

## PRAGMATIC METAPHOR IN THE STATEMENT OF ELITES OF THE ACEH GOVERNMENT WHEN CONTROLLING COVID-19 IN ACEH PROVINCE

RN Herman<sup>1</sup>, Nira Erdiana<sup>2</sup> dan Rahmad Nuthihar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Bahasa Indonesian Education, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh

<sup>2</sup>Department of English Education, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh

<sup>3</sup>Akademi Komunitas Negeri Aceh Barat

hermannrn13@gmail.com; niraerdiana@unsyiah.ac.id; rahmad.nuthihar@aknacehbarat.ac.id

### ABSTRAK

*This study discusses the style of communication of the Aceh Government elites during the Covid-19 response in Aceh Province. The statements of the government elites are important to study because the government elites have a role, power and authority in the form of policies. What is the policy and wisdom of the speech acts of the Aceh Government elites during the response to Covid-19 in Aceh? This is the focus of the research so that a comprehensive description of the language style and speech acts of the Aceh Government elite will be obtained in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The statement of the Aceh Government elites when responding Covid-19 Pandemic actually contains many metaphorical elements that have led to various interpretations and perceptions in the wider community. On the one hand, the Aceh Government issued a statement with the aim of wanting to reduce and break the chain of the spread of Covid-19 while at the same time controlling the social life situation of the community to keep it safe and under control, on the other hand it turns out that this statement can be interpreted differently by many people. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the pragmatic function of metaphors in the speech of the Aceh Government elites during the Covid-19 response in Aceh Province. Data collection was carried out through mass media coverage. The statements of the Aceh Government elites in the mass media are collected, identified and classified so that they compile statements that lead to a metaphor. Furthermore, the data is analyzed in terms of the pragmatic function as a knowledge and learning social communication for the wider community. The mass media which is used as a reference source for data collection is representative mass media read by the people of Aceh, both printed and online media. The statement of the Aceh Government elites that has gone viral in the social life of the community will be prioritized as the primary data source. Thus, the stages of this research are (1) providing data; (2) data description; (3) and data analysis. Data analysis was carried out by coding (Saldana, 2009), then interpreted with a semantic approach. The results showed that the statements of the Aceh Government elites when responding Covid-19 Pandemic generally contained assertive, directive, and expressive pragmatic functions. This function shows the existence of a linguistic strategy in the social communication of the Aceh Government elites to provide services to the community as well as an effort to break the chain of the spread of Covid-19 in Aceh. This pragmatic function is also related to the politeness of language in the Acehese government elite in the face of a disease that has plagued globally.*

**Keywords:** pragmatics, metaphors, Aceh government elites, Covid-19

### INTRODUCTION

Aceh, as we know, is the westernmost province on the tip of Sumatra Island. This does not mean that this region is free from disasters and calamities. Likewise with the coronavirus disease-19 (Covid-19) pandemic, since March 2020, this outbreak has entered Aceh. In fact, nationally, the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo has just given a statement that the first case of Covid-19 entered Indonesia on March 2, 2020 (Nuraini, 2020; Setyvani, 2020).

As reported by the mass media, on March 23, 2020, a positive patient of Covid-19 died at the Zainoel Abidin Regional General Hospital (RSUDZA) Banda Aceh. This is the first Covid-19 case in Aceh (Surry, 2020; DinasKesehatan, 2020; Ramadhan, 2020). Furthermore, there are 13 people affected or positive Covid-19 in this province, seven of whom are still one family (BBC, 2020). Only a few days apart, Covid-19 cases were also found in Aceh Tengah. It was reported that 3 people were exposed to Covid-19 in Aceh Tengah, including a doctor and nurse at the Datu Beru Takengon Hospital (Umar, 2020; Kompas, 2020).

Since Covid-19 hit Aceh, various prevention efforts have been carried out, including forming a task force to control the Covid-19 Aceh. The Aceh Covid-19 Task Force is led by a spokesperson. Since the Aceh Covid-19 Task Force was formed, the Aceh Government has made every effort to provide information to residents regarding Covid-19. This information is conveyed through the mass media. Updates regarding Covid-19 in Aceh were also delivered through the official website of the Government of Aceh, namely <http://covid19.acehprov.go.id>. It is on this website that various things are conveyed by the Government of Aceh, not only the development of the Covid-19 case, but also policies, directions, and appeals (Infocovid-19, 2020). On behalf of the government, the spokesperson for the Aceh Covid-19

cluster often delivers statements in the mass media. This effort was made to prevent and break the chain of the spread of Covid-19 in Aceh (Tosepu et al., 2020). Moreover, statements in the mass media are considered a fast way to provide information to residents (Alafnan, 2020) so that the Aceh Government issues daily press statements related to Covid-19.

