METAPHORS IN THE EX-GAM'S POLITICAL DISCOURSES DURING PRE-PUBLIC ELECTIONS IN ACEH

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ABSTRACT

The Free Aceh Movement, locally called Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), developed several unique political discourses after having signed a peace accord with the Government of Indonesia (GoI) in Helsinki in 2005. The discourses created are metaphorical in Acehnese language, aimed to structure people's mind and to be accepted and transformed into their actions that supported GAM during pre-public election post conflicts. However, research on analyzing the metaphors is scant. This research used Lakoff and Johnson's (1980a, 1980b) conceptual metaphor and Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to critically analyze the political discourses in order to unveil the meaning and their ideology position. The research shows the most commonly used metaphor was ELECTION IS A BATTLE. However, the currently used political metaphors are more persuasive, urging people to voluntarily come back to their political party, than previously used ones that seemed to strongly force people to be on their side.

Keywords: *Metaphors; political discourses; language awareness; GAM/Partai Aceh; critical discourse analysis (CDA); ideology*

INTRODUCTION

Aceh, an Indonesian province located in the northern tip of Sumatra Island, has experienced several waves of political, armed conflicts against the Government of Indonesia (GoI). One of them is the prolonged conflict between the Free Aceh

Movement, which was at first locally called Aceh Merdeka (AM) and later on Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), and the GoI from 1976 to 2005 in order to free Aceh from Indonesia. The political conflict lasted for over 30 years, killing a lot of people, leaving thousands of children without parents, and burning countless people's houses and other belongings.

After having fight for such a long time, both sides agreed to sign a win-win solution peace accord in 2005 in Helsinki, Finland. Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) mediated by the former President of Finland, Marty Ahtisaari, who chaired the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) (Aspinall, 2005), one of the points realized was establishing a locally-based political party named Partai Aceh (henceforth called PA) by the ex-combatants/politicians. Having established the political party, the ex-GAM politicians propagated that they intend to continue their struggle for Aceh sovereignty through a soft political approach to replace the previous militaristic approach for over thirty years (Aspinall & Crouch, 2003). Using the political party, many of them then successfully reached top positions in local and central governments such as senators, legislative members, and executives at provincial and district/municipality levels.

I argue that the GAM elites' ability to reach top positions in the governments was not only because of the logistics they had, but also because of strong supports from the local people. Their success to win the local people's supports was partly due to the "language weapons" or creative political discourses they created in order to help shape people's thinking towards their struggle, both before and after the MoU signing. They propagated that it was only by having top positions within the government system that they could continually sustain their struggle for Aceh' people welfare (Serambi Indonesia, 2016). Most of the candidates nominated were ex-combatants, either those who used to live in exile in several foreign countries (e.g., Sweden, Malaysia, Singapore) to seek international political supports during the conflict or those who lived in Aceh to keep fighting in guerrilla ways against the Indonesian security and military officers as the representations of the GoI.

Despite the political discourses developed in Aceh, research aimed at making their meanings transparent has never been carried out or documented. Analyzing

them is beneficial in that it can make explicit the hidden meanings and their ideology, and the change they make to their political discourses. Moser (2000) argues that metaphor analysis is beneficial in that it can access tacit knowledge and explore "social and cultural processes of understanding" (p. 5). This research critically analyzes the political discourses in terms of metaphors created by the GAM and PA politicians and their sympathizers during and post conflict in Aceh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Discourses

Many discourse theorists (e.g., Fairclough, 2010) agree that discourse can be briefly defined as language in use in its social context. Language plays a crucial role in politics as it is frequently used by politicians to communicate their political will. According to Schaffner (1996), language can help prepare, control, and influence political actions. By political language, many researchers (e.g., Charteris-Black, 2005; Carver & Pikalo, 2008; Taiwo, 2013) refer to rhetorical and figurative strategies, which are exemplified by circumlocution, irony, symbolisms, innuendos, euphemisms, and metaphors. Language use is influenced by its social context. Pre-public election is an instance of social contexts during which many kinds of political discourses are created and used to structure people's thinking.

