

## ***Place Name Metonymy And Political Power: The Case Of Menteng In Indonesian Media Discourse***

Muhammad Adam<sup>1</sup>, Fathu Rahman<sup>1</sup>, Harlinah Sahib<sup>1</sup>, Herawaty Abbas<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia.

### ***Abstract***

This study examines the metonymic use of the place name Menteng in Indonesian media political discourse. Specifically, this study aims to identify forms of metonymy involving Menteng, determine the actual referents it represents, and explain its discursive function in constructing meanings of power. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with discourse analysis methods based on metonymy theory in cognitive linguistics and political discourse analysis. The data consists of sentences from political media texts containing the word Menteng and used in non-literal contexts. The results show that Menteng is consistently used as a metonymy to represent political elites, institutions, and power networks through the conceptual pattern PLACE → POLITICAL ELITE/INSTITUTION. Furthermore, the use of Menteng metonymy has a discursive function as a representational strategy and ideological critique of the dominance of political elites and the power relations between the center of power and the public. This study confirms that place name metonymy is not neutral, but rather plays an active role in shaping political meanings and perceptions in Indonesian media discourse.

**Keywords:** Metonymy, Menteng, Political Discourse, Cognitive Linguistics, Indonesian Media.

### ***1. Introduction***

Language plays a central role in shaping and representing social reality, including in the political realm. In contemporary discourse studies, language is not understood as neutral, but rather functions as a social practice directly involved in the formation, legitimization, and reproduction of power relations and ideology (van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Weda et al., 2021). Through mass media, political discourse is presented to the public using various linguistic strategies aimed at simplifying complex political realities while simultaneously framing specific actors, policies, and power relations.

One prominent linguistic strategy in political discourse is metonymy. In contemporary cognitive linguistics, metonymy is understood as a conceptual mechanism that allows one entity to be used to refer to another entity within the same conceptual domain through a relationship of contiguity (Kövecses, 2010; Littlemore, 2015; Aswad et al., 2019). Metonymy functions to focus attention on specific aspects of a concept, thereby enabling the condensation of meaning and the simplification of social representations in texts and discourse (Brdar & Brdar-Szabó, 2014). In the context of political discourse, metonymy is often used to indirectly represent institutions, actors, or centers of power, while also functioning as a discursive strategy in framing power relations and ideology (Chilton & Schäffner, 2011; Wodak, 2021; Dalyan et al., 2022).

The use of place names as metonymic expressions is a common practice in media political discourse. Barcelona (2003) explains that place names have strong symbolic potential because they contain social, historical, and ideological associations. Therefore, place names are often used to represent political actors or decision-making centers through metonymic patterns such as PLACE → INSTITUTION or PLACE → POLITICAL ACTOR. Chilton (2004) adds that this strategy allows media and political writers to convey criticism, legitimacy, or evaluation of power without explicitly naming the actors. In the Indonesian context, Menteng is known not only as a geographical area in Jakarta,

but also as a symbolic space associated with the political elite and centers of influence. In political media discourse, the mention of Menteng frequently appears in the context of policy, power, and decision-making, indicating that the place name has undergone a metonymic expansion of meaning. Menteng is no longer understood solely as a physical location, but rather as a representation of elite networks and centers of power influential in national politics.

Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the metonymic use of the place name Menteng in Indonesian political discourse and to determine the actual referents it represents in media contexts. Furthermore, this study aims to explain the discursive function of the Menteng metonymy in constructing meanings of power and relations between political elites and the public. This research is significant because it can contribute to the study of cognitive linguistics and political discourse analysis by highlighting how a single place name can function as a symbol of power and ideology in Indonesian media discourse.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Metonymy in Cognitive Linguistics**

Metonymy is an important conceptual mechanism in contemporary cognitive linguistics. Metonymy is understood not simply as a figure of speech, but as a cognitive process that enables the understanding of a concept through other concepts within the same conceptual domain based on contiguity relationships, such as part-whole, cause-effect, or place-institution (Kövecses, 2010; Littlemore, 2015). Unlike metaphor, which involves cross-domain mapping, metonymy operates intra-domain and serves to highlight certain aspects of an entity while downplaying others (Brdar & Brdar-Szabó, 2014). In social and political contexts, metonymy allows speakers or writers to indirectly refer to actors, institutions, or power relations, resulting in an effective condensation of meaning while also carrying ideological implications in shaping public understanding of social reality (Chilton & Schäffner, 2011; Asba et al., 2019).

