

Conceptual Metaphors In Ritual Communication: The Case Of The Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra

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Abstract

The Dayak Iban wedding mantra in the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual constitutes a ritual communication practice that constructs cultural meanings concerning married life through metaphorical language. This study analyzes the conceptual metaphors contained in the mantra and examines their functions within the

communication context of the wedding ritual. The data, consisting of mantra texts, were obtained from ritual speech events in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and transcription. The analysis was conducted through the identification of metaphorical expressions based on lexical meanings, the mapping of concrete experiences onto abstract concepts, and interpretation within the situational context of ritual communication. The findings identified ten metaphorical expressions organized into eight categories of conceptual metaphors, namely Bonding Metaphor, Protection Metaphor, Journey Metaphor, Life Direction and Control Metaphor, Harmony Metaphor, Family Renewal Metaphor, Social Legitimization Metaphor, and Holistic Well-Being Metaphor. The findings indicate that concrete experiences such as binding, fencing, journeys, direction, physical conditions, kinship, and health are systematically projected onto the abstract concept of married life. Within the ritual context, the mantra is delivered in a sacred setting by a customary leader to the bride and groom, their families, and the community as a medium for invoking blessings and social legitimization through ritual language that reinforces cultural values. Thus, the mantra functions as a collective conceptual construction that represents the way the Dayak Iban community understands and organizes married life.

Keywords: *Conceptual Metaphor, Wedding Mantra, Ritual Communication, Dayak Iban, Oral Tradition*

1. Introduction

Ritual communication in indigenous communities plays an important role as a medium for the intergenerational transmission of cultural values, norms, and worldviews (Nihayati et al., 2025). Within indigenous communities, communication is not carried out solely through everyday conversation but is also manifested through symbols, rituals, and sacred utterances that contain social, cultural, and spiritual meanings (Dasih & Nirmalayani, 2021; Kamuri et al., 2025; Novia, 2025). These communicative practices demonstrate that language functions not merely as a means of conveying information but also as a medium for constructing, maintaining, and reproducing a community's cultural identity. From the perspective of ritual communication, communication is understood as a process of creating shared meaning through symbolic actions performed repeatedly in social life (Prasetiyo & Dartiningsih, 2023; Sabila, 2021). Therefore, ritual communication is not only informative but also ritualistic and symbolic, as it serves to strengthen community members' attachment to their cultural values and traditions (Rahmi et al., 2024).

One form of ritual communication in indigenous communities is manifested through mantra. A mantra is a ritual utterance used within a

particular cultural context and carries symbolic, social, and spiritual functions. As part of an oral tradition, a mantra serves not only as a medium of sacred communication but also as a means of transmitting collective knowledge, cultural values, and the worldview of its speech community. The language used in mantra is generally symbolic and poetic, enabling the communication of complex cultural meanings through specific forms of expression (Puspitasari, 2023; Putra et al., 2023).

Within the Dayak Iban community, mantra occupies an important position in various customary ceremonies, including the wedding ritual known as *Sampi Melah Pinang*. In this ritual, a mantra is recited as part of a series of customary proceedings to convey prayers, hopes, advice, and cultural values related to married life. The Dayak Iban wedding mantra functions not only as a ceremonial element but also as a medium of ritual communication that represents the community's views regarding the husband–wife relationship, family life, and social order. Thus, the wedding mantra can be understood as a form of communication that connects the community's life experiences with the value system in which they believe.

The meanings contained in the wedding mantra are generally expressed through symbolic language and metaphorical expressions. In Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Lakoff & Johnson (1980) explain that metaphor is not merely a figure of speech but rather a cognitive mechanism that enables humans to understand abstract concepts through more concrete experiences. Through the process of conceptual mapping between the source domain and the target domain, abstract concepts such as marriage, family, harmony, protection, and well-being can be understood through experiences that are more closely related to everyday life (Chaer et al., 2024; Purwanti et al., 2025). In the context of customary mantra, metaphors function not only as aesthetic elements of language but also as a means of representing the community's cultural perspective on the social realities they experience (Miswaty & Sumadewi, 2024).

However, metaphor analysis alone is insufficient to explain how such meanings are produced and understood within the cultural context of the speech community. Therefore, this study also employs the Ethnography of Communication approach, which positions language as part of social and cultural practice. This approach enables an analysis of the relationship among linguistic forms, participants, communicative purposes, and the social context in which an utterance is used. In this study, Conceptual Metaphor Theory is used to identify the forms and constructions of metaphors found in the Dayak Iban wedding mantra, whereas Ethnography of Communication is employed to understand the functions and meanings of these metaphors within the ritual communication context

of the Dayak Iban community. Accordingly, these two approaches complement one another in explaining the relationship between metaphorical meaning structures and the cultural context from which they emerge.