Political discourse serves various important functions. The most common functions of political discourse are: to compel, to oppose, to protest, to disguise, to legitimate, and to illegitimate (Chilton & Schaffner, 1997). These functions are commonly used by those who want to gain power or those who wish to sustain their power. If they can successfully employ and disseminate their political discourses and people accept them, the discourses will be transformed into actions intended to do (Tingting, 2007).

That there are intentions embedded in the political discourses suggest that discourses are not neutral. However, they look normal as they have been influenced by ideology (Bourdieu, 1986). In critical perspective, ideology refers to "a modality which constitutes and sustains relations of power through producing consent or at least acquiescence, power through hegemony rather than power through violence and force" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 73). Some other researchers use legitimation

instead of hegemony as the strategies used by politicians to gain or sustain power. According to Allen (2003), legitimation can be manifested in "discourse that promotes positive self-presentation" (p. 3). Nevertheless, Taiwo (2008) reminds that both strategies (legitimation and coercion) are sometimes practiced altogether. Even though some politicians promote their positive image, they also use coercion techniques such as intimidation or treat in discourse.

As language in use or discourse has been manipulated and looks normal without any social problem, its meaning needs to be made transparent. Therefore, it is necessary to have knowledge on critical language awareness in order to uncover any possible social problems conveyed in the political discourse. According to Fairclough (1995), critical language awareness can discover the relationship between the language use and its social perspectives. Critical language awareness can make people aware of the language use including metaphors, through which social change in society can be made.

Metaphor

Metaphor is an indirect language use, which has sizably been employed in political discourses. According to early researcher, Edelman (1971, as quoted in Mio, 1997), metaphor refers to "devices for simplifying and giving meaning to complex and bewildering sets of observations and evoke concern" (p. 65). This suggests that political world is too complex and abstract to be understood by the general public. Therefore, it is necessary for politicians to think about how to reduce its complexity and abstraction to be easily understood by citizens or voters (Cammaerts, 2012; Lippman, 1965; Mio, 1997). That is why metaphor is important to use.

With respect to this, Lakoff and Johnson (1980b) who coin cognitive semantic metaphor state that metaphor is inextricably related to the structure of our conceptual system. It can be regarded as a tool for understanding how one perceives the world. According to them, in the cognitive semantic approach, metaphor is treated as "a cross-domain mapping that is pervasive in our thought and reflected in our daily use of language" (Li, 2016, p. 93). According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980b), essentially, metaphor refers to "understanding and

experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another thing…[such as] ARGUMENT IS WAR" (p. 5). In the instance of ARGUMENT IS WAR, an abstract concept of *argument* is transferred to a concept of *war* because argument involves attacks and counterattacks by the speakers or writers.

In another example, Lakoff (1993) uses a metaphor of LOVE AS A JOURNEY. He identified this metaphor from the following everyday expressions:

> Look how far we've come. It's been a long, bumpy road. We can't turn back now. We're at a crossroads. We may have to go our separate ways. The relationship isn't going anywhere. We're spinning our wheels. Our relationship is off the track. The marriage is on the rocks. We may have to bail out of this relationship. (Lakoff, 1993, p. 205)

It can be seen that all the words or phrases used by the lover in the expressions above utilize the entities in the domain of a journey. From then, Lakoff (1993) develops a mapping which he means as "the set of correspondences" (p. 206). The set of ontological correspondences in the domain of love, for instance, is then transferred into those of journey. A love is usually composed such entities as the lovers, their common goals, their difficulties, the love relationship, and so forth, and those entities are then referred to the entities of journey (the travelers, the vehicle, destinations, etc.). From then, he develops the following mapping:

"THE LOVE-AS-JOURNEY MAPPING: The lovers correspond to travelers; the love relationship corresponds to the vehicle; the lovers' common goals correspond to their common destinations on the journey; difficulties in the relationship correspond to impediments to travel" (Lakoff, 1993, pp. 205-206).

Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson (1980b) state that metaphor is not only about language, but also thoughts. Nevertheless, Lakoff (1993) reminds that not all metaphors, including political metaphors, are cognitively aware. This is so because our thoughts are composed of conscious and unconscious cognitive. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) note that only five percent is conscious and 95 percent is unconscious, and the unconscious thought structures the conscious. As such, the meaning metaphors need to be analyzed in order to understand their meanings.

In political world, metaphor is like a mantra, which has been deliberately employed by politicians for a variety of purposes. It is used to structure political

mind of people (Lakoff, 2008), to shape political categorization and argumentation (Taiwo, 2013), and as a means "to communicate with their opponents through media" (Cammaerts, 2012, p. 1). Therefore, it is not surprising that Beard (2000, as cited in Otieno, 2016) makes a claim that if politicians understand the way of using metaphors, they can get or keep power.

Many studies have been carried out regarding the use of metaphors in political discourses. Otieno (2016), for instance, reviewed seven studies on political metaphors and found that metaphors were used to serve persuasive and rhetorical purposes, and to show the politician's ideology position. The same thing was also found by Nickels (2013) who did research on the metaphors used in Puerto Rican political discourse during a 105th U.S. Congressional hearing about the political status of the country. It was found that the metaphors were used to persuade and inform people through affective or cognitive approach. To do so, cognitive and affective ways were used including making justification, legitimation or framing, and fostering group solidarity, ridicule, or appeal to emotions, etc. With regards to elections, Bratoz (2014) who analyzed the English corpus of metaphors found that there were six metaphors used including contest, fighting, gambling, journey, sea voyage, and show. Of the metaphors used, elections were mostly conceptualized as battle (118 occurrences), as contest (76), as journey (21), as gambling (14), as show (6), and as sea voyage (6).

Metaphors have also been employed to sustain their power as revealed in many studies. Navera (2011), for instance, critically analyzed the political speech by the Philippine President Arroyo on the war of terror as led by the U.S. Using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tool, the research uncovered what is behind the president's speech. According to the researcher, the metaphor "WAR ON TERROR" used by Arroyo was meant to get people's supports for her government. One the one hand, people were expected to give supports for her in order to sustain her commitment to the war on terror, but at the same time she actually hid her government problems.

A similar way was used by the President of Indonesia, Soeharto when he attempted to sustain his power (see Nuryatno, 2005) by introducing the term

"Tinggal landas" (in Bahasa Indonesia means "take off"). "Take off" is a term in the domain of aircraft, which was used to conceptualize "INDONESIA AS AN AIRCRAFT" that will soon take off. It seems that by "take off" for Indonesia he meant that Indonesia which at that time was a developing country would "fly" soon to be a developed country. Therefore, Indonesian people as the passengers were required to support his administration to work and need to patiently wait for the aircraft to take off through the phase of REPELITA *(Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun)* or a five-year phase of Soeharto's development plan. However, after having spent six phases or over 30 years leading the GoI, he was unable to steer Indonesia to take off. He was even forced to step down through massive strikes by students across Indonesia in 1988 when monetary crisis hit the country and made its economy collapsed.

All the studies reviewed suggest that various metaphors have been used by politicians in order to reach their political goals. Using CDA in addition to using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980b) cognitive semantic metaphor analysis plays an important role in unearthing hidden meaning of the political discourse used.

RESEARCH METHOD

This qualitative study employed document analysis and interview in collecting data. The data were collected from various sources such as newspapers, books, and pamphlets that documented the discourses used by GAM and PA politicians in order to win the people's heart post-conflict public elections in Aceh. Besides, people who understand political issues in Aceh and used to live there during the prolonged political, armed conflict, and public election periods were also interviewed to collect their memories on the language use in written and oral forms during and post political armed conflict. In addition, I also became the source of information because I have lived in Aceh during the armed political conflict, which means that I could serve both as a researcher and a research participant through the living memory I have had.

