# Figurative Forms of Gender Equality in Indonesian Female Ulama's Speeches

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## Abstract

This study sought to identify the metaphorical languages employed by Indonesian female ulama to realize and promote linguistic gender equality. In this qualitative study, four Indonesian female ulama actively preaching in women's organizations participated. The data for this study consisted of the female ulama's figurative expressions of gender equality. The information was gathered via recording the ulama's sermons. Pragglejaz Group identified metaphorical statements expressing gender equality by altering Metaphor Identification Procedures (MIP). The study of data suggests that similes, new metaphors, and conceptual metaphors facilitate gender equality. In similes and novel metaphors, the balance between males and females is structured through colloquial.

## Introduction

In emerging nations such as Indonesia, gender inequality is a prevalent issue. The Ministry of Woman Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia verified that between 2011 and 2015, the involvement of Indonesian females in school and work training, as well as the use of information technology and Internet access, was lower than that of males (Said et al., 2016). According to second research conducted in Indonesia, most party officials in Riau Province consider women second-class citizens who do not deserve to represent the party at the highest levels. As a result, the 30% quota for women established by Election Law No. 12 in 2003 cannot be met (Hardani, 2016; Klingorova & Havlíček, 2015). These results correlate with more extensive research indicating that the states with the highest level of gender disparity are those whose populations subscribe to Islam and Hinduism. These studies' findings on gender disparity indicate that "the teachings of Islam are not fully applied in many sections of the Muslim world" (Sulaiman, Quayum, & Manaf, 2018).

One of the possible variables that lead to gender disparity is the prevalent belief that women are one step behind men. This doctrine can be traced, among other places, to how Islamic preachers (ulama) interpret the Quranic texts and Hadiths (Sari, 2016). Her research indicates that certain ulama in South Aceh, Indonesia, oppose women's political participation based on their reading of the Qur'an and hadiths. Likewise, according to Holy Qur'an interpreters, males are more deserving of leadership positions than girls (Anshori, 2016). Hence, gender equality remains a contentious issue among Muslims. Some feel that balance between males and females is essential to life, while others say that imbalance between the sexes is the norm.

Since the ulama is the figure responsible for transferring messages from the Qur'an and Hadiths to their followers, it is vital to analyze how the notion of gender equality is portrayed and promoted by Muslim preachers (ulama). In addition, when a language is structured in the form of linguistic artifacts, such as literature and other discourses, it "may construct not simply knowledge but also the very reality" it "appears to describe" (Singh, 2013). Furthermore, the language employed by the ulama, particularly figurative language, must be researched since language influences how a speaker perceives the world, particularly regarding gender-based beliefs, attitudes, and discrimination (Holmgreen, 2009; Liu, Shair-Rosenfield, Vance, & Csata, 2018; Tipler & Ruscher, 2019). It concentrates on female ulama rather than male ulama because the protection of women's rights is ordinarily carried out by various feminist movements (Anshori, 2016).

## Linguistic Realizations of Gender Equality Issues

Over the years, gender and language research has revealed how women are linguistically portrayed and stereotyped. In English, third-person pronouns exhibit a blatant bias toward women. When the gender of the referent is unclear, high-status occupational titles such as lawyer, physicist, and scientist are usually pronominalized with he. In contrast, she is frequently used to refer metaphorically to low-status occupations such as nurse or schoolteacher (Hellinger, 2001). Similarly, Javanese addressing systems for husband-and-wife relationships exhibit a bias against women. Managing terms is one of the linguistic ways in Javanese to express respect for others. The gender relationship between husband and wife is asymmetric in that a wife is linguistically bound while a husband is not. Even if the husband is younger than the wife, he typically refers to her by her first name or the kinship word dik 'younger sibling,' while the wife addresses him as mas 'older brother' (Kuntjara, 2001).

Moreover, Turkish proverbs reflect a gender bias. Many Turkish proverbs describe women as housekeepers and men as breadwinners. Additionally, several Turkish proverbs say that males are preferred to daughters (Braun, 2001). Several researchers have examined the stereotyping of women in English textbooks (Jasmani et al., 2011; Mustapha, 2013; Shamsuddin & Hamid, 2017). Regardless of the linguistic unit under investigation, these investigations share a common trait. They demonstrate that gender disparity is evident in language. Through verbal choices and visual representations, women are devalued and portrayed as second-class citizens.