As part of an oral tradition, the wedding mantra has been transmitted from generation to generation within Dayak Iban society. Oral tradition serves important social and cultural functions because it acts as a medium for the preservation and transmission of a community's collective knowledge (Jurdi & Amiruddin, 2024; Karsiwan & Sari, 2024). Therefore, the Dayak Iban wedding mantra can be understood not only as a form of oral literature but also as a ritual communication practice that represents the community's values, norms, and worldview.

Research on Dayak Iban wedding traditions has been conducted in several previous studies. Juri & Santi (2019) examined cultural values and symbolic meanings in Dayak Iban wedding rituals, whereas Sudhiarsa et al. (2022) explored the philosophical and spiritual dimensions of these rituals through a hermeneutic perspective. These studies have made important contributions to understanding the cultural meanings embedded in Dayak Iban wedding rituals; however, they focus primarily on customary proceedings in general and do not specifically examine mantra texts as the core of ritual communication. Meanwhile, research on the Dayak Iban mantra conducted by Putri (2023) focuses more on healing mantras, mysticism, and the belief systems of indigenous communities. Thus, studies of Dayak Iban wedding mantras remain relatively limited compared with studies of wedding rituals and mantras in other contexts.

Based on a review of previous studies, research on Dayak Iban marriage has focused primarily on ritual proceedings, cultural values, symbolic meanings, and the spiritual functions of mantra. Although these studies have made important contributions to understanding the wedding traditions of the Dayak Iban community, no study has been found that specifically integrates Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Ethnography of Communication to examine the wedding mantra as the core of ritual communication in the Sampi Melah Pinang tradition. Consequently, the understanding of how metaphors are used to construct and communicate the meanings of married life within the Dayak Iban cultural context remains relatively limited. To address this gap, the present study focuses on analyzing the conceptual metaphors contained in the Dayak Iban wedding mantra recited during the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual and interpreting their meanings within the ritual communication context of the Dayak Iban community. Accordingly, this study is directed toward examining mantra texts and the context of their use as ritual

communication events rather than providing a comprehensive description of the entire sequence of Dayak Iban customary wedding ceremonies.

Based on this background, the study seeks to answer two research questions: (1) What forms of conceptual metaphors and speaking components are found in the Dayak Iban wedding mantra? and (2) How do these metaphors represent ritual communication within Dayak Iban culture? This study is expected to enrich scholarship on ritual communication, cultural linguistics, and oral tradition, particularly with respect to the use of metaphor in the communicative practices of indigenous communities.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach by integrating Lakoff & Johnson (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Hymes (1974) Ethnography of Communication. Conceptual Metaphor Theory was used to identify the relationships between the source domain and the target domain in the construction of meaning within ritual utterances Hakim (2025), whereas Ethnography of Communication was used to understand how such meanings are produced and communicated within the sociocultural context of the Dayak Iban community (Hymes, 1974; Poerana, 2025; Putra & Simanjuntak, 2025). The integration of these two approaches makes it possible to understand the mantra both as a linguistic text and as a ritual communication practice that represents the community's values, norms, and worldview.

The study was conducted in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, with a focus on the wedding mantra used in the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual. The unit of analysis was a mantra text that is still used in customary practice and recognized by customary authorities as an important component of the Dayak Iban wedding ceremony. The selection of a single text was intended to obtain an in-depth understanding of metaphorical constructions and cultural meanings within a single ritual communication event rather than to compare variations of mantra across regions or rituals. The primary data were obtained through direct recording during the ritual and subsequently transcribed into written form as the object of analysis (Kusumanegara et al., 2024). Data processing involved the transcription of the Iban-language text, translation into Indonesian, and verification of meanings with informants to minimize the loss of cultural meaning during the translation process. To ensure cultural accuracy, interpretations of symbols, terms, and expressions contained in the mantra were verified through in-depth interviews and member checking with informants who

understood the context in which the utterances were used (Agustia & Sukmawan, 2025; Kristina, 2024).

Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique oriented toward information-rich cases, namely, individuals who possessed knowledge, experience, and cultural authority related to the phenomenon under investigation. The criteria for selecting informants included: (1) an understanding of Dayak Iban wedding traditions, (2) direct involvement in the implementation of customary rituals, (3) the ability to explain the use and meanings of wedding mantras, and (4) recognition by the community as holders of customary authority. Based on these criteria, the study involved two customary leaders. In qualitative research, data adequacy is determined not by the number of participants but by the depth of information obtained from sources relevant to the research focus. Therefore, both informants were considered capable of providing comprehensive explanations regarding the meanings, functions, and contexts of the use of the wedding mantra in the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual.

Table 1. Research Informants

| Informant | Age | Customary Role |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Marselius Adi | 66 years old | Customary Chief |
| Merayang | 84 years old | Customary <i>Temenggung</i> |

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and transcription of utterances (Linda et al., 2025). Data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation by comparing the results obtained from the initial data collection process. The findings were confirmed with informants to ensure that the meanings were consistent with the local cultural context (Susanto & Jailani, 2023). This study was oriented toward providing an in-depth contextual description (thick description) rather than producing statistical generalizations.

