

Unveiling the Ideological Construction of Prabowo's First Presidential State Address a Critical Discourse Analytical Approach

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Abstract

Background:

Prabowo Subianto's 2025 First State Address, a speech that has not been previously examined in academic literature. This study seeks to identify and analyse the linguistic and rhetorical strategies utilized in Prabowo's speech to unmask his political legitimacy, presidential identity, ideological stance within the Indonesian context.

Methodology:

Using Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study analyzed both the transcript and video recording. Data were coded across macro, super, and micro levels to uncover thematic organization, argumentation patterns, and linguistic devices. Qualitative coding and multimodal cue analysis were employed by identifying recurring linguistic patterns (e.g., pronouns, metaphors, repetition) and correlating them with non-verbal features such as gestures, facial expressions and tone, to interpret how verbal and visual elements jointly construct ideological meaning.

Findings:

The analysis reveals that Prabowo frames his leadership as a moral and protective force against corrupt elites and economic exploitation. Nationalist appeals such as food self-sufficiency, poverty reduction, and empowerment of the *wong cilik* reinforce a paternalistic model of governance portraying the state as the guardian of the people. Toward the conclusion, he emphasizes democratic transition, international cooperation, and Indonesia's global standing, invoking pride and collective dignity. Microstructural analysis of pronoun use, presuppositions, and metaphors demonstrates how rhetorical strategies align with broader ideological positioning.

Conclusion:

Prabowo's first state speech address gives some theoretical contributions as the role of historical narratives in constructing collective cognition and sustaining political legitimacy.

Originality:

The originality of this research lies in its integrated application of van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework to Prabowo Subianto's 2025 State of the Nation Address which hasn't been analyzed before, it combines textual and multimodal analysis to show how linguistic structures, visual cues, and rhetorical strategies work together to create political legitimacy and national identity.

Keywords : Critical discourse analysis; prabowo's speech; ideological construction

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this age of fast information exchange and digital connectivity, political speech has more power than ever to shape public discourse and the outcomes of society. Social media and online platforms enable leaders to circumvent conventional media filters and engage directly with citizens, presenting both opportunities for involvement and threats of manipulation and polarization ([Andriani, 2022](#)). In Indonesia, these dynamics are especially important because political leaders use both digital outreach and formal state rituals to make their authority seem legitimate.

Politicians frequently utilize political speeches as a strategic instrument to elicit public sympathy by appealing to emotions, values, and collective experiences ([Handayani and Wibowo 2025](#)). They use carefully chosen words to try to connect with their audience on a personal level, making them feel empathy and a sense of unity. Politicians position themselves as advocates for the public good by framing issues in ways that resonate with people's concerns, such as addressing economic hardship, social injustice, or national pride ([Wibowo and Anggraini 2024](#)). These speeches can be very powerful when things are bad or uncertain because they give people hope and bring them together. In the end, politicians can get people to feel sorry for them, get them to support them, and strengthen their political positions by using the emotional power of language.

One of the most important things about Prabowo Subianto's rhetoric is how he combines nationalist language with calls for patriotism and unity, often using Indonesia's past struggles for independence and sovereignty as examples. These rhetorical strategies, bolstered by his military background and authoritative delivery style, not only amplify the persuasive efficacy of his speeches but also influence perceptions of his leadership persona. However, despite their political importance, these strategies have garnered minimal scholarly focus in Indonesian discourse studies, where presidential rhetoric is frequently analyzed descriptively rather than critically. This gap highlights the necessity for a systematic examination of how Prabowo establishes legitimacy through the integration of nationalist, populist, and performative components in his first State of the Nation Address.

Prabowo Subianto is a well-known and popular figure in Indonesian politics. He has worked in both the military and politics. His reputation as a former general has been closely linked to issues of national security, sovereignty, and nationalism, which are still important to his political discourse. As a politician, he has been both charming and divisive. He has defended

Indonesia's sovereignty and economic justice, but people have criticized him for his past military record and aggressive leadership style. His numerous attempts to become president and eventual success at the polls have solidified his position as a key player in Indonesia's current political scene. These factors render Prabowo a pivotal subject for critical discourse analysis, as his rhetoric elucidates the construction of political legitimacy, authority, and national identity within Indonesia's evolving democratic framework.

