

## The Function of Metaphors in Political Reporting on Kompas.com from January to August 2025

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**Abstract:** Metaphors are a figure of speech that can cause ambiguity of meaning because they refer to figurative meanings to simplify abstract concepts into concrete concepts, especially in political discourse. This study aims to analyze the use and function of metaphors in political reporting in the Kompas.com media from January to August 2025. This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The research data source consists of eight news texts taken from monthly publications. The data collection technique used is documentary study. The data is analyzed using a matching method with classification and analysis stages. The results show that there are eight uses of metaphors in the form of words and phrases with two functions, namely five metaphors with assertive functions and three metaphors with expressive functions. In conclusion, the use of metaphors has different functions depending on the context.

**Keywords:** Metaphors; Politics; Kompas.com

## Introduction

Studies on metaphors in political discourse are still rarely found because they generally focus only on the types of metaphors in literary works using a semantic approach, rather than on the function of the use of metaphors themselves (Aliurridha & Efendi, 2021). The inappropriate use of metaphors in political reporting can cause ambiguity of meaning because the words used often deviate from their lexical meaning and refer to figurative meanings that can confuse readers (Safitri et al., 2023). Metaphors in the media are closely related to the issues discussed in the news because they are used as tools of argument, so that if there is repeated use of metaphors, it can blur the line between literal and non-literal meanings (Iori, 2025; Syas & Rusadi, 2021). In the use of metaphors, there may be a shift in meaning between the two things being compared because non-literal language in the form of words or phrases is used to refer to other words or phrases (Wiradharma & Tharik, 2016). This also occurs because metaphors are part of language that is interpreted through concepts in accordance with the cognitive form of the speaker (Sundari et al., 2023). Metaphors as a form of linguistic expression are related to perspectives that have implications for mindsets, thereby influencing the way people act (Sriwulandari et al., 2023)

Political events often feature forms of communication that use metaphors as a means of conveying meaning (Kusmanto, 2019; Mashud et al., 2025). The metaphors found usually contain layered meanings and can cause specific problems in the form of various interpretations, so that language users cannot understand the meaning behind them and the message to be conveyed becomes unclear and communication fails (Fatmahwati A., 2020; Rashidin et al., 2023). The meaning conveyed is not instantaneous and usually uses beautiful word choices, thereby creating a certain effect desired by the author (Faizah & Pradita, 2024; Namira & Sitepu, 2022).

The linguistic analysis of metaphors is considered necessary in order to understand the meaning or significance of the words used, because every sentence containing a metaphor contains words with figurative meanings or stylistic devices that have different meanings (Aji, 1994; Saputra, 2018; Surip & Sinar, 2020). As part of language use, the study of metaphors must consider context in order to understand the pragmatic function of metaphors, as this varies greatly depending on the context in which the metaphor is used (Aliurridha & Efendi, 2021; Scharlau et al., 2024).

Several studies state that the study of metaphorical language style in political discourse requires not only a linguistic approach but also a pragmatic approach. Fahriani et al. (2025) argue that pragmatic studies play an important role in understanding the function of metaphors in political discourse because they examine not only literal meanings but also implicit meanings that arise from the context of conversation or discourse. Metaphors used in political discourse often reflect hidden agendas and the power that political actors want to emphasize (Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020). Therefore, metaphors in political discourse cannot be adequately analyzed

using a linguistic approach alone, but also require a pragmatic approach because through a pragmatic approach, utterances or sentences can be examined in terms of their intent and purpose (Kuntarto, 2018; Sukarno, 2017).

Other research suggests that when a metaphorical expression is in context, it not only has a literal meaning and a second-level meaning or metaphorical power, but also a third-level meaning, which is its pragmatic function (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022; Nirmala, 2014). The pragmatic function conveyed through metaphor is directed toward the reader, allowing it to be interpreted as having the speaker's intention that goes beyond the meaning contained within it (Nirmala, 2013; Pranowo & Febriasari, 2020). Additionally, this is reinforced by the reality of media language, which conveys political messages in mass media with a highly diverse range and tends to involve concepts beyond political meaning. Therefore, this study helps identify the hidden meanings of various subsystems functioning within it (Liu & Li, 2025; Surip et al., 2024).