Data analysis was conducted through two approaches. First, Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory was used to identify and classify metaphors based on mappings between the source domain and the target domain. Second, Hymes's (1974) Ethnography of Communication was used to analyze the context of ritual communication through the SPEAKING components. The results of these two analyses were integrated to explain the cultural meanings of the Dayak Iban wedding mantra as a ritual communication practice. The study was conducted after obtaining approval from the informants and the local customary authorities. The researcher served as the primary instrument,

while efforts to minimize bias were undertaken through field note-taking, repeated consultations with informants, and verification of interpretive findings throughout the research process. The stages of the study are presented in the following flowchart.

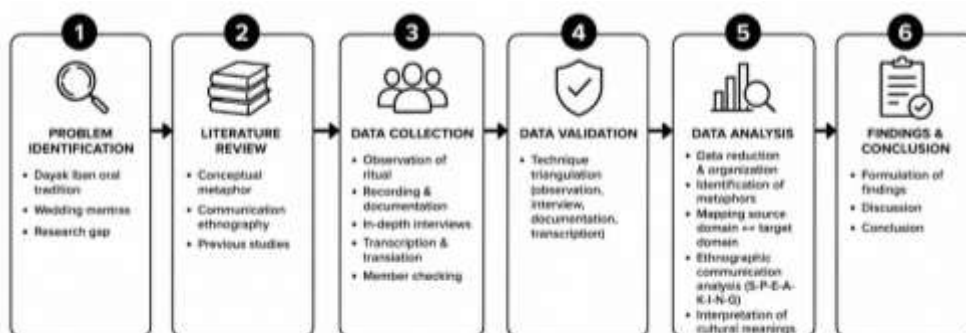


Figure 1. Research Stages of the Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra

3. Results

3.1 Presentation of Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra Data

The research data analyzed in this study consist of the text of a Dayak Iban wedding mantra recited during the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual. The mantra was obtained through direct documentation of the customary ritual and was subsequently transcribed and translated into Indonesian through a verification process conducted with informants. The presentation of these data aims to display the ritual utterances that serve as the source for the identification of conceptual metaphors and the analysis of ritual communication.

Table 2. Text of the “Sampi Melah Pinang” Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra

| No. | Original Lyrics | Translation |
|-----|--|---|
| 1 | ho ha ho ha ho ha | ho ha ho ha ho ha |
| 2 | nyadi to baka to baka pengawak kami kesari to | Thus it is, thus it is, our activity on this day |
| 3 | nyadi kanak buah kami ya kekawin seduaiya | making our descendants who are getting married, the two of them |
| 4 | Nyadi suroh kami to nyak tade ukai enda enggau pedara', enggau pegela', enggau rendai, enggau | Thus, we make this request; it is not without offerings, presentations, roasted rice, and smoked meat; we are marrying these two individuals |

| No. | Original Lyrics | Translation |
|-----|--|--|
| | salai, kami to ngawin ke seduaiya. | |
| 5 | nyadi pengawak seduaiya kebaka to kekawin kebaka to suroh berkat baka Ketancang, baka kedikang, baka ketambat, baka kedikat, enda sarak enda tererak | Thus, the activities of the two of them in this marriage are a request for blessings in living their lives, like something fastened, like something fenced, like something tethered, like something bound, so that they may neither divorce nor be separated |
| 6 | nyadi serta seduaiya nyak tade kebegulai nama semua boleh anak boleh resak seduaiya ilak | And may the two of them, who are together, later be blessed with children and descendants |
| 7 | ngambek kami ke apai indai ia to boleh ucok boleh ambok | so that we, the father and mother, may be blessed with grandchildren |
| 8 | nyadi serta pengawak enggam seduaiya suroh mujor suroh unjor seduaiya | And may the occupations that suit and match the two of them be granted, and may they be given a straight path |
| 9 | baka kami to suroh atai suroh manggai utai ketuju ati seduaiya utai kedepansang ke seduaiya | As we are requested to come and fulfill the wishes and aspirations of the hearts of the two of them as they continue their lives together |
| 10 | Nyadi serta seduaiya nyak tade suroh celap lindap gayu guru gerai nyamai nguan menua nadai nama, nadai ngapa, nadai mara. | and may the two of them be granted a cool and protected life, sheltered from misfortune, long life, good health, and a pleasant and worthy life in this world, free from adversity, hardship, and danger |

Based on the data presented in Table 2, the Sampi Melah Pinang mantra contains a number of expressions related to marital relationships, family continuity, well-being, and hopes for the couple's household life. In general, the mantra demonstrates the use of symbolic language that refers to concrete experiences within Dayak Iban society, such as bonds, fences, paths, descendants, and conditions of safety and tranquility. These expressions form the basis for the process of identifying conceptual metaphors used to represent the meaning of married life within the Dayak Iban community.

