

Metaphors Related to Climate Issues in @greenpeaceid's Instagram: A Conceptual Metaphor Theory Approach

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Abstract

Climate change communication often relies on abstract and technical language, which makes environmental issues difficult for the public to understand and engage with. This study aims to examine how climate change is represented through conceptual metaphors in Instagram post texts published by @greenpeaceid, and how these metaphors shape public perception and emotional engagement. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. The research data consist of metaphorical expressions taken from Instagram post texts published by @greenpeaceid between 1 October and 30 November 2025, with a total of 135 posts selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) to systematically identify metaphorical expressions, and further examined using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to analyze the mapping between source and target domains. The results show that 24 metaphorical expressions were identified, forming several dominant conceptual metaphors, including *Nature Is A Body*, *Crisis Is A Person*, and *Ecosystem Is A Building*. These metaphors represent environmental issues through familiar human experiences such as illness, danger, physical movement, and structural damage. Furthermore, the metaphors function to make abstract environmental problems easier to understand, create a sense of urgency and threat, evoke empathy and moral responsibility, criticize political systems indirectly, and encourage collective action. This study concludes that conceptual metaphors serve as an effective cognitive and communicative strategy in Indonesian environmental advocacy, particularly in digital contexts, by shaping how the public understands and emotionally responds to climate change.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor theory, climate issues, environmental discourse, greenpeace indonesia, instagram post texts*

Introduction

Climate change has become a global crisis that affects ecosystems, biodiversity, and human life worldwide. However, one major problem in climate communication is that environmental issues are often presented in abstract, technical, and scientific language, which makes them difficult for the public to fully understand and relate to. As a result, although awareness of climate change has increased, many people still struggle to interpret its meaning, urgency, and impact on everyday life. This gap between information and understanding becomes a key challenge, as it limits public engagement and reduces the effectiveness of environmental advocacy. Therefore, there is a need to examine how language, particularly metaphor, can be used to make climate issues more accessible, meaningful, and emotionally engaging for the public.

Metaphor plays an important role in climate change communication because it helps explain abstract environmental issues through more familiar and concrete experiences. According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), metaphor is not only a linguistic expression but also a cognitive mechanism that structures how people understand the world. This theory explains that abstract concepts such as climate change are understood through mappings from more concrete source domains, such as the human body, illness, movement, or physical objects, to abstract target domains. Through these mappings, complex environmental issues become easier to understand and more meaningful for the public. Previous studies have shown that metaphors significantly influence how climate change is perceived and interpreted. (Flusberg et al., 2017) found that metaphors such as war and illness can increase public concern and shape attitudes toward climate action. Similarly, Niebert & Gropengiesser (2013) argue that metaphors help simplify complex scientific information and make it more accessible to non-expert audiences, while Nerlich (2015) highlights their role in shaping social and political meanings in environmental discourse.

To identify metaphorical expressions in a systematic way, this study applies the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Group (2007). MIP is used by first determining the basic (literal) meaning of a lexical unit and then comparing it with its contextual meaning in the text. A lexical unit is identified as metaphorical when its contextual meaning differs from its basic meaning but can still be understood through a conceptual comparison. In this study, MIP is applied to analyze Instagram post texts by identifying metaphorical expressions and then interpreting them using Conceptual Metaphor Theory to map the relationship between source and target domains.

Despite the growing body of research on climate change communication, several important gaps remain. First, most previous studies focus on Western contexts and traditional media such as newspapers, political speeches, or policy documents, leaving digital environmental advocacy in Southeast Asian contexts largely underexplored. Second, although many studies identify metaphorical expressions in climate discourse, they often lack a systematic methodological approach such as the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), which limits the reliability and consistency of metaphor analysis. Third, limited research has examined how conceptual metaphors function not only as linguistic features but also as cognitive and emotional tools that shape public perception and engagement, particularly in social media environments where communication is fast, interactive, and widely consumed. This gap becomes more critical in the Indonesian context, where more than 221 million people actively use the internet, and environmental communication has increasingly shifted to digital platforms such as Instagram. Despite this rapid digital engagement, there is still a lack of research that systematically analyzes how metaphor operates in Indonesian environmental advocacy, especially in terms of how it influences public understanding and emotional responses.

