



CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS OF HUMOR AND SOCIAL CRITICISM IN MEET NITE LIVE

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ABSTRACT

Political satire has become an important medium for expressing political criticism, with conceptual metaphor serving as a key cognitive and rhetorical device. However, studies examining conceptual metaphors in Indonesian political satire remain limited. This study investigates the conceptual metaphors employed in Meet Nite Live to construct political criticism in contemporary Indonesian public discourse. Drawing on Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Image Schema Theory, and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study aims to identify conceptual metaphors, explain their conceptual mappings and image schemas, and reveal their ideological functions. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using metaphorical expressions extracted from selected episodes of Meet Nite Live. The data were identified manually based on Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory and analyzed through conceptual mapping, image schema analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis. The findings reveal eight conceptual metaphors grouped into three thematic categories: Political Relationships, Governance and Institutional Failure, and Leadership and Bureaucratic Ethics. These metaphors conceptualize political issues through familiar experiential domains, including interpersonal relationships, everyday objects, natural phenomena, digital technology, and navigation. The study demonstrates that conceptual metaphors function not only as stylistic devices but also as cognitive and discursive strategies that facilitate public understanding while constructing ideological criticism of governance and political leadership.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor; political satire; image schema; critical discourse analysis; Meet Nite Live*

INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is no longer regarded merely as a rhetorical ornament employed to beautify language. Instead, contemporary cognitive linguistics views metaphor as a fundamental mechanism through which human beings conceptualize, organize, and communicate their experiences. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), abstract concepts are systematically understood through mappings from more concrete domains grounded in bodily and everyday experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Consequently, metaphor shapes not only linguistic expressions but also patterns of reasoning, social perception, and decision-

making across diverse communicative contexts. This cognitive perspective has substantially transformed metaphor studies from a stylistic concern into an interdisciplinary field that intersects linguistics, psychology, communication, media studies, and political discourse (Kövecses, 2010).

The cognitive nature of metaphor is closely associated with the notion of image schemas, namely recurring sensorimotor patterns that emerge from embodied human experience and subsequently structure conceptual thought. Image schemas such as Container, Path, Force, Balance, and Link enable speakers to comprehend abstract phenomena through concrete experiential structures (Cruse & Croft, 2004). Rather than functioning solely as semantic patterns, image schemas provide the cognitive foundation upon which conceptual metaphors are constructed, thereby explaining how language users transform physical experiences into complex social, political, and ideological meanings. From this perspective, metaphor represents an interaction between cognition, language, and embodied experience that continuously shapes human interpretation of reality (Kövecses, 2010).

The importance of conceptual metaphor has encouraged extensive research across a wide range of discourse domains. Previous studies have demonstrated that metaphor plays a significant role in constructing meanings in religious discourse (Chaer et al., 2024; Shadman et al., 2021; Silvestre-López, 2020), literary texts (Sri Suryani, 2024), music lyrics (Widyastuti & Fateah, 2024; Emeraldhani & Prihandini, 2024; Dewi & Gusthini, 2025; Luthfiani & Kurniawati, 2024), news media (Mas Uliatul Hikmah & Hermina Sutami, 2025; Mashud et al., 2025), health communication (Fatin et al., 2024), and political communication (Andre Ritonga & Lubis, 2025). In media discourse, for instance, metaphors have been shown to frame public understanding of crises by conceptualizing events such as the COVID-19 pandemic through domains including war, disaster, and battle, thereby influencing audience interpretation of social reality (Lahlou & Rahim, 2022). Likewise, studies of political communication reveal that metaphor functions as an effective cognitive and rhetorical resource for simplifying complex political issues, legitimizing ideological positions, and shaping public opinion (Kövecses, 2010). Collectively, these studies indicate that metaphor is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a strategic communicative device through which social actors construct particular representations of reality.

Recent developments further demonstrate that conceptual metaphor has become increasingly prominent within humorous and satirical discourse. Rather than serving only as a source of amusement, satire integrates entertainment, information, and evaluation to communicate criticism of contemporary political and social issues. In this context, metaphorical humor enables speakers to package criticism in forms that are cognitively accessible while simultaneously maintaining the humorous character of the discourse. Droog and Burgers (2023), for example, argue that metaphorical humor in satirical news functions as a hybrid communicative mechanism capable of simultaneously generating humor, conveying information, and expressing evaluative judgments toward political events. Their findings reinforce the growing recognition that metaphor constitutes one of the principal linguistic resources through which satire negotiates criticism, ideological positioning, and audience engagement in contemporary political communication.

Although conceptual metaphor has been extensively investigated across diverse discourse domains, existing scholarship has primarily concentrated on political speeches, news reports, campaign rhetoric, social media discourse, literary texts, and popular culture.



These studies consistently demonstrate that metaphor functions as a cognitive mechanism for simplifying complex issues, framing ideological perspectives, and shaping public understanding of political and social realities. More recently, scholars have also begun to examine metaphor within humorous and satirical communication, highlighting its role in producing evaluative meanings while simultaneously entertaining audiences (Droog & Burgers, 2023). Collectively, these findings confirm the importance of metaphor as both a cognitive and communicative resource in contemporary public discourse.

Nevertheless, the rapid expansion of metaphor studies also reveals several issues that remain insufficiently explored. First, existing studies predominantly examine institutional or conventional forms of political communication, such as speeches, parliamentary debates, news coverage, and online political campaigns. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to political entertainment, particularly television programs that combine comedy, satire, interviews, and public commentary within a single communicative event. Unlike conventional political discourse, political entertainment employs humor as its primary communicative strategy, enabling criticism to be conveyed indirectly through metaphorical and satirical expressions while simultaneously maintaining audience engagement. Consequently, the cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphor construction in humorous political discourse remain underexplored.