Prabowo Subianto's First Presidential State of the Nation Address held on August 15, 2025, constitutes a pivotal discursive event that warrants meticulous analysis via Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In his first speech as president, he not only laid out his policies but also legitimized his authority, built his political identity, and expressed his national ideology. Prabowo's speech focused on nationalism, sovereignty, and state intervention, which is different from the speeches of his predecessors, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), who focused on democratic consolidation, and Joko Widodo (Jokowi), who focused on infrastructure and technocratic governance. This shows a change in how leadership and nationhood are talked about in Indonesian politics. CDA is especially helpful for figuring out the language and rhetorical tools that Prabowo uses to compare himself to these past governments, define his role as the protector of the nation, and project Indonesia's future on both the domestic and international stages. Additionally, the speech was aimed at a variety of groups, including parliamentarians, political elites, the general public, and people from around the world. This makes it a great place to look at discursive strategies like pronoun use, modality, historical references, and appeals to nationalism. Based on [Fairclough's \(1995\)](#) idea that discourse is a kind of social practice and [van Dijk's \(1998\)](#) idea that discourse, power, and ideology are all connected.

Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a way to look at how language is used to change social structures and affect people's beliefs and actions. It is based on the idea that language is a way to talk about power and how it works. Van Dijk's approach to CDA focuses on the cognitive, social, and linguistic aspects of discourse. He says that language is not just a way to communicate, but also a way to keep or change the power structures in society. He contends that political, media, and institutional discourses frequently mirror and perpetuate ideologies that benefit dominant groups while marginalizing others. Van Dijk's model analyzes discourse across various levels, encompassing the micro level of syntax and vocabulary and the macro level of social context and historical influences. One of his most important ideas is the idea of "cognitive models," which shows how people's mental pictures of social realities affect how they understand discourse. CDA sheds light on how power dynamics, social

disparities, and ideological hegemony are maintained and challenged through discourse by examining the construction and communication of cognitive models of language.

Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is especially suitable for examining Prabowo Subianto's speech because it emphasizes the ways in which language shapes and mirrors power relations, ideologies, and social dynamics. Prabowo, a well-known politician, often talks about things that make people feel proud of their country, safe, and united, all of which are important parts of his political identity. CDA, particularly Van Dijk's framework, facilitates a more profound comprehension of how Prabowo's speech functions to mold public perception and impact the political landscape. By looking at the macrostructure, we can find the main ideological themes in Prabowo's speech, like his focus on nationalism, sovereignty, and economic justice. The superstructure analysis shows how the speech is put together to make people feel something and convince them, usually by appealing to their sense of patriotism and national pride. Lastly, the microstructure analysis shows how Prabowo uses specific language choices, like metaphors, rhetorical questions, and emotive language, to make his points stronger and connect with his audience. This makes CDA a useful tool for figuring out how he uses persuasive language in his speech.

Numerous studies have investigated various domains of discourse in Indonesia. [Contesa \(2024\)](#), for example, looked at Joko Widodo's last State of the Nation Address using transcripts, video recordings, and social media sources. This gave a multimodal view that included both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. The study was predominantly descriptive, reiterating Jokowi's narrative of accomplishments without critically examining their ideological ramifications or contradictions. In the same way, [Arwanto \(2024\)](#) looked at moral values in English textbooks, [Langoday \(2024\)](#) looked at how stand-up comedy uses metaphors. Although these works reference Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), many merely identify rhetorical or syntactic patterns without linking them to overarching dynamics of power, ideology, and political positioning.