To address these gaps, this study applies Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) in combination with the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) to analyze metaphorical expressions in Instagram post texts published by @greenpeaceid. The novelty of this study lies in three main aspects. First, this study focuses on Indonesian digital environmental advocacy, particularly Instagram, which remains underexplored in previous research that predominantly examines Western and traditional media contexts. Second, this study integrates a systematic identification method (MIP) with a cognitive analytical framework (Conceptual Metaphor Theory), providing a more rigorous and structured analysis of metaphor use. Third, this study does not only identify and classify

metaphors, but also examines how these metaphors function to shape public perception and emotional engagement, which has received limited attention in previous studies.

By applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this study emphasizes that metaphor is not merely a linguistic feature, but a cognitive mechanism that structures how people understand abstract concepts such as climate change through mappings between source and target domains. Through this theoretical framework, the study provides a deeper explanation of how metaphorical language contributes to meaning construction, emotional response, and public interpretation of environmental issues. Therefore, this research contributes both theoretically, by extending the application of Conceptual Metaphor Theory in Indonesian digital discourse, and practically, by offering insights into how metaphor can be used effectively in environmental communication on social media.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze how metaphorical representations of climate and environmental issues are constructed in Instagram post texts published by @greenpeaceid. This approach was chosen because the study focuses on interpreting meaning, identifying patterns, and understanding how language is used to represent abstract concepts. The research specifically aims to identify, classify, and interpret conceptual metaphors found in the data by applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory Lakoff & Johnson (1980). In addition, purposive sampling was used to select relevant data based on specific criteria, including Instagram posts published between 1 October and 30 November 2025 and texts that address climate change and environmental issues. To ensure a systematic and reliable identification of metaphorical expressions, this study applies the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) developed by the Group (2007), which provides clear steps for determining whether a lexical unit is used metaphorically.

The data of this study consist of metaphorical expressions identified in Instagram post texts published by the official account @greenpeaceid. The data source is the Instagram platform, where Greenpeace Indonesia actively communicates environmental issues through written texts and visual content. The data were collected by accessing the @greenpeaceid account and selecting all posts uploaded between 1 October and 30 November 2025, resulting in a total of 135 posts. Each post that met the research criteria was documented by recording its caption text, date, and main topic. Only textual data containing potential metaphorical expressions were selected for further analysis.

The data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, all Instagram post texts were read carefully to understand their overall meaning. Second, each lexical unit in the text was examined to determine its basic (literal) meaning and its contextual meaning. Third, following the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), a lexical unit was identified as metaphorical when its contextual meaning differed from its basic meaning but could be understood through a conceptual comparison. After identifying the metaphorical expressions, the analysis continued by applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to map each expression into its source domain (concrete) and target domain (abstract). The metaphors were then classified into conceptual categories based on recurring patterns, such as body-based, personification, and structural metaphors. Finally, the identified metaphors were interpreted to explain how they represent environmental issues and how they contribute to shaping public perception and emotional engagement toward climate change.

Result

This section presents the results of the metaphor analysis of Instagram post texts published by @greenpeaceid between 1 October and 30 November 2025. The analysis focuses on identifying, classifying, and interpreting metaphorical expressions based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP). The data consist of 135 Instagram posts, from which 24 metaphorical expressions were systematically identified. The findings show that these metaphorical expressions are not randomly distributed, but form clear and recurring conceptual patterns. Most of the identified metaphors are used to represent environmental issues through familiar domains such as the human body, physical movement, danger, structures, and social interaction. Among these, body-related metaphors and personification metaphors appear as the most dominant patterns, indicating that environmental problems are frequently framed as conditions affecting a living body or as active agents interacting with humans. In addition, several metaphors extend beyond environmental descriptions to include political and social meanings, showing how climate discourse is closely connected to issues of power, policy, and responsibility.

