



# The Use of Metaphors in Malcolm X Speech Entitled *the Black Revolution*

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the metaphor in Malcolm X's speech entitled *The Black Revolution*. The method used is qualitative descriptive method using the theory of Lakoff and Johnson (2003) and strengthened by the theory of Saeed (2005) in describing the characteristics contained in the metaphor. This analysis aims to identify the metaphors contained in Malcolm X's speech. *The Black Revolution* explains how oppression and injustice have been accepted by the black community in America over the years. The results of the research are Structural, Orientation, and Ontological metaphors. The most dominant metaphor used in speech is structural metaphor. Then there are the characteristics of Conventional, Systematic, Asymmetric, and Abstraction. The most dominant characteristic in speech is the systematic one.

**Keywords:** Black Community; Metaphors; Malcolm X; Speech

## **Introduction**

In the American black nationalist movement, there was one of the most important figures, Malcolm X or by his Islamic name El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. He had many ideas, such as racial pride and self-defense. He also became the ideologue of the black movement that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. After his murder, his life story spread widely and made him a hero of ideology, especially among black youth. His fame was strengthened, with the publication of Autobiography in 1965 (Temkin, 2012). Malcolm X is one of the figures who was born as a fighter for the enforcement of black civil rights in the United States. He was motivated by several things that made him interested in enforcing the civil rights of the black community in the United States, namely: the misery of the Malcolm X family who often became victims of violence against the white American community, also factors influenced by Elijah Muhammad which led him to the Nation of Islam organization on the importance of upholding the civil rights of black people (Malik & Darmawan, 2017).

Malcolm X has a goal to speak in front of the audiences certainly. And the purposes of speaking are classified into five: the first aims to encourage the audiences - the speaker arouse excitement and show respect and devotion to audience, the second is to convince the audiences - the speaker tries to influence their beliefs, the third is to move them - the speaker requires action or physical reaction from the audience by awakening emotions, the fourth is to inform - the speaker tries to describe or convey something to the listeners, and the fifth is to increase their enthusiasm - the speaker intends to increase and to entertain the audience (Keraf, 1980). Furthermore, it is reinforced by Och and Winker that the purpose of speech has 3 general objectives, namely as follows: the first is to inform, second is to entertain, and the last is to persuade. Based on the statement above, it can be emphasized that the purpose of speech is to provide information, entertain, convince something to others in order to communicate, add insight, and knowledge (Tarigan, 2008).

The purpose of Malcolm X's speech is to indict racism against black people.

Furthermore, Malcolm also relies on linguistics to maintain the strong relationship he has developed with his audience. Through language, social groups and individuals are identified, integrated and strengthened. In general, the interpersonal function of language is related to the way humans manifest themselves through language. The affective attitude in Malcolm X's speech reveals varying degrees of positive and negative emotional involvement such as sympathy, sadness, hatred, and anger. Malcolm also expresses emotions and feelings to influence the reactions of potential respondents and to build an ideal audience for his speech (Aqeeli, 2020)

The problem that often occurs among people about language is the use of metaphors. The use of metaphorical language style can attract the attention of the listener or reader. Metaphors can be applied anywhere they do not have to be a normal event or formal writing. Metaphor is not only in the words we use, but also in arguments and opinions. People think that humans can talk without using metaphors, but in fact everyday life already depends on metaphors. Not only inherent in language, but metaphor is also attached to human thoughts and actions (Lakoff, G and Johnson, 2003). It is classified that metaphor is figurative expression in which an idea explained in terms usually used for different meanings (Kreidler, 1998). Here the conceptual metaphor takes the right part to describe Malcolm X's speech which contains metaphors.