The data were then critically analyzed by using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980a, 1980b, 1993, 1999) Conceptual Metaphor and Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 2010) framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As has been proposed by

Fairclough, a discourse can be analyzed in three stages including textual analysis, discursive practice analysis, and social analysis. This is so because he considers that "every discursive event as being simultaneously a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 4). Textual analysis described "what" linguistic properties (e.g., vocabulary) are used. In this research, metaphors used by the GAM politicians were focused. The second stage was to interpret "how" the discourses were constructed by power relations and ideologies. This can be understood, such as, through analyzing the force. Force is about using language to do something, as indicated in speech acts such as for giving an order, threatening, promising, and so on (Fairclough, 1992). The last stage was to explain "why" in order to understand the effects of the broad, societal currents on the texts (Locke, 2004).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The metaphors that have been developed and distributed province-wide during and after the political conflicts are as follows.

"Bijeih Sipai" and *"Awak Droe"*

Following the signing of the win-win peace accord between the GoI and GAM in Helsinki in 2005, the metaphorical political discourses in Acehnese*"Bijeih sipai"* and *"Awak droe"* were developed and publicly disseminated. *"Bijeih sipai"* means the descents of enemy and *"Awak droe"* means our own people. By using the phrase *"Awak droe"*, they positioned themselves as Acehnese very own politicians who kept doing their best for Aceh after they had fight against the GoI, represented by Indonesian police and army forces, for over thirty years. Hence, the GoI was depicted as the enemy.

It seems that the metaphors were not only to persuade but also to force people in Aceh in order to support them to reach legislative and executive top positions in Acehnese provincial government. They reasoned that their political struggle for Aceh was no longer with weapons because it has killed thousands of people from both sides and left many orphans in Aceh, but with soft political approach. Therefore, people were encouraged to strongly support their struggle for

Aceh. Those who did not support them at that time were regarded as *"Bijeh sipai"*. From the use of *"Bijeih sipai"* and *"Awak droe"*, they conceptualized that those who did not support them were against them or their enemies, and those who supported them were their own people. Here, at least two metaphors can be identified: THOSE NOT SUPPORTING "PARTAI ACEH" ARE THE DESCENTS OF THE ENEMY; and thus, ELECTION IS A BATTLE since there are enemies against our own people.

Associated with those who are against the ex-GAM party after the MoU signing was frightening for those living in Aceh. This was so because during the post conflict, not standing with GAM's ideology was deemed as supporting traitors or enemies. As such, the metaphors worked well in Aceh at that time. The candidates nominated by PA successfully won the people's heart and reached top positions at provincial and district governments in Aceh, defeating other rivals from nationally-based political parties.

"Meunyo kon ie, leuhop; meunyo kon droe, gop."

The Acehnese culturally-based proverb *"Meunyo kon ie, leuhop; meunyo kon droe, gop"* literally means "if not water, it is mud; if not us, they are others". However, this proverb in Acehnese language cannot be translated literally in order to get the proper meaning because it is metaphorical. In terms of meaning, it is still strong. It can be understood that the metaphor was again intentionally created for the purpose of othering those who did not support PA and those who supported their own ideology to gain power.

The use of the pronoun *"droe"*—means ourselves (us) and *"gop"*—means other(s) or non-Acehnese people. This means that it is important to support our own people by voting them because we need our own people, or not relying on others, to keep politically fighting and developing our province. In the context of the public election, the use of the proverb meant that they persuaded and even forced people to stand with PA to vote for the candidates nominated by them to reach top positions in local governments or otherwise being regarded as others. Thus, THOSE NOT SUPPORTING "PARTAI ACEH" ARE OTHERS.