Second, the growing body of research on political satire has been largely developed within Western sociopolitical contexts, particularly studies examining satirical news programs and late-night television shows in the United States and Europe. While these studies have generated valuable theoretical insights into metaphorical framing, ideological criticism, and political humor, their findings cannot be automatically generalized to different cultural and linguistic settings. Political satire is inherently shaped by local sociocultural norms, media practices, and political traditions. Therefore, examining metaphorical constructions in Indonesian political satire offers an opportunity to extend current discussions by incorporating perspectives from a non-Western democratic context characterized by distinctive cultural values, linguistic creativity, and patterns of political communication.

Third, previous studies have generally employed either Conceptual Metaphor Theory to explain cognitive mappings or Critical Discourse Analysis to uncover ideological meanings. Although both approaches have contributed substantially to metaphor research, relatively few studies have integrated Conceptual Metaphor Theory, image schema analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis within a unified analytical framework. Such an integrated perspective enables researchers not only to identify metaphorical mappings but also to explain how embodied conceptual structures interact with discourse practices to construct ideological meanings and negotiate social criticism. Consequently, there remains considerable potential for developing a more comprehensive account of metaphor as a phenomenon that simultaneously operates at cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural levels.

Responding to these gaps, the present study investigates conceptual metaphors employed in *Meet Nite Live*, an Indonesian political satire television program broadcast by Metro TV. As one of the country's emerging late-night political entertainment programs, *Meet Nite Live* combines satirical monologues, interviews, comedy sketches, and

commentary on current political and social issues. Rather than merely entertaining audiences, the program provides a discursive arena in which humor functions as an indirect strategy for communicating criticism of public policies, political actors, and broader social conditions. This communicative configuration makes Meet Nite Live an appropriate site for examining how metaphorical expressions simultaneously construct humorous effects, organize cognitive representations, and negotiate ideological meanings within Indonesian political discourse.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify and classify the conceptual metaphors occurring in selected episodes of Meet Nite Live, to analyze their source and target domain mappings based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), to explain the embodied conceptual structures underlying these metaphors through image schema analysis (Cruse & Croft, 2004), and to interpret their ideological functions using Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013). By integrating these complementary analytical perspectives, this study extends previous research beyond the identification of metaphorical expressions toward a more comprehensive explanation of how conceptual metaphors operate simultaneously as cognitive structures, humorous devices, and discursive strategies for articulating social criticism.

The findings are expected to contribute to the growing scholarship on conceptual metaphor, political satire, and media discourse by providing empirical evidence from an Indonesian sociocultural context that remains underrepresented in international metaphor research. Furthermore, this study demonstrates how cognitive linguistic approaches can be productively combined with critical discourse perspectives to enhance our understanding of metaphor as a multidimensional phenomenon that links embodied cognition, language use, humor, and ideological critique in contemporary political communication.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the use of conceptual metaphors in Indonesian political satire discourse. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because the objective of the study was not to measure the frequency of metaphorical expressions statistically but to interpret how metaphors construct meaning, organize conceptual representations, and communicate ideological criticism within a particular sociocultural context. The analysis integrates Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), image schema analysis (Cruse & Croft, 2004), and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013) to examine metaphor from complementary cognitive and discourse-oriented perspectives.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory was employed to identify the underlying mappings between source and target domains, while image schema analysis was used to explain the embodied conceptual structures motivating these mappings. Subsequently, Critical Discourse Analysis provided an interpretive framework for examining how metaphorical constructions function as discursive strategies for representing political actors, negotiating ideological positions, and expressing social criticism. The integration of these analytical perspectives enables a comprehensive understanding of metaphor as a cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural phenomenon in contemporary political communication.

***Data Source***

The data of this study consisted of verbal utterances containing metaphorical expressions extracted from selected episodes of Meet Nite Live, an Indonesian political satire television program broadcast by Metro TV. The program was selected because it consistently combines political commentary, satirical humor, interviews, and comedy sketches to discuss contemporary political and social issues. This communicative format provides a rich source of naturally occurring political discourse in which metaphorical language functions not only as a humorous device but also as a strategy for constructing social criticism and ideological evaluation.

The unit of analysis was metaphorical expressions occurring in the hosts' and guests' utterances. Rather than treating an entire episode as a single unit of analysis, this study focused on individual metaphorical expressions together with their immediate discursive contexts to ensure that each metaphor was interpreted according to the surrounding interaction and communicative purpose. Only utterances directly related to political or social issues were included in the analysis, while literal expressions and conversations unrelated to the research objectives were excluded.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through four sequential stages. First, selected episodes of Meet Nite Live were repeatedly observed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the communicative context. Second, all relevant verbal utterances were transcribed verbatim. Third, potential metaphorical expressions were identified manually based on the principles of Conceptual Metaphor Theory proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). An expression was considered metaphorical when an abstract concept was systematically understood through a more concrete experiential domain, indicating the presence of a conceptual mapping between a source domain and a target domain. Finally, the identified metaphorical expressions were compiled into a corpus and organized according to the political issues discussed in each episode to facilitate subsequent analysis.

Manual identification was selected because the primary objective of this study was to examine conceptual mappings rather than lexical metaphor frequency. Accordingly, the identification process emphasized semantic interpretation within discourse context to ensure that each metaphor reflected an underlying conceptual relationship rather than an isolated figurative expression.

Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted through a sequential interpretative procedure integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory, image schema analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis. Rather than applying these approaches independently, the analysis treated them as complementary analytical stages that progressively explained the cognitive and discursive functions of metaphorical expressions.

The first stage involved identifying the conceptual structure underlying each metaphorical expression. Every identified metaphor was analyzed to determine its source

domain and target domain following the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This stage aimed to reveal how abstract political concepts were conceptualized through more concrete domains derived from everyday human experience.

The second stage examined the image schemas motivating the conceptual mappings. Drawing upon the framework proposed by (Cruse & Croft, 2004), each metaphor was analyzed to identify recurring embodied patterns such as Container, Path, Force, Balance, Link, and other relevant image schemas. This analysis explained how bodily experience provided the conceptual foundation for metaphorical reasoning and contributed to the coherence of metaphorical representations throughout the discourse.

The third stage interpreted the ideological functions of the identified metaphors using (Fairclough, 2013) Critical Discourse Analysis. At this stage, metaphorical expressions were examined within their immediate discursive contexts to explain how they represented political actors, constructed evaluations of political events, and communicated social criticism through humorous and satirical discourse. Rather than treating metaphor as an isolated linguistic phenomenon, this analysis considered metaphor as part of broader discursive practices through which ideological meanings were negotiated and reproduced.

Finally, the findings from the three analytical stages were synthesized to generate an integrated interpretation of metaphor in *Meet Nite Live*. This synthesis demonstrated how conceptual mappings, embodied image schemas, and discursive strategies interact to construct humorous narratives while simultaneously articulating political criticism. Through this integrated analytical procedure, the study provides a comprehensive explanation of metaphor as a multidimensional phenomenon operating at cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural levels.

To ensure methodological transparency and analytical consistency, the integrated analytical procedure employed in this study is summarized in Table 1. The framework illustrates the sequential relationship between each analytical stage, beginning with the identification of metaphorical expressions and proceeding through conceptual metaphor analysis, image schema analysis, and critical discourse analysis before arriving at an integrated interpretation. Rather than representing separate analytical techniques, these stages constitute a complementary framework in which the output of each stage informs the subsequent analysis. This operational framework provides a systematic basis for examining how metaphorical expressions in *Meet Nite Live* simultaneously reflect conceptual structures, embodied cognition, and ideological meanings within Indonesian political satire.

Table 1. Operational Analytical Framework

Analytical Stage	Analytical Focus	Analytical Procedure	Expected Output
Identification	Metaphorical expressions	Identify metaphorical expressions manually based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).	Corpus of metaphorical expressions
Conceptual Metaphor Analysis	Source and target domains	Determine the conceptual mappings between source and target domains.	Conceptual metaphor classification
Image Schema Analysis	Embodied conceptual structure	Identify the image schema underlying each conceptual mapping (e.g., Container, Path, Force, Balance, Link).	Image schema identification



Critical Discourse Analysis	Ideological and discursive meaning	Interpret the metaphor within its sociopolitical and discursive context following Fairclough (2013).	Discursive and ideological interpretation
Synthesis	Integration of findings	Integrate the cognitive and discursive analyses to explain the communicative function of metaphor in political satire.	Comprehensive interpretation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

A total of eight conceptual metaphors were identified from the selected episodes of Meet Nite Live. Rather than functioning as isolated rhetorical expressions, these metaphors reveal systematic patterns through which political criticism is constructed. As summarized in Table 2, the metaphors can be organized into three broader thematic categories: Political Relationships, Governance and Institutional Failure, and Leadership and Bureaucratic Ethics. This thematic organization is based on the target domains of the metaphors, thereby highlighting the principal dimensions of political life that are criticized through satire.

Table 2. Overview of Conceptual Metaphors Identified in Meet Nite Live

Theme	Conceptual Metaphor	Source Domain	Target Domain	Metaphor Type	Image Schema
Political Relationships	Political Relationship as an Unhealthy Relationship	Interpersonal relationship	Government–citizen relationship	Structural	Link
	Government as a Hopeless Husband	Marriage	Political leadership	Structural	Link
Governance and Institutional Failure	Democracy as a Document	Written document	Democratic governance	Ontological	Container
	Corruption as a Vicious Cycle	Circular movement	Institutional corruption	Structural	Cycle
Leadership and Bureaucratic Ethics	Social Disorder as Dark Clouds	Weather	Illegal mass organizations and social disorder	Ontological	Force (Removal)
	History as a Filtered Selfie	Digital photo filter	Historical revisionism	Ontological	Container (Surface-Content)
	Budget Misuse as	Cybersecurity	Budget corruption	Structural	Force (Penetration)

Digital Hacking Policy Direction as Crossing Logic	Navigation	Leadership and public policy	Structural	Path
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The first theme conceptualizes political interaction as interpersonal relationships, allowing audiences to understand governance through familiar experiences of trust, commitment, and disappointment. The second theme shifts attention toward democratic institutions and state capacity, where democracy, corruption, and public order are represented through concrete objects and recurring processes that expose institutional weaknesses. The third theme focuses on leadership and bureaucratic ethics by drawing upon digital technology and navigation as experiential domains for criticizing historical revisionism, corruption, and deviations in public policy.

Across these themes, conceptual metaphors consistently transform abstract political issues into concrete experiences derived from everyday life. This pattern demonstrates that metaphor in Meet Nite Live is not merely ornamental but constitutes a cognitive strategy that facilitates public understanding while simultaneously functioning as a discursive resource for ideological criticism. The following sections discuss each thematic category in detail by integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory, image schema analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis.