### **2.2. Metonymy of Place Names in Political Discourse**

The use of place names as metonymic expressions is a common phenomenon in political discourse. According to Barcelona (2003), place names are often used to represent institutions, power, or political actors because places have strong social and historical associations. Metonymic patterns such as PLACE → INSTITUTION or PLACE → POLITICAL ACTOR allow the complexity of power structures to be simplified into a single, easily recognizable linguistic marker.

This explanation aligns with Chilton (2004), who stated that in political discourse, metonymy of place names functions as a discursive strategy to establish legitimacy, authority, or critique without explicitly naming the actors. This is evident in various global contexts, such as the use of the White House to refer to the United States government or Downing Street for the British government. This practice demonstrates that geographical space can undergo an expansion of meaning to become a symbol of political power.

### **2.3. Studies of Metonymy in Indonesian Political Discourse**

In the Indonesian context, several studies have examined the use of metonymy of place names in political discourse. Senayan is one of the most frequently analyzed examples of metonymy for legislative institutions or members of parliament. The use of Senayan in the media no longer refers to a physical location, but to the institutions and political actors within it (Haryatmoko, 2017). Furthermore, research on Cendana demonstrates how place names can function as symbols of presidential power and certain regimes. These studies confirm that the metonymy of place names in Indonesia has strong

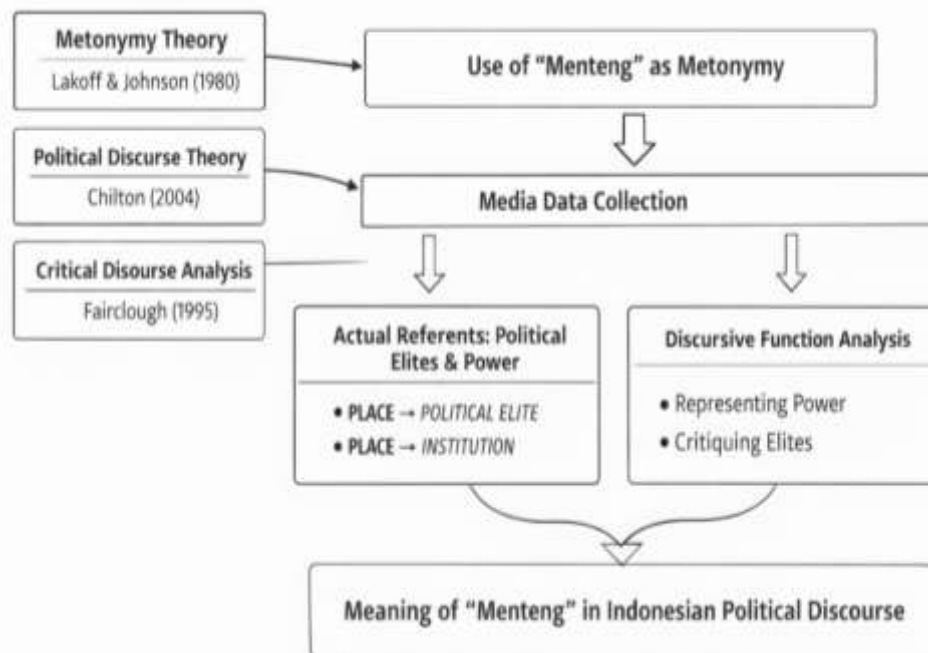
historical and ideological dimensions and plays a role in shaping public perceptions of political power (Eriyanto, 2009). However, most of these studies still focus on place names directly related to formal state institutions.

