi ((Lapasau et al., 2020), in the lyrics of A Thousand Kissed Deep, Here It Is, and Boogie Street from the album Ten New Songs (2001) by Leonard Cohen (Johansson, 2016), in Atticus' selected poems (Zulfadhlina et al., 2022), and conceptual metaphor of love on Minang song composed by Syahrul Tarun Yusuf (Ratna Sari, 2020). Not only has it been analyzed on literary works, the conceptual metaphor is also used in the discourse of newspaper on case of Setya Novanto (Purnama & Nurhakim, 2018) and the conceptual metaphors at the Japanese Prime Minister's Press Conference, Shinzo Abe (Sarif et al., 2021). Based on gender's perspective, they are examined through the captions of *Instagram* by Indonesian teenagers (Rus & Nim, 2019). Another study investigates the conceptual metaphor of the word *komunikasi* (communication) in messages (Surip & Mulyadi, 2019).

This paper aims to investigate the kinds of metaphors found in the book *Penyambung Lidah Rakyat* regarding the concept of leader and people. Therefore, the concern of the metaphors identified is the metaphor of leader and people. By analyzing the metaphors, the general description of concept of leader and people can be interpreted.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Metaphor is defined as an analogy, comparing one thing to another without using the words as, if, and some other connecting words like ones in simile (Keraf, 2005). However, Lakoff and Johnson stated that the most important thing regarding metaphor is that it is to understand and experience a thing in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Cognitive linguists assume that metaphor is the central feature of human language (Evan & Green, 2006). Metaphor, thus, according cognitive linguists, is to understand as one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain.

The domains existed are the target and the source domains. The target domain is the abstract domain. Meanwhile, the source is characterized as a concrete object or a thing. Based on the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson, the mapping from these two domains, from source to target domain can only be executed in one direction (Lakoff & Johnson,

2003). Hence, it is not possible to reverse the direction (from target to source or source to target). Take an example of the metaphor ARGUMENT is WAR. It is not accepted to comprehend it in the opposite way, WAR is ARGUMENT. Furthermore, the mapping formulated in the metaphor is possible by the use of inference. The inference of the researcher is needed to conceptualize the metaphor and map the source domain to target domain.

The conceptual metaphor can be classified into three categories by Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). They are structural metaphor, orientational, and ontological metaphors. Structural metaphor is to make people understand target b which is more abstract by means of the structure of source a (Kovecses, 2010). It is then representing a more complex and abstract concept by means of the structure of some other concrete concept. Meanwhile, orientational metaphor is associated to human spatial orientations, such as up-down, center-periphery, and some other orientations. The upward orientation tends to give positive sense to the meaning while the downward is on the other hand, has tendencies to make negative sense. At last, ontological metaphor gives understanding of abstract concepts and experiences in terms of people's experience with actual physical objects and substances in the real world. Kovecses adds that personification can also be included under the category of ontological metaphor (Kovecses, 2010).

The studies of metaphors related to leadership have been conducted before from different aspects and objects. One of them is to investigate the descriptive metaphors of leadership and find out which meaning structures of leadership culture metaphors concealed (Virtanen, 2007). Virtanen did a survey to 17 public agencies in Finnish state government, and it turned out that there are positive-meaning metaphors including the 'fixer', 'confessor', 'coach', 'arbitrator', 'counsel', and 'addicted visitor' and the negative-meanings metaphors including the metaphors of 'prosecutor', 'fixture', 'hermit', 'driftwood', and 'beast of draught'. The results also show that there are also two kinds of leadership in human relations; they are charismatic leadership and solidarity leadership. By using different approach and object from Virtanen's research, this paper tried to see the concept of leader and people from the autobiography book of the first president of Indonesia in order to get a clearer picture of notion of a leader in the era when Indonesian people were fighting for independence and freedom.

## **METHOD**

The source of data used in the paper is Soekarno's autobiography book: *Penyambung Lidah Rakyat Indonesia* by Cindy Adams (Adams, 2018). As the approach applied in the study is qualitative, analyses of data provided are in form of description and explanation regarding the metaphors related to the concept of leader-people relationship in the book. Those metaphors were collected by identifying lexical units containing metaphors.