To present these findings systematically, the results are organized into three subsections based on the research questions of this study. The first subsection identifies the metaphorical expressions found in the data. The second subsection explains how source and target domains are mapped to represent environmental issues. The third subsection interprets how these metaphors function in shaping public perception and emotional engagement toward climate and environmental issues. Tables are provided in the first and second subsections to support the analysis and to illustrate the patterns of metaphor use in the data.

The Metaphorical Expressions Appear in the @greenpeaceid Instagram Account

The analysis of 135 Instagram post texts published by @greenpeaceid resulted in the identification of 24 metaphorical expressions through the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP). These metaphorical expressions are not randomly distributed but show clear and recurring patterns in how environmental and climate-related issues are represented. Overall, the data indicate that Greenpeace Indonesia consistently uses familiar and concrete experiences to explain abstract environmental problems. One of the most dominant patterns found in the data is the use of body-based metaphors, where nature and environmental conditions are conceptualized as a living body.

Table 1.1 Table of metaphorical expression using concept of injury

No	Date	Metaphorical expression	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
1	03 Oct	cerita luka dari surga tersembunyi	luka = cedera fisik	kerusakan lingkungan yang menyakitkan
3	18 Sep	krisis iklim mengetuk pintu	mengetuk pintu = meminta izin masuk	ancaman iklim semakin dekat
4	12 Oct	bumi sedang sakit	sakit = kondisi tubuh manusia	kerusakan ekologis bumi

Expressions such as “*cerita luka dari surga tersembunyi*,” “*bumi sedang sakit*,” and “*krisis iklim mengancam sendi kehidupan*” describe environmental damage using concepts of injury, illness, and body parts. Through this pattern, environmental issues are framed as conditions that cause pain and require care, making them easier for readers to understand and emotionally relate to.

Table 1.2 Table of metaphorical expression using human-like agents

No	Date	Metaphorical expression	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
3	18 Sep	krisis iklim mengetuk pintu	mengetuk pintu = meminta izin masuk	ancaman iklim semakin dekat
11	12 Nov	banjir makin rajin mampir ke rumah warga	mampir = berkunjung	banjir sering datang seperti pengunjung
15	18 Nov	krisis iklim hadir di depan pintu rumah	hadir di depan pintu = tamu datang	krisis iklim sudah dekat dan mengancam

Another prominent pattern is personification, where climate change and environmental problems are represented as human-like agents. For example, expressions such as *"krisis iklim mengetuk pintu," "krisis iklim hadir di depan pintu rumah,"* and *"banjir makin rajin mampir ke rumah warga"* portray climate-related events as visitors or actors that come closer to humans. This type of metaphor reduces the distance between the issue and the audience, presenting climate change as something immediate and unavoidable.

Table 1.3 Table of metaphorical expressions based on physical structures and objects

No	Date	Metaphorical expression	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
7	23 Oct	benteng iklim runtuh	benteng = bangunan pertahanan	hutan kehilangan fungsi ekologis
23	28 Nov	pondasi ekologis melemah	pondasi = dasar bangunan	perlindungan ekologis menurun

In addition, several metaphors are based on physical structures and objects, such as *"benteng iklim runtuh"* and *"pondasi ekologis melemah."* These expressions conceptualize environmental systems as structures that can collapse or weaken, suggesting that ecological balance functions as a form of protection for human life. When these structures fail, the consequences are framed as dangerous and irreversible.

Table 1.4 Table of metaphorical expression related to danger and loss

No	Date	Metaphorical expression	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
6	24 Oct	pulau-pulau kecil berada di ujung tanduk	ujung tanduk = situasi bahaya	pulau terancam tenggelam

Furthermore, the data also reveal metaphors that reflect danger and loss, such as *"pulau-pulau kecil berada di ujung tanduk"*. This expression uses spatial and movement-based imagery to describe risk, instability, and the loss of future possibilities due to climate change. Such metaphors create a strong visual representation of threat and vulnerability.