3.2 Identification of Conceptual Metaphors in the Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra

The metaphor analysis in this study was conducted based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The identification of metaphors was carried out through three stages. First, each expression in the mantra text was analyzed according to its lexical meaning based on the context of its use in the Iban language. Second, expressions that demonstrated the use of concrete experiences to explain more abstract concepts were identified as potential metaphors. Third, mappings between the source domain and the target domain were established to determine the conceptual patterns underlying these expressions. An expression was categorized as a metaphor when its intended meaning did not merely refer to a literal object or physical experience but was used to understand more abstract social, cultural, or family-life concepts. The results of the identification are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Identification of Conceptual Metaphors in the “Sampi Melah Pinang” Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra

| No. | Data Line | Metaphoric al Expression | Lexical Meaning | Source Domain | Target Domain | Metaphor Category |
|-----|-----------|--------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Line 5 | baka ketambat | Tethering something so that it does not move away | Physical bond | Marriage | Bonding Metaphor |
| 2 | Line 5 | baka kedikat | Binding something so that it remains united | Physical bond | Marriage | Bonding Metaphor |
| 3 | Line 5 | baka kedikang | Fencing an area | Physical protection | Family | Protection Metaphor |
| 4 | Line 8 | suroh mujor suroh unjor | A straight path | Journey | Family life | Journey Metaphor |

| No. | Data Line | Metaphoric Expression | Lexical Meaning | Source Domain | Target Domain | Metaphor Category |
|-----|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5 | Line 9 | ketuju ati seduaiya | The destination of a journey | Direction of movement | Family life | Life Direction and Control Metaphor |
| 6 | Line 10 | celap lindap | Cool, shaded, comfortable | Comfortable physical condition | Family harmony | Harmony Metaphor |
| 7 | Lines 6-7 | buleh anak buleh rusak, buleh ucok buleh ambok | Having children and grandchildren | Biological descendants | Family continuity | Family Renewal Metaphor |
| 8 | Line 7 | apai indai ia to buleh ucok buleh ambok | Parents obtaining grandchildren | Kinship relationship | Social legitimization of marriage | Social Legitimation Metaphor |
| 9 | Line 10 | Gayu guru gerai nyamai | Healthy and comfortable | Physical health | Family well-being | Holistic Well-Being Metaphor |
| 10 | Line 10 | nadai nama, nadai ngapa, nadai mara | Free from danger | Physical security | Family well-being | Holistic Well-Being Metaphor |

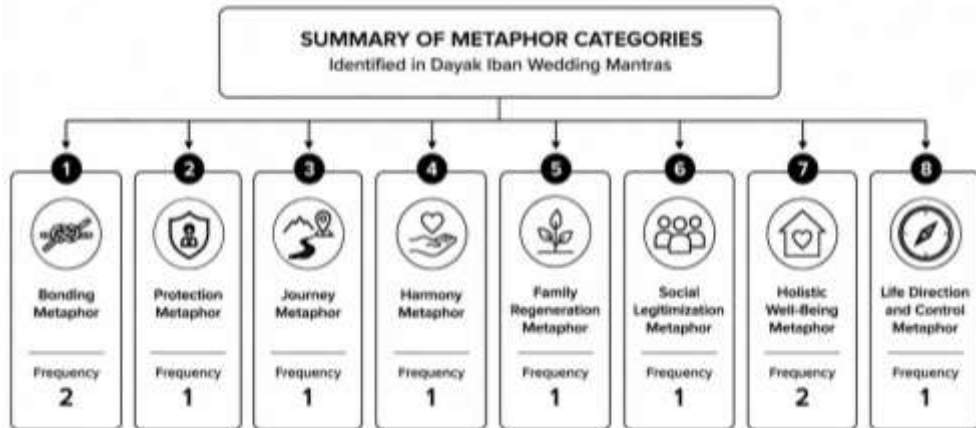


Figure 2. Conceptual Metaphor Categories Identified in Dayak Iban Wedding Mantras

3.3 Ritual Communication Context in the Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra

The Dayak Iban wedding mantra also demonstrates characteristics of ritual communication that can be analyzed through Hymes’s (1974) SPEAKING model. This analysis is used to understand the social and cultural context in which the mantra is recited, including the communication participants, the purposes of the utterances, cultural norms, and the forms of communication employed in the customary wedding ritual. The results of the SPEAKING component analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Ritual Communication Context of the Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra Based on the SPEAKING Model

| Speaking Component | Research Findings |
|-------------------------|---|
| Setting (S) | The Sampi Melah Pinang ritual within the Dayak Iban customary wedding ceremony in Kapuas Hulu Regency. |
| Participants (P) | The customary leader as the reciter of the mantra; the bride and groom, families, and the indigenous community as the recipients of the utterances. |
| Ends (E) | To invoke blessings, marital unity, descendants, well-being, and social legitimization for the couple. |
| Act Sequence (A) | The mantra is recited after the completion of the customary stages as part of the formalization of the marriage and the offering of prayers for the couple. |
| Key (K) | Sacred, solemn, and characterized by deep respect for customary traditions and ancestors. |

| Speaking Component | Research Findings |
|------------------------------|--|
| Instrumentalities (I) | The Iban language is the medium of ritual communication, containing cultural symbols and metaphors. |
| Norms (N) | The utterances are delivered by a customary leader who possesses cultural authority and are accepted as part of the customary norms that bind the community. |
| Genre (G) | A customary wedding mantra that functions as a prayer, advice, and social legitimization. |