#### **2.4. Menteng as a Symbolic Space in Political Discourse**

Historically and socially, Menteng is known as an elite area with symbolic value in the context of Jakarta and Indonesia. Although not formally the center of state institutions, Menteng is often associated with the political elite, intellectuals, and decision-makers. Historically, this area developed as an elite residential area since the colonial era and later became the residence of officials and social elites, thus establishing strong symbolic capital in the public imagination (Yasin, 2025). In media discourse, the use of Menteng in political contexts indicates a process of metonymization, where place names are used to represent networks of power and political elites. This phenomenon aligns with contemporary studies on spatial discourse, which show that urban space is often used as a symbol of power relations and social structures in discursive practices (Lefebvre, 2020; Wodak & Reisigl, 2015).

However, academic studies specifically discussing Menteng as a metonymic expression in Indonesian political discourse are still very limited. Most previous research has focused on metonymy referring to formal institutions, such as parliament or the presidency, leaving the symbolic and informal aspects of power largely unexplored.

**Figure 1. The Metonymic Use of Menteng in Indonesian Political Discourse**



This research demonstrates that the analysis of the metonymy of Menteng in political discourse is grounded in cognitive linguistic theory and political discourse analysis, which view language as a means of representing power. Through data collection on media using the word "Menteng," this study identifies a shift in meaning from a geographical referent to a representation of political elites, institutions, and power networks through the metonymy pattern PLACE → POLITICAL ELITE/INSTITUTION. Furthermore, the analysis focuses on the discursive function of this metonymy in constructing meanings of power and ideological critiques of the relationship between

political elites and the public.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on discourse analysis. This approach was chosen because the research objective was to understand the meaning, referents, and discursive function of the metonymy of the place name "Menteng" in media political discourse, rather than to measure frequency statistically. The analysis emphasized the interpretation of contextual meaning based on cognitive linguistic theory.

#### 3.2. Data Sources and Types

The research data consisted of written texts taken from news and political analysis articles in Indonesian online media. The data consisted of sentences or clauses containing the place name "Menteng" and used in a political context. In this study, the data focused on the non-literal use of Menteng, namely when the place name does not refer solely to a geographic location, but rather to an actor, institution, or center of political power.

#### 3.3. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques with the following steps:

1. Searching news articles and political opinion pieces in online media using the keyword "Menteng."
2. Selecting texts containing the word "Menteng" in the context of national politics.
3. Eliminating data that used Menteng literally, such as addresses, local events, or non-political news.
4. Classifying sentences containing Menteng as potential metonyms.
5. Determining the ten most representative data points for in-depth analysis.

#### 3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in stages, drawing on metonymy theory in contemporary cognitive linguistics, which views metonymy as a conceptual mechanism based on contiguity and intra-domain mapping (Kövecses, 2010; Littlemore, 2015; Brdar & Brdar-Szabó, 2014). The analysis steps included:

1. Identifying metonymic expressions in each data item by highlighting the use of the place name Menteng.
2. Distinguishing literal and contextual meanings based on the discourse context.
3. Determining the actual referents of the use of the Menteng metonymy (e.g., political elite, decision-making center, or power network).
4. Classifying emerging metonymy patterns, such as PLACE → POLITICAL ELITE or PLACE → INSTITUTION.
5. Interpreting the discursive function of the Menteng metonymy in constructing meanings of power and relations between the political elite and the public.