[Purwanto \(2017\)](#) analyzed the influence of written expression via social media, while [Fitri \(2017\)](#) examined the coverage of murder news and its integration into the Posmetro Padang. [Lestari \(2024\)](#) examined the communication strategies employed by Indonesian EFL learners. The research exhibited significant strengths in its focus and methodological application; however, it also reveals certain weaknesses in prior studies. In some parts, the analysis stays at a descriptive level, just summarizing media stories without really getting into the deeper ideological structures that are at work.

Additionally, [Floranti \(2024\)](#) examined the portrayal of social actors in Biden's speech. [Raharfian \(2024\)](#) examined the ideological transformations regarding the terms “pribumi and nonpribumi” in the post-Suharto period. [Mariyani \(2024\)](#) examined the portrayal of female actors through the lens of female writers. [Saragih \(2024\)](#) analyzed the ideologies and linguistic perspectives of prospective Indonesian presidential candidates. Nonetheless, the preceding research exhibits significant deficiencies. Because it only uses a small number of examples, the analysis sometimes stays descriptive, focusing on surface representations without fully unpacking the deeper ideological meanings.

While prior research has thoroughly investigated discourse analysis concerning texts and images in language textbooks, it has inadequately addressed the rhetorical strategies utilized by political speakers. A significant portion of the current literature emphasizes structural or visual dimensions of discourse; however, the strategic construction of rhetorical elements such as speech acts, presuppositions, pronoun selections, and metaphors to establish authority, legitimacy, and persuasion is insufficiently examined. This lack of attention creates a big gap in understanding how rhetoric changes political communication. To fill this gap, this study looks at how Prabowo used rhetorical elements in his 2025 state address to build political legitimacy and get people to feel strongly about something.

This research was aimed to analyse Prabowo Subianto's first presidential state address, delivered on August 15, 2025, utilizing the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) informed by the Van Dijk Concept. The study seeks to identify and analyse the linguistic and rhetorical strategies utilized in the speech to construct political legitimacy, establish presidential identity, and either reinforce or contest prevailing ideological narratives within the Indonesian context. This research examines Prabowo's framing of national priorities, his appeals for unity, and Indonesia's positioning within the global order, aiming to reveal the underlying power dynamics and discursive practices that influence public perception and political discourse. The study aims to enhance the comprehension of presidential rhetoric as a social practice that conveys policy directions while simultaneously perpetuating authority, ideology, and national identity in contemporary Indonesia.

This research is significant for its contribution to discourse studies and Indonesian political scholarship by providing a critical analysis of Prabowo Subianto's first Presidential state address as a crucial event in Indonesia's current political context. The study theoretically expands the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the realm of presidential rhetoric in Southeast Asia, a field that has been inadequately examined previously. From a practical perspective, the study elucidates the discursive strategies that influence public perceptions of

political leadership and national identity in Indonesia, thereby contributing to broader discourses on governance, political communication, and the role of discourse in power consolidation. Ultimately, the findings are anticipated to enhance scholarly discussions regarding discourse, ideology, and leadership, while also providing a nuanced analysis of the dynamics of Indonesian democracy during Prabowo's presidency.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case-study design utilizing Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how Prabowo's first State Nation Address constructs political legitimacy, presidential identity, and Indonesia's domestic and international positioning. The van Dijk framework is selected due to its tripartite emphasis on macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure, facilitating the concurrent analysis of thematic frames, rhetorical organization, and linguistic devices, essential for examining the hidden ideology in discourse.

2.2 Research Subject

The research subject is President Prabowo Subianto's first State of Address, presented on 15 August 2025. The selection of a single case is intentional and based on theory: inaugural addresses are important discursive events that set the agenda for an administration and symbolically represent leadership. This speech is a crucial example for addressing the research questions regarding legitimacy, identity formation, and geopolitical positioning.

2.3 Data Collection

Primary data comprise the official transcript (about 7.500 words) and the complete video recording of the address obtained from the Presidential Secretariat. The transcript is cross verified with the video to capture pauses, emphases, and timing. Supplementary contextual materials (news reports, official releases) are collected for triangulation. All data are organized into a synchronized textual and multimodal corpus to allow linked coding of verbal and non-verbal features (e.g., gestures, facial expression, prosody, audience responses). The lingual data were obtained through the video transcription.