Table 1.5 Table of metaphorical expressions related to environmental issues

No	Date	Metaphorical expression	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
20	25 Nov	membuang muka dari penderitaan rakyat	membuang muka = mengalihkan wajah	mengabaikan masalah rakyat
13	17 Nov	jalan para pelobi fosil mulus	jalan mulus = permukaan rata	kemudahan tanpa hambatan bagi pelobi
12	17 Nov	di balik pintu tertutup konferensi iklim	pintu tertutup = ruang tertutup fisik	keputusan yang tidak transparan

Interestingly, some metaphorical expressions extend beyond environmental descriptions and include political and social meanings, such as *"membuang muka dari penderitaan rakyat," "jalan para pelobi fosil mulus,"* and *"di balik pintu tertutup konferensi iklim."* These metaphors are used to criticize political systems, inequality, and lack of transparency in environmental decision-making. Although they are not purely

environmental, they remain closely connected to climate discourse because they highlight how policy and power influence environmental outcomes. Overall, these findings show that metaphorical expressions in @greenpeaceid Instagram post texts are used systematically to construct environmental meaning. By using familiar domains such as the human body, physical actions, structures, and social interactions, the metaphors help transform abstract climate issues into more concrete, relatable, and meaningful representations. These patterns provide a foundation for further analysis of how source and target domains are mapped in the next section.

The source domains mapped onto target domains to represent environmental issues

In answering RQ2, this study analyzed how each metaphor builds a relationship (mapping) between the source domain and the target domain, making environmental issues more easily understood by readers. Based on the 24 metaphors obtained, it was found that Greenpeace Indonesia frequently uses source domains derived from the human body, health, buildings, and physical spaces to explain target domains such as environmental conditions, the climate crisis, and ecological damage. The table below is the example of explaining the relationship between the source domain and target domain of each metaphor.

Table 1.6 Table of source target domain

No.	Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain (Concrete)	Target Domain (Abstract)
1	cerita luka dari surga tersembunyi	Physical injury (wound)	Environmental destruction
3	krisis iklim mengetuk pintu	Human visitor	Climate threat approaching
4	bumi sedang sakit	Human illness	Ecological damage
5	asap menyelimuti desa	Cloth covering body	Air pollution
6	pulau-pulau kecil berada di ujung tanduk	Dangerous position	Climate vulnerability
7	benteng iklim runtuh	Defensive wall	Forest ecosystem
8	laut kita masih bisa pulih	Human recovery	Ocean health
9	melindungi masa depan kita sendiri	Physical protection	Sustainability / future
10	krisis iklim mengancam sendi kehidupan	Human joints	Core aspects of life
11	banjir makin rajin mampir ke rumah warga	Frequent visitor	Recurrent floods
12	di balik pintu tertutup konferensi iklim	Closed door	Lack of transparency
13	jalan para pelobi fosil mulus	Smooth road	Easy political access
14	Indonesia dapat gelar Si Paling Fosil	Fossil	Backward energy policy
15	krisis iklim hadir di depan pintu rumah	Visitor at door	Immediate climate threat
16	energi fosil adalah energi kotor	Dirt / stain	Environmental harm
17	jeratan bahan bakar fosil	Trap / snare	Fossil fuel dependency
18	keputusan dihantui lemahnya tindakan	Ghost / haunting	Policy weakness
19	COP30 dihantui keputusan global	Haunting presence	Fear of failure

No.	Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain (Concrete)	Target Domain (Abstract)
20	membuang muka dari penderitaan rakyat	Turning face away	Ignoring suffering
21	wajah krisis iklim	Human face	Visible impact of climate crisis
22	krisis iklim menghantam kehidupan	Hit	Severe impact
23	pondasi ekologis melemah	Building foundation	Ecological stability
24	masa depan Indonesia terkontaminasi	Pollution	Future quality of life

