

War Metaphors in Political Contestation Prior to 2019 Presidential Election

Ajang Budiman
University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia
ajangbudiman99@gmail.com

Abstract. This paper is intended to describe the use of war metaphor in Indonesian public discourse prior to the 2019 presidential election. The data were collected by using Google's search engine from the statements of the candidates of the president and the vice president and of their success teams, which are related to war metaphors. The collected data were then processed using the conceptual metaphor theory. Based on data analysis, it was found that there was indeed a strong indication that the war metaphors were underlying the discourse of political competition in the presidential election. This was prominently manifested in the use of the word *berantem* (fight) spoken by the presidential candidate and incumbent president Joko Widodo. The phrase *total war* was declared by the vice spokesperson of Joko Widodo's success team, General Mulyadono. Also, the phrase *battle post* was used by the other presidential candidate, Prabowo Subianto. These words/phrases and their respective cognates strongly suggest that the presidential election is a war of metaphors underlying the public discourse prior to the election day.

Keywords: war metaphor, presidential election, cognitive linguistics

INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that politics always contains an aspect of contestation to win the people's attention. The aspect of contestation is proven through war metaphors, which are expressed in various phrases by the presidential and vice-presidential candidates and their successful teams. One well-known phrase stimulating debate is *berantem* (fight) which was once said by Joko Widodo, the presidential candidate when delivering a speech in front of his supporters. Another phrase that was also quite well-known and became the subject of controversy is the expression *markas pertempuran* (battle post) spoken by the other presidential candidate, Prabowo Subianto when expressing his plan to establish a winning post in Central Java. These expressions do not seem to be just a matter of language, but a matter of perception and conception of political competition which may eventually influence concrete actions. In this connection, it might not be a coincidence that there was once an incident when two different groups of supporters of the presidential candidates mocked each other on social media and continued to attack each other physically so that one of them died [1].

The incident is probably an extreme case when differences in a presidential choice lead to physical conflict resulting in death. However, this clearly illustrates the Conceptual Metaphor Theory saying that metaphor is not just a matter of language but is primarily a conceptual phenomenon which is not only regulating thoughts but also influencing actions. In the incident above, the perpetrator and the victim were entirely affected by the rhetoric of *fight* and *battle* in the political contestation of the presidential election. Therefore, the supporters of one candidate see the others as the opponent to be defeated. Lakoff and Johnson firmly stated that "Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities" [2]. Therefore, a metaphor indirectly influences human perception, conception, and action. Also, it can be said that a metaphor is not merely an ornament of language that can be discarded when it is not needed. A metaphor is indispensable and works at the conceptual level as a way of thinking that understands something through something else: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" [3]. It is not surprising that a metaphor as a conceptual system underlies the use of language in various fields ranging from the field of religion and science to the daily usage terms.

One famous metaphor is that of war, which is a metaphor that views certain human activities as a war. Human activities commonly associated with war are argumentation [4], love [5], sports [6], politics [7], and business [8]. Thus, we have the metaphors argument is war, love is war, sport is war, politics is war, and business is war. The influence of war metaphors occurs because the concept of war is rooted in the experience of human life itself. Explaining the argument is war metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson [9] explained that this metaphor allows us to conceptualize rational arguments in terms of a more directly lived experience, namely physical conflict (fight). Fights are rooted in human evolution from the animal world; animals fight to get what they want in the form of food, sex, territory, and control because other animals want the same thing. In humans, these physical fights get institutionalized in the form of war. Despite the differences between physical fights and war, the basic structure remains the same, for example, starting with conveying challenges, establishing and defending territory, attacking, defending, counter-attacking, and giving up. However, as rational beings,

humans also develop institutions of verbal argumentation. Although verbal arguments have far surpassed physical fights, humans have become accustomed to understanding verbal arguments as physical fights with the vocabulary of attacking, defending, winning, giving up, and so on.

In the political sphere, one of the manifestations of war metaphor is the metaphor politic is war [10]. Politic is a field of life where humans struggle to gain power; because power is limited while the hunters of power are almost unlimited, so humans inevitably have to struggle to get it. In a democratic system, this political contestation is channeled through free elections, where every citizen has a right to choose and be elected. However, because this war metaphor comes from the subconscious, people often do not realize the metaphorical nature of this political discourse. For example, war metaphors may make people to be deluded by the assumption that in the war the winner takes all and people get misguided by the false assumption that negotiations and compromises are not allowed in war. Thus, fanatical voters can be trapped in actual hostility caused by war rhetoric in politics.