Metaphor is one of figurative languages which has different meaning and it compares two things. For instance, in one example of the expression of "ARGUMENT IS WAR" in the sentence "I'm never won an argument with him", in that sentence there is no physical battle but a verbal battle which a person can lose when arguing with his opponent. It is in sense that the intended metaphor of "ARGUMENT IS WAR". Metaphor in political discourse is one of the interesting metaphors with the features. Speakers use metaphors in speeches to express their beautiful and powerful language. To use beautiful and interesting language, the use of metaphors is supported by the importance of the listeners to understand the language spoken from different points of view and comparisons. The use of metaphors is very useful

to bring the language so that listeners are moved to understand the metaphor (Lakoff, G and Johnson, 2003)

To determine if a sentence is a metaphor, it is necessary to indicate that the sentence is a metaphor. According to Saeed that word groups that have four characteristics are called metaphors. The four characteristics are: conventional, systematic, asymmetric, and abstract (Lyra et al., 2018).

1. Conventional is a metaphor whose existence is already common and considered as everyday vocabulary used by society.
2. Systematic means that there is one point of similarity that is incorporated in the comparison of the source and target domains.
3. Asymmetry are two concepts that are compared with the unidirectional nature.
4. Abstraction is something that is concrete to be described to something abstract.

There are three kinds of conceptual metaphor: structural metaphor, orientational metaphor, and ontological metaphor (Lakoff, G and Johnson, 2003). And the researcher tries to analyze the utterances of Malcolm X's speech through metaphor based on Lakoff and Johnson's theory above.

1. The source and target domain are two domains found in structural metaphors. Everyday experiences and having systematic correlations are the basis of structural metaphors. An example of a structural metaphor is "LIFE IS JOURNEY"
2. Metaphors related to spatial orientation, such as up and down, front-back, inside-out, and others. Examples of orientational metaphors are "HAPPY IS UP", "HEALTH IS UP". This spatial orientation appears that the human body functions in a physical environment. The concept shown by the orientational

metaphor is spatial which can vary according to the physical experience and culture of the community. Therefore, orientational metaphor is different in every corner.

3. Metaphors that make emotional activities, events, and ideas as entities and substances are ontological metaphors. The ontological metaphor is to make something concrete into something abstract. Similarly, Nordquist classifies that ontological metaphor is a figurative comparison in which something concrete is predictable onto something abstract. An illustration of an ontological metaphor is "THE MIND IS MACHINE" (Arifatin, 2019).

The analysis of metaphors in the speeches has been done by several researchers with different approaches. Furthermore, the research by Muhammad Ali that discusses how metaphors work to convey messages in Donald Trump's speech about immigration. He researched metaphors using Richard's theory which discussed the tenor-vehicle metaphorical model. In the statement it was revealed that Donald Trump uses the unique words instead of using nouns or other metaphorical words, Trump uses verbs and phrases that are in non-metaphorical pattern following the tenor-vehicle model (Ali, 2021). Furthermore, research conducted by Risdianto has conducted research that focuses on the use of metaphors in Barack Obama's inauguration speech. He researched Barack Obama's speech about America's plans for the future. He found several conceptual metaphors contained in Barack Obama's speech using Lakoff and Johnson's theory (Risdianto, 2016). Another study conducted by Rizqi, Putri, and Diana on conceptual metaphors in some of Barack Obama's 2013 speeches and comments about the economic crisis. In the speech it was revealed that Barack Obama uses the economy as his target domain and its dominant sources such as crops, buildings, and travel (Rizqy et al., 2013). It seems that among previous studies there were less attention to the use of metaphors in Malcolm X's speech. Malcolm X's metaphorical expressions have not been studied before, especially from a metaphorical perspective based on Lakoff and Johnson's

theory. Malcolm X's speech entitled "The Black Revolution" has raised a lot of discussion about how slavery and injustice happened in America to black people. How white people enslave black people and claim black people's right to prosper is contained in Malcolm X's speech. In speech, language is the main character of all existing discussions. He uses many metaphors in his speech.

This paper analyzes the metaphors contained in Malcolm X's speech entitled 'The Black Revolution' in 1964. He describes how oppression and injustice have been accepted by the black community in America. Malcolm X also features on linguistics to maintain the strong relationship he has developed with his audiences. Therefore, the metaphors used in Malcolm X's speech has a lot of influences on his audiences. Furthermore, to analyze the types of metaphors contained in Malcolm X's speech, the researcher uses the theoretical basis of metaphor according to (Lakoff, G and Johnson, 2003) and theoretical basis (Saeed, 2005) to describe the characteristics contained in the metaphor. Conceptual metaphors are divided into three, namely: structural, oriental, and ontological metaphors. Based on this description, the researcher formulated: What are the types and characteristics of the metaphors used in Malcolm X's speech?

