

A Political Communication Analysis of Prabowo Subianto's First Official Speech

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Abstract

This study seeks to reveal the dynamics of power relations and the strategies of political communication in president prabowo subianto's first official address following the 2024 election. employing norman fairclough's three-dimensional approach to critical discourse analysis (cda), this research examines the speech at three levels: micro (textual), meso (discursive practices), and macro (socio-cultural practices). the research adopts a qualitative descriptive method with data collected through a documentary analysis of the speech manuscript. findings at the textual level indicate the prevalence of the inclusive pronoun "we" and the necessity modality "must/must," which reflect efforts to forge a collective identity while asserting leadership authority. at the discursive practices level, a strong phenomenon of intertextuality was observed, linking the developmental narrative of the joko widodo administration with the classical nationalist rhetoric of the soekarno-hatta era to establish transitional legitimacy. at the macro level, the speech serves as a tool for reducing polarization and fostering political reconciliation to promote national stability at the onset of his term. the conclusion of the research demonstrates that through a language structure that is both inclusive and authoritative, prabowo subianto successfully transformed his image from a populist candidate to a statesman capable of accommodating diverse ideological interests within the framework of executive authority.

Keywords: Political Communication, political speech

Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dinamika relasi kekuasaan dan strategi komunikasi politik dalam pidato resmi pertama Presiden Prabowo Subianto setelah pemilu 2024. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan tiga dimensi Norman Fairclough terhadap Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA), penelitian ini mengkaji pidato tersebut pada tiga tingkatan: mikro (tekstual), meso (praktik diskursif), dan makro (praktik sosio-kultural). Penelitian ini mengadopsi metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan data yang dikumpulkan melalui analisis dokumen naskah pidato. Temuan pada tingkat tekstual menunjukkan prevalensi kata ganti inklusif "kita" dan modalitas kebutuhan "harus" yang mencerminkan upaya untuk membentuk identitas kolektif sekaligus menegaskan otoritas kepemimpinan. Pada tingkat praktik diskursif, fenomena intertekstualitas yang kuat diamati, yang menghubungkan narasi pembangunan pemerintahan Joko Widodo dengan retorika nasionalis klasik era Soekarno-Hatta untuk membangun legitimasi transisi. Pada tingkat makro, pidato tersebut berfungsi sebagai alat untuk mengurangi polarisasi dan mendorong rekonsiliasi politik untuk mempromosikan stabilitas nasional di awal masa jabatannya. Kesimpulan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa melalui struktur bahasa yang inklusif dan berwibawa, Prabowo Subianto berhasil mengubah citranya dari kandidat populis menjadi negarawan yang mampu mengakomodasi beragam kepentingan ideologis dalam kerangka kekuasaan eksekutif.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi Politik, Pidato Politik

INTRODUCTION

Beneath the majestic ceiling of the main courtroom, the atmosphere was filled with the weight of history. To most individuals, the moment might have seemed like a rigid set of rules, but behind the glowing microphones, a roadmap for the future was being formed. A leader's first speech is not simply a ceremony punctuated by thunderous applause; it is a crucial policy document that guides the lives of millions.

Now, the general faces two major challenges: profound polarization and an unclear development path. From the podium, he speaks not just as an election winner but also as a healer of the nation's wounds. Every word he chooses must connect those separated by political differences and serve as a powerful beacon amidst waves of global uncertainty. In his grasp, this speech is more than just a series of words, but a sacred commitment to revitalize the giant machine known as Indonesia in a new direction.

Determining exactly what "Indonesia" means is one of the challenges of writing and thinking about the country at the start of the twenty-first century. The word's initial geographical definition is arguably the least contentious of its many geographical, political, and social connotations since it was first used in the middle of the nineteenth century. (Brown, 2003).

A multitude of reasons can serve as catalysts for social and political upheavals, including rioting, resistance, and insurrection. We must acknowledge at least a few different kinds of societal unrest throughout Indonesian history. The first was the anti-colonial uprising, which took place during what is widely regarded to have been a struggle for survival under Dutch control. This was followed by the nationalist effort to establish Indonesia as an independent state. As we will see later, every single incidence of social and political upheaval has had its own effects, both positive (freedom, equality, and democracy) and negative (crisis and social instability). (Efendi & Zuhriyanti, 2018).