### 4. Result Analysis and Discussion

In the study of metonymy, Menteng functions as a metonymic device in the form of a place name, while the target referent is the political elite and the state power network socially associated with the area. The relationship between Menteng and the political elite is conceptually contiguous (not similar), as Menteng is historically and socially known as the residential area of high-ranking officials, diplomats, and political actors. Therefore, the place name is used to represent the actors and power operating within it.

| Data 1                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → power network / political elite |

|                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>“Kebijakan strategis yang dikeluarkan para pengambil keputusan di Menteng semakin dipertanyakan oleh publik.”</p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

In this sentence, the word Menteng does not refer to a literal geographic area, but rather to a political actor with authority in policymaking. Menteng is used to represent the network of political elites associated with the center of power. Thus, a conceptual metonymy occurs: PLACE → POLITICAL ELITE, where the place name replaces the institutional actor. This metonymy serves to indirectly criticize the elite.

| Data 2                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → central political power                                                                         |
| “Analisis politik menunjukkan bahwa narasi dari Menteng masih sangat dominan dalam pembentukan kebijakan nasional.” |

The word "Menteng" in this data is used to refer to an influential source of political discourse. Menteng is not interpreted as a physical location, but rather as a center for the production of policy narratives. This demonstrates the metonymy "PLACE → SOURCE OF POWER DISCOURSE," where place represents symbolic power in shaping national policy.

| Data 3                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → symbol of political elite                                                   |
| “Menteng dianggap sebagai simbol kekuasaan lama yang terus mempengaruhi arah politik saat ini.” |

In this data, Menteng is positioned as a symbol, not a place. Menteng represents established political power with historical continuity. The metonymy that occurs is PLACE → SYMBOL OF POWER, which serves to construct ideological meaning about the continuity of the old elite in the contemporary political system.

| Data 4                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → central political elite / decision makers                                                        |
| “Perbedaan pandangan antara Menteng dan kelompok masyarakat sipil semakin terlihat dalam polemik kebijakan terbaru.” |

Menteng in this sentence is contrasted with civil society, so it clearly has no geographical meaning. Menteng represents the political elite group that holds a dominant position in the power structure. The metonymy that emerges is PLACE → POLITICAL ACTORS, with the discursive function of creating a symbolic opposition between the elite and the public.

| Data 5                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → policy formulation center                                              |
| “Keputusan yang lahir dari Menteng dinilai belum sepenuhnya mencerminkan aspirasi publik.” |

The phrase "decision," which originated from Menteng, indicates that Menteng is understood as the center of decision-making. The metonymy "PLACE → DECISION-MAKING INSTITUTION" is used to simplify complex policy processes. Discursively, this metonymy emphasizes the distance between the ruling elite and the public.

| <b>Data 6</b>                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → network of influential political elites                |
| “Tekanan politik dari Menteng membuat dinamika parlemen semakin kompleks.” |

Menteng is here given the role of an agent capable of exerting political pressure, clearly not a literal meaning. This demonstrates the metonymy PLACE → POWER NETWORK, where place represents an elite network with influence across institutions. This metonymy serves to emphasize the informal power of the political elite.

| <b>Data 7</b>                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → center of power and political direction                             |
| “Menteng kembali menjadi rujukan utama dalam membaca arah kebijakan nasional ke depan.” |

In this data, Menteng is used as a symbolic reference for understanding the direction of national politics. The metonymy PLACE → CENTER OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY arises because Menteng is treated as a source of legitimacy and policy orientation. This reinforces Menteng's image as a symbolic center of power.

| <b>Data 8</b>                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → political coalition                                         |
| “Konsolidasi kekuatan politik di Menteng dinilai semakin menguat pasca pemilu.” |

In this context, Menteng refers to the symbolic location of elite political consolidation, not merely a physical location. The metonymy PLACE → POLITICAL COALITION is used to represent the process of strengthening elite power. This metonymy serves to condense political actors and processes into a single lexical marker.

| <b>Data 9</b>                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → elite discussion producer                                                   |
| “Wacana yang berkembang di Menteng sering kali berbeda dengan realitas di tingkat akar rumput.” |

Menteng is positioned as a producer of elite discourse that is at odds with the wider community. The metonymy PLACE → ELITE DISCOURSE PRODUCER demonstrates the difference in perspective between the center of power and the people. Its discursive function is an ideological critique of elite domination.

| <b>Data 10</b>                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Metonymy: Menteng → agenda setter                                                        |
| “Dominasi Menteng dalam perumusan agenda politik nasional masih terasa hingga saat ini.” |

In this data, Menteng represents the dominant actor in determining the political agenda. The metonymy PLACE → AGENDA SETTERS is used to describe elite control over the direction of national politics. This metonymy emphasizes the unequal power relations within the political system.