4. Discussion

4.1 Conceptual Metaphors in the Dayak Iban Wedding Mantra

The results of the conceptual metaphor identification indicate that the Dayak Iban wedding mantra in the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual utilizes various concrete experiences of the community to understand abstract concepts related to married life. Based on the mappings between the source domain and the target domain, eight categories of metaphors were identified, namely Bonding Metaphor, Protection Metaphor, Journey Metaphor, Life Direction and Control Metaphor, Harmony Metaphor, Family Renewal Metaphor, Social Legitimization Metaphor, and Holistic Well-Being Metaphor. These findings demonstrate that metaphors in the mantra function not only as aesthetic elements of language but also as conceptual mechanisms that shape how the Dayak Iban community understands the meaning of marriage and family life. This is consistent with the view of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that metaphor is a process of mapping concrete experiences onto abstract concepts that humans use to understand social and cultural realities.

Based on the identification results presented in Table 3, the expressions *baka ketambat* and *baka kedikat* demonstrate mappings from the source domain of physical bonds to the target domain of marriage. Lexically, tethering and binding refer to actions that keep an object in its position and prevent it from becoming separated. In the Dayak Iban wedding mantra, these concrete experiences are used to understand marriage as a permanent social bond. This mapping forms the conceptual metaphor “Marriage is a Bond”, illustrating that the relationship between husband and wife must be maintained through loyalty, commitment, and social responsibility. Within the Dayak Iban cultural context, marriage not only unites two individuals but also connects two extended families within a single social

and customary network. Therefore, marital unity is understood as a form of social attachment that must be preserved to maintain community harmony (Parani et al., 2025). This perspective is consistent with the findings that state that customary marriage functions as a mechanism for integrating social, cultural, and economic relationships among families in traditional societies.

In addition to the Bonding Metaphor, a Protection Metaphor was identified through the expression *baka kedikang*. This expression demonstrates a mapping from the source domain of physical protection to the target domain of family. Literally, a fence functions to delimit and protect a space from external disturbances. In the mantra, this function is projected onto family life, so that the family is understood as a social space that must be safeguarded and protected. This mapping forms the conceptual metaphor “Family is a Protected Space”. This finding indicates that the Dayak Iban community views marriage not merely as a personal relationship but also as a social institution requiring moral, social, and cultural protection in order to remain harmonious and sustainable. This perspective is consistent with Zeybek & Kasap, (2020), who emphasize that the family is a fundamental social institution that plays a role in maintaining societal stability and continuity.

The Journey Metaphor is found in the expression *suroh mujor suroh unjor*, which lexically refers to a straight and unobstructed path. This expression demonstrates a mapping from the source domain of a journey to the target domain of family life. Within the conceptual metaphor framework, journeys are frequently used to understand life as a process that has direction, goals, and specific stages. Therefore, this metaphor forms the conceptualization “Family Life is a Journey”. Married life is viewed as a process that must be navigated purposefully, with caution, and free from obstacles that may disrupt the harmony of the couple. This finding indicates that the Dayak Iban community understands marriage as a long journey that requires commitment and perseverance in facing the various dynamics of life.

A similar meaning is reflected in the expression *ketuju ati seduaiya*, which is categorized as a Life Direction and Control Metaphor. This expression demonstrates a mapping from the source domain of direction of movement to the target domain of family life. Conceptually, direction is used to understand life goals and the orientation of human actions. This mapping forms the metaphor “Family Life is a Journey with a Destination”. Through this metaphor, married life is understood as a process that requires shared goals, self-control, and the ability to make decisions together. This finding demonstrates that the Dayak Iban

community places alignment of life goals as one of the essential foundations for building a sustainable family. This interpretation is consistent with the view that the quality of marital relationships is influenced by couples' ability to develop a shared life orientation and self-regulation in family life (Mas' udah, 2022).

Furthermore, the Harmony Metaphor is found in the expression *celap lindap*, which literally means cool, shaded, and comfortable. In the mantra data, these physical conditions are projected onto the emotional and social conditions of the family. Accordingly, a mapping occurs from the source domain of a comfortable physical condition to the target domain of family harmony. This mapping forms the conceptual metaphor "Harmony is Coolness". The expression indicates that an ideal family is understood as a life that is peaceful, tranquil, and free from conflict. This finding demonstrates that the Dayak Iban community uses everyday sensory experiences to conceptualize the emotional condition of the family. This understanding is consistent with studies that position the family as the primary space for the development of peace, dialogue, and social harmony within society (Fauziah, 2020; Hayes et al., 2019).