The analysis of the source and target domain mappings reveals that the metaphorical expressions identified in this study are not equally distributed, but show clear dominance in certain conceptual patterns. Among the various source domains, the human body and health-related domain appears as the most dominant pattern in the data. This is reflected in expressions such as *“cerita luka dari surga tersembunyi,” “bumi sedang sakit,” “laut kita masih bisa pulih,”* and *“krisis iklim mengancam sendi kehidupan.”* These metaphors consistently map environmental conditions onto bodily experiences such as injury, illness, recovery, and physical structure. This dominance indicates that environmental issues are primarily conceptualized as conditions affecting a living body. Through this mapping, abstract concepts such as climate change and ecological damage are understood in terms of physical suffering and vulnerability. This pattern makes environmental problems more concrete and relatable, as readers are more familiar with bodily experiences than with abstract environmental processes.

In addition to body-based metaphors, other source domains also appear in the data, such as personification (visitor), structure (building), and danger-related metaphors. For example, expressions like *“krisis iklim mengetuk pintu”* and *“banjir mampir ke rumah warga”* represent climate events as human visitors, while *“benteng iklim runtuh”* and *“pondasi ekologis melemah”* conceptualize environmental systems as physical structures. However, these patterns occur less frequently compared to body-based metaphors, indicating that they serve as supporting conceptual strategies rather than dominant ones. Overall, the findings show that Greenpeace Indonesia relies heavily on body-based metaphors as the primary conceptual framework, while other domains such as personification and structure function as complementary patterns in representing environmental and climate issues.

The analysis of the 24 metaphorical expressions identified in the @greenpeaceid reveals the patterns observed mere stylistic function, as powerful cognitive tools that simplify complex climate issues. The conceptual metaphors are categorized into five primary concepts based on their dominant Source Domain mapping; The analysis of source–target domain mappings reveals that the metaphorical expressions identified in this study can be systematically categorized into several major conceptual patterns. These patterns are not equally distributed, but show a clear hierarchy in terms of frequency and prominence.

The most dominant conceptual metaphor identified in the data is Climate Change Is Illness / Injury. This pattern reflects the frequent use of the human body and health as the primary source domain to represent environmental conditions. Expressions such as *“cerita luka dari surga tersembunyi,” “bumi sedang sakit,” “laut kita masih bisa pulih,”* and *“krisis iklim mengancam sendi kehidupan”* illustrate how environmental damage is conceptualized as physical injury, illness, and bodily vulnerability. This mapping allows abstract environmental issues to be understood as conditions that cause pain and require

treatment, making the crisis more relatable and emotionally engaging. The presence of recovery-related expressions, such as *"masih bisa pulih,"* also introduces a sense of hope, suggesting that environmental restoration is still possible.

The second dominant pattern is Climate Change Is A Physical Threat Or Attack, which frames climate change as an active and immediate danger. This is evident in expressions such as *"krisis iklim mengetuk pintu," "krisis iklim hadir di depan pintu rumah,"* and *"krisis iklim menghantam kehidupan."* These metaphors present climate change as a force that approaches, confronts, and impacts human life directly. Similarly, *"pulau-pulau kecil berada di ujung tanduk"* highlights vulnerability by placing certain regions in a critical and dangerous position. Through this mapping, climate change is no longer seen as a distant issue, but as an urgent and unavoidable threat.

Another important conceptual category is Environment Is A Structure Or Building, where ecological systems are understood as physical constructions that can weaken or collapse. Expressions such as *"benteng iklim runtuh"* and *"pondasi ekologis melemah"* illustrate how environmental protection is framed as a structural system that provides stability and safety. When these structures fail, the consequences are perceived as systemic breakdowns. In addition, *"di balik pintu tertutup konferensi iklim"* extends this metaphor to the political domain, representing climate governance as a closed space, which implies secrecy and lack of transparency.