The choice of Kompas media is based on the reasons put forward by previous researchers, namely that Kompas is a news portal that provides up-to-date information or news in a practical and fast manner. Furthermore, the information or news published is the latest news and there are many variations in the published news (Setiowati et al., 2021). Additionally, this reason is also supported by the research of Ropikoh et al. (2021) which states that Kompas is a trusted news website.

Based on the above issues, the use of metaphors in political discourse contains a multitude of political messages packaged in media language and often employs figurative words with specific functions, which can lead to misunderstandings in interpretation. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the use of metaphors and their function in political news coverage focused on the Kompas.com media and specifically on publications from January to August 2025.

## Methods

This research is qualitative research using a descriptive method. The data source in this study is political news text from the Kompas.com media, totaling 8 (eight) articles published between January and August 2025. The selection of news articles for analysis refers to previous research that sampled each news article proportionally using simple random sampling (Bangun et al., 2021). In this case, the articles were selected based on their monthly publication in 2025. Research data consists of news quotes containing the use and function of metaphors within their sentences.

Data collection was done using a documentary study. According to Soemardi & Mutiaz (2020), in their research, they used a documentary study to collect articles written in the mass media section based on the specified publication period. Irfanda (2022) also used documentary study techniques to examine and review provisions related to the problem.

The classified data was then analyzed using the matching method to reveal metaphoricity, while the data analysis was presented in narrative form, both formal and informal (Sriwulandari et al., 2023). The steps taken as the working method in this study are: (1) classifying the use of metaphors found in news from the Kompas.com media; (2) analyzing the function of the classified metaphors based on the referenced theory.

## Results And Discussion

Based on the results of data identification in the form of metaphors in political discourse on the Kompas.com media from January to August 2025, eight uses of metaphors with two functions were found. These two functions of metaphors include the assertive function and the expressive function. The following presents the data findings on the use and function of these metaphors, which will be the subject of discussion.

**Table 1.** Findings from Metaphor Data

News Title	Publication Date	Data Quote	Lingual Unit Form	Function Of Metaphor
Tugas Berat Mengubah Wajah dan Mentalitas Buruk Politik	26 Januari 2025	kapal keruk	Phrase	expressive
Reshuffle Kabinet Tanpa Drama Politik	10 Februari 2025	bola liar	Phrase	assertive
Demokrasi Lunglai, Partai Teralienasi	30 Maret 2025	tubuh partai politik	Phrase	assertive
Wajah Gelap Kekuasaan: Ingat Naik, Lupa Turun	4 April 2025	halte	Single word	expressive
Politik Citra	21 Mei 2025	topeng	Single word	expressive
Jokowi Lebih Pilih PSI, PPP: Bagus Secara Etika dan Moral Politik	9 Juni 2025	tempatny berlabuh	Phrase	assertive
Joker dan Partai Politik	25 Juli 2025	benang merah	Phrase	assertive
JK Sebut Demonstrasi Besar Akibat Akumulasi Kemarahan	30 Agustus 2025	menghimpit	Affixed word	assertive

Based on the research findings, the data found can be classified into three parts based on linguistic units: the single words 'halte' and 'topeng', then the inflected word 'menghimpit', and the phrases 'kapal keruk', 'bola liar', 'tubuh partai politik', 'tempatnyaberlabuh', and 'benang merah'. Furthermore, based on their metaphorical function, they are grouped according to assertive function: (1) bola liar; (2) tubuh partai politik; (3) tempatnyaberlabuh; (4) benang merah; and (5) menghimpit, while expressive functions include: (1) kapal keruk; (2) halte; (3) topeng.

The metaphor found is a figure of speech widely used in communication, considered a form of creative language use because it compares two things to create an impression not explicitly stated with words (Akastangga, 2020; Safitri et al., 2023). Metaphors are a powerful tool in journalism because they help convey complex ideas and evoke strong emotions (Selvam & Yong, 2025). Metaphor, as one of the semantic phenomena, plays a particularly important role in the creation of new words that are usually difficult for society to accept, making metaphor the tool that facilitates the description of this new reality (Afriansyah & Zakiyah, 2022; Meyridah, 2017). In this case, metaphors play a role in transferring meaning based on similarities in form, function, and use, which are derived from the implicit comparison of two things (Erfiani & Neno, 2021).