It is based on Schmitt's method of analyzing metaphor, he identified lexical units as metaphor with conditions of which the phrase or word is able to be understood aside from its literal meaning (Schmitt, 2005). The literal meaning is derived from areas of physical and cultural experience known as source domain and then transferred to the second areas which is abstract and known as target domain. In this study, metaphors analyzed focused on those related to leader-people relationship so the lexical units identified are associated with it. After identifying the metaphors, they were classified based on types of conceptual metaphor categorized by Lakoff and Johnson: structural, orientational, and ontological. There are 28 metaphorical phrases related to leader-people relationship found (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). At last, the explanation on the meaning brought by the metaphorical phrases and cognitive analyses on the phrases were carried out. Based on the meaning and cognitive analyses, the interpretation on the concept of leader-people relationship can be achieved.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In the findings and discussion section, the metaphors which are related to leadership are categorized into three types of conceptual metaphors proposed by Lakoff and Johnson:

## **Orientational Metaphor**

The type of orientational metaphor is the fewest one found. In line with what Kovecses says that orientational metaphor carries cognitive function which is associated with human spatial orientations, such up-down, center-periphery, and other kind of orientations, the metaphorical phrases identified in this study are regarding the position and the role of the leader (Kovecses, 2010).

Datum 1:

*para pemimpin berasal dari rakyat dan bukan berada diatas rakyat.*

‘the leaders rise from the people, not above people.’

Based on datum 1 above, it can be seen there are metaphor in the phrases *berasal dari rakyat* ‘rise from people’ and *bukan berada di atas rakyat* ‘not above the people’. The metaphor used ‘bottom-up’ spatial orientation to state the position of the leader. It is said that the leader rise from people. The target domain of the phrase is the leader while the source is ‘rise from the people’. The phrase ‘rise from’ shows CONTAINER schema. The leader used to be common people like others. However, it is because of the other people who appoint and accept one to be leader that he/she can become the leader among them. Therefore, the leader is originally inside the people who later come out of these people to lead them.

Furthermore, the second phrase emphasizes again that the position of the leader is not above the people. Hence, orientationally, the concept about leader-people relationship brought in the metaphorical phrases of the book is that the leader is neither on top nor bottom of the people. Both people and leader are in the equal position. It is assumed that Soekarno, through his autobiography, tried to state his opinion regarding the equal position in the leader-people relationship.

## **Structural Metaphor**

In the structural metaphor, people can understand the meaning of metaphorical phrase by turning the abstract and mental concept into more concrete structure. In the data, there are several abstract concepts about leadership are demanded to be understood more concretely.

Datum 2:

*Aku mengetahui tentang pembinaan bangsa. Didalam tanganku ia seorang bayi.*

‘I know about building the nation. In my hands it (the notion of building the nation) is a baby.’

The metaphorical phrase found in the sentences is ‘it is a baby.’ It refers to the notion of building the nation. Soekarno stated that he knows about building the nation because he is the leader in politics. As the leader in the field of politics, he is in charge of building the nation. It is assumed that Soekarno tried to make people understand that building the nation is as hard as taking care of/raising a baby. It needs more concern from the caretaker. Soekarno as the leader, had a role as the caretaker as it is said that it is in his hands that the responsibility is hold. Based on the concept of source-target domains, it can be decided that a baby is the source domain while the target domain is building the nation. The target domain, building the nation which is abstract concept is described by structuring concrete thing ‘a baby’.

Besides the metaphorical phrases related to the notion of how leading the nation, there are some phrases/clauses that metaphorically depicts the concept of leader for the people. The concept of Soekarno as leader can be seen from Table 1 below.