The fundamental components that underpin the operation of the political system are included in the political infrastructure, but the more sophisticated aspects pertaining to the delegation of power and control are included in the political superstructure. Mechanisms are essential for preserving the equilibrium and operation of a political system in this setting. Based on its unique functions, every political organization must engage with others. (Syauket, Indriasari, Prayitno, Mendrofa, & Cabui, 2024, p. 20).

A political system needs effective communication tools throughout its evolution in order for all of its components to interact and communicate effectively. Elements of the communication system include the interactions between political structures that are an essential component of a political system. However, it is important to keep in mind that not every component of the communication system is necessarily a component of the political system. However, every political system establishes its own network for political communication in order to promote interaction and the sharing of information inside it. (Syauket, Indriasari, Prayitno, Mendrofa, & Cabui, 2024, p. 20).

The use of English is not limited to academic contexts; it can also be applied in other fields where language users are required to use it, as in the case of state politics, where researchers are employed.

For this reason, in order to provide a more in-depth analysis, one of which is from a language perspective, the author will use two types of analysis, namely first from a political communication perspective, especially from a branding and political rhetoric perspective, and second from a language perspective, using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis model.

Because of this, the subsequent issues that emerge are: How Prabowo Subianto applied rhetoric in his first speech? In which the steps taken are: Identifying Problems, Defining Problems, Exploring and Applying Selected Interventions, Looking at Effects. (Brown-Chidsey & Andren, 2013).

In terms of politics, this text is more than just a collection of words; it is a diplomatic tool that simultaneously works on three fronts. For supporters, it serves as "fuel" to reassure them that their decision was correct—a pledge fulfilled. This text can be interpreted by political rivals as an affirmation of the bounds of power that need to be respected or as an offer of reconciliation. This text is a symbol of stability for global markets. Every sentence is seen by investors and world leaders as a sign of whether a nation will be a cooperative partner or a dangerous riddle. The goal of this article is to turn uncertainty into economic certainty. (Berridge, 2015).

The existence of vocalizations (full pauses) and silence periods (empty pauses) that lack lexical meaning is a feature of spontaneous speech as well as other speech forms. It appears that pauses help regulate the flow of speech. (Buck & VanLear, 2002).

Research on the distribution of speech pauses in language creation has shown a connection between discourse structure and pausing. At the clause and paragraph levels, empty and filled pauses are more likely to align with boundaries, which are actualized as quiet intervals of varied length. This is especially true for narrative frameworks, where it has been demonstrated that pauses delineate the divisions between narrative components. (Buck & VanLear, 2002).

According to a number of cognitive scientists, the intricacy of neural information processing is reflected in halting methods. The amount and duration of pauses represent the cognitive work associated with lexical choices and semantic challenges for generating new information. Pauses will appear in the speech stream as the result of a "planning" process that cannot be carried out during speech articulation. (Buck & VanLear, 2002).

Various strategies, including the application of metaphor, and discuss its rhetorical effectiveness. Additionally, It will introduced a method called Critical Metaphor Analysis. (Charteris-Black, 2007).

Although Prabowo Subianto has emerged victorious in the political arena, he faces a significant challenge in effectively conveying his vision amid the ongoing societal divisions. There exists a communication conflict between the necessity to present himself as a decisive leader (authority) and the imperative to include all segments of the nation (reconciliation). Consequently, this research seeks to address the following questions: (1) In what ways does the linguistic microstructure shape Prabowo's image as a leader? (2) How does the text endeavor to foster social integration following the election through specific discourse strategies?

The novelty of this research lies although a lot of research has been done on political speech in Indonesia, this study adds something new by concentrating on Prabowo Subianto's linguistic shift from combative campaign language to integrative presidential rhetoric. In contrast to earlier studies, this piece shows how language is employed as a technical tool to dismantle polarization barriers after the 2024 elections, in addition to being utilized to communicate plans.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Communication

Political communication can be defined as a form of communication aimed at achieving a certain level of influence within a political system. In this context, political communication efforts focus on discussing issues that can bind all citizens through sanctions established jointly through political institutions. (Syauket, Indriasari, Prayitno, Mendrofa, & Cabui, 2024).