Theme 1: Political Relationships

The first thematic category demonstrates that Meet Nite Live frequently conceptualizes political life through interpersonal relationships. Rather than representing politics as an abstract institutional system, the program frames interactions between political actors and citizens in terms of everyday social experiences, particularly intimate relationships such as romantic partnerships and marriage. These experiential domains provide audiences with familiar cognitive frameworks for interpreting political trust, responsibility, disappointment, and accountability.

Within the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, interpersonal relationships constitute a highly productive source domain because they involve shared embodied experiences that are universally understood. Consequently, political criticism becomes more accessible when governance is interpreted through familiar relational experiences. The following metaphors illustrate how Meet Nite Live systematically employs interpersonal relationships to evaluate the quality of democratic interaction and political leadership.

Political Relationship as an Unhealthy Relationship

Excerpt 1

“Sritex dan utang itu ibarat hubungan enggak sehat, tapi terus dijalanin bukan karena cinta, tapi karena sama-sama butuh.” (“Sritex and debt are like an unhealthy relationship. One that continues not out of love, but because both sides need each other.”)

(Meet Nite Live Episode *Hati-hati bahaya IT*, May 22, 2025).



The first metaphor conceptualizes the relationship between the government and citizens as an unhealthy relationship, portraying political interaction through the experiential domain of intimate interpersonal relationships. Instead of evaluating governance through legal or institutional terminology, the expression interprets political dissatisfaction as the deterioration of a personal relationship characterized by declining trust, ineffective communication, and emotional distance.

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the expression instantiates the conceptual mapping POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP IS AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP. The source domain contributes experiential knowledge regarding conflict, disappointment, emotional imbalance, and broken commitment. These relational characteristics are systematically projected onto the target domain of political interaction, enabling audiences to understand democratic dissatisfaction through familiar interpersonal experiences.

The metaphor is primarily supported by the Link image schema, which conceptualizes social relationships as connected entities maintained through reciprocal interaction. When this relational link weakens, the connection between government and citizens is perceived as unstable and dysfunctional. The metaphor therefore emphasizes that political legitimacy depends not only on institutional authority but also on maintaining reciprocal trust between governing institutions and the public.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor functions as an indirect critique of political legitimacy. Rather than openly accusing governmental actors of failure, the satirical expression frames institutional shortcomings as symptoms of a deteriorating relationship. This humorous comparison reduces the distance between political institutions and everyday experience, allowing audiences to evaluate governance through moral and relational expectations rather than through formal political discourse.

This finding supports previous studies demonstrating that interpersonal metaphors facilitate public understanding of political concepts by grounding abstract governance in embodied social experience. However, the present study further demonstrates that in Indonesian political satire, such metaphors simultaneously function as cognitive simplifications and ideological evaluations, enabling humor to become an effective vehicle for democratic criticism.

Government as a Hopeless Husband

Excerpt 2

“Legalisasi kasino ini ibarat bapak-bapak hopeless yang izin ke istri buat main gaple di pos ronda, alasannya buat bayar SPP anak sekolah.” (“Legalizing casinos is like hopeless husbands asking their wives for permission to play gaple at the neighborhood watch post, claiming it’s to pay their children’s school tuition.”)

(Meet Nite Live Episode *Hati-hati bahaya IT*, May 22, 2025).

The second metaphor represents the government as a hopeless husband, conceptualizing political leadership through the experiential domain of marital relationships. Unlike the previous metaphor, which emphasizes the deterioration of government–citizen interaction, this metaphor foregrounds the expectations attached to leadership roles. In everyday experience, a husband is commonly associated with responsibility, protection, commitment, and the fulfillment of shared obligations. By portraying the government as a hopeless husband, the satirical discourse highlights a perceived failure to satisfy these normative expectations.

Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the metaphor instantiates the conceptual mapping GOVERNMENT IS A HOPELESS HUSBAND, whereby characteristics of an unreliable marital partner are projected onto political leadership. The mapping emphasizes broken promises, irresponsibility, inconsistency, and declining public confidence. Consequently, governmental performance is interpreted not only as administrative competence but also as moral responsibility toward citizens.

The metaphor is likewise motivated by the Link image schema because marital relationships are sustained through reciprocal commitment and mutual trust. The weakening of this relational bond symbolizes the erosion of confidence in political leadership. Accordingly, political dissatisfaction is conceptualized not simply as disagreement over policy but as the collapse of a relationship that ideally should be maintained through accountability and shared commitment.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor delegitimizes political authority through humorous comparison rather than explicit accusation. By reducing political leadership to an everyday family role, the satire encourages audiences to evaluate government according to ordinary moral expectations that govern interpersonal life. This strategy makes political criticism emotionally resonant while remaining accessible to a broad audience.

Together with the previous metaphor, this finding indicates that Meet Nite Live consistently frames political leadership as a relational rather than purely institutional phenomenon. The use of marital experience strengthens the emotional dimension of political criticism by emphasizing that effective governance depends upon trust, responsibility, and sustained public commitment.

Synthesis of the Political Relationships Theme

The two metaphors analyzed above demonstrate that Meet Nite Live consistently conceptualizes politics through interpersonal relationships. Although each metaphor emphasizes different aspects of political life, both rely on culturally familiar social experiences to make political criticism cognitively accessible and emotionally meaningful. The first metaphor focuses on the deterioration of the relationship between government and citizens, whereas the second emphasizes the moral obligations attached to political leadership. Together, these findings indicate that interpersonal relationships constitute a dominant experiential domain through which Indonesian political satire evaluates governance, public trust, and democratic accountability.