The function of using metaphors themselves is related to the message being conveyed and can be found by inferring the metaphors of the concept of metaphors revealed within them (Akbar & Yunanfathur, 2016). In identifying the function of metaphors, indicators that refer to theory are needed. Based on previous research findings, the functions of metaphors are divided into five types, namely: (1) representative (assertive); (2) directive (impositive); (3) expressive; (4) commissive; and (5) declarative (Fahriani et al., 2025; Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

### **Assertive Metaphor Function**

The assertive or representative function means conveying something related to the truth of the proposition or statement expressed and serves to state, inform, report, strengthen, speculate, affirm, and announce (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022; Purnamentari et al., 2019; Rizki, Dhea & Asnawi, 2023). Here is data showing metaphors that have an assertive function.

- (1) *Jika seorang menteri dicopot, rakyat harus tahu alasannya dengan jelas. Alasan reshuffle harus dapat dimengerti oleh publik, supaya tidak menjadi **bola liar** yang memantul ke mana-mana* (Kompas, February 10, 2025).

Data (1) contains a metaphor in the phrase "bola liar." When interpreted literally, a bola liar is an uncontrolled fire that can spread in all directions without a definite path. In a political context, this phrase is used to describe issues or information about a reshuffle that are not openly explained and can lead to public speculation that is unfocused and detrimental to stability. The metaphor has an assertive function

because it conveys a statement that politically asserts a causal relationship, where if the reshuffle is not explained, it will lead to speculation. This statement is made to be evaluated by the public for its truthfulness. This means that the metaphor is used to convey propositional truth, allowing the interlocutor (reader) to evaluate the logic and truth of the statement. If a metaphor is used to state whether a value is true or not, it is certain that the metaphor contains the function of assertive political metaphor (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

- (2) *Tren teralienasinya partai politik dengan pemilihnya menunjukkan oligarki tumbuh kuat di tubuh partai politik* (Kompas, March 30, 2025)

Data (2) contains a metaphor in the phrase "tubuh partai politik." If interpreted literally, the word "body" literally refers to the physical part of a living being, but in the quote, it is used metaphorically to illustrate the internal structure or the entire system that makes up a political party by combining the terms "body" with "political party," so the meaning that emerges is that oligarchy has taken root within the party system, as if it has become an inseparable part of the party's own "body organs." This metaphor has an assertive function because it serves to state a political condition that can be judged as true or false by the reader, namely that oligarchy has developed within the party structure. If a metaphor is used to state whether a value is true or not, it is certain that the metaphor contains the function of assertive political metaphor (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

- (3) *Tokan menegaskan bahwa Jokowi memiliki hak politik untuk memilih partai mana yang menjadi tempatnyaberlabuh* (Kompas, June 9, 2025).

Data (3) contains a metaphor in the phrase "tempatnyaberlabuh." Literally interpreted, the phrase "tempatnyaberlabuh" means the final destination to halte, reside, and cease all activities. The suffix "nya" refers to Jokowi, who is depicted as having completed his political affairs. The metaphor illustrates that Jokowi has a clear political direction and purpose. The metaphor has an assertive function that states a belief or view that Jokowi's political choices are legitimate and natural, thus political parties are likened to a place to anchor, meaning Jokowi's choice to stay. If a metaphor is used to state whether a value is true or not, it is certain that the metaphor contains the function of assertive political metaphor (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

- (4) *Ada benang merah yang bisa ditangkap dari keduanya: begitu strategisnya kedudukan partai politik dalam struktur kenegaraan* (Kompas, July 25, 2025).

Data (4) contains a metaphor in the phrase "benang merah." When interpreted literally, a benang merah is a kind of red connecting rope. Metaphorically, the phrase represents the main idea or outline that binds together various elements in a discourse. In the quote, a metaphor is used to describe a thematic connection or relationship that unites the two things being discussed: the possibility between the

Joker character phenomenon and political reality. This metaphor functions assertively because it conveys the statement that although two things may appear different, they share the same core idea: the importance of the role of political parties. If a metaphor is used to state whether a value is true or not, it is certain that the metaphor contains the function of assertive political metaphor (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

- (5) Menurut JK, rangkaian kemarahan mulai dari tunjangan anggota DPR RI yang besar hingga masalah ekonomi yang menghimpit rakyat (Kompas, August 30, 2025).