Similarly, metaphors are employed to describe gender issues, especially gender equality. A review study indicated that metaphors incorporating prejudice and prejudices about women seeking leadership positions are more prevalent than those stating that being female impedes attaining top management jobs (Smith, Caputi, & Crittenden, 2012). Several studies have examined how metaphors influence a person's worldview (Holmgreen, 2009; Tipler & Ruscher, 2019). The study indicated that individuals who read an article about predatory women were more likely to agree with negative sentiments than those who read an article about women who are prey. The latter study concluded that metaphorical constructions are an effective strategy for attaining power covertly because they can influence how humans perceive the world.

## Figurative Language

Figurative language is non-literal language, according to a simple definition. The violation of normal communication limitations characterizes the use of figurative language. Figurative language may be used as an attention-grabber, to simplify a complex notion, or to convey a new concept (Croft & Cruse, 2004).

Similes and metaphors are two seemingly similar figurative languages, yet they are unique. The primary distinction between similes and metaphors is the extent of the similarity. With similes, the scope is limited, whereas, in metaphors, it is expansive. Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) note in their examination of similes that metaphors primarily map relations such as traits, processes, and functions. In contrast, similes mainly map specific aspects such as colors and shapes. The authors explain further that metaphor compares one domain to another, but similes are comparisons. The second distinction between them is their verbal expression. With similes, two domains are presented as separate entities, and the word like is frequently used to connect them, whereas, in metaphors, two different items are merged into one (Croft & Cruse, 2004).

According to Oleniak (2018), a simile is an autonomous language concept that aims to highlight the shared characteristic upon which the referents are juxtaposed. In addition, the author provided a formula for similes that do not require the presence of like or as. It is asserted that the procedure is universal in that it characterizes similes independently of their forms and the languages in which they are used. The new strategy emphasizes similarities between the tenor and the vehicle, instead of using the term like or as the primary attribute of similes. The general formula for a simile is A n Bn, where A is a tenor, n is a characteristic shared by the tenor and the vehicle, is the symbol encoding the resemblance between the tenor and the vehicle, and B is a vehicle.

A substantial number of metaphors are established on purpose for communicating. These metaphors are innovative, easily understood creations plentiful in popular culture, the daily press, and television. Unlike common idioms, these metaphors are distinct because they are deliberately crafted (Croft & Cruse, 2004). In addition, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) felt that metaphors exist in the human mind; they are conceptual systems that allow people to organize and comprehend abstract notions. Humans can conceive their physical and concrete experiences into more abstract and less tangible descriptions, owing to the conceptual systems in mind. Metaphorical thoughts in the human mind are the source of metaphorical expressions in everyday speech.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, humans map concepts and involve source and target domains while thinking and communicating metaphorically. In this case, mapping is not simply a comparison of the source and target domains. It consists of the cognitive process by which human cognition selects which aspects of the source and destination domains can be mapped. With the TIME IS MONEY metaphor, time is the object and money the source. Certain characteristics of money, including the ability to be spent, invested, and shared, can be mapped onto time. Human thought's mapping process generates a range of linguistic expressions, such as "spending a great deal of time playing online games."

## Female Ulama

Ulama is the plural version of the Arabic word alim, meaning knowledgeable folks or learned scholars. Ulama is people with an extensive understanding of science and religion (Shihab, 2013). Following this, Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (henceforth KUPI) or the Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama, defines ulama as individuals who have in-depth knowledge, fear Allah, have noble personalities, and practice, preach, and enforce justice and bring blessings to the entire world (Tim KUPI, 2017). Moreover, a distinction is made between female ulama and woman ulama. Female ulama is women who possess ulama qualities, including both women with and without gender attitudes. In contrast, women ulama are either male or female and include gender perspectives in their acts (Tim KUPI, 2017). KUPI's concept of female ulama has been utilized for this study.

## Research Methods

*Participants*

In this study, qualitative methodology was employed. Our investigation began by identifying the female ulama. In selecting the ulama to be recruited as study participants, I relied on the definition of female ulama provided by KUPI or the Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama.