More broadly, the findings suggest that metaphor functions not merely as a linguistic device but as a cognitive framework that enables audiences to interpret political legitimacy



through everyday human relationships. This thematic pattern establishes the foundation for the following section, which shifts attention from interpersonal interaction toward the functioning of democratic institutions and the broader capacity of the state to govern effectively.

Theme 2: Governance and Institutional Failure

The second thematic category shifts the focus of analysis from interpersonal political relationships to the performance of democratic institutions and the state's capacity to govern effectively. Rather than criticizing individual political actors alone, Meet Nite Live extends its satire toward broader institutional practices, including democratic governance, corruption, and law enforcement. These issues are conceptualized through familiar experiences involving documents, repetitive cycles, and natural phenomena, enabling abstract institutional problems to be understood through concrete everyday experiences.

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, these metaphors demonstrate that institutional governance is consistently interpreted through embodied source domains that emphasize visibility, continuity, and environmental conditions. Consequently, political satire not only evaluates governmental performance but also encourages audiences to reconsider whether democratic institutions genuinely fulfil their intended public functions. The following metaphors illustrate how institutional weaknesses are cognitively and ideologically represented in contemporary Indonesian political satire.

Democracy as a Document

Excerpt 3

“Demokrasi kita masih di atas kertas. Di kertas bebas bicara, di jalan dibuat takut bersuara.” (“Our democracy still exists only on paper. On paper, there’s freedom of speech; on the streets, people are intimidated into silence.”)

(Meet Nite Live Episode *Dua Dunia Dara Sore*, May 27, 2025).

The metaphor conceptualizes democracy as a document, contrasting the formal existence of democratic principles with their practical implementation. Rather than questioning the constitutional legitimacy of democracy, the expression criticizes the discrepancy between democratic ideals and political reality. By projecting characteristics of a written document onto the concept of democracy, the metaphor suggests that democratic values may exist officially while remaining ineffective in everyday governance.

Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the expression instantiates the conceptual mapping DEMOCRACY IS A DOCUMENT. The source domain contributes conceptual attributes such as written form, official recognition, permanence, and symbolic legitimacy. These characteristics are projected onto the target domain of democracy, allowing audiences to distinguish between constitutional recognition and substantive democratic practice.

The metaphor is primarily supported by the Container image schema. A document functions as a container that stores information, principles, and institutional commitments. Likewise, democracy is represented as containing constitutional ideals that should guide political life. However, the satirical force of the metaphor lies in the implication that these ideals remain confined within official texts rather than being translated into concrete governmental practices.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor functions as an indirect critique of institutional legitimacy. Rather than denying the existence of democratic institutions, it questions the extent to which democratic values are implemented in practice. Through humor, the metaphor reduces an abstract political system to an ordinary object that may exist merely as a formal record without producing meaningful social consequences.

This finding suggests that Indonesian political satire frequently critiques democratic institutions by exposing the gap between symbolic legality and lived political experience. Conceptualizing democracy as a document allows audiences to evaluate governance not only through constitutional procedures but also through the practical realization of democratic principles.

Corruption as a Vicious Cycle

Excerpt 4

“Demokrasi tanpa amanah sama aja jeblok ke dalam lingkaran korupsi yang gitu-gitu aja.” (“Democracy without integrity is just a ticket to falling into a vicious cycle of corruption that never ends.”)

(Meet Nite Live Episode *Dua Dunia Dara Sore*, May 27, 2025).

The metaphor conceptualizes corruption as a vicious cycle, representing corrupt practices as recurring and self-perpetuating processes rather than isolated criminal acts. Instead of portraying corruption as individual moral failure, the metaphor frames it as a structural phenomenon continuously reproduced through interconnected political and institutional mechanisms.

Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the expression instantiates the conceptual mapping CORRUPTION IS A VICIOUS CYCLE. The source domain of circular movement contributes conceptual properties such as repetition, recurrence, continuity, and the difficulty of escape. These characteristics are systematically projected onto the target domain of corruption, suggesting that corrupt practices repeatedly re-emerge despite institutional reforms and political change.

The metaphor is motivated primarily by the Cycle image schema, emphasizing continuous movement without a definitive endpoint. Through this schema, corruption is conceptualized as a persistent process that repeatedly returns to its point of origin, reinforcing the perception that institutional reform alone may be insufficient to dismantle entrenched patterns of abuse.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor challenges narratives that reduce corruption to isolated misconduct committed by individual actors. Instead, it redirects public attention toward systemic weaknesses that sustain corruption over



time. The humorous framing therefore intensifies rather than softens political criticism by illustrating the apparent impossibility of escaping entrenched institutional practices.

The metaphor demonstrates that political satire functions not only to criticize corrupt actors but also to reveal corruption as an enduring institutional pattern. Consequently, audiences are encouraged to perceive anti-corruption efforts as requiring structural transformation rather than merely legal punishment.

Social Disorder as Dark Clouds

Excerpt 5

"Karena kalau negara bisa mengusir awan gelap dari langit, mestinya bisa juga mengusir ormas gelap dari negara." ("Because if the government can dispel dark clouds from the sky, it should also be able to expel dark organizations from the country.")
(Meet Nite Live Episode *Dua Dunia Dara Sore*, May 27, 2025).

The metaphor conceptualizes unlawful mass organizations as dark clouds, transferring characteristics of threatening weather conditions to the domain of social and political disorder. Rather than describing organized intimidation through legal or bureaucratic terminology, the speaker represents it as an environmental disturbance that obscures the social landscape. This conceptualization enables audiences to perceive insecurity as an obstacle that should be removed through effective state intervention.

Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the expression instantiates the conceptual mapping SOCIAL DISORDER IS DARK CLOUDS. The source domain contributes experiential knowledge concerning obstruction, instability, uncertainty, and the restoration of clear conditions after storms. These characteristics are projected onto the target domain of unlawful organizations, suggesting that their existence disrupts the normal functioning of democratic society.

The metaphor is primarily motivated by the Force image schema, particularly the Removal configuration. Dark clouds are understood as external forces covering the sky until they are dispersed. Likewise, unlawful organizations are conceptualized as disruptive forces whose removal depends upon decisive governmental action. The metaphor therefore emphasizes that maintaining public order constitutes a core responsibility of legitimate political authority.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor indirectly evaluates institutional effectiveness rather than merely criticizing specific political actors. The comparison humorously questions why the state appears capable of addressing complex technological or administrative issues while remaining ineffective in resolving persistent social disorder. Consequently, the metaphor exposes tensions between official narratives of state authority and public perceptions of institutional performance.

Together with the previous metaphors, this finding demonstrates that Meet Nite Live conceptualizes institutional failure through concrete experiential domains that make political

criticism immediately recognizable to audiences. By portraying social disorder as a natural phenomenon requiring removal, the satire frames law enforcement as an essential indicator of democratic governance and institutional legitimacy.

Synthesis of the Governance and Institutional Failure Theme

The three metaphors analyzed in this section collectively demonstrate that Meet Nite Live evaluates democratic governance primarily through the performance of public institutions rather than through the behavior of individual political actors. While DEMOCRACY IS A DOCUMENT highlights the discrepancy between constitutional ideals and political practice, CORRUPTION IS A VICIOUS CYCLE emphasizes the systemic reproduction of institutional misconduct. Meanwhile, SOCIAL DISORDER IS DARK CLOUDS portrays the maintenance of public order as a fundamental responsibility of the state.

Taken together, these metaphors construct a coherent critique of institutional governance by illustrating different dimensions of state failure: the failure to implement democratic principles, the failure to break entrenched corruption, and the failure to guarantee legal certainty and public security. Rather than functioning independently, these metaphorical expressions collectively reveal how Indonesian political satire frames institutional legitimacy as something that must be continuously demonstrated through effective governance rather than merely asserted through formal authority.

This thematic pattern also demonstrates that conceptual metaphor enables audiences to understand institutional performance through familiar embodied experiences involving documents, cycles, and natural phenomena. Consequently, metaphor serves simultaneously as a cognitive mechanism for interpreting political reality and as a discursive strategy for questioning institutional legitimacy within democratic society.

Theme 3: Leadership and Bureaucratic Ethics

The third thematic category examines how Meet Nite Live conceptualizes leadership and bureaucratic ethics through diverse experiential domains, including digital technology, cybersecurity, and navigation. Unlike the previous theme, which primarily evaluates the effectiveness of democratic institutions, this section focuses on the values, mindsets, and decision-making processes that shape political leadership. The metaphors reveal that governance is not only influenced by institutional structures but also by the cognitive orientations and ethical dispositions of political elites.

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, these metaphors demonstrate that abstract concepts such as historical revisionism, corruption, and policy direction are systematically understood through familiar technological and navigational experiences. Such conceptualizations enable audiences to interpret complex political behavior using everyday knowledge of digital media, hacking, and transportation. Consequently, political satire frames leadership not merely as an administrative function but as a moral practice whose quality is reflected in the ways leaders think, decide, and exercise power.

History as a Filtered Selfie

Excerpt 6



“Intinya nambahin atau update sejarah itu bagus tapi jangan asal edit kayak nge-filter foto selfie, hasilnya beda banget sama pas foto di KTP.” (“The point is, adding to or updating history is a good thing, but don’t just edit it haphazardly like you would when applying a filter to a selfie, the result ends up looking completely different from the photo on your ID card.”)

(Meet Nite Live Episode *Hati-hati bahaya IT*, May 22, 2025).

The metaphor conceptualizes historical revision as a filtered selfie, representing the rewriting of national history through the familiar experience of digitally enhancing personal photographs. Instead of presenting history as an objective record of past events, the expression frames it as an editable visual image whose appearance can be manipulated to produce a more favorable impression. This comparison allows audiences to understand historical distortion through the increasingly common practice of applying digital filters to selfies.

Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the utterance instantiates the conceptual mapping HISTORY IS A FILTERED SELFIE. The source domain contributes conceptual properties such as beautification, selective enhancement, manipulation of appearance, and the concealment of imperfections. These characteristics are projected onto the target domain of historical representation, suggesting that official historical narratives may be deliberately modified to improve the image of political actors or institutions while obscuring uncomfortable realities.

The metaphor is primarily motivated by the Container (Surface–Content) image schema. The filtered image represents the visible surface presented to the public, whereas the original historical record constitutes the underlying content. By emphasizing the discrepancy between these two layers, the metaphor illustrates how political narratives may privilege appearance over historical authenticity. The comparison with an official identity card photograph further reinforces the distinction between objective documentation and manipulated representation.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor functions as a critique of historical revisionism and political image management. Rather than directly accusing political authorities of falsifying history, the satirical comparison invites audiences to question the credibility of official historical narratives. Humor emerges from the familiarity of digital photo filters, while the underlying criticism targets the ideological reconstruction of collective memory for political legitimacy.

This finding demonstrates that contemporary political satire increasingly draws upon digital culture to explain complex political phenomena. By mapping historical revision onto everyday experiences with social media, the metaphor enables audiences to recognize historical manipulation as a form of symbolic image management rather than merely a technical revision of historical records.