The next finding reveals the presence of a Family Renewal Metaphor through the expressions *buleh anak buleh resak*, *kanak buah kami*, and *buleh ucok buleh ambok*. These expressions demonstrate mappings from the source domain of biological descendants to the target domain of family continuity. The presence of children and grandchildren is understood not merely as a biological fact but also as a symbol of lineage continuity, the transmission of identity, and the preservation of cultural values. This mapping forms the conceptual metaphor "Family is a System of Generational Continuity". This finding indicates that the success of marriage in Dayak Iban culture is measured not only by the relationship between the spouses but also by the family's ability to sustain its social and cultural existence through future generations. This perspective is supported by Perales et al. (2021), who explain that the family functions as the primary medium for the transmission of values, norms, and cultural identity across generations.

In addition, the Social Legitimization Metaphor is found in the expression *apai indai ia to buleh ucok buleh ambok*. Lexically, this expression refers to parents obtaining grandchildren. However, within the context of the mantra, this meaning extends beyond a biological relationship and signifies the acceptance of the marriage by the extended family. Therefore, a mapping occurs from the source domain of kinship relations to the target domain of the social legitimization of marriage. This mapping forms the conceptual metaphor "Marriage is a Socially Legitimized Institution".

This finding demonstrates that the validity of marriage in Dayak Iban society is determined not only by the relationship between the spouses but also by recognition from the family and the customary community. This perspective highlights the importance of kinship relations in establishing social order and strengthening community solidarity (Damanik, 2022).

The final category is the Holistic Well-Being Metaphor, identified in the expressions *gayu guru gerai nyamai* and *nadai nama, nadai ngapa, nadai mara*. These expressions demonstrate mappings from the source domain of physical health and security to the target domain of family well-being. Conceptually, being healthy, safe, and free from danger is used to understand an ideal married life. This mapping forms the metaphor “Family Well-Being is a Healthy and Secure Physical Condition”. This finding indicates that the Dayak Iban community views marital well-being holistically, encompassing physical health, social security, emotional tranquility, and the continuity of family life. This interpretation is consistent with studies that regard family well-being as a multidimensional condition involving health, security, emotional stability, and the quality of relationships among family members (Comolli et al., 2021; den Dulk & Swanberg, 2021).

Overall, the eight metaphor categories identified demonstrate that the Dayak Iban community constructs marriage as a social bond that must be maintained, protected, guided, and transmitted to future generations. These metaphors function as conceptual tools for transforming everyday concrete experiences into abstract understandings of married life. This finding supports the view that metaphor is not merely a linguistic device but also a cognitive mechanism that reflects how a community understands its social and cultural reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Musolff, 2021).

Based on the overall mappings, it can be concluded that there is a macro-level metaphor (master metaphor), namely that “Marriage is a Constructed System of Social Life”, in which various concrete experiences of the community are used to shape, reinforce, and transmit the meaning of married life within the social and cultural structure of the Dayak Iban community. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in revealing how metaphors in wedding mantras operate not only at the level of individual conceptualization but also as a medium for the transmission of cultural values, social legitimization, and the construction of collective meanings concerning family life within the social system of the Dayak Iban community.

4.2 Metaphors as a Ritual Communication Practice of the Dayak Iban Community

The findings of this study indicate that the metaphors found in the Dayak Iban wedding mantra within the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual function not only as linguistic devices but also as part of the ritual communication practices of the Dayak Iban community. From the perspective of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor is a conceptual mechanism that enables concrete experiences to be used to understand more abstract concepts. Meanwhile, from the perspective of Hymes's (1974) *Ethnography of Communication*, the use of these metaphors can be understood as part of a speech event occurring within a specific social and cultural context. Accordingly, the metaphors identified in the mantra not only represent the way the Dayak Iban community conceptualizes marriage and family life but also function as a means of transmitting cultural values through ritual communication.

The relationship between metaphor and ritual communication is particularly evident in the Ends component (communication purposes). The findings show that the various metaphors employed in the mantra converge toward relatively similar purposes, namely, invoking blessings, marital unity, family continuity, well-being, and social legitimization for the married couple. Bonding Metaphor, Protection Metaphor, Journey Metaphor, Harmony Metaphor, Family Renewal Metaphor, Social Legitimization Metaphor, Holistic Well-Being Metaphor, and Life Direction and Control Metaphor function to articulate the community's collective aspirations regarding an ideal married life. In other words, metaphors serve as symbolic media through which cultural objectives associated with customary marriage are communicated (Musolff, 2021).

In addition to representing communication purposes, metaphors also play a role in transmitting the norms and cultural values of the Dayak Iban community. Through the metaphorical expressions contained in the mantra, the bride and groom are introduced to a set of values that govern married life, including loyalty, responsibility, family protection, respect for kinship, generational continuity, and the achievement of shared well-being. In this context, metaphors function not only to explain particular concepts but also as cultural instruments that reinforce the social norms that the couple is expected to uphold after entering married life. This finding is consistent with the view that ritual language functions as a medium for reproducing cultural values and identity within traditional societies (Mubayanah & Amin, 2024).