Aristotle's model of political communication is one of the earliest models in communication studies. This model mainly focuses on speeches, especially those intended to influence people. Because of this, it is also called the rhetorical model or rhetoric, and it is still used today to understand political communication. The three main parts of this model are the speaker, the message, and the audience. Even though this was the first model in political communication, it has some weaknesses. It sees communication as something static and only looks at how the speaker tries to convince the audience to accept their point of view. It does not consider how non-verbal communication can affect people. Because of this, other researchers have started using more modern communication models instead. (Iswadi, et al., 2024).

Political Branding

Political branding is the process of shaping a party's image and message to resonate with the electorate. (Ferreira & Eyk, 2023).

A political brand can be seen as the intended image, a story created and shared by members of the political organization. Furthermore, in the eyes of various stakeholders both inside and outside the company, political brand identity reflects what strategists, politicians, and communication directors want their brand to "stand for." More precisely, people like politicians, strategists, paid and volunteer employees, activists, and supporters develop an imagined identity based on tangible components like logos, symbols, communication platforms, tools, messages, and policies that are frequently created to appeal to various target markets or groups. Furthermore, intangible components like a unique set of values, narratives, mission, vision, personality ideology, and cultural heritage—often brought to life through favored images and associations—can be used to

create political brand identities. It is the duty of every member of the political brand to maintain unity, make sure all people stay, and maintain consistency between the concrete and intangible components. (Pich & Newman, 2021).

Political Rhetoric

The application and function of persuasion in the public domain and the political process is known as political rhetoric. This covers the tactics employed by political actors (also known as political communicators, terms that are used interchangeably to refer to politicians, candidates for political office, and members of various political groups) to create convincing justifications and arguments in both formal public debates and everyday political activity. Speeches, statements, testimonies, legislative deliberations, filibusters, press conferences, media releases and briefings, broadcast interviews, political party manifestos and platforms, and campaign posters and advertisements that examine, contest, or debate a specific position on any given issue are all examples of strategies employed by political actors. (Feldman, 2020).

Three appeals are used in rhetoric: the logical (logos), the ethical (ethos), and the emotional (pathos). The first three will be logical ones that bolster the notion that Aristotle's concept of rhetoric is primarily logos-centered. Reasonable judgments should come first, followed by ethical and emotional ones. The enthymeme, an informal syllogism, is the primary form of invention. (Crider, Brann, & Yusuf, 2019).

The rhetor must create ethical and emotional arguments in addition to logical ones as audiences might be convinced by factors other than reason alone. Character, the appeal to which is referred regarded as ethos, correctly persuades us. Since the appeal is based on the rhetor's observed behavior, we refer to it as ethical even when it isn't always clearly moral, much alone moralistic. (Crider, Brann, & Yusuf, 2019).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis involves the combination of (a) examining texts, (b) studying how texts are created, used, and shared, and (c) analyzing the social and cultural contexts of discourse events (such as interviews, research articles, or conversations) as a complete entity. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 23).

The dominant noncritical, descriptive approach in discourse analysis that was emerging in linguistics departments at the time is distinguished from critical discourse analysis by its critical and descriptive goals. The latter is critiqued for its disregard for explanation—that is, for the social repercussions of discursive activities or how they are socially shaped. The idea of "background knowledge" is criticized for obfuscating ideological processes in discourse, for being preoccupied with "goals" that are predicated on an untenable theory of the subject, and for ignoring power relations, as seen, for example, in elevating conversations between equals to the status of an idealized archetype for linguistic interaction in general. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 27).

Discourse representation in media discourse differs from the previous theoretical study in that it emphasizes textual linguistic details. Based on an examination of a collection of newspaper articles, it reveals patterns in how discourse (also known as "reported speech") is portrayed in the media; the reported discourse is typically not distinguished from the report itself, and the ideational meaning (also known as the "content") of the reported discourse is typically prioritized over its interpersonal meanings and context. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 43).

The analysis is divided into 3 sections, they are: 1. Language, ideology and power (description), 2. Discourse and sociocultural change (interpretation), and 3. Textual analysis in social research (explanation). (Fairclough, 1995, p. iii).