For this reason, it is hoped that the examination of the nature of war metaphors in politic can make us realize that war metaphors are actually just one way of talking highlighting certain aspects of reality, but at the same time they may hide other aspects. Thus understanding the metaphor is expected to make us more open to other discourses. Moreover, we understand that politic is not merely a matter of competition, but it is also a matter of cooperation.

METHOD

To achieve the purpose above, this paper relies on Cognitive Linguistics as its theoretical orientation, especially on conceptual metaphor theory, which sees language as a cognitive/conceptual phenomenon and a means of communication. Seeing language as a conceptual means of communication is rooted in bodily experiences [11], [12], [13]. The method of investigation was basically descriptive qualitative, describing the use of metaphors in language of a daily basis. The source of data was news stories of online media on the internet. Data were collected through Google's search engine in the form of statements taken from the candidates for the president and the vice president and their success teams, which are related to war metaphors. The collected data are then processed using the conceptual metaphor theory, which holds that "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one thing of terms in another" [14]. In this connection, political competition (presidential election) is understood and experienced as a war or a battle. The data were analyzed by highlighting lexical units containing metaphors by following the guides given by Schmitt [15] and Pragglejaz group [16]. Both guides have similarities in that both rely on the differences between literal and contextual meaning for the identification of metaphorical words/expressions.

RESULT

Based on data analysis, it was found that the use of war metaphors in political discourses prior to 2019 presidential election is manifested in some linguistic expressions. Among the prominent expressions getting public attention is the word *berantem* (fighting) which was spoken by Joko Widodo, one of the presidential candidate and also the phrase *markas pertempuran* (battle post) spoken by the other presidential candidate, Prabowo Subianto, and *perang total* (total war) declared by General Muldoko who is the vice-chairman of winning team of Joko Widodo.

The first metaphor pulling public attention was the word *berantem* (fighting) from Joko Widodo during a welcoming speech at a public meeting with Jokowi's volunteers at the Sentul International Convention Center Bogor (04/08/2018). In his speech it seems that the sentence containing *fighting* is uttered as an addition to the main topic because the topic of the speech itself is not about fighting, but suggestion not to do disrespectful deeds: "Don't build up hostility, don't build hate speech, don't create slander, don't condemn, no need to disparage other people. However, *if you are invited to fight, you are brave too.*" (Emphasis added.)

In the above welcoming address, Jokowi did not explain what he meant by the word *fighting*. This arouses different interpretations, pros and cons. His rival in the presidential election, represented by Andre Rosiade, The spokesperson for the Prabowo-led Gerindra Party, regretted Jokowi's remark asking his volunteers to be brave if invited to fight because the statement could lead to violence.

Responding to this objection, Budi Arie Setiadi, the chairman of pro-Jokowi group PROJO, saw nothing wrong with Jokowi's statement. According to him, Jokowi only advised the volunteers not to seek enemies during the campaign period, but also they *should not be feared or afraid*. Budi added that "even President Jokowi was surprised when finding that all volunteers said they were *ready to fight* proving Jokowi's volunteers were *very militant and never feared* because they were activists and *militant fighters*," Budi said. (Emphasis added.)

So, even though the fight statement was defended, but the defense strengthened the war metaphor, by adding some additional vocabulary: *not to be feared or afraid*, *very militant and never afraid*, *ready to fight*, and *militant fighters*.

The second metaphorical phrase that also got much attention is the use of the term *battle post* or *combat command post* by the Prabowo-Sandi pair. This term was used in connection with the plan to move the Prabowo-Sandi National Winning Board (BPN) headquarters from Jakarta to Central Java.