2.4 Data Analysis

Using both video and text sources makes the analysis better by adding sound and visual elements that help with language interpretation. The video was analyzed to extract linguistic evidence from the speech, facilitating comprehension of how gestures, expressions, and intonation highlighted or reinforced specific messages. Additionally, to ensure data validity,

the researcher also referred to the transcript of Prabowo's speech as published by Setneg RI which can be accessed at <https://s.id/praboworiset>.

The analytical model utilized in this study adheres to [Dijk's \(1998\)](#) tripartite framework encompassing text analysis, social cognition analysis, and social context analysis, each aligned with the study's research objectives. The first stage, text analysis, aims to identify the linguistic and rhetorical strategies in Prabowo's inaugural speech by analyzing its central themes, structural organization, and stylistic characteristics. The second stage, social cognition analysis, aims to investigate how Prabowo's personal history, military background, and political career influence the cognitive frameworks that inform his discourse. The third stage, social context analysis, connects the speech to the larger goal of the research, which is to place Prabowo's speech within Indonesia's socio-political landscape, including both domestic power relations and Indonesia's place in the world. This method makes sure that the analytical stages are directly related to the study's goals, which gives it consistency and depth ([Aini, 2021](#)).

3. FINDINGS

The first presidential state address by Prabowo Subianto, which took place on August 15, 2025, is a major discursive event that shows different ideological patterns at the macro, super, and micro levels. At the macrostructure level, the speech focuses on themes of national sovereignty, economic self-reliance, and social justice. This shows that Indonesia is strong and independent in the world. At the superstructure level, the speech is set up in a way that makes Prabowo's authority as the new president clear. It starts with thanks, moves on to policy priorities, and ends with calls for unity. At the microstructure level, the repeated use of pronouns like "we" and "our nation," the use of strong words like "must" and "will," and references to Indonesia's past struggles all work together to create a sense of unity, urgency, and moral legitimacy. These results demonstrate that the speech serves not only as a policy framework but also as a strategic exhibition of national identity and leadership.

3.1 Macrostructure (Thematic)

Prabowo's first speech as president focuses on three main macro themes that stand out: First, Prabowo talks about Indonesia's fight for independence by bringing up the legacy of famous national figures like Sukarno, Hatta, and the Generasi '45. In his speech, for example, he says, "*Kita harus menjaga semangat perjuangan para pendiri bangsa seperti Bung Karno dan Bung Hatta, serta Generasi '45 yang rela berkorban demi kemerdekaan kita.*" This reference to other texts puts his leadership in the context of Indonesia's founding history, which lets him connect his presidency to the goals of the independence movement. Prabowo builds

political legitimacy by claiming to be the heir to this vision. He does this by linking his power to the sacrifices and hopes of the country's founders. In this way, Prabowo's mention of Indonesia's founding figures is not only a way to appeal to patriotism, but it is also a way to make his rule seem legitimate to both the political elite and the general public.

Second, Prabowo uses a strong moral framework to talk about corruption, calling it a "penyakit" (disease) that threatens the country's integrity. The word "penyakit" comes up three times in his inaugural speech, all of which are direct references to corruption. This shows that it is a central metaphor that keeps coming up. He also uses the new word "serakahnomics" to criticize practices that are driven by greed, saying that they are not only wrong but also bad for Indonesia's economic order. The repeated use of medical and pathological terms like "penyakit bangsa" and "harus disembuhkan" makes corruption seem like a moral and existential threat that needs to be dealt with right away by everyone. This metaphorical framing strengthens his reputation as a reformist leader who wants to "cure" the country's problems and makes corrupt behavior seem socially harmful and economically unsustainable. This metaphorical framing lets him put his administration in the role of the corrective force that must restore integrity and justice to the state apparatus.