The problem is that sometimes the statements of the government elites are often met with controversy by the wider community. These are interesting to be researched and studied. A speaker sometimes makes statements that are ambiguous or multiple interpretations beyond their consciousness and meaning. This ambiguity can sometimes be explored as part of metaphorical pragmatics. This metaphoric element arises because the speaker tries to reflect on what he thinks, experiences, and feels (Lakoff & Johnsen, 2003).

In Acehese society, stories that contain metaphorical elements have become part of everyday's life. This is because every literary work written or created by Acehese in the past always contains a figurative language style, including metaphor (Harun et al., 2020; Relawati et al., 2018). For the people of Aceh themselves, the figurative language style plays as the most important characteristic in Acehese literary works so that a lot of advices are conveyed through metaphorical expressions. In fact, in the songs of the Acehese crib, metaphors often appear containing advice (Herman & Mukhlis, 2019). Thus, examining the metaphorical pragmatics in the statements of the Aceh Government elites during the response to Covid-19 in Aceh Province is an important effort to be done.

This study will provide an understanding to the audience that metaphorical elements in speech can arise due to several things, both situations, conditions, as well as because of the speaker's intent. The results of this study will be a scientific contribution in strengthening the pragmatic theory of metaphors. In a practical form, this research provides understanding to government elites and government elite candidates that in daily communication, humans cannot avoid metaphorical elements as a language style so that communicating with the people requires a lot of consideration and feeling.

There are several studies that are relevant to this study, among others research by Mohd. Harun, Yunisrina Qismullah Yusuf, and Karnafi, with the title *Figurative language used in a novel by Arafat Nur on the aceh conflict* (Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences, 2020); C. Genovesion with the title *Metaphor and what is meant: Metaphorical content, what is said, and contextualism* (Journal of Pragmatics, 2020); Baiq Haula and Tajudin Nur with the title *Conceptualization of Metaphors in the KOMPAS Opinion Rubric: Cognitive Semantic Studies* (Journal of Retorika, 2019); Sukma Adelina Ray with the title *Analysis of the Types of Metaphors in Newspapers: Semantic Studies* (Journal of Bahastra, 2019); Yuli Purnama Sari S, Arza Aibonotika, Zuli Laili Isnaini with the title *The Meaning of Metaphor of USHI 'Cow': Study of Cognitive Semantics* (Department of Japanese Language Education, Riau University, 2018).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study with linguistic text data sources. The language texts are taken from the utterances of the Aceh Government elites in the mass media about the response to Covid-19 in Aceh. The Aceh Government Elites meant here are the governor, the Aceh Covid-19 task force, the regional head/district head, the police chief, and the army (TNI) commander. The statements that are used as the object of this study are statements that have been published by the mass media, because statements that have been reported by the mass media are considered to have become public consumption. The mass media used as a reference source are media published in Aceh, regionally and nationally, both printed and online. The data that had been collected were analyzed qualitatively. To obtain comprehensive analysis results, the statements of the elites are analyzed semantically (meaning) because this study seeks to examine words and sentences that form a network of meanings and conceptual networks in a semantic field (Ismail, 2016). Metaphor data collection uses the coding method (Saldana, 2009). In more detail, this research consists of three stages, namely the stage of providing data, the stage of data classification, and the stage of data analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The expressions or statements that contain metaphorical elements have at least three pragmatic functions, namely assertive, directive, and expressive. The assertive function in the statement of the Aceh Government elite refers to the government's efforts to report, inform, remind, show facts, criticize, provide solutions, explain cases, submit assumptions, and provide reasons related to the Covid-19 case in Aceh. Furthermore, the function of the directive is with regard to asking for clarification, asking for help,

providing advice, giving warnings, giving advice, and asking for prayers regarding the development of Covid-19 in Aceh. The expressive function refers to the intention that shows the emotional state or mental attitude of the speaker. Thus, the expressive function relates to concern, worry, resentment, concern, complaint, anger, doubt, doubt, and surrender to the Aceh Government elite regarding the development of the Covid-19 case in Aceh.