The analysis also identifies the metaphor Climate Crisis Is An Unwelcome Visitor, which conceptualizes climate change as an intrusive presence in human life. Expressions such as *"banjir makin rajin mampir ke rumah warga," "krisis iklim mengetuk pintu,"* and *"krisis iklim hadir di depan pintu rumah"* portray climate-related events as visitors that repeatedly enter human spaces. This metaphor emphasizes the increasing frequency and inevitability of environmental disasters, while also highlighting the lack of control experienced by affected communities.

Finally, the metaphor Fossil Energy Is Dirt Or A Trap is used to frame fossil fuel use in negative moral and structural terms. Expressions such as *"energi fosil adalah energi kotor," "jeratan bahan bakar fosil,"* and *"Indonesia dapat gelar Si Paling Fosil"* construct fossil energy as something harmful, polluting, and restrictive. This mapping not only describes environmental damage but also criticizes dependency on fossil fuels and positions it as a barrier to sustainable development.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that Greenpeace Indonesia strategically employs multiple conceptual metaphors to represent environmental issues. Among these, body-based metaphors emerge as the most dominant pattern, followed by threat-based and structural metaphors. This structured use of metaphor indicates that environmental discourse is carefully framed through familiar human experiences, allowing abstract climate issues to be understood in concrete, emotional, and socially meaningful ways.

Metaphors Shape Public Perception and Emotional Engagement Toward the Climate Crisis

Based on the metaphorical expressions identified through the MIP procedure (RQ1) and the source–target domain mappings (RQ2), the metaphors used in @greenpeaceid caption texts serve several clear communicative functions. These functions show that metaphors are shape public perception and emotional engagement related to climate issues. The findings can be grouped into five main functions, which are explained below:

To Make Abstract Environmental Problems Easier to Understand

The first and most dominant function of metaphor in the data is to help readers understand abstract and complex environmental issues in a simpler way. Climate change, ecological damage, and political processes are difficult topics, especially for a general audience. By mapping these abstract issues onto concrete and familiar experiences, the messages become easier to process.

For example, expressions such as “bumi sedang sakit” (the earth is sick), “laut kita masih bisa pulih” (our sea can still recover), and “pondasi ekologis melemah” (the ecological foundations weaken) describe environmental damage using the human body or building structures as the source domain. These metaphors allow readers to understand environmental problems through everyday knowledge about illness, recovery, and structural weakness. As a result, climate issues are presented in a more accessible and relatable way.

To Create a Sense of Urgency and Threat

Another important function of the metaphors is to create urgency and highlight the seriousness of the situation. Many expressions frame the climate crisis as something that is approaching, attacking, or already present.

Metaphors such as “krisis iklim mengetuk pintu” (the climate crisis is knocking on the door), “di balik pintu tertutup konferensi iklim” (behind closed doors at the climate conference), “krisis iklim hadir di depan pintu rumah” (the climate crisis is present at the doorstep), and “krisis iklim menghantam kehidupan” (the climate crisis slams into life) present climate change as an immediate threat rather than a distant problem. By using source domains related to visitors or physical attacks, the texts suggest that the crisis cannot be ignored and requires immediate attention. This function helps push readers to see climate change as a present danger, not a future possibility.

To Create Emotional Impact and Encourage Empathy and Moral Responsibility

Metaphors in the data also have a strong emotional function. By using language related to pain, injury, contamination, and suffering, that mostly related to disease, the texts invite readers to feel empathy toward nature and affected communities.

Expressions such as “cerita luka dari surga tersembunyi” (story of a wound from a hidden paradise), “masa depan Indonesia terkontaminasi” (Indonesia’s future is contaminated), and “wajah krisis iklim” (the face of the climate crisis) humanize environmental damage and its consequences. These metaphors uplift readers to see environmental destruction as something that causes real suffering, not merely to nature but also to people. Through this emotional stating, the texts promote a sense of moral responsibility to care for the environment and protect future generations.

To Criticize Political Actors and Systems Indirectly

The findings also show that metaphors are used as a tool for indirect political criticism. Instead of using direct accusations, the texts rely on metaphorical expressions to highlight problems in political decisions and systems.