The second step consisted of conducting a preliminary study in which ten Indonesian female ulama were observed and recorded voluntarily. It was discovered that figurative forms of gender equality frequently appeared in the context of domestic life. Figurative versions of gender equality rarely appeared in contexts apart from domestic life, such as theology, Islamic economics, and human relations. Only four of the observed ulama were found to preach on the issue of domestic life routinely, and they were subsequently recruited as participants in the study.

Mrs. Rkm, a 60-year-old bachelor of science holder, activist for 'Aisyiyah, and household consultant, is the first participant. She regularly delivers sermons in the 'Aisyiyah community and the Insan Kamil mosque in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. Ms. Sp is the second participant. She is 49 years old, holds a bachelor's degree in science, teaches religion, and is an activist in 'Aisyiyah. She preaches weekly in her neighboring community. The third individual is Mrs. TC. She is 35 and holds a bachelor's degree in science from one of Egypt's colleges. She regularly preaches at Malang city women's organizations. Mrs. Mys is the final candidate. She is 49 years old, has a bachelor's degree in science, is an English teacher, and preaches live on the radio weekly.

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The first participant is Mrs. Rkm, a bachelor of science, 60 years old, an activist of 'Aisyiyah [1], and a household consultant. She routinely preaches in 'The Aisyiyah community and Insan Kamil mosque in Malang city, East Java, Indonesia. The second participant is Mrs. Sp. She is 49 years old, a bachelor of science, a religion teacher, and an activist in 'Aisyiyah. She preaches weekly in her surrounding neighborhood. The third one is Mrs. TC. She is 35 years old and a bachelor of science graduate from one of the universities in Egypt. She routinely preaches in woman's organizations in Malang city. The last participant is Mrs. Mys. She is 49 years old, has a bachelor of science, is an English teacher, and weekly preaches live on the radio.

*Data collection*

The next step was data collection. This study's data are female ulama's utterances containing gender equality-related figurative language. The data was gathered via the audio recording of the ulama's statements while preaching in front of their community. The data collection occurred between September 2018 and January 2019 and lasted approximately 25 hours. The audio cassette was transcribed and studied in Indonesian, the language used by the ulama. The whole audio tape was transcribed, except utterances that did not contain the figurative language of gender equality.

*Data analysis*

Analysis of data was the final phase. Pragglejaz Group detected figurative language by modifying the Metaphor Identification Process (MIP) (2007). The search for figurative terms in the data began with identifying dictionaries signifying equality. Second, identifying the contextual and underlying meanings of each equality-containing utterance identified in step one. The fundamental meaning is more tangible because what it inspires is easier to visualize, hear, feel, smell, and taste (Group, 2007). Figurative language exists when the contextual meaning differs from the underlying meaning, but the distinction is clear.

## Results and Analysis

Data analysis reveals that gender equality is figuratively realized through similes, novel metaphors, and conceptual metaphors.

*Similes*

The simile is the figurative language dominantly occurring in this study, and some are presented in this subheading. Gender equality is realized in *the right-and-left-leg*, *football team, sugar-and-salt,* and *sugar-and-coffee* similes.

|     | The right-and-left leg simile |
| --- | --- |
| (1) | *Makanya     kalau     di   Islam     itu       saling     melengkapi. kaki   kanan*<br>That's why     if      in  Islam            mutually complements leg     right<br>*butuh     kaki     kiri     supaya     bisa       jalan.*<br>needs a  left  leg to be able to   walk<br>'...that is why, according to Islam, (we) are complementary. The right leg needs the left one to be able to move. |

Example (1) is a simile because it juxtaposes two distinct domains: we (husband and wife) and the leg movement. The juxtaposition makes evident the shared characteristic of the two, namely harmony. The basis of the comparison between the two in harmony. The equilibrium of the leg movement represents the husband-wife relationship.

Moving by placing one foot in front of the other is walking. To walk properly, the left and right legs must move in unison. Using the analogy of walking on two legs, the speaker illustrated the significance of husband and wife in family life. There must be harmony between husband and wife to achieve a pleasant family life.

|     | Football-team simile |
| --- | --- |
| (2) | *Laki-laki dan perempuan itu   sama-sama   punya   kewajiban. Sepak bola  itu*<br>Men       and women mutually       have     duties in football      that<br>*semuanya punya kewajiban.*<br>*All have     duties*<br>'Male and female both have duties. (All individuals) in a football team have duties'. |

'Both men and women have obligations, and (everyone on a football team) does as well' juxtaposes two distinct worlds. It shows a comparison between male and female obligations and those of football players, revealing a shared characteristic: interdependence between or among individuals. Dependence in male-female relationships resembles that of a football team in some ways but differs in others.