Data (5) contains a metaphor located in the word "menghimpit" (to press or squeeze). If interpreted literally, "menghimpit" means to crush or press down heavily. Metaphorically, the word describes the people's situation due to economic problems, represented by the word 'oppressing', which is physically contextual. The function of this metaphor is assertive because it expresses an image related to the condition of the people due to economic problems. If a metaphor is used to state whether a value is true or false, it is certain that the metaphor contains the function of assertive political metaphor (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

### **Expressive Metaphor Function**

The expressive function means conveying something containing a political message according to the speaker's expectations and desires to the listener. His expressions can also be criticism, threats, or even a decision to reveal the speaker's emotions and attitudes related to dissatisfaction with something (Fahriani et al., 2025; Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022) here is data showing metaphors with expressive function.

- (6) *Pasalnya, orang-orang semacam itu akan memperlakukan politik sebagai "kapal keruk" untuk mendapatkan sebanyak-banyaknya keuntungan pribadi, material, maupun nonmaterial tanpa memikirkan nasib rakyat banyak yang sebelumnya telah menitipkan mandat kepada mereka* (Kompas, January 26, 2025).

Data (6) contains a metaphor found in the phrase "kapal keruk". If interpreted literally, a kapal keruk means a ship specifically used for dredging mud in a harbor. Metaphorically speaking, the phrase describes how politics is likened to a tool used to extract the greatest possible profit, and in that context, the object being extracted is the people. The metaphor has an expressive function because it conveys criticism and disapproval in a strong and satirical way. This shows that the language chosen is not only to explain, but also to express attitudes and emotions toward social realities considered deviant. His expressions can also be in the form of criticism, threats, or even decisions, in accordance with the 'kapal keruk' metaphor (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

(7) *Di sinilah titik awal krisis kita bermula: kita lupa bahwa kekuasaan bukanlah tempat tinggal, melainkan sekadar halte* (Kompas, April 4, 2025).

Data (7) contains a metaphor located in the single word "halte". If interpreted literally, a halte means a train, tram, or bus halte. Metaphorically, the word describes how power is not truly permanent like a residence, but rather a temporary halteover like a bus halte. The metaphor has an expressive function because it reveals a subtle criticism that power is inherently temporary, not a possession. The metaphor contains criticism, so it falls under the expressive function (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

(8) *Namun di negeri ini, topeng sering lebih penting daripada wajah* (Kompas, May 21, 2025).

Data (8) contains a metaphor located in the single word "topeng." Literally interpreted, a topeng means a face covering that resembles the face of a person, animal, etc. Metaphorically, the word describes how something is covered like a topeng. The metaphor refers to the image of someone who falsely builds their self-image because they are only seen from their outward appearance, like a topeng. The metaphor has an expressive function because it reveals a satire about the culture in Indonesia, which prioritizes image over honesty. The metaphor contains criticism, so it falls under the expressive function (Firmansyah & Topengub, 2022).

Based on the discussion, Kompas uses metaphors in its reporting as a means of conveying arguments. The metaphors found have assertive and expressive functions. The assertive function is purely descriptive of a statement, consistent with the findings of Rahmania et al. (2022) which state that the assertive function relates to the truth of what the speaker says. The expressive function, on the other hand, relates to the communicator's expression of attitude toward something. In the study by Rahmania et al., (2022), the expressive function emphasizes the speaker's attitude toward the listener without any element of satisfaction, so it is limited to expressing the speaker's feelings about a situation. This aligns with Iori (2025) finding that news discourse plays a significant role in shaping real-world events and that metaphors are used as tools for argumentation, enabling indirect comparisons that can be expanded, reversed, and modified. This statement reinforces the finding that the use of metaphors has its own function depending on the context (Aliurridha & Efendi, 2021).

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the Kompas.com media has been proven to use metaphors in its reporting. The metaphors used and successfully found in the news are in the form of single words, words with affixes, and phrases. Every abstract concept in political terms is simplified using metaphorical concepts that are appropriate for the context. The metaphors found include two functions: assertive and expressive. Overall, the data shows that the dominant function of the metaphors is assertive, used to convey something containing truth, while the

expressive function is more used to express an opinion or view on something through criticism or satire.

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