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative methodology with a critical discourse analysis approach. This methodology was chosen by the researcher because the object of the study is a speech manuscript delivered by President Prabowo Subianto in his first speech after taking the oath of office before members of the plenary session of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia on Sunday, October 20, 2024, which must be dissected from both the political communication and meaning aspects, using Fairclough's theory. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, case studies, and observations. The research informants consisted of Political Communication and English lecturers at Muhammadiyah University of Jember.

The analysis process is conducted through three interconnected levels as detailed below:

1. **Description Level (Textual Analysis):** In this phase, the researcher analyzes the speech manuscript solely as a linguistic construct. The examination centers on lexical components (word choice) to investigate ideologically significant vocabulary, syntax to analyze active and passive sentence constructions and transitivity, as well as modality to assess the degree of certainty and political authority expressed by Prabowo Subianto. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 46).
2. **Interpretation Level (Discourse Practice Analysis):** This phase centers on the creation and use of text. Scholars examine aspects of intertextuality, which pertains to how the speech references, utilizes, or modifies the concepts of past political leaders. Additionally, they investigate how the presidential communications team develops the text to effectively engage a particular audience. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 60);
3. **Explanation Level (Social Practice Analysis):** In the concluding phase, scholars link the results observed at the textual and discursive levels to the wider socio-political environment of Indonesia. The main objective is to clarify how the language used in the speech acts as a mechanism for political reconciliation and the justification of authority amidst the developments following the 2024 elections. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 73).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through a thorough examination of President Prabowo Subianto's initial official speech manuscript, organized discursive patterns were identified at all three tiers of Norman Fairclough's analytical framework.

1. Textual Level Findings (Description)

At the micro level, the text illustrates the prevalent use of inclusive personal pronouns and a commanding tone. Scholars observe that the pronoun "We" serves as the main linguistic link between the subject (the President) and the objects (the citizens and state institutions). The frequent occurrence of "We" stands in contrast to the pronoun "I,"

which is utilized solely in formal situations like taking oaths and making personal accountability declarations.

Moreover, a grammatical structure was identified in the use of brief, assertive sentences that project a clear and direct effect. Regarding modality, the terms "must" and "obligatory" appeared to be prominent in the spoken portions addressing the elimination of corruption, the achievement of food self-sufficiency, and the attainment of energy independence. The selected vocabulary often carried a sense of national pride, including words like "*martabat* (dignity)," "*daulat* (sovereignty)," and "*wong cilik* (commoners). "

2. Discursive Practice Level Findings (Interpretation)

At the meso level, the analysis shows a significant use of intertextuality. This speech text is not a standalone piece; instead, it serves as a convergence point for various political discussions from different periods. Researchers have noted the inclusion of development-related terms from the Joko Widodo era, such as "downstreaming (*hilirisasi*)" and "great leap (*lompatan besar*). " At the same time, this text also brings back the themes of democracy and sovereignty evident in Soekarno-Hatta's rhetoric by using the term "berdikari. " These observations indicate that the creation of the text involved a process of negotiating identity in order to encompass a wide political range.

Findings at the Socio-Cultural Practice Level (Explanation)

Macroanalysis indicates that this text was created in reaction to societal uncertainty after the 2024 elections. Scholars discovered that the conversation centered on stability and sustainability. The text acted as a means of mass communication aimed at turning a heated electoral contest into a cooperative development context. Indonesia's social landscape, amid global economic changes, also supported the development of a robust narrative of independence within the text.

3. Collective Identity Construction and Polarization Mitigation

The prevalence of the pronoun "We" in the research findings (refer to Textual Level Findings) demonstrates a strategy of discursive inclusiveness. According to Fairclough, language serves as a means of shaping reality. By repeatedly using "We," Prabowo eliminates the divisions among political groups (the act of othering) that have notably impacted him during the campaign. In political communication, this represents a deliberate attempt to create a shared hegemony, positioning himself not merely as a leader

of a specific faction but as an embodiment of the collective will of the populace. This strategy effectively acts as a tool to reduce polarization, drawing political adversaries into a larger narrative of "unity" that is morally challenging to contest.