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1 'Aisyiyah is an Islamic-woman-non-government organization in Indonesia which is concerned with the empowerment of females and charitable works. This organization is one of the autonomous organizations of Muhammadiyah, one of the most prominent Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia.

Each of the eleven players on a football team has a specific role to perform. A quarterback is the group's leader; he is responsible for calling the plays and shouting the signals at the line of scrimmage. The center is responsible for passing the ball to the quarterback. The running back is the player who carries the football. A fullback's responsibilities include blocking for the running around and pass-blocking to protect the quarterback. To win a match, collaboration among these positions is required. The characteristics of this partnership are comparable to the husband-wife relationship. It implies that each spouse has their responsibilities, yet they work together to make the home life enjoyable.

|  | Sugar-and-salt simile |
|---|---|
| (3) | *Perempuan gayanya lemah lembut, sementara laki-laki tidak seperti itu.* <br> Women　　her style is gentle,　　　　while　　men do not　like　　that <br> *Seperti　gula　dan　garam　dalam　sayur　kalau　kita　　masak.* <br> Like sugar and　salt　　in the soup　when　we　　cook <br> 'Females are gentle, but males are not like sugar and salt in our soup pot. |

Example 3 juxtaposes and compares the difference between men and women to that of sugar and salt in a soup pot. Using like or seperti emphasizes this juxtaposition and comparison between the two. Thus, the simile in Example 3 is represented by the formula A is like B.

Utilizing the concept of mutual dependency, the speaker compared the relationship between husband and wife to adding sugar and salt to the soup. Salt and sugar are two compounds with distinctive tastes; salt is salty, whereas sugar is sweet. But, when blended in a soup pot, the contradictory flavors produce excellent and pleasing tastes.

|  | Sugar-and-coffee simile |
|---|---|
| (4) | *Wanita　itu　berasal　dari　tulang rusuk　laki-laki. ... Tapi　saling* <br> Women that　come　from　bone　rib　men　...　But　mutually <br> *melengkapi.　Kayak　gula　dan　kopi...* <br> complementary, like　sugar　and　coffee <br> 'Woman is created from man's rib, but we are complementary to each other, like sugar and coffee (in a single glass of coffee).' |

In example (4), the comparison between sugar and coffee (the source) and the husband-wife relationship (the target) are shown side-by-side and connected by the term like. The expression A is like B, illustrating the similarity between the two. The basis for the comparison is the interconnectedness between the two realms.

The flavors of sugar and coffee are opposed; sugar is sweet, while coffee is harsh. Yet, the flavors produce a delicious flavor with a pleasing scent. It suggests that the contradictory qualities may not impede healthy cooperation and unity. Citing evidence from the sugar and coffee case, the speaker compared the teamwork between husband and wife to that of sugar and coffee. It suggests that coordination and unity between the husband and wife are not impossible, despite their opposing qualities and distinct social backgrounds, because they depend on one another.

*Novel metaphor*

This study demonstrates that certain metaphors can be used to illustrate gender equality. A domain is purposely shown as another domain in this metaphor using precise linguistic phrases. This type of metaphor has some data from this investigation. One-team, union, transaction, and door function are all metaphors utilized to realize gender equality.

|  | One-team metaphor |
|---|---|
| (5) | *Laki-laki　dan　perempuan　itu　satu　tim.* <br> Men and women are one team. <br> 'Men and women are a single team.' |

Men-and-women relations are linked with teammate relationships in Example 5. Individual interdependence in teammate relationships is projected onto the men-and-women relationship. The two realms' features are comparable in some ways but distinct in others.

A team is a group of individuals collaborating to achieve a common objective. Each team member has a distinct function, none more vital than the others. The achievement of the team's objective depends on the input of each individual. Thus, each person is the partner of the other. Males (laki-laki) and females (perempuan) are equivalent to a single squad in Example 5.

|  | Union　Metaphor |
|---|---|
| (6) | *...kalau　sudah　menikah,　sudah berserikat　antara　suami* <br> If　already　married,　already united　between　husband <br> *istri　itu* <br> wife　that <br> '...as female and male are married, they are united in one union'. |

It is a metaphor to say that they are unified in one union. The metaphor can be traced back to the open mapping of the relationship between the domains of marriage and union. The mapped aspects are unrestricted; recipients are invited to determine for themselves.