For example, “di balik pintu tertutup konferensi iklim” (behind the closed door of the climate conference) suggests a lack of transparency, while “jalan para pelobi fosil mulus” (the path of fossil lobbyists is smooth) implies unfair political access. Expressions like “membuang muka dari penderitaan rakyat” (turning the face away from the suffering of the people) criticize political actors for ignoring public suffering. These

metaphors allow Greenpeace to deliver strong criticism in a persuasive way, while still maintaining a symbolic and indirect tone.

To Motivate Action and Collective Responsibility

Finally, metaphors function to encourage action and shared responsibility. By framing the future as something fragile that needs protection, the texts position readers as active agents rather than passive observers.

Expressions such as *"melindungi masa depan kita sendiri"* (protecting our own future) and *"jeratan bahan bakar fosil"* (the trap of fossil fuels) suggest that human choices play a key role in shaping environmental outcomes. These metaphors emphasize that environmental problems are not only caused by systems, but can also be addressed through collective effort. As a result, readers are encouraged to support environmental action, policy change, and sustainable behavior.

Discussion

This study examines how conceptual metaphors are used in Greenpeace Indonesia's Instagram post texts to communicate climate issues and shape public perception and emotional engagement. Based on the analysis of 135 caption texts published between 1 October and 30 November 2025, a total of 24 metaphorical expressions were identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) and analyzed through Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The findings show that Greenpeace Indonesia frequently employs metaphorical expressions to explain climate and environmental issues in a systematic way. These metaphors are not random linguistic choices, but follow clear conceptual patterns based on familiar human experiences, such as the human body, physical danger, movement, and social interaction. This supports Lakoff & Johnson (1980) argument that metaphors function as cognitive tools that structure human understanding of abstract concepts.

These findings are consistent with previous studies. For instance, (Deignan, 2017) found that body-based metaphors are commonly used in climate discourse to make environmental issues more concrete and emotionally engaging. Similarly, Flusberg et al., (2017) show that metaphorical framing influences how people interpret climate threats and urgency. However, this study extends these findings by demonstrating that such metaphorical patterns are also strongly present in Indonesian digital environmental discourse, particularly in social media contexts. The dominance of expressions such as *"bumi sedang sakit," "laut kita masih bisa pulih,"* and *"krisis iklim mengancam sendi kehidupan"* indicates that climate change is consistently framed as a condition affecting a living body, making environmental damage more personal and relatable for the audience.

Similar patterns were also found by Deignan (2017) and Kapranov (2018) who observed that body-based metaphors are common in climate change discourse because they make environmental damage feel personal and serious. In the Indonesian context, these metaphors may be especially effective because they connect environmental harm to everyday human experiences of pain, illness, and recovery. In relation to the second research question, the mapping between source domains and target domains reveals how Greenpeace Indonesia conceptualizes climate change. The most frequent source domains include the human body, visitors, buildings, physical attacks, and pollution. These concrete domains are mapped onto abstract targets such as climate crisis, ecological damage, political inaction, and future sustainability. For example, the metaphor *"krisis iklim mengetuk pintu"* maps the source domain of a human visitor onto the target domain of climate threat. This mapping suggests that climate change is no

longer distant, but close and unavoidable. Similar personification metaphors have been discussed by Flusberg et al., (2017), who argue that personifying climate change increases urgency and attention. Likewise, metaphors such as “pondasi ekologis melemah” and “benteng iklim runtuh” frame ecosystems as buildings or protective structures. This reflects the conceptual metaphor Ecosystem Is A Building, which highlights strengths, break down, and defence. Shaw & Nerlich (2015) also found that structural metaphors are often used in climate governance discourse to explain complex systems.