Responding to the news that the BPN will move its headquarters to Central Java, Darma Setiawan, BPN Chairman of the DIY (Special Province of Yogyakarta) province, straightened out that it was not the physical transfer of the BPN central headquarters from Jakarta to

Central Java, but the establishment of a winning post which is called *battle post* and *combat command post*. "As to the BPN itself, it stays in Jakarta in Kertanegara No. 6 because it is there that all of the success team coordinate at the national level. However, we will later make some *sort of battle post* (in the middle of Java Island)," he said. "Initially our *target* was 55:45 in DIY, then it changed to 60:40. Now in our calculation to reach 60:40, one of the *strategic steps* that must be taken is (forming) a *combat command post* in Solo," said Setiawan. Darma Setiawan explained that the choice of Solo as a *battle post* was based on national political considerations, namely the need to immediately establish a *battle post in the middle of the battlefield* (Java Island), and in the middle of it is Solo.

Responding to the establishment of the Prabowo battle post, Bambang Wuryanto, PDIP chairperson of the Central Java region responded that this would actually *wake up the sleeping bulls*. Bambang even stated that the *bull party cadres* were *ready to fight* against the Prabowo-Sandi camp in *capturing the hearts* of the people of Central Java. "As a party leader in the region, I will hold a meeting soon. Of course, to anticipate the *opponent's movements*. However, this will lead to a good, more solid dialectic aspect. Especially later if there comes an order from the *commander-in-chief* Megawati Sukarnoputri and Puan Maharani, the *bulls will soon hone the horn*," he said. Those expressions, such as *a bull cadre ready to fight*, *the bulls will soon hone the horns*, *anticipate the opponent's movements*, and *the commander in chief*, indirectly refer to "fighting." Also, the words, supporting figure of Joko Widodo above, were added. Those are *bull cages* and *bulls ready for combat* and *bulls honking their horns*.

The atmosphere of the war was present more clearly when the use of the phrase *total war* was echoed by the Joko Widodo camp, specifically by the Deputy Chair of TKN, General Muldoko. Muldoko said that his team would play a total war campaign strategy. Moeldoko explained that by the term total war is to optimize the use of all resources that were owned, starting from political parties, volunteers, and all the elements supporting the candidate pair 01. Erick Tohir, the Chairman of TKN, added that total war does not mean justifying any means to achieve victory. Deputy Chairperson of the National Campaign Team Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin, Arsul Sani interpreted the total war as an effort to "carry out *infantry activities* in the form of *micro-targeting*." He admitted that the term 'total war' was intentionally used.

As might be expected, the use of the *total war* term immediately received criticism from the rival camp, as stated by the politician of the democratic party Ferdinand Hutahean and the Secretary-General of the Gerinda Party Fadli Zon. Ferdinand Hutahean considered that the term 'total war' used by Moeldoko showed that the incumbent camp was under pressure. He interpreted the term 'total war' spoken by Moeldoko, showing that the Jokowi-M'ruf camp would justify any means to achieve victory: "Legalizing all important ways to get rid of defeat." In line with that, Secretary-General of the Gerindra Party,

Fadli Zon, criticized the total war term said Moeldoko. He mentioned that the term was created by one of the leading figures in World War II. "The term was started by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's right hand from the Nazi Party," Fadli said. Fadli said that in a 1943 war campaign, Germany was almost lost. Then the term total war emerged as part of the propaganda and an effort to mobilize all effort, whatever was left of the Nazi Party's power.

CONCLUSION

From the data analysis of language use, which is considered as an expression of the war metaphor above, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, the presidential election and its various activities, especially campaigns, are expressed metaphorically in various forms ranging from fighting to battles and wars. That can trigger physical conflict. Secondly, the metaphor of war seems to form a system that includes various actions (such as *fighting*, *fighting*, *attacking*, *counter-attack*, *attacking each other*, *anticipating opponent's movements*, *strategic steps*, *capturing people's hearts*; *airstrikes*, *ground attacks*, *infantry activities*, *penetration*, *canvassing*, *micro-targeting*, *man to man*, *body to body*, *winning the presidential election*, *not to let any inch of ground left untouched by the attack*), the perpetrators and their qualities (such as *militant fighters and not feared and afraid and ready to fight*, *opponents*, *commander in chief*, and *losing and depressed parties*), and their place (*post / battle post*, *battleground*, *attack target*, *defense area*, *enemy area*). Besides, there are also terms related to the animal world such as *bull cages*, *sleeping bulls*, *wake up sleeping bulls*, *bulls sharpen their horns*, and *bulls are ready to fight*.

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