Being unionized, each member has equal rights and obligations; a union treats all its members equally, not simply those more robust socially and economically. This attribute corresponds to the husband-wife relationship in a marriage. It can be inferred from the figurative statement that the speaker wishes to affirm that in a marriage, males and females are equal; no one is superior to the other.

| Transaction Metaphor |
| --- |
| (7)*Kehormatan mereka dihalalkan bagi kalian dengan menggunakan kalimat Allah.*<br>Virginity     their     allowed     for     you     by     using     sentence Allah<br><br>*Sebuah transaksi yang transaksi itu tidak sama dengan*<br>A     transaction   which  transaction  that not  the same  as<br>*transaksi jual beli, tapi menggunakan kalimat Allah*<br>transaction selling buying , but     resorting to     sentence Allah<br>'Their virginity is lawful for you because of Allah. This transaction is not the same as a commercial transaction, but this is under Allah's permission.' |

The connection between a woman and a man in marriage is compared metaphorically to a transaction or transaksi. However, transaction and male-female interactions are not reported individually; they are combined into a single item. The correspondence between the domains is mapped publicly, so the recipients are asked to identify which characteristics of the domains are mappable.

The transaction is selling and purchasing, in which each party is legally bound by commercial law. According to the legal requirement, each party has rights and responsibilities. Marriage shares similarities with economic transactions in that it is a legally binding contract. Yet, the legal constraint is not human-created law but Allah's permission.

| (8) Door-function metaphor |
| --- |
| *... Allah ngasih rejeki     untuk keluarga, bukan untuk orang per*<br>...Allah bestows livelihood for     family     not     for     person per<br>*orang, tapi untuk semuanya, dan bisa melalui satu atau dua pintu.*<br>person but   for   all     and may through one   or     two doors<br>'... Allah bestows livelihood to the entire members of the family, instead of to<br>A certain individual. **The livelihood might be distributed through one or two doors'**. |

In example (8), the involvement of family members in the distribution of means of subsistence is illustrated by the statement '(it) may be dispersed through one or two doors' or bisa melalui satu atau dua pintu. In this instance, the function of each family member is compared to that of a door. A door is an object through which people and other objects can enter and exit a space. Utilizing the door function, the speaker illustrated the role of family members in dividing the family's means of subsistence.

*Conceptual metaphor*

Part of the findings in this study is represented using conceptual metaphor, or metaphor anchored in idea. It is claimed that the metaphorical nature of human thought influences the data's language.

| WOMAN AND MAN ARE PARTS OF A WHOLE |
| --- |
| (9) *...di Islam,     wanita itu bagian dari laki-laki karena wanita dari*<br>...in Islam, women   are   part   of   men     because women from<br>*tulang rusuk laki-laki...*<br>bone   ribs   men<br>'...in Islam, **women are part of men** because women are created from men's ribs...' |

The phrase 'women are pieces of men' or wanita itu bagian dari laki-laki is derived from the metaphor WOMEN AND MEN ARE PARTS OF A WHOLE. We can move forward based on how we comprehend and organize the concept of the totality. Entire could be regarded as a state in which all components of something are united. When some parts are missing, something is not considered a whole. Each component's contribution to the object's totality is essential; without it, fullness cannot be achieved. A bicycle is an example of an object whose wholeness is created through the interconnectedness of its elements. The optimal operation of a bicycle cannot be achieved if the bell is missing, the chain is damaged, or the lamp is dead. Similarly, the voice, the chain, and the light are ineffective unless assembled as a unit.