The ritual communication dimension is also reflected in the Instrumentalities and Genre components. The findings indicate that the

mantra is recited in the Iban language as a medium of ritual communication rich in cultural symbols and metaphors. The use of the local language enables cultural values to be transmitted in forms that are closely connected to the lived experiences of the speech community. At the same time, the genre of mantra as a form of ritual utterance provides cultural legitimization for the messages being conveyed. Therefore, the metaphorical meanings contained in the mantra are understood not as individual expressions but rather as representations of collective knowledge transmitted from generation to generation within the Dayak Iban community. This finding is consistent with studies in cultural linguistics that position ritual language as a means of preserving cultural identity and collective memory within society (Sariasih et al., 2020).

The function of metaphor as a ritual communication practice cannot be separated from the social context in which the mantra is recited. Based on the Setting, Participants, Act Sequence, and Key components, the mantra is delivered during the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual, which takes place as part of the Dayak Iban customary wedding ceremony. The utterances are delivered by a customary leader to the bride and groom, their families, and the community members in attendance within a sacred and solemn atmosphere. The position of the customary leader as the speaker confers cultural authority upon the messages conveyed, while the involvement of families and the community demonstrates that the meanings constructed through the metaphors are directed not only toward the bride and groom but also toward the community that forms part of their social life. Thus, the mantra functions as a mechanism of collective communication that strengthens social bonds and ensures the continuity of customary values within the community (Meilinda, 2024).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that conceptual metaphors and ritual communication are two interrelated aspects of the Sampi Melah Pinang wedding mantra. Metaphors provide a conceptual framework for understanding married life, while ritual communication serves as the social and cultural mechanism through which these meanings are transmitted, legitimized, and passed on to community members. These findings reveal that the Dayak Iban wedding mantra functions not merely as a prayer or ceremonial utterance but also as a medium of ritual communication that shapes and sustains the community's collective understanding of marriage, family, and ideal family life.

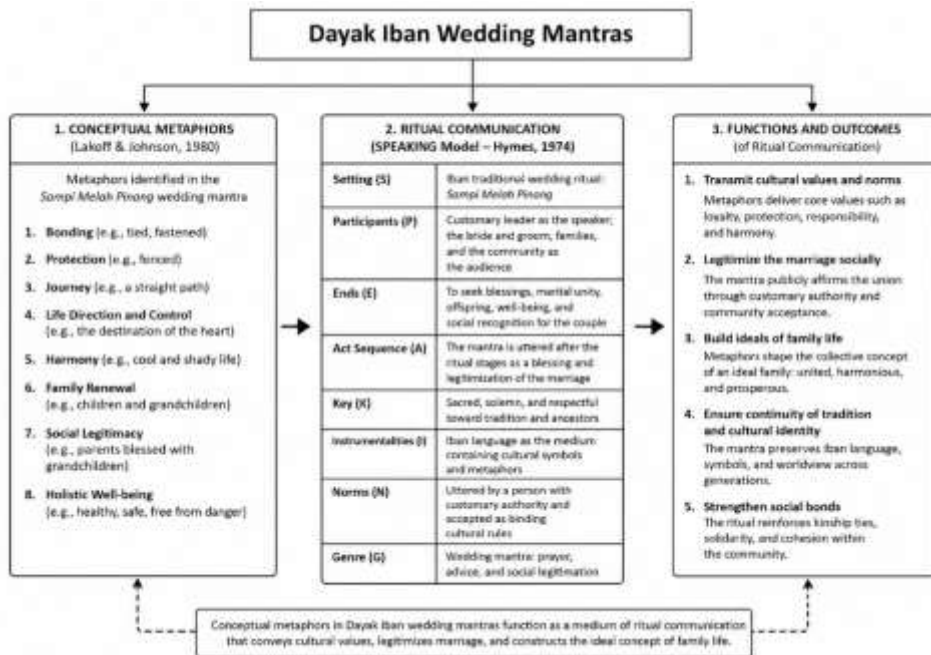


Figure 3. Integrated Model of Conceptual Metaphors and Ritual Communication in Dayak Iban Wedding Mantras

4.3 Theoretical Implications, Practical Contributions, Research Limitations, and Future Research Agenda

This study contributes theoretically to the development of Conceptual Metaphor and Ethnography of Communication studies within the context of indigenous oral traditions. The findings demonstrate that metaphors in the Dayak Iban wedding mantra function not only as aesthetic elements of language but also as conceptual mechanisms used to understand married life through concrete experiences such as bonding, protection, journeys, direction, and well-being. These metaphors shape the way the Dayak Iban community understands marriage, family, and the continuity of sociocultural life.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Saragi (2025), which showed that metaphors in Batak wedding discourse represent cultural values such as honor, happiness, and family well-being. The results of this study also support the findings of Adha et al. (2025), who demonstrated that metaphors in customary marriage discourse are used to understand cultural realities through particular conceptual mappings. However, research on Batak marriage primarily focuses on the classification of metaphors in umpasa texts, whereas research on Sasak marriage emphasizes metaphors as tools for representing complex cultural

realities. Unlike these studies, the present study not only identifies conceptual metaphors but also relates them to the context of ritual communication through Hymes's SPEAKING model. Accordingly, metaphors are understood not merely as cognitive structures or cultural representations but also as components of communication practices that possess specific social purposes, cultural norms, participants, and ritual functions. This has likewise been identified in studies of ritual as a metaphorical process, which demonstrates that metaphor is not merely an ornament of language but a mechanism for meaning-making within ritual practices (Della Costa, 2023).