Table 1. Mapping the Domains of Target and Source of Metaphorical Clauses/Phrases related to Leader

***Leader (Soekarno) is the backbone of a family***

Phrases/Clauses	Target	Source
<i>para pemimpin berasal dari rakyat dan bukan berada diatas rakyat.</i>	<i>Para pemimpin</i> ‘The leaders’	The offspring of the people

‘the leaders rise from the people, not above people.’		
<i>apabila aku tidak bisa keluar dan bersatu dengan rakyat-djelata jang melahirkanku.</i>		
‘If I cannot be united with the people who had given birth to myself.’		
<i>Aku adalah kepunjaan rakyat.</i> ‘I am the belonging of my people.’	<i>Aku</i> ‘I’	<i>Kepunjaan rakyat</i> ‘the belonging of my people’
<i>Setiap orang jang pernah mendekati Sukarno mengetahui, bahwa egonja terlalu besar untuk bisa mendjadi budak seseorang— ketjuali mendjadi budak dari rakyatnja.</i>	Soekarno ‘The leader’	<i>Budak dari</i> <i>rakyatnya</i> ‘Slave of his people’
‘Everyone who has ever been close to Soekarno knows that his ego is too big to be able to be a slave for someone – except being slave from his people.’		
<i>Aku mendjadi mulut mereka.</i> ‘I become their mouth.’	<i>Aku</i> ‘I, the leader’	<i>Mulut mereka</i> ‘Their mouth’
<i>Soekarno, Telinga Besar dari rakyat Indonesia</i>	Soekarno ‘The leader’	‘the big ear for Indonesian people’
<i>Bung Karno, penjambung lidah rakyat Indonesia.</i> ‘Bung Karno, the extension of people’s tongue.’	Soekarno ‘the leader’	<i>Penjambung lidah rakyat</i> ‘the extension of people’s tongue’

Based on these metaphorical clauses/phrases, it can be understood the concept of leader Soekarno had in mind in the book is that he/she is the backbone of a family. Firstly, the leader rises from and is raised by people. It can be illustrated that the leader is an infant which had been given birth by people as the parent. Automatically, the infant belongs to his/her parents. The appointed leader belongs to his/her people. Then, as a good kid, he/she needs to obey what their parents tell him/her. So is the leader. In order to be a good and understanding leader, sometimes one needs to be the slave who provides and serves anything his/her people needs. As the kid grows older, he/she becomes more of a capable figure for his/her family. Moreover, when his/her parents get older, the capable figure takes the role as the backbone of his/her family.

In the nation, the leader is the backbone of his people. Not only giving what his people need, the leader should be capable of listening to and voicing the aspiration of his/her people. He/she is the mouth of his people. Soekarno believed that things he said out loud were actually what his people themselves thought and felt about in their heart. He was the one who collected the hidden feelings/emotions of his people and turn them turned them into terms used in politics and social. Lastly, Soekarno is the extension of the people’s tongue. Soekarno became the extension of the people’s tongue as he learned many writings of the statesmen all over the world, kept in mind the sayings of the well-known leaders of the nation, and finally arranged all of them with fundamental philosophy gained from his people, Marhaen. Hence, Soekarno as the extension of people’s tongue attempted to be the representation of the voice of Indonesian people with the whole knowledge about nation he knew, both theoretically and practically.

### Ontological Metaphor

Datum 3:

*rakjat Indonesia melepaskan dirinja dari belunggu pendjadjahan dan mendjadi bangsa jang merdeka.*

‘Indonesian people freed themselves out of colonization and became independent nation.’

Datum 3 above shows that Indonesian people is the target domain which is described by nonphysical object (abstract) which is ‘colonization’ as the source domain. It is said that when Indonesian people can free themselves from colonization, then they can become the independent nation. Containment image schema can be found in the metaphorical phrases *melepaskan dari belunggu pendjadjahan* ‘let out of colonization’. Out of the box of colonization, they can enter the zone of independence.

The concept of leader from the view of his people can be seen from Table 2 below.

**Table 2. The Concept of Leader from The People’s Standpoint**

<b>Clauses/Phrases</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Source</b>
<i>Ia akan tetap hidup dalam hati rakjat, sekalipun sesudah mati.</i>  ‘He would remain alive in people’s heart.’	<i>Akan tetap hidup dalam hati rakyat</i>  ‘Soekarno as the leader.’	<i>Tetap dikenang oleh rakyat</i>  Still remembered by the people.  Living thing and unforgettable memory
<i>Rakjat masih menempatkan Sukano dipuntjak impian mereka.</i>  ‘People still put Soekarno on top of their dreams.’	<i>Menempatkan Soekarno di puncak impian.</i>  ‘Soekarno as the leader’	<i>Memiliki pengharapan sangat tinggi terhadap Soekarno.</i>  Have big hopes on Soekarno  Big hopes and dreams of Indonesian people

Based on the whole elaboration, people can grasp the idea of how important and significance the role of leader for people. The concept of leader is perceived as uplifting from some aspects. In other side, there are also metaphors representing the meaning of people for their leader. It can be seen from Table 3.