Third, Prabowo makes people's welfare a main point in his first state address by talking about programs like providing free healthy meals, making changes to agriculture, and giving more people access to education. These programs are presented as the direct fulfillment of constitutional duties, which puts his policy agenda within the larger legal and moral framework of the Indonesian state. Simultaneously, Prabowo reinterprets the notion of sovereignty, transcending its traditional political context to include food security, economic resilience, and national defense. By linking welfare and sovereignty, Prabowo makes his government responsible for both meeting the needs of its people and protecting Indonesia's independence in the world, as further illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Macro Structure of Prabowo's Speech

No	Heading	Theme
1	Pidato Presiden RI pada Sidang Tahunan MPR dan Sidang Bersama DPR dan DPD, 15 Agustus 2025	Historical Continuity and Legitimacy <i>"Hari ini kita melanjutkan perjuangan para pendiri bangsa yang telah mengorbankan segalanya demi kemerdekaan dan kedaulatan Indonesia."</i> Moral Economy and Anti-Corruption

Kita harus menjaga integritas, melawan korupsi di semua lini, dan memastikan bahwa kekuasaan digunakan untuk melayani rakyat, bukan memperkaya diri sendiri.”

People's Welfare and Sovereignty

Kesejahteraan rakyat adalah tujuan utama perjuangan kita. Negara harus hadir untuk memastikan setiap warga mendapat kesempatan hidup layak dan bermartabat.”

3.2 Superstructure (Schematic)

A schema is a structured framework of ideas systematically organized into parts like an introduction, body, and conclusion. Van Dijk stresses that a coherent scheme or flow is important for structuring meaning and helping the audience understand what is being said in the context of discourse analysis. President Prabowo's speech on August 15, 2025, shows this systematic arrangement. It starts with an introduction that tries to connect with the audience, then moves on to a body that talks about national successes, current problems, and future goals, and ends with a conclusion that stresses *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) as the spirit of nation-building. The speech also paints a picture of Indonesia as a free, fair, and prosperous country that is not dependent on foreign countries, poverty, or exploitation. This kind of structure is not only formal, but also rhetorical: it makes the message clearer, strengthens the persuasive power, and gives legitimacy to the authority of the leader by presenting a logically ordered and emotionally resonant discourse. This analysis underscores the significance of systematic discourse frameworks in facilitating effective and comprehensive political communication, as further illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Superstructure of Prabowo's Speech

No	Superstucture of Speech	Theme
1	Introduction	Opening Address & Gratitude
2	Main Body	Challenges, Government Efforts & Achievements
3	Conclusion	Call to Unity & Vision for the Future

Prabowo starts his speech by saying "*Saudara-saudara sekalian*," which is a polite way to greet the audience. This shows that he wants to include everyone and show that he is humble and grateful for the chance to give his first official government accountability speech. By recognizing the heavy burden of duty placed on him, he puts himself in a moral and political

framework that connects his personal duty to the expectations of the nation. Prabowo also frames his leadership as a continuation of Indonesia's struggle for independence, which gives his role in the larger nationalist story a sense of historical continuity and makes it seem more legitimate. His clear mention of the Founding Fathers, such as Soekarno, Hatta, Syahrir, and Agus Salim, serves not only as a sign of respect but also as an intertextual strategy that places his discourse within the Republic's ideological foundations. Prabowo's use of their experiences of colonial exploitation as the basis for the Constitution strengthens the idea that current government must be based on what has happened in the past. Lastly, by saying that his speech will show how accountable, successful, and still facing problems his government is, he makes himself look both open and responsible, which are two important traits of legitimate democratic leadership. Through the lens of critical discourse analysis, these strategies show how Prabowo's speech builds authority, calls on collective memory, and builds public trust at the same time.