## **Method**

Descriptive qualitative is the research method used in this study. Qualitative research aims at explaining or describing situation, event, object, whether person or everything related to variables that can be explicated either by words or numbers (Samsu, 2017). The use of qualitative for this research is because the researcher takes data in the form of a transcript of Malcolm X's speech which explaining situation and produces utterances. Therefore, qualitative is the appropriate method to be used in research.

The data source in this study is transcript of one of Malcolm X's speeches. The title of Malcolm X's speech that the researcher used is The Black Revolution. Malcolm X's transcripts are taken from internet sources and Malcolm X's recorded speeches on YouTube about The Black Revolution.

The implementation of this study begins with the provision of data which is carried out using the listening method (Sudaryanto, 2015). To collect the data, the researcher did several steps. The first step is reading and understanding the utterances in transcript of Malcolm X's speech. Next is looking for problems or phenomena in Malcolm X's speech. After that is finding and taking notes the utterances that contain metaphorical expressions.

Data analysis was carried out after data collection. The first is that the data from Malcolm x's transcript are classified according to the metaphorical expression. The second is that the data is presented to the metaphors according to the theory of Lakoff and Johnson. Furthermore, the researcher concludes based on the findings of the analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

However, in Malcolm X's speech, there are several metaphors that match the theory of Lakoff and Johnson. This research analysis uses the theoretical basis of Lakoff and Johnson to find out what the kinds, dominant, characteristic of metaphors in Malcom X's speech with the theme of racism and African-American Muslim. There are structural, orientational, and ontological metaphors. The following is the result of an analysis of the metaphors contained in one of Malcolm X's speeches entitled "The Black Revolution".

### ***Structural Metaphor***

"Will the exploited and oppressed black masses seek integration with their white exploiters and white oppressors or will these awakened black masses truly revolt and separate themselves completely from this wicked race that has enslaved us?"

The utterances above are a question asked by Malcolm X at the beginning of his speech. Integration is the renewal of differences into unity. In the sentence "white exploiters" and "white oppressors" become a metaphor that is emphasized to the white people who have oppressed and enslaved black people in America. The utterance "wicked race" also becomes

another metaphor, namely the white race which is called vicious because it has enslaved the black race. Injustice perpetrated by white people refers to the concept of crime against black people. The type of expression in the sentence is a structural metaphor. The domain sources in the metaphorical expressions here are the expressions of “white exploiters, white oppressors, and wicked race” The domain target is white people who have committed crimes such as oppression and slavery against black people.

“Islam is the religion of naked truth, undressed truth, truth that is not dressed up, and he says that truth is the only thing that will truly set our people free.”

The utterances “Islam is the religion of naked truth, undressed truth, truth is not dress up” it states Islam is a religion that transparent to the truth. Religion who has the truth is not covered by anything, and even Islam is a religion who have truth will liberate the true Muslims. The relationship between Islam and the changing attitudes of white people in America is totally submission to God's will, or compliance to God in righteousness. A Muslim is one who endeavors to live in truth. What will happen in the future during the black revolution in America, whether there will be integration, segregation, or total separation between black and white communities in America are all God's will. The type of metaphor in the expression is a structural metaphor. The source domain is Islam the religion of naked truth, undressed truth, truth is not dressed up. The target domain is the will of almighty god against the black revolution in America.

“Truth will stand us on our own feet.”

The utterances “Truth will stand us on our own feet” states that the truth will side with the black community. The truth will give awareness to the black community of what the



white community has done for the black community in America. The type of metaphor contained in the utterance is a structural metaphor. The source domain is in the truth. The target domain is black people who are aware of the truth and what white people have done to black people in America.