**Table 3. The Concept of People from Leader’s Standpoint**

<b>Clauses/phrases</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Source</b>
<i>Ia adalah roti-kehidupan bagiku.</i> ‘The people is bread (food)-life for me.’	People	Nutrition bread (food)-life
<i>Kudengarkan pertjakapan mereka, kudengarkan mereka berdebat, kudengarkan mereka berkelakar dan bertjumbu-kasih. Dan aku merasakan kekuatan hidup mengalir keseluruh batang tubuhku.</i>  ‘I heard the people’s talking, debating. I heard them having fun and romantic conversation. And I felt the power alive and flowing all over my body.’	People’s talk	Motor The power to the leader alive

As much as important leader for people, the leader also treasures the people as the utmost thing in his/her life. Soekarno said in his book, the people is as his bread-life for him. Without nutrition of food, he could not survive to live. Without life, there is no existence of the leader. Moreover,

people are also the motor that gives power to the leader. The talk and life of his people are the source of his power. That is how important the people for his/her leader are in Soekarno's point of view. It sounds to be elevating as well. However, there is also a phenomenon when the use of metaphor is perceived to be insulting. As Perry (2008) analyzed the metaphors in leadership, Sarah Palin used the term "pit-bull with lipstick" to refer to herself representing her courage facing obstacle or hardship. The use of metaphor seems inspiring. However, Obama then suggested another metaphor for her "lipstick with pig". Undoubtedly, it raised the negative responses as it is understood as insult for Sarah Palin. Therefore, as Lakoff and Johnson (2003) wrote as the title of their book, "Metaphors We Live by", metaphors are tightly bound to our lives, it is wise to use this tool as ethically and positively as possible. Moreover, for a public figure, like a leader, metaphor should be used to give inspiration for the people in a positive way.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the classification of metaphorical phrases and clauses and analyses on cognitive function of metaphor, it is found that there are several concepts of leader for people in the book of *Penyambung Lidah Rakyat Indonesia*. The leader, Soekarno, is depicted as the backbone of his people. He was the offspring, the slave, the mouth, the ear, the belonging of his people, and the extension of the people's tongue. In the people's standpoint, the leader is metaphorically described as a living thing which grows in people's heart and to whom people highly put their dreams on. In the era when people fought for independence, they put high hopes on the leader to set them free of colonialism. The people, as much important as the leader, are described as the most important thing for the leader. It is the nutrition and motor that give power and keep the leader survive and fight for their independence.

This study is expected to help study of meaning related to metaphors. Besides, it can be useful for the readers who intend to have research on metaphor. The result of the study shows that it is found that there are several concepts of leader for people in the book of *Penyambung Lidah Rakyat Indonesia*. The leader, Soekarno, is depicted as the backbone of his people. He was the offspring, the slave, the mouth, the ear, the belonging of his people, and the extension of the people's tongue. In the people's standpoint, the leader is metaphorically described as a living thing which grows in people's heart and to whom people highly put their dreams on. In the era when people fought for independence, they put high hopes on the leader to set them free of colonialism. The people, as much important as the leader, are described as the most important thing for the leader. It is the nutrition and motor that give power and keep the leader survive and fight for their independence.

The metaphors that are used by the writer in the book are already effective as it can be seen from the consisting clauses and phrases the clear depiction of Soekarno as great leader for his people. This study has focused on identifying the metaphors on the ones related to the concepts of leader and people based on the conceptual metaphor: the orientational metaphor, structural metaphor, and ontological metaphor. Therefore, for the future research, it is suggested to conduct the similar study by analyzing the different genre of novels and writers to enrich the study of meaning especially in context of metaphor.

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