Budget Misuse as Digital Hacking

Excerpt 7

“Dulu kita berharap bos startup masuk ke pemerintahan bisa bawa perubahan. Tapi kok sekarang malah diduga bawa mindset hacking anggaran.” (“We used to hope that startup founders entering government would bring about change. But now it seems they’re actually suspected of bringing a ‘budget-hacking’ mindset.”)
(Meet Nite Live Episode *Visi Para Musisi*, May 29, 2025).

The metaphor conceptualizes the misuse of public funds as digital hacking, portraying corruption as an intentional process of infiltrating and exploiting governmental systems. Rather than depicting corruption as ordinary financial misconduct, the metaphor frames it as a sophisticated digital intrusion in which bureaucratic procedures are treated as vulnerable systems that can be penetrated and manipulated for personal benefit.

According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the expression instantiates the conceptual mapping BUDGET MISUSE IS DIGITAL HACKING. The source domain contributes experiential knowledge regarding unauthorized access, exploitation of security weaknesses, manipulation of systems, and covert personal gain. These conceptual characteristics are projected onto the target domain of public finance, allowing corruption to be understood as a systematic abuse of institutional vulnerabilities rather than isolated administrative misconduct.

The metaphor is motivated primarily by the Force image schema, particularly the Penetration configuration. Bureaucratic institutions are conceptualized as bounded systems whose integrity is violated through unauthorized intrusion. This image schema reinforces the perception that corruption originates not only from unethical individuals but also from deliberate efforts to exploit institutional weaknesses from within.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor challenges the public expectation that technological innovation naturally produces political reform. Instead, it suggests that digital expertise may be redirected toward opportunistic exploitation when ethical responsibility is absent. The humorous expression therefore demystifies the image of technologically competent leaders while exposing the persistence of corrupt practices beneath narratives of modernization and digital transformation.

This finding illustrates how contemporary political satire appropriates concepts from digital culture to reinterpret corruption in ways that resonate with modern audiences. Rather than presenting corruption through conventional legal discourse, the metaphor emphasizes its adaptive, strategic, and systemic character within contemporary bureaucratic institutions.

Policy Direction as Crossing Logic

Excerpt 8

“Kita semua masih punya harapan semoga arah kemudi ke depan bukan lagi menyeberangkan logika demi syahwat serakah, tapi menyeberangkan warga dengan aman tanpa jadi beban negara.” (“We all still hold out hope that the course we set for the future



will no longer be one of sacrificing logic for the sake of greedy desires, but rather one of safely transporting citizens without becoming a burden on the state.”)

(Meet Nite Live Episode *Visi Para Musisi*, May 29, 2025).

The metaphor conceptualizes public policy as a crossing journey, portraying political leadership through the experiential domain of navigation. Rather than depicting governance as a static administrative process, the metaphor frames leadership as the responsibility of directing a collective journey toward a shared destination. The contrast between "crossing logic" and "crossing citizens" introduces a moral distinction between policies driven by elite interests and those genuinely intended to serve the public.

Within Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the expression instantiates the conceptual mapping PUBLIC POLICY IS A JOURNEY. The source domain contributes conceptual elements such as direction, destination, navigation, passengers, and responsibility for safe passage. These characteristics are projected onto the target domain of public policy, suggesting that political leadership should guide society toward collective welfare rather than private interests.

The metaphor is primarily motivated by the Path image schema, which conceptualizes leadership as purposeful movement toward an intended destination. The steering wheel symbolizes political authority, while the journey itself represents the implementation of public policy. When leadership deviates from its intended course, the metaphor implies that political decisions become instruments of personal ambition rather than public service.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the metaphor critiques the moral orientation of political leadership rather than merely its administrative effectiveness. The satirical comparison suggests that governments should prioritize transporting citizens safely toward collective prosperity instead of redirecting political reasoning to justify elite interests. By embedding this criticism within the familiar experience of ferry transportation, the metaphor renders complex policy debates immediately understandable to the public.

This finding demonstrates that navigation metaphors remain powerful cognitive resources for representing governance because they simultaneously emphasize direction, responsibility, and collective purpose. In the context of Indonesian political satire, the metaphor ultimately reframes leadership as an ethical commitment to guiding society rather than manipulating political discourse for personal or institutional gain.

Synthesis of the Leadership and Bureaucratic Ethics Theme

The three metaphors examined in this section reveal that Meet Nite Live consistently evaluates political leadership through the cognitive lens of ethical decision-making. Although they employ different experiential domains such as digital photography, cybersecurity, and navigation, they converge on a common target domain: the moral quality of leadership and bureaucratic practice. Historical revision is represented as image manipulation, corruption as unauthorized digital intrusion, and policymaking as a journey whose direction may either serve citizens or satisfy elite interests.

Collectively, these metaphors demonstrate that contemporary Indonesian political satire increasingly appropriates concepts from digital culture and everyday mobility to critique governance. Rather than portraying corruption and policy failure solely as legal or administrative problems, the metaphors frame them as consequences of distorted ways of thinking and unethical leadership practices. This thematic pattern indicates that political legitimacy depends not only on institutional performance but also on the ethical orientation guiding political decision-making.