Recognizing that women-and-men relationships can be conceptualized in this manner is crucial. Culturally, there are gender-role specialties that mutually reinforce one another. Man is viewed as a pillar, which requires him to be a breadwinner. In contrast, the female is a housekeeper responsible for housework

such as caring for children, purchasing and preparing food, and housekeeping. Despite the distinct differences in responsibility, they are complementary. No matter how much a man makes, he will never achieve perfection without a family-managing partner. Even if a woman is a skilled housekeeper, she cannot achieve perfection without a decent partner. In short, the husband and wife are two things combined into one. They are components of the whole.

| | FEMALE IS BEHIND, and LESS IS BEHIND |
|---|---|
| (10) | *...di belakang laki-laki    yang    kuat    terdapat perempuan  yang    kuat    pula*<br>... behind    man    which   strong   there is    woman    which  strong  as well<br>'...there must be a great woman behind a successful man'. |

The female (wife) is shown as a creature contributing significantly to a man's prosperity (husband). A spouse cannot achieve success without his wife's support. The importance of women is expressly acknowledged in the phrase, "there must be a strong woman behind a successful man" (di behin pria sukses pasti ada wanita yang baik). The origins of this metaphorical term are the orientational metaphors FEMALE IS BEHIND, and LESS IS BEHIND.

The FEMALE IS BEHIND metaphor is based on our repeated real experiences witnessing the function of a woman as a housekeeper. Therefore she must spend most of her time in the kitchen, typically in the back of the house. As a result, the position of women is a part of our thought, leading to the emergence of metaphorical expressions such as the one in the example (10).

The LESS IS BEHIND metaphor is based on the reality that persons typically occupy the position behind it with a subordinate status. In some societies, a woman is one step behind a man since she is not viewed as a rival but as a complement. She is not a primary character but rather a supporting one. Moreover, a woman is responsible for home tasks such as housework, laundry, and cooking, which are all classified as lower-status occupations. The metaphorical notion LESS IS BEHIND and the cultural facts give rise to metaphorical expressions such as the example expression (10).

| | MALE IS FRONT, and MORE IS FRONT |
|---|---|
| (11) | *Jadi, tidak  ada  larangan  untuk  menjadi    pemimpin. Wanita  bisa   di depan..*<br>so,    no    ban   to   be               leaders.    Females  may  be in front<br><br>'There is no ban on females from being a leader. Females may be in front.' |

According to the findings of this study, our actions and habits subconsciously place women one step below men. The figurative word "women may lead" atau wanita bisa di depan (Example 11) indicates a cultural ideal in which we believe. The usage of the auxiliary verb may imply that women have the opportunity to be in the lead. However, this is not the case. A guy is prioritized for leadership roles. Example 11 is derived from the metaphorical notions MORE IS FRONT and MALE IS FRONT.

The MORE IS FRONT metaphor is a metaphorical concept in the human mind. This metaphorical concept is supported by continuous experiences demonstrating that a leader is a figure who can inspire, guide, and motivate others to achieve their goals and who must be seated in the front row and the front line. The concrete facts indicating that a leader tends to correspond with frontness and movement, along with the metaphorical concept MORE IS FRONT, result in figurative expressions, such as those in the following example: (11).

Moreover, our consistent experience reveals that leaders are typically men; males occupy most of the top positions in various institutions, including businesses, government offices, and educational institutions. The predominance of men in these organizations leads to the metaphorical thought MALE IS IN THE LEAD, which eventually comes to the metaphorical statement wanita boleh di depan, or "women may be in the lead."

## Discussion

This study's findings confirm that figurative languages, such as simile, innovative metaphor, and conceptual metaphor, are used effectively to realize gender equality. These metaphorical expressions imply the promotion of gender equality and the tacit acceptance of gender inequity.

This study's figurative language may diminish the resistance to gender equality. Gender equality in Muslim society is a difficult issue, as it is well recognized. Some members of the Muslim community interpret the verse 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made one of them superior to the other and because they spend (to support them) from their means' (QS 4:34) and the hadith a nation led by a woman will fail' (d. 52 AH) so strictly. Some ulama believe that women are not permitted to be leaders; only men, not women, have the authority to lead (Sari, 2016). Owing to its rigid interpretation, the rate of gender inequality in Muslim societies remains high (Klingorova & Havlíček, 2015). Thus, it is necessary to make consistent and persistent efforts to promote gender equality.