3.3 Microstructure (Semantics)

Prabowo's political speech includes background information, detailed explanations, clear goals, and hidden assumptions that all support and validate his main ideas. These semantic elements not only add depth and coherence to the conversation, but they also work strategically to shape how the audience sees things by putting issues in the context of shared cultural and ideological values. In political communication, this kind of semantic structuring is important because it lets the speaker make their case in a convincing way while also putting in place assumptions that the audience may not question. So, the way Prabowo's speech is organized semantically shows both rhetorical design and ideological framing, which makes sure that his message hits home on both cognitive and emotional levels. The following section discusses these semantic elements in greater detail, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Microstructure (Semantics) of Prabowo's Speech

No	Background of Speech	Intention
1	The speech is situated in the context of Prabowo's first government accountability address at the annual meeting session with the DPD, DPR, and MPR RI on 15 August 2025.	Prabowo's 2025 state address legitimizes his leadership through historical and constitutional references, frames corruption and exploitation as existential threats to national integrity, and defines welfare and sovereignty as the true substance of independence.

3.4 Intention

Prabowo's 2025 state address makes it clear that his leadership is legitimate by linking it to Indonesia's historical struggles, constitutional mandates, and the legacies of past presidents. It also presents his administration as a reformist force that wants to end corruption, poverty, and exploitation. His focus on food security, welfare, and education shows that he wants to create an image of a leader who helps the "*rakyat kecil*" and makes systemic changes that will last for a long time. However, the speech functions as an ideological project: it positions sovereignty and welfare as the true essence of independence, undermines neoliberal economic frameworks as inconsistent with Indonesia's constitutional and cultural foundations, and portrays corruption as a fundamental threat that necessitates robust, centralized leadership. This rhetorical approach is consistent with van Dijk's theory of political discourse, which posits that historical narratives, presuppositions, and moral framing are utilized to reinforce authority and garner public consent. By using "*gotong royong*" and starting "Indonesia Incorporated," Prabowo not only appeals to deeply held cultural values, but he also wants to make a collective developmental ethos that brings the state, the market, and society together under his leadership, as further illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Details and Intention of Prabowo's Speech

No	Detail of Speech	Intention
1	Historical Legitimacy Recalls 1945 proclamation, sovereignty in 1949	Establishes legitimacy by linking his leadership to Indonesia's historical struggle and continuity of past leaders. Seeks unity through respect for predecessors.
2	Democracy & National Identity Defines democracy as <i>demokrasi khas Indonesia</i> rooted in family, harmony, and <i>gotong royong</i> .	Frames his governance as authentic and culturally grounded; delegitimizes Western liberal democracy as unsuitable.
3	Corruption & Mismanagement Highlights corruption in bureaucracy and SOEs; Rp300 trillion recovered through efficiency measures.	Constructs an image of reformist leadership; portrays corruption as a moral and existential threat requiring decisive action.
4	Economic Sovereignty & Constitution Emphasizes UUD 1945 (Pasal 33) as blueprint; criticizes elites who dismiss	Uses constitutional and historical authority to legitimize economic nationalism; opposes neoliberal frameworks.

	founding fathers' economic vision.	
5	Food Security & Welfare Reports record rice surplus, reduced imports, and success of <i>Makan Bergizi Gratis</i> benefiting children, mothers, and farmers.	Presents welfare and food sovereignty as the essence of independence; portrays leadership as delivering tangible benefits to <i>rakyat kecil</i> .
6	Poverty, Education & Social Transformation Launches <i>Sekolah Rakyat</i> , expands <i>Sekolah Unggul Garuda</i> , medical faculties, and school renovations; establishes DTSEN for targeted aid.	Projects himself as champion of social mobility and structural reform; legitimizes promise to end extreme poverty.
7	Law Enforcement & Resource Control Reclaims millions of hectares of illegal plantations, pledges crackdown on illegal mining; warns elites including military and parties.	Positions himself as fearless leader against oligarchs; frames resource control as legal, moral, and patriotic duty.
8	Foreign Policy & Defense Promotes non-alignment, BRICS membership, support for Palestine, and military modernization.	Positions Indonesia as independent, peace-seeking yet strong; reinforces theme of sovereignty and global standing.
9	Unity & "Indonesia Incorporated" Thanks institutions, business actors, and civil society; promotes synergy under <i>Indonesia Incorporated</i> .	Frames <i>gotong royong</i> as guiding ethos; legitimizes his presidency as unifying force harmonizing state, market, and society.