This study shows several forms of metaphors in terms of pragmatic functions by the Aceh Government elites during the response to Covid-19 in Aceh. With the aim of minimizing the spread of Covid-19 in Aceh, there are times when elites convey statements through a metaphorical language style which contains certain objectives. For example, the statement of the Aceh Covid-19 Spokesperson, Saifullah Abdul Gani at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic regarding ‘mass graves’ turned out to have received contradictory responses from the Acehnese people (Dani, 2020; CNN, 2020; KumparanNews, 2020). Some think that this statement is a hope that many Acehnese people will be affected by Covid-19 so that graves are immediately provided. This statement is considered to have offended the Acehnese people. Finally, the Aceh Covid-19 Spokesperson was forced to apologize for his statement and retract the statement (Acehkini, 2020b; Serambinews, 2020b; Dani, 2020a).

### **Assertive function**

The assertive function refers to the speaker's intention of the fact of the existence or absence of something. In this case, the Aceh Government elites try to reveal facts about the development of Covid-19 in Aceh Province through a metaphorical language style. The disclosure of these facts is in the form of reports, information, flattery, ridicule, reproach, criticism, irony, and reminders. The assertive function of metaphorical pragmatics in the statements of the Aceh Government elites can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Statements of the Aceh Government Elites which Contain Pragmatic Assertive Metaphors

<b>Data</b>	<b>Ungkapan Metafora [Metaphorical Expressions]</b>	<b>Elite Penutur [Speakers from elites]</b>	<b>Sumber, tanggal [Source, Date]</b>
1	<i>Pemerintah Aceh sedang mempersiapkan “tanah untuk kuburan massal” korban Virus Corona.</i> [The Aceh government is preparing "land for mass graves" victims of the Corona Virus]	Juru Bicara Covid-19 Aceh [Covid-19 Aceh Spokesperson]	Cnnindonesia 28 March 2020; kumparan/acehkini 28 March 2020
2	<i>Kalau menurut saya, Pak Kadis, ini virus Corona berasal dari “senjata biologis”.</i> [In my opinion, Sir, this Corona virus comes from "biological weapons"]	Bupati Pidie, Roni Ahmad. Regent of Pidie, Roni Ahmad.	Channel, 3 April 2020; Detik.com, 4 April 2020
3	<i>Alhamdulillah, kita tutup tahun ‘pendemi’ 2020 dengan kasus terkonfirmasi paling rendah.</i> [Alhamdulillah, we are closing 'pandemic' 2020 with the lowest confirmed cases]	Jubir Covid-19 Aceh [Covid-19 Aceh Spokesperson]	Acehprov.go.id, 1 January 2021
4	<i>Kebijakan pemerintah sudah jelas, melarang untuk mudik lebaran.</i> [The government policy is clear, prohibiting Eid homecoming]	Gubernur Aceh [Governor of Aceh]	Antaranews, 5 Mei 2021

From the table above, it can be seen that the Aceh Government elites in issuing statements when dealing with Covid-19 tends to try to provide facts and data, both regarding the source of the outbreak, the efforts to be made by the government, current conditions, and prevention efforts in the form of appeals and requests. Statements in the form of information can be seen in data 1 [D1], data 3 [D3], while statements containing criticism can be seen in data 2 [D2], and statements containing warnings are seen in data 4 [D4]. On [D1] the spokesman for the Aceh Covid-19 cluster, Saifullah Abdul Gani, was trying to provide information regarding the handling of Covid-19 victims in Aceh. For this reason, the Aceh Government has prepared a burial ground. However, the term 'mass grave' used in the speech of the Aceh Covid-19 spokesperson has been interpreted contradictory by the wider community, causing protests in the mass media. In [D3], the statement of the Aceh Covid-19 Spokesperson seemed softer. He opened with the expression Alhamdulillah. The metaphorical element in this statement is seen in the term “we are closing the year of Pandemic 2020”. This metaphorical expression shows an information about 2020 as the year of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The next information is that the Pandemic year was closed with the lowest confirmed case of Covid-19 since the beginning of the outbreak of this outbreak to Aceh.

In [D2] it is seen that the Regent of Pidie, Roni Ahmad, issued a statement of annoyance at the Covid-19 outbreak. His resentment is shown by the emergence of the idiom “biological weapon”. Of course this expression contains elements of metaphor, because “biological weapons” can mean “biological weapons of killing”.