These mappings show that Greenpeace Indonesia uses conceptual metaphors strategically to explain how environmental systems work and what happens when they are damaged. These mappings demonstrate that Greenpeace Indonesia uses conceptual metaphors strategically to explain how environmental systems function and what happens when they are damaged. From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory Lakoff & Johnson (1980) these findings reflect the fundamental principle that abstract concepts are understood through mappings from concrete source domains to abstract target domains. For example, the metaphor “*krisis iklim mengetuk pintu*” illustrates the mapping CRISIS IS A PERSON, where climate change is conceptualized as a human agent that approaches and interacts with people. Similarly, expressions such as “*pondasi ekologis melemah*” and “*benteng iklim runtuh*” reflect the mapping Ecosystem Is A Building, which emphasizes stability, structure, and potential collapse.

This confirms that metaphorical language does not only function as a stylistic device, but as a cognitive mechanism that shapes how individuals conceptualize environmental problems. By activating familiar schemas such as the human body, physical space, and social interaction, these metaphors enable readers to understand climate change as a concrete and structured phenomenon. Therefore, the findings strongly support Lakoff & Johnson (1980) view that conceptual metaphors play a central role in organizing human thought and guiding interpretation of complex issues such as climate change. This hopeful framing is important, as Myroniuk (2025) notes that climate communication should balance fear with hope to avoid public disengagement. Overall, this study extends previous research by focusing on Indonesian environmental advocacy on social media. While many earlier studies examined Western media or political texts (Nerlich, 2015; Shaw & Nerlich, 2015), this research highlights how conceptual metaphors operate in Indonesian digital activism. The findings confirm that metaphors are not only linguistic features but also cognitive and emotional tools that shape how people understand and respond to climate change. By analysing Instagram post texts, this study also shows that social media is an important space for climate communication, especially in a country where digital engagement is high. The results support the view that metaphors play a central role in connecting environmental issues with public values, emotions, and actions in contemporary climate discourse.

Conclusion

This study examined the utilization of conceptual metaphors in Instagram caption texts published by @greenpeaceid to understand how climate and environmental issues are represented and communicated to the public. This study is using qualitative descriptive approach, and the analysis was conducted on 135 Instagram posts published between the period of time which is 1 October and 30 November 2025. Metaphorical expressions were identified through the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) and analysed using Conceptual Metaphor Theory

proposed by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). The total of 24 metaphorical expressions within the data were identified. These metaphors were not randomly used, but showed consistent conceptual patterns that reflect how Greenpeace Indonesia frames climate change, environmental damage, and related political issues. The findings were organized according to the three research questions of this study.

Regarding RQ1, the study found that @greenpeaceid frequently employs metaphorical expressions to explain environmental and climate issues. Many of these metaphors express familiar experiences such as the human body, disease, danger, physical action or movement, and social interaction. Through these expressions, complex and abstract environmental issues are presented in a more concrete and understandable way for the public. In relation to RQ2, the analysis of source and target domain mappings uncovered that @greenpeaceid relies significantly on concrete source domains such as the human body, visitors, buildings, pollution, and physical attacks to represent abstract target domains like ecological damage, climate crisis, political inaction, and future sustainability. Dominant conceptual metaphors such as Nature Is A Body, Crisis Is A Person, And Ecosystem Is A Building show how environmental issues are framed as living, fragile, and directly connected to human life. These roadmap assists readers to comprehend the seriousness and structure of environmental issues.

Concerning RQ3, the findings elevate those metaphors play a crucial role in forming public perception and emotional engagement toward the climate issues. The metaphors function to make environmental issues easier to understand, construct a sense of urgency and threat, evoke empathy and moral responsibility, criticize political actors and systems indirectly, and motivate collective movement. By combining emotional appeal with cognitive clarity, the metaphors encourage readers to see climate issues especially climate change as a fast and shared problem that requires action. Overall, this study concludes that conceptual metaphors are an effective communicative strategy in Greenpeace Indonesia's digital environmental advocacy. Through metaphorical language, climate issues are not merely described but also emotionally framed in a way that influence how the public understands, feels, and responds the climate issues. This research contributes to the growing body of studies on climate discourse by highlighting the role of metaphors in Indonesian social media activism and emphasizing their importance in contemporary climate communication.

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