They persuaded that it was only PA that was the real political party in which GAM fighters, who had always struggled for Aceh as had been proved during armed political conflicts, resided.   PA was conceptualized as the vehicle to continue the journey to reach the destination expected, the freedom of Aceh. Therefore, they needed the people's supports.   In that way, they conceptualized that ACEH FREEDOM IS A JOURNEY and ELECTION IS A BATTLE.

"Peungkhianat perjuangan"

"Peungkhianat perjuangan" literally means the traitor(s) of the people's long struggle in Aceh. The slogan was used during the public election following the ex-combatant incumbent governor, Irwandi Yusuf, who was selected by PA for 2004-2009 Aceh governor, initiated a new local political party named "Partai Nasional Aceh" (PNA/National Aceh Party), and nominated himself as a candidate for incoming period governor of Aceh. This was certainly in contrast with the intent of PA that had selected the ex-GAM health minister in exile, Zaini Abdullah, to be Aceh governor candidate pairing with the former chief leader of GAM army, Muzakkir Manaf. It seemed that the different ideologies between the ex-GAM members had led the PA politicians to create the slogan *"Peungkhianat Perjuangan",* referring to the traitors that destructed the Acehnese people's long struggle. In the political discourse, such metaphors can be taken out: "THE STRUGGLE FOR ACEH FREEDOM IS A JOURNEY" and "NEVER SUPPORT THE TRAITORS". Again, from the concepts used, it can be identified a metaphor: ELECTION IS A BATTLE.

The metaphor was used as a linguistic tool to inform and persuade people that there were some people in Aceh who had been dismissed from the line of collective struggle for Aceh freedom. As such they were equated with apostates. This may mean "don't vote for them". It then appeared that the slogan had successfully won the people's heart to vote for the candidates nominated by PA. Zaini Abdullah and Muzakkir Manaf were elected as the governor and vice governor of Aceh for the period of 2012-2017, defeating the incumbent Irwandi Yusuf and other candidates of nationally-based political parties. At the district levels, many candidates in GAM-home bases were elected as *bupatis* (regents) and deputies, even though some of them had low level education backgrounds.   However, in the districts where

population were not Acehnese tribe in majority such as in Aceh Tengah with Gayo tribe, Aceh Tenggara with Lues tribe, and other districts, candidates from PA did not successfully win the position of *bupati*. This can be concluded that the Acehnese cultural-based metaphor created by PA did not work well there, whereas in GAM home bases did.

"Woe bak rumoh droe"

"Woe bak rumoh droe" is a political metaphor created by PA politicians during the campaign for the 2017 general election to elect provincial and district leaders. *"Woe bak rumoh droe"* is in Acehnese language which means a call to "come back to our own home" or "let's come back to our home". The use of the verb *"woe"* or "to come back" in the beginning of the sentence means an imperative, a call, or a reminder. And, the place *"rumoh droe"* literally means our own home. In short, they used a persuasive approach with a metaphor: "PARTAI ACEH" IS OUR OWN HOME.

However, it should be considered that "a house" refers to the place where all family members have the rights to live together, love each other, and share things together. Moreover, as a home of a family, it normally has parents with their "authority over their children and their exercise of punishment and care" (Musolff, 2004, p. 2). Regarding their authority practiced, it depends on the type of the parents: a strict father model or a nurturing parent model.

Unfortunately, the metaphor has lost its power during the 2017 gubernatorial election. The call for all ex-combatants and other sympathizing people in Aceh to return home as they in recent years had scattered in other local or national political parties was ignored by more than half of the people. Muzakkir Manaf as the candidate nominated as well as the chair of PA did not win the election. He was defeated by another ex-GAM fighter, who was also a former university lecturer and the founder of a local political party, PNA, Irwandi Yusuf.

In fact, PA's politicians have attempted to apply several strategies in order to win the governor and district heads' elections. Even, the governor candidate, Muzakkir Manaf --who was the chief leader of GAM army and now the chairman of

PA -- was paired with the vice governor candidate from a national political party, T. A. Khalid. T. A. Khalid is a politician of Gerindra party, a political party which at the national level is led by the retired chief army General Prabowo Subianto, a general involved in implementing repressive militaristic approach for handling the political conflicts in Aceh.