In [D4], the Governor of Aceh, Nova Iriansyah, tried to give an appeal as well as a ban on traveling during holidays. Homecoming or vacationing on holidays is considered to facilitate the spread of Covid-19 so that the Governor of Aceh issues a statement urging all Acehnese employees and people not to go home or go on vacation.

### Directive function

The directive function refers to the speaker’s intention to correct the previous expression. This is related to efforts to clarify the facts that have been spoken. In addition, the directive function is also concerned with asking for help, showing challenges, showing demands, giving suggestions and suggestions, providing motivation, and calming or interrupting. In the case of the Covid-19 response in Aceh, the statements that function in a directive manner can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Statements of Aceh Government Elites Containing Directive Metaphor Pragmatics

Data	Ungkapan Metafora [Metaphorical Expressions]	Elite Penutur [Speakers from elites]	Sumber, tanggal [Source, Date]
5	<i>Jam malam “mampu menghentikan” penyebaran Covid-19 di Aceh</i> (Popularitas, 2020b). [The curfew "is able to stop" the spread of Covid-19 in Aceh]	<i>Pangdan Iskandar Muda, Mayjen TNI Teguh Arif Indratmoko</i> [Military Commander of Iskandar Muda, Mayjen TNI Teguh Arif Indratmoko]	Popularitas.com 4 April 2020
6	<i>Saya meluruskan bahwa tanah yang dipersiapkan Pemerintah Aceh “bukan kuburan massal” melainkan tanah pemakaman jenazah dari RSUD dr Zainoel Abidin (RSUDZA) Banda Aceh.</i> [I straightened out that the land that the Aceh Government had prepared was "not a mass grave" but the burial ground for the body from the Dr. Zainoel Abidin Regional Hospital (RSUDZA) Banda Aceh]	Juru Bicara Covid-19 Aceh [Covid-19 Aceh Spokesperson]	Kumparan, 29 March 2021
7	<i>Maka, kalau ditanya saya bagaimana senjata biologis, saya juga tidak pernah dengar, saya juga tidak pernah lihat, tapi hanya saya lihat buku-buku, saya baca novel-novel tapi bagaimana bentuk barangnya, bagaimana bentuknya itu saya tidak tahu, tidak pahami.</i> [So, if I am asked how biological weapons are, I have never heard of it, I have never seen it either, but only I see books, I read novels but what the shape of the stuff is, I don't know what form it is, I don't understand it]	<i>Bupati Pidie, Roni Ahmad</i> Regent of Pidie, Roni Ahmad..	Detik.com, 5 April 2020 Dialeksis, 5 April 2020 Popularitas, 5 April 2020
8	<i>Plt. Gubernur Aceh minta Bank Aceh untuk “memberikan restrukturisasi” pembayaran pinjaman bagi ASN.</i> [The Caretaker Governor of Aceh asked Bank Aceh to "provide a restructuring" of loan payments to civil servants]	<i>Plt. Gubernur Aceh</i> [The caretaker Governor Aceh]	Acehonline.co 28 April 2020
9	<i>Kita ajak semua lapisan masyarakat untuk melindungi segi tiga wajahnya dengan protokol Kesehatan.</i> [We invite all levels of society to protect the triangle of its face with the Health protocol]	Jubir Covid-19 Aceh [Covid-19 Aceh Spokesperson]	Antaraneews, 19 April 2021

If the assertive function contains information on current facts, the directive function shows the continuation of the information from the facts that have been disclosed. However, the next information is in the form of clarifying the previous facts. This can be seen in [D6]. In [D6], the Aceh Covid-19 Spokesperson attempted to clarify the meaning of the previous phrase 'mass grave', because this

expression had caused unrest in the wider community. The clarification is in the form of adding a negation word so that it becomes 'not a mass grave' but a burial ground (Abonita, 2020c). Of course the Aceh Covid-19 Spokesperson is trying to refine the point so that 'mass burial ground' for Covid-19 victims is metaphorized with a burial ground. Statements in the form of clarification also emerged from the Regent of Pidie [D7] who had issued a metaphor statement "biological weapons" (DetikNews, 2020); (Dialeksis, 2020); (Popularitas, 2020a).

In [D5], the TNI Commander Iskandar Muda, Maj. Gen. Teguh Arif Indratmoko, issued a metaphorical statement of "curfew". In the statement appears the intention of the speaker who wants to provide challenges, suggestions, as well as suggestions for the wider community to comply with the "curfew". This is related to the habits of the Acehnese people who like to go out late at night, sitting in coffee shops and cafes. Expressions in the form of suggestions and suggestions were also seen in the statement of the Governor of Aceh [D8]. He suggested that Bank Aceh could provide a "restructuring of loan repayments" for civil servants. The term "restructuring" is included in the metaphor. Furthermore, in [D9] the Spokesperson for Covid-19 Aceh invites the public to protect the 'triangular face'. The term facial triangle is a metaphor for the two nostrils and the mouth opening.