3.5 Presumption

In political speech, presupposition is a powerful way for leaders to make certain assumptions seem like facts that everyone agrees with. This changes how people see things without needing to give a clear reason. Presuppositions function implicitly, integrating historical, cultural, and ideological assertions within commonplace expressions that listeners are less inclined to challenge, in contrast to explicit statements. In Prabowo's 2025 state address, for example, when he talks about the founding fathers, he assumes that Indonesia's fight for independence will continue. When he says that "democracy in Indonesia is unique,"

he assumes that foreign models of democracy don't work. These implicit meanings enable the speaker to validate political authority, create a moral imperative against corruption and exploitation, and normalize values like gotong royong as intrinsic to national identity. From a critical discourse standpoint, presuppositions not only organize political arguments but also operate ideologically by favoring specific narratives while suppressing alternatives, thereby solidifying the speaker's perspective as the conventional basis for collective action. There were some elements of presumption in Prabowo's speech that fit the description in Table 5.

Table 5. Details and Intention of Prabowo's Speech

No	Sentence	Meaning
1	<i>"Bung Karno, Bung Hatta, Bung Syahrir, Bung Agus Salim, dan kawan-kawan adalah peletak dasar Republik Indonesia yang merdeka."</i>	By invoking the founding fathers, Prabowo presupposes continuity between past struggles and present governance, legitimizing his rule as part of the same historical mission.
2	<i>"Kita harus berani mengatakan bahwa demokrasi kita adalah demokrasi khas Indonesia, yang berakar pada budaya bangsa kita."</i>	This presupposes that imported forms of democracy are unsuitable, reinforcing his claim that his leadership reflects an authentic national identity.
3	<i>"Korupsi, penyalahgunaan wewenang, dan pemborosan adalah penyakit yang sudah lama menggerogoti bangsa kita."</i>	The assumption strengthens the urgency of reform and portrays Prabowo as the leader determined to cure this "chronic illness."
4	<i>"Pasal 33 UUD 1945 adalah cetak biru ekonomi bangsa kita."</i>	This presupposes that alternative economic systems (e.g., neoliberalism) are illegitimate, reinforcing his nationalist and populist economic stance.
5	<i>"Program Makan Bergizi Gratis telah berjalan dan dirasakan manfaatnya oleh jutaan anak-anak dan ibu hamil di seluruh Indonesia."</i>	The program is already functioning and producing positive results.
6	<i>"Kita tidak boleh lagi menjadi bangsa yang hanya menjadi penonton di tanah air kita sendiri."</i>	This presupposes a history of dependency and exploitation, reinforcing his nationalist agenda of reclaiming sovereignty.
7	<i>"Tidak ada lagi elite, tidak ada lagi pengusaha besar, tidak ada lagi aparat atau partai politik yang boleh kebal hukum."</i>	This presupposes systemic inequality before the law, portraying his leadership as a corrective force to restore justice.
8	<i>"Gotong royong adalah roh pembangunan bangsa kita."</i>	This presupposes a cultural continuity where collective effort is the moral basis of nation-

building, making *gotong royong* both a value and political tool under his administration.

3.6 Types of Speech Acts in Prabowo's Speech

Political speeches often employ a range of speech acts that serve not only communicative but also strategic and ideological purposes. Drawing from Austin and Searle's typology, political discourse typically integrates assertives, commissives, directives, expressives, and declaratives, each functioning to shape audience perception and mobilize support. Here are some types of speech act in Prabowo's speech that fit the description.