4. Ideological Synthesis: Between Continuity and Classical Nationalism

Intertextuality findings (see: Discursive Practice Level Findings) explain how political legitimacy is constructed through narrative integration. The use of the term "downstream" serves as a signal of continuity for supporters of the previous government and economic market players. However, by inserting the terms "*berdikari*" and "*kedaulatan makanan*" (independent) and "food sovereignty," Prabowo gives the policy a new, more protectionist and nationalistic tone.

This discussion demonstrates that Prabowo is practicing discursive triangulation: he is taking popular elements from the past (Jokowi) and combining them with his party's core values (nationalism-Gerindra). This strategy is highly tactical for creating stability early in his term, as it is able to satisfy various mass bases with differing ideological preferences.

5. Authoritative Modality in the Framework of Populism

While the text discusses democracy in detail, the presence of the modals "must" and "obligation" at a micro level suggests that the proposed leadership style is rooted in strong authority. In the realm of political communication, this concept is termed "Authoritative Populism." Prabowo presents the nation's challenges, such as budget mismanagement and poverty, as common adversaries that can only be effectively tackled through decisiveness.

At a macro level, it can be observed that Indonesian society, following its political conflicts, has a tendency to seek a "savior" figure who can offer assurance. Hence, the use of assertive language in his speech is not meant to imply dictatorship; rather, it aims to foster a sense of security and optimism that the executive branch possesses complete authority over the nation's future trajectory.

6. Analytical Conclusion: Speech as a New Social Contract

In summary, this analysis affirms that Prabowo Subianto's inaugural official speech served as a demonstration of soft power. With its inclusive yet commanding linguistic style and a narrative that blends different historical periods, the speech operated

as a new "social contract." He effectively transformed the perspective from "competitive politics" to "development politics." Consequently, the speech fulfilled its socio-political objective of strengthening power within the varied ambitions of the Indonesian populace.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of critical discourse analysis using the Norman Fairclough model on President Prabowo Subianto's first official speech, this study concludes three main points.

First, a change in communication style was noted at the textual level, shifting from a confrontational populism in the campaign phase to a more inclusive, statesman-like approach. This shift is highlighted by the frequent use of the personal pronoun "We," which helps to create a sense of collective identity and diminish political divisions following the 2024 elections. Such a choice in language illustrates that words are being employed as a key tool in symbolically fostering national unity.

Second, this research demonstrates a strategy termed "Protecting Authority," characterized by imperative modalities (must and must) paired with a narrative focused on safeguarding the populace. This framework showcases a leadership style that is both assertive and inclined towards social welfare. In terms of discourse, Prabowo effectively established dual legitimacy through intertextuality by merging the development narrative of the Joko Widodo period (downstreaming) with the nationalist narrative of the Sukarno era (self-reliance). This strategy proved to be highly effective in promoting political stability and ensuring the continuity of the national agenda during the early phase of his administration.

Third, from a socio-cultural perspective, this speech acts as a "new social contract" intended to reduce societal division. The document is not solely a ceremonial piece; rather, it is a practical instrument of authority designed to redirect the country's emphasis from electoral disputes to cooperative development. The findings of this research indicate that a leader's effectiveness during a transitional phase is primarily influenced by their capacity to navigate discussions that embrace various ideological views while maintaining their authoritative presence.

his study focuses solely on examining the text of the inaugural speech. Future researchers are encouraged to perform a comparative analysis between the written text and the manner in which it is delivered orally (such as through improvisation) or to explore how the ideas expressed in this speech are incorporated into subsequent public policy.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for future research and practical application. First, future studies are encouraged to expand the scope of analysis beyond textual examination by incorporating multimodal approaches, such as analyzing tone, gestures, and delivery style in oral speeches. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how political messages are constructed and received by the public. Additionally, comparative studies between different speeches or leaders could offer deeper insights into variations in political communication strategies across contexts and time.

Second, it is recommended that further research explore the practical implications of political discourse by examining how the narratives presented in official speeches are translated into concrete public policies. This would help to assess the consistency between political rhetoric and policy implementation, particularly in relation to themes such as national unity, social welfare, and development agendas. Lastly, policymakers and political actors may consider utilizing inclusive and unifying language, as identified in this study, as a strategic communication tool to strengthen public trust, reduce polarization, and support more collaborative governance processes.

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