### *Expressive function*

This function refers to the speaker's mental and emotional attitude. Its sub-function refers to an attitude of caring, an attitude of despair, an attitude of concern, an attitude of annoyance, an attitude of concern, an attitude of doubt, an attitude of concern, and an attitude of resignation. During the response to Covid-19 in Aceh, these attitudes appeared in almost every statement of the Aceh Government elites. However, only a few statements were taken as research data and are considered to have represented or represented the attitude of the Aceh Government elites during tackling Covid-19 in Aceh.

Table 3. Statements of Aceh Government Elites Containing Expressive Metaphor Pragmatics

<b>Data</b>	<b><i>Ungkapan Metafora</i> [Metaphorical Expressions]</b>	<b><i>Elite Penutur</i> [Speakers from elites]</b>	<b><i>Sumber, tanggal</i> [Source, Date]</b>
10	<i>Kalau menurut saya, Pak Kadis, ini virus Corona berasal dari "senjata biologis"</i> . [In my opinion, Sir, this Corona virus comes from "biological weapons"]	Bupati Pidie, Roni Ahmad. Regent of Pidie, Roni Ahmad.	Channel, 3 April 2020; Detik.com, 4 April 2020
11	<i>Alhamdulillah, sementara yang dirawat tinggal 40 orang, dan yang meninggal masih tetap 78 orang sejak awal pandemi.</i> [Alhamdulillah, while only 40 people have been treated, and 78 people have died since the beginning of the pandemic]	Aminullah Usman, Walikota Banda Aceh  [Aminullah Usman, Mayor of Banda Aceh]	Inews, 23 December 2020
12	<i>Virus corona itu memang tak kasat mata mamun korban-korbannya sudah di depan mata kita, karena itu mari menyikapinya dengan cara yang lebih serius, rasional, dan pro aktif, menangkal penularannya secara personal maupun bersama-sama masyarakat, dan pemerintah daerah.</i> [The corona virus is indeed invisible, but the victims are right in front of our eyes, so let's take it in a more serious, rational and pro-active way, preventing its spread both personally and with the community and local governments]	Jubir Covid-19 Aceh  [Covid-19 Aceh Spokesperson]	Kompas, 18 June 2021

Expressively, several Acehnese government elites often issue spontaneous statements, especially when responding to a matter, including the Covid-19 outbreak. This can be seen in [D10] which is the statement of the Regent of Pidie, Roni Ahmad. Spontaneously he called Covid-19 a "biological weapon". Because of his spontaneous nature, the Regent of Pidie was forced to issue an apology statement.

An attitude of concern and surrender is seen in [D11]. The Mayor of Banda Aceh, Aminullah Usman spontaneously said the word of gratitude (*Alhamdulillah*) regarding the Covid-19 data in Banda Aceh at that time that there were 40 people living in the hospital and 78 people who had died. Supposedly, with this case, a regional head does not need to say gratitude, but grief. However, because he was resigned to the existing conditions, the gratitude vocabulary just came out. In [D12], the Aceh Covid-19 Spokesperson expressed a statement of concern regarding the Covid-19 case in Aceh. The statement

contains a metaphor in the form of “the corona virus is invisible to the eye”. The term “invisible” is a metaphorical expression for something which is invisible but should not be taken lightly.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Overall, the Acehese government elites seem to be quickly worried but also try to be sensitive and responsive to natural phenomena, including disease outbreaks. Quick anxiety is shown by the appearance of statements that contain ambiguous meanings. However, all of that is also a form of responsiveness to natural phenomena. It is advisable to the Aceh Government elites and every official anywhere to think beforehand before issuing a statement. Statements of a government official can easily go viral, especially contradictory ones.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Complete Name	Institution	Education	Research Interests
RN Herman	Universitas Syiah Kuala	Bahasa Indonesia Education	Language, Art, and Literary
Nira Erdiana	Universitas Syiah Kuala	English Education	Language and Education
Rahmad Nuthihar	Akademi Komunitas Negeri Aceh Barat	Bahasa Indonesia Education	Language, speech, etc.