Using reassuring and encouraging language to promote gender equality convincingly instead of coercively may be an effective method. According to Aristotle, as referenced by Wood (2009), to encourage and persuade individuals to change their behavior, speakers need words and reasoning rather than force. Figurative language can persuade others to alter their behavior without coercion or violence. Using metaphorical terms such as similes and metaphors may make the word sound catchier, simpler, and more flourishing, making the message more conveyable, tangible, and understandable. The interpretation is more natural when a message is conveyed using figurative language. The juxtaposition of two distinct domains in similes provides a clearer image of the semantic structure of expressions (Croft & Cruse, 2004), making proper interpretation more accessible. In addition, gender equality becomes less problematic when expressed in metaphors since metaphor has artistic characteristics and produces an additional cognitive effect (Sperber & Wilson, 1985). The beauty of figurative language can transform coercion into encouragement, threat into hope, and rejection into acceptance. This may explain why female ulama in the study employs similes and metaphors so frequently.

This study suggests that metaphors and similes were constructed purposely to promote gender equality. The frequent support of gender equality by female ulama under investigation can be traced to the dictionaries they employed. Utilizing metaphors and similes, they portrayed females as an integral component of males; their place is not neglected. The equality between men and women is organized using colloquial phrases such as football team, sugar-and-coffee, and sugar-and-salt in soup, as well as dictionaries relating to organization and activities involving people: union, one team, and transaction. The construction accurately characterizes and meaningfully ties the source domain to the target domain. As a result of the entire speech, the abstract and contentious notion of gender equality has become more interpretable and even more acceptable.

Using metaphors and similes, the female ulama in the study attempted to emphasize the importance of women's duties and the equality between men and women. The female ulama's use of similes and metaphors reflects their attitudes and ideas toward gender equality (Holmgreen, 2009; Liu et al., 2018). Such language discoveries are a useful beginning point for highlighting the importance of women in social life, given that our perceptions of a particular gender are heavily influenced by the information we take in. Good information about a woman could result in a favorable opinion of her and vice versa (Tipler & Ruscher, 2019).

This study also contains orientational metaphors, which merits discussion. Despite their small number, they represent an essential aspect of gender equality. The orientational metaphors demonstrate the existence of gender disparity in human thinking. Linguistic idioms such as "women may be in front" or "wanita bisa di depan" and "there must be a strong woman behind a successful man" or "di belakang pria sukses pasti ada wanita yang kuat" demonstrate the acceptance of inequality. According to the investigation, the linguistic statements MALE IS FRONT, MORE IS FRONT, FEMALE IS BEHIND, LESS IS BEHIND are respectively motivated by our metaphorical thinking MALE IS FRONT, MORE IS FRONT. FEMALE IS BEHIND, LESS IS BEHIND. The cultural experience of language users cannot separate conceptual thoughts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). According to empirical evidence, women's participation in politics (Hardani, 2016), education, and work training are less than that of men (Said et al., 2016). These statistics indicate that men play a more prominent role than women. It may be assumed from this that politics, education, and careers are associated with males, and those who succeed in these fields are in the lead. These social and physical realities may be the basis for the conceptual concepts MALE IS IN FRONT, MORE IS IN FRONT, FEMALE IS BEHIND, and LESS IS IN BACK.

## Conclusion

Female ulama employs simile, new metaphor, and conceptual metaphor to describe and promote gender equality through figurative language. Examples of similes and new metaphors are distinguished by their use of everyday phrases as source domains, allowing gender equality to be appropriately profiled and become less controversial. The data analysis demonstrates that the female ulama employed figurative language in the study, suggesting the presence of gender equality promotion and gender inequality admission. The figurative languages employed to promote gender equality in Indonesian society are similes and creative metaphors, whereas conceptual metaphors are used to accept the presence of gender inequality.

The study of figurative language used by Indonesian female ulama in their speeches highlights the creative and powerful ways in which they communicate messages of gender equality. Through metaphors, analogies, and other figurative languages, female ulama can challenge patriarchal norms and advocate for greater gender equality within Islamic discourse. The findings of this paper suggest that figurative language can be a valuable tool for feminist scholars and activists who seek to promote gender equality within religious contexts. Furthermore, the study sheds light on the important role of female ulama in Indonesian society and their contributions to the ongoing struggle for gender equality. However, it is important to note that significant challenges remain to be addressed, such as the marginalization and exclusion of women from traditional Islamic institutions. Therefore, further research and advocacy are needed to support the efforts of female ulama and promote greater gender equality in Indonesia and beyond. Overall, the study highlights the importance of figurative language to promote social change and advance feminist agendas within religious discourse.

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