### ***Discussion***

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the Menteng lexicon in media discourse does not function solely as a geographical marker, but rather as a metonymic device representing the political elite and the center of state power. Consistently, Menteng is used to represent the actors, institutions, and power networks involved in the policy-making and production processes. This pattern confirms that metonymy in media texts operates as both a cognitive and discursive strategy to condense complex socio-political relations into a single linguistic marker.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, metonymy has several key characteristics: (1) it is based on conceptual contiguity, (2) it involves intra-domain mapping, (3) it is selective by highlighting certain aspects of a domain, and (4) it functions as a cognitive access mechanism to economically represent complex realities (Kövecses, 2010; Littlemore, 2015). In the analyzed data, a conceptual mapping of PLACE → POLITICAL ELITE / INSTITUTION occurs, where the place name Menteng serves as the source domain that activates the representation of the political elite and institutions of power as the target domain. This relationship is metonymic because it does not involve cross-domain comparisons like metaphors, but rather focuses on specific aspects of the same domain of political power.

Furthermore, the use of Menteng as an abstract actor that "makes decisions," "exerts political pressure," or "dominates the political agenda" reflects what metonymy studies call active zone metonymy, namely the representation of an entity through its most cognitively and socially relevant zones or aspects (Barcelona, 2003; Brdar & Brdar-Szabó, 2014). In this context, Menteng does not represent the entire physical region, but rather a symbolic zone associated with elite power and informal political influence operating behind the formal institutions of the state.

This characteristic of selectivity suggests that metonymy functions as a mechanism of highlighting and obscuring in discursive representation, where certain aspects of political reality are emphasized while others are marginalized. This phenomenon is also evident in everyday language practices, for example, the use of the brand name Aqua to refer to bottled drinking water in general, even though Aqua is referentially only one brand. Another example is the use of the word Google to refer to the activity of searching for information on the internet in general, even though Google is a search engine platform. These two examples demonstrate how a single, cognitively salient entity is used as a conceptual access point for a broader category, a characteristic of conceptual metonymy.

From the perspective of critical political discourse analysis, the metonymy of Menteng also functions as an ideological strategy in the representation of power. Referring to the views of van Dijk (2008) and Wodak (2021), the use of place names as substitutes for political actors allows the media to indirectly convey criticism, evaluation, or delegitimization of power. Through the symbolic opposition between Menteng and "civil society" or "grassroots," this metonymy plays a role in constructing discourses about power distance, elite dominance, and unequal political relations within society.

Overall, these findings confirm that metonymy functions not only as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a cognitive and ideological tool in political media discourse. The use of Menteng as a metonymic marker shows how language contributes to framing political reality, shaping public perception, and representing power relations implicitly but effectively in the context of Indonesian political discourse.

### ***5. Conclusions***

This article demonstrates that Menteng functions as a form of metonymy for social space in Indonesian political communication discourse. In media representations and political

discourse, Menteng refers not simply to a geographical area, but to the network of political elites, intellectuals, and power actors associated with the area. Thus, Menteng is mapped as a symbolic spatial domain that represents informal power relations outside of formal state institutions.

These findings demonstrate that metonymy for social space appears not only in the names of official institutions such as Senayan or Cendana, but also in urban spaces with historical and social symbolic value. The use of Menteng in political discourse reflects the conceptualization of space as a representation of elites and centers of influence, thus broadening our understanding of how political language constructs power structures through metonymic strategies.

Theoretically, this research confirms that conceptual metonymy plays a crucial role in the ideological framing of political space and actors. Empirically, this study enriches the study of political metonymy in Indonesia by uncovering the symbolic and informal dimensions of power spaces that have previously received little attention. This finding opens up opportunities for further research on how other urban spaces are discursively constructed as loci of power in contemporary democracy.

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