“Truth not only shows us who our real enemy is, truth also gives us the strength and the know-how to separate ourselves from that enemy. Only a blind man will walk into the open embrace of his enemy, and only a blind people, a people who are blind to the truth about their enemies, will seek to embrace or integrate with that enemy. Why, Jesus himself prophesied: You shall know the truth and it shall make you free.”

The utterances “Only a blind man will walk into the open embrace of his enemy” states that only people who are blind about the truth will enter the enemy's trap. Blind people here refer to people who do not believe in the truth of religion that has been ordained by God. So, these people are lost and do not know the real direction of life. Therefore, Malcolm X realized that the truth in religion really can opens the eyes of the people who believe in the truth. The type of metaphor contained above expression is a type of structural metaphor. The source domain is the blind man and the target source is people who do not believe in the truth of God.

“God must destroy the world of slavery and evil in order to establish a world based upon freedom, justice, and equality.”

The utterances “God must destroy the world of slavery and evil in order to establish a world based upon freedom, justice, and equality.” It shows that God must destroy the world of slavery and crime in America to create freedom, justice, and equality in America. The sentence is

associated that something cannot change to be better if the damage has not been repaired. Malcolm X believed that black revolution was a divine plan of God who had the truth. Therefore, Malcolm X made the black community aware through destruction of slavery could happen by the will of God. People must believe in the truth that is shown by God. The type of metaphor contained in the expression is a structural metaphor. The source domain is God and the target domain is the belief in God's will that can destroy the world of slavery and crime.

“America herself is now facing her day of judgement, and she can't escape because God Himself is the judge.”

The utterances “God Himself is judge” shows that only God has power over the world. America has faced a day of judgment when they cannot escape from God's judgement. If white people are not responsible for what they have done to black people. Then the white people will receive a recompense from the judge, it is God himself. The type of metaphor above expression is a structural metaphor. The source domain is in God and the target domain is in the judge.

### ***Orientational Metaphor***

“How can the so-called Negroes who call themselves enlightened leaders expect the poor black sheep to integrate into a society of bloodthirsty white wolves, white wolves who have already been sucking on our blood for over four hundred years here in America?”

In the utterance “black sheep” refers to the black community like sheep being herded by white people. Furthermore, in utterance “white wolves”, refers to fierce and savage wolf like the white American society who is cruel to the black community. Furthermore, the suffer experienced by black community refers to their energy which has always been used by the white

community for many years in the sentence 'White wolves who have already been sucking on our blood for ever four hundred years in America'. The type of metaphor found in the sentence above is an orientational metaphor. There is a spatial association in the form of a low condition contained in the utterance "sucking blood". The utterance "sucking blood" which is associated with utilization, suffering, and exhaustion.

"But if America waits for God to step in and force her to make a just settlement, God will take this entire continent away from the white man."

The utterance "God to step in" indicates that God is getting into America's problems to make a just settlement. If America does not have the good intentions to solve the problem for black people, then God will step in and take the entire America continent away from white people. The type of metaphor in the expression is an orientational metaphor. As in Lakoff and Johnson's book "Were Live By" which states that serving God, respect to material possession is "Virtue is Up" in an orientational metaphor. God intervened associated that God was involved in human affairs in the world and would repay what they did in the world.

### ***Ontological Metaphor***

"He kept us in the darkness of ignorance. He made us spiritually blind by depriving us of the light of truth. During the four hundred years that we have spent confined to the darkness of ignorance here in this land of bondage, our American enslavers have given us an overdose of their own white-controlled Christian religion, but have kept all other religions hidden from us, especially the religion of Islam."

The utterances "He made us spiritually blind by depriving us of the light of truth." shows

that the light in question is the truth of Islamic religion which has been covered up for so long. For more than four hundred years the white community has hidden the truth that Islam exists in America so that black people live in darkness without the truth. White people said that they hold the truth against black people. But the reality is that white people hide all religions (the light of truth) especially Islam in the slavery of black people. The type of metaphor in this expression is ontological metaphor. According to Lakoff and Johnson that orientational metaphors elicit experiences with physical objects, especially the human body. Blind refers to people who cannot see anything, but in the utterance, blind is associated with white people who have hidden the truth from black people. So that black people do not know the truth.