Theoretically, the findings of this study also reinforce previous research that views ritual as a medium of communication through which social values, collective identities, and customary order are reproduced. Similar findings have been reported in the Nyadran Sonoageng tradition, which demonstrates that ritual communication functions as a means of transmitting cultural values and maintaining intergenerational social harmony (Tuti & Safitri, 2024). The results of this study also strengthen various investigations of symbolic communication in customary wedding rituals, which have shown that ritual language is used to convey moral values, social responsibilities, and community worldviews. Nevertheless, this study differs from those studies because it does not focus solely on the functions of ritual communication, cultural symbols, or the social meanings of ritual in general. Rather, it demonstrates that values concerning marital unity, protection, harmony, generational continuity, social legitimization, and family well-being are constructed through conceptual mappings between concrete experiences (source domain) and more abstract social concepts (target domain). In other words, this study explains the linguistic mechanisms underlying the transmission of cultural values through ritual communication.

Conceptually, this study demonstrates that conceptual metaphor and ritual communication have a complementary relationship. Conceptual metaphor explains how the Dayak Iban community constructs meanings related to marriage and family life through concrete experiences closely associated with everyday life. *Ethnography of Communication*, meanwhile, explains how those meanings are articulated, legitimized, and transmitted through ritual communication practices involving setting, participants, communication purposes, cultural norms, and particular forms of utterance. The integration of these two approaches constitutes the primary contribution of this study in expanding scholarship on cultural linguistics, oral traditions, and ritual communication within indigenous communities, while also demonstrating that metaphor is an essential

component of the communicative mechanisms that sustain the values and collective identity of the Dayak Iban community.

Although this study successfully reveals the construction of conceptual metaphors and the ritual communication context of the Dayak Iban wedding mantra, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focuses on only one mantra text within the Sampi Melah Pinang ritual and therefore does not represent the broader variation of metaphors found in other Dayak Iban mantras or rituals. Second, the analysis is limited to conceptual metaphor and ethnography of communication, leaving other linguistic aspects such as phonology, morphology, and pragmatics insufficiently explored. Third, the study places greater emphasis on the analysis of mantra texts that were transcribed and verified with informants; consequently, performative aspects such as intonation, speaker expression, and the dynamics of ritual interaction were not the focus of the discussion. Nevertheless, these limitations indicate that the Dayak Iban wedding mantra continues to offer opportunities for further investigation from linguistic, cultural, and communication perspectives.

5. Conclusion

This study identified eight categories of conceptual metaphors in the Sampi Melah Pinang wedding mantra, namely Bonding Metaphor, Protection Metaphor, Journey Metaphor, Life Direction and Control Metaphor, Harmony Metaphor, Family Renewal Metaphor, Social Legitimization Metaphor, and Holistic Well-Being Metaphor. All of these metaphors are constructed through mappings of the community's concrete experiences onto abstract concepts concerning married life. Theoretically, these findings affirm that metaphor functions not only as a cognitive mechanism grounded in embodied experience for understanding abstract realities but also operates within the social domain through ritual communication practices. In this context, metaphor does not exist merely as an individual construction; rather, it is legitimized and institutionalized within customary speech events, thereby functioning as a medium for transmitting collective values, norms, and life orientations. In synthesis, all of these metaphor categories converge into a single macro-level conceptual construction (master metaphor), namely that "Marriage is a Constructed System of Social Life", in which the community's concrete experiences are used to shape, reinforce, and transmit the meaning of married life within the social and cultural structure of the Dayak Iban community.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The analysis focuses on only one mantra text within a single ritual context and therefore does not represent the broader variation of metaphors found in Dayak Iban ritual

practices. In addition, the limited number of informants and the absence of an analysis of performativity aspects (intonation, gestures, and the dynamics of ritual interaction) restrict the depth of the multimodal ritual communication analysis. Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to: (1) conduct comparative studies of ritual mantras across various Dayak communities and other ethnic groups in order to examine the consistency and variation of the master metaphor across different cultural contexts; and (2) develop a performative-multimodal ethnographic approach that analyzes not only the text but also ritual performance in its entirety (voice, gesture, rhythm, and audience response) in order to deepen understanding of how metaphors are actualized in ritual communication practices. These findings contribute to the preservation of oral traditions and the strengthening of local wisdom-based education, particularly in the documentation of cultural values, the development of cultural linguistics learning materials, and the reinforcement of the cultural identity of indigenous communities.

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