The pairing of the leaders of the local ex-combatant political party, PA, with the leader of national party for the governor and vice candidates, indicated a certain kind of positioning. Prabowo with his Gerindra Party has been positioned as a partner rather than as an enemy as in the past during the conflict. This approach was certainly not in line with the goal of the struggle for Aceh sovereignty. It was not likely for the Indonesian national party to support Aceh for freedom as expected by previous Aceh free movement, GAM. Hence, it can be understood that the struggle of PA through their metaphor *"woe bak rumoh droe"* was not in line with the soft approach for Aceh independence, but purely for the political benefits of winning the governor and regent/mayor candidates during the public election.

"Sajan Panglima"

The metaphor *"Sajan Panglima"* was used by the ex-GAM politicians joining PA and reproduced by many local people during the pre-election of Aceh governor in 2017. *"Sajan Panglima"* is a phrase in Acehnese which means being with the commander-in-chief. Using the concept mapping, it can be understood that commander-in-chief usually belongs to the domain of military or battle. *Panglima* in this context was referred to Muzakkir Manaf, famously known as Muallem, as the governor candidate nominated by PA in the election. Manaf also insisted that he wanted to take rein of Aceh by himself because his predecessors nominated by his party had failed to bring a success to Aceh. In fact, during the armed political conflicts, he used to lead the Free Aceh Movement following the death of the GAM army chief Tgk. Abdullah Syafii. Hence, *Sajan Panglima* or along with the commander means that the pro Muallim people were all fighters in the battle and would always obey what he commanded.

Metaphorically, by using the phrase *"Sajan Panglima"*, they intended to conceptualize that the "ELECTION IS A BATTLE" in which Muzakkir Manaf was

positioned as the commander-in-chief. When this metaphor was used to win the people's heart in Aceh, it might have expected that the Acehnese people would voluntarily work together in the team of PA, support each other, and take any possible risks under the commander in struggling against the enemy. The enemy, in this context, were all those competing against Muzakkir Manaf. However, the metaphor did not work well in the 2017 gubernatorial election as *Muallem* failed to win the place. The failure was likely partly due to their inability to realize their promises campaigned in previous elections.

CONCLUSION

From the above analyses, there are several points to note. Firstly, the use of metaphors in Acehnese as the language of the majority in Aceh has ignored the minority tribes of non-Acehnese who were also the residents and potential voters. Unconsciously, using the political language in Acehnese can be seen as they only intended to inform their political will and persuade those speaking in Acehnese to vote for them.

Secondly, there was a decreased tension embedded in the metaphors used to win the people's heart during the periods of public elections post-conflict in Aceh. The metaphors used in the first period tend to intimidate people to go with PA. Otherwise, it would be deemed as being on the side of what they called enemies. In the second period, the metaphors being used tended to exclude and include the local people as those who were still with or against them. Essentially, the metaphors were still forcing people to be with the party; or consequently, they would be excluded and considered as traitors. Differently, in the latest public election, the metaphors used have been rather soft or persuasive in that the ex-combatants and Acehnese people were called to come back home (to PA).

The change of metaphors PA used from coercive to persuasive approach was likely because of the condition in the field at that time. The PA politicians or ex-combatants were not as solid as they used to. Many ex-GAM fighters have now joined and supported other governor and regent candidates from coalition parties such as Sofyan Dawod, who was once with PA chose to support Tarmizi Karim from non-PA as the latest governor candidate pairing with other non-PA, Machsalmina

Ali. Other examples included Muksalmina who supported Irwandi Yusuf, pairing with non-PA candidate Nova Iriansyah; ex-PA Zaini Abdullah who paired with non-PA Nasaruddin in the election; and, ex-PA politician Zakaria Saman pairing with non-PA Ir. Alaidinsyah.

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