“The Honorable Elijah Muhammad says that America has signed their own doom. And you, our people, would be foolish to accept her deceitful offers of integration at this late date into her doomed society.”

The utterances “America has signed their own doom” indicates that America is ready to get its own doom. The punishment here is God's vengeance on the white American people who have lied to the black community for the integration offer that offered to the black community. The type of metaphor contained in the expression is an ontological metaphor. According to Lakoff and Johnson that to understand events, actions, activities, and circumstances also actions are conceptualized metaphorically as objects using ontological metaphors. Signing is generally defined to sign a contract, statement, bound promise, and etc. But signing here is associated that white people have accepted or plunged themselves into the lies they have done.

“The Honorable Elijah Muhammad says a desegregated theater, a desegregated lunch counter won't solve our problem. Better jobs won't even solve our problems. An

integrated cup of coffee isn't sufficient pay for four hundred years of slave labor."

The utterances "desegregated theatre, a desegregated lunch, and cup of coffee" shows that America's crimes cannot be redeemed by anything to forgive its crimes. Therefore, Elijah Muhammad, the teacher of Malcolm X, gave the opinion that the only way to have freedom was to separate from white society. The type of metaphor in the expression is an ontological metaphor. The utterances desegregated theatre, a desegregated lunch, and cup of coffee' generally denote places, verbs, and a cup of coffee that humans usually do. But the utterances here associated with America's offer that cannot atone for its crimes against black society.

"We want no part of integration with this wicked race of devils. But he also says we should not be expected to leave America empty-handed."

The utterance "empty-handed" shows that America does not want black people to leave America if they do not give something useful to America. Black people have rejected integration from America, but America still wants black people also make a good impact on America before leaving America. The type of metaphor in the expression is an ontological metaphor. According to Lakoff and Johnson a type of metaphorical expression there is a personification included in the type of ontological metaphor. Empty hands generally mean hands that do not carry anything, but in this utterance, it is associated with black people to make a good impact before leaving America.

The following is the relationship between theories based on the characteristic by Saeed and the conceptual metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson in Malcolm X's speech "The Black Revolution".

<b>Data</b>	<b>Saeed's Theory</b>	<b>Lakoff and Johnson's Theory</b>
1	Systematic	Structural
2	Systematic	Structural
3	Systematic	Structural
4	Systematic	Structural
5	Systematic	Structural
6	Systematic	Structural
7	Asymmetry	Orientational
8	Asymmetry	Orientational
9	Abstraction	Ontological
10	Abstraction	Ontological
11	Conventional	Ontological

From the results above, it is stated that there are 6 systematic characteristics that explain there is one point of similarity that is incorporated in the comparison of the source and target domains in the structural metaphor. Next, there are 2 asymmetry characteristics that explain two concepts that are compared with the unidirectional nature in orientational metaphors. Then the result of ontological metaphor which has the characteristic of abstraction which explains something that is concrete to be described to something abstract, and conventional metaphor which explains the metaphor whose existence is already common and considered as everyday vocabulary used by society.

## **Conclusion**

The metaphor in Malcolm X's speech entitled "The Black Revolution" is upholding human rights, anti-racism, and the oneness of God. Based on the results of the research that the researchers discussed in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the types of metaphors in Malcolm X's speech entitled "The Black Revolution" use Lakoff and Johnson's theory, which consists of 6 structural metaphors, 2 orientational metaphors, and 3 ontological metaphors. In this study, most structural metaphors were found.

Based on the results of characteristic analysis using Saeed's theory, there are 6 systematic characters, 2 asymmetric characters, 2 abstraction characters, and 1 conventional character. The relationship between the two is very sustainable because of the comparison between the two domains in conventional characteristics in structural metaphors. There is a comparison between the two directions in the characteristics of the orientational metaphor. Also, the transfer of the concept from something concrete to abstract in characteristics of abstraction in ontological metaphor. As well as the existence of everyday vocabulary in conventional characteristics in the ontological metaphor which was conveyed by Malcolm X in his speech.

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