Table 6. Types of Speech Acts in Prabowo's Speech

No	Speech Act	Function
1	Assertives - "Corruption has become a disease in our nation." - "We have recovered Rp 300 trillion from misuse in the national budget." - "Indonesia has reached a rice surplus and can even export to other countries."	Establishes credibility and authority by presenting facts, achievements, and challenges; legitimizes his leadership.
2	Directives - "Let us work together under the spirit of <i>gotong-royong</i> to build the nation." - "I call on all Indonesians—farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and soldiers—to unite."	Mobilizes citizens toward collective participation; emphasizes unity and cooperation as the foundation for national progress.
3	Commissives - "I will ensure the continuation of free nutritious meals for school children and pregnant mothers." - "We will create millions of jobs through cooperatives and downstream industries." - "We will not allow greedy elites to exploit our people."	Strengthens trust by committing to future reforms and protections; assures listeners of concrete government action.
4	Expressives - "I stand here humbly before you." - "I express my deepest respect to our founding	Builds emotional connection with the audience; portrays humility, respect, and shared national pride.

	fathers.”	
	- “I thank the people of Indonesia for their trust.”	
5	Declarations	Demonstrates government power by presenting policies and enforcement as already enacted; transforms discourse into reality.
	- “We have reclaimed 3.1 million hectares of land that were illegally occupied.”	
	- “Illegal mining and business practices have been shut down.”	

Prabowo's speech contains all five types of speech acts, but assertives are the most common. He uses historical references, constitutional mandates, and achievements as unquestionable facts to support his authority and show that Indonesia's national struggle is still going on. Commissives, especially promises to improve welfare, change the education system, and end poverty, make him responsible for future actions, which gives him an image of being trustworthy and responsible. Directives, like calls for gotong royong and unity under "Indonesia Incorporated," are used strategically to get people to work together and support his political vision. Expressives, such as thanking past leaders and feeling sorry for marginalized groups, give his authority emotional weight that makes him seem more human. Declarations, like policy announcements, use language to create change and show performative power. Scholars of political communication contend that the interaction of these speech acts converts rhetoric into governance, wherein language not only delineates reality but also actively influences political legitimacy and social cohesion. In this regard, Prabowo's speech illustrates how speech acts serve as both communicative mechanisms and ideological instruments to promote transformative governance and obtain popular consent.

3.7 Pronouns

Prabowo's use of pronouns in his 2025 state address is a strategic linguistic tool that he uses to build solidarity, authority, and inclusiveness in his political speech. The first-person plural "*kita*" (we) appears 24 times, showing a desire to break down the barriers between the leader and the people. This makes national struggles and goals seem like a group effort based on gotong royong. This all-encompassing pronoun not only stresses unity but also makes policies seem more legitimate by framing them as shared duties instead of orders from above. In contrast, the first-person singular "*saya*" (I) appears 11 times, usually in situations where Prabowo claims personal responsibility or leadership authority. This balances the idea of everyone being included with the idea of each person being responsible. (I) is used less often, mostly when Prabowo takes personal responsibility or shows commitment, which balances authority with humility. The use of second-person forms like "*saudara-saudara sekalian*"

creates closeness and respect, which strengthens the dialogical relationship between the president and the audience. From a discourse-analytic standpoint, these pronoun selections are not solely grammatical but profoundly ideological, as they situate the speaker as a representative of the populace, a moral arbiter, and an authoritative figure. In this way, the way Prabowo uses pronouns in his speech is very important for shaping political identity and gaining legitimacy through rhetorical inclusivity. There were some pronouns in Prabowo's speech that fit the description in Table 7.

Table 7. Pronouns in Prabowo's Speech

No	Pronouns	Function
1	First-person singular ("I" / <i>saya, aku</i>) <i>"Saya ingin menyampaikan...";</i> <i>"Saya disumpah untuk melaksanakan perintah Undang-Undang Dasar..."</i>	Establishes personal responsibility and authority of the president; builds ethos by showing commitment to law and constitution.
2	First-person plural inclusive ("we" / <i>kita</i>) <i>"Kita berhasil karena kita menganut demokrasi yang khas Indonesia.";</i> <i>"Kita ingin rakyat kecil bisa tersenyum..."</i>	Creates