Taken together, the findings across the three thematic categories demonstrate that conceptual metaphors in Meet Nite Live systematically connect interpersonal experience, institutional governance, and leadership ethics. This progression provides the analytical foundation for the following General Discussion, which synthesizes these themes to explain how conceptual metaphor functions simultaneously as a cognitive mechanism, a discursive strategy, and a vehicle for ideological criticism in Indonesian political satire.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that conceptual metaphors in Meet Nite Live function far beyond stylistic ornamentation or humorous language. Across the three thematic categories identified in this study, metaphors consistently reconstruct abstract political concepts through concrete, embodied experiences that are familiar to Indonesian audiences. Political relationships are understood through intimate interpersonal interactions, institutional governance through tangible objects and environmental phenomena, and leadership through experiences associated with digital technology and navigation. This systematic pattern indicates that political satire relies on conceptual metaphor as a cognitive strategy for translating complex political realities into accessible forms of public understanding.

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the findings reveal that the selection of source domains is not arbitrary. Instead, Meet Nite Live consistently draws upon experiential domains that are deeply embedded in everyday social life. Romantic relationships and marriage provide conceptual resources for evaluating trust and accountability between the government and citizens. Documents, natural phenomena, and repetitive cycles explain institutional legitimacy, corruption, and law enforcement, whereas digital technology and navigation provide frameworks for criticizing leadership, bureaucratic ethics, and policy direction. These findings extend previous metaphor studies by demonstrating that Indonesian political satire systematically selects source domains that are culturally familiar and cognitively salient for contemporary audiences, thereby strengthening both comprehensibility and persuasive force.

The image schema analysis further demonstrates that these conceptual mappings are grounded in embodied cognitive structures. Recurrent schemas such as Link, Container, Cycle, Force, and Path organize metaphorical reasoning across different political issues while maintaining conceptual coherence. Rather than functioning independently, these image schemas provide the experiential foundations that enable abstract political concepts to be interpreted through bodily interaction with the physical and social world. The findings therefore support the cognitive linguistic claim that metaphorical reasoning is motivated by recurring patterns of embodied experience while illustrating how these schemas operate within the discourse of Indonesian political satire.



From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, conceptual metaphors simultaneously function as ideological resources through which political criticism is negotiated. Instead of directly accusing political actors or institutions, Meet Nite Live employs humorous metaphorical expressions that reduce social distance between political elites and ordinary citizens. This indirect strategy allows audiences to evaluate political legitimacy through familiar moral experiences rather than through abstract political terminology. Humor therefore does not diminish the seriousness of political criticism; instead, it increases its persuasive potential by embedding ideological evaluation within everyday experience.

An important contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that Indonesian political satire systematically integrates cognitive and critical dimensions of metaphor. Previous studies have generally emphasized either the cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphorical thought or the ideological functions of metaphor in political discourse. The present findings indicate that these two perspectives are complementary rather than contradictory. Conceptual metaphors simultaneously structure political understanding, facilitate public engagement, and construct ideological critique. Consequently, metaphor should be understood not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a multidimensional discourse strategy operating at cognitive, communicative, and sociopolitical levels.

Taken together, the three thematic categories reveal a progressive conceptualization of political life. Political criticism begins with interpersonal relationships between the government and citizens, expands toward the performance of democratic institutions, and culminates in the ethical orientation of political leadership. This progression suggests that Meet Nite Live portrays political problems not as isolated events but as interconnected dimensions of governance that extend from individual leadership to institutional performance and ultimately to democratic legitimacy. By integrating Conceptual Metaphor Theory, image schema analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis, this study provides a comprehensive explanation of how metaphor functions simultaneously as a cognitive mechanism for organizing political thought and as a discursive strategy for articulating political criticism in contemporary Indonesian satire.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated conceptual metaphors employed in Meet Nite Live to construct political criticism within contemporary Indonesian political satire. Drawing upon Conceptual Metaphor Theory, image schema analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study identified eight conceptual metaphors that were organized into three thematic categories: Political Relationships, Governance and Institutional Failure, and Leadership and Bureaucratic Ethics. These thematic patterns demonstrate that political criticism is systematically conceptualized through familiar experiential domains, enabling complex political realities to become cognitively accessible to wider audiences.

The analysis reveals that the selected source domains are not randomly employed. Instead, Meet Nite Live consistently utilizes embodied experiences derived from interpersonal relationships, everyday objects, natural phenomena, digital technology, and

navigation to explain abstract political concepts. These conceptual mappings are reinforced by recurrent image schemas, including Link, Container, Cycle, Force, and Path, which organize metaphorical reasoning across different dimensions of political life. Consequently, metaphor functions not merely as a stylistic device but as a cognitive mechanism through which political reality is interpreted and communicated.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the findings further demonstrate that conceptual metaphors serve as an effective discursive strategy for articulating ideological criticism through humor. Rather than directly confronting political actors, Meet Nite Live employs familiar metaphorical experiences that encourage audiences to evaluate political legitimacy, institutional performance, and leadership ethics through everyday moral reasoning. This indirect strategy enhances both the accessibility and persuasive power of political satire.

The principal contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that Indonesian political satire systematically selects culturally familiar experiential domains to construct political criticism. Rather than functioning independently, conceptual metaphor, image schema, and critical discourse interact to produce coherent ideological narratives that connect interpersonal relationships, institutional governance, and political leadership. This finding contributes to the growing body of research on political metaphor by illustrating how cognitive and critical approaches can be integrated to explain the persuasive mechanisms of satirical discourse in digital media.

This study is limited to metaphorical expressions identified in selected episodes of Meet Nite Live. Future research may expand the corpus by incorporating additional political satire programs, cross-platform digital content, or comparative studies across different cultural and political contexts. Further investigation employing multimodal discourse analysis or computational metaphor identification may also provide deeper insights into how verbal, visual, and performative elements jointly construct political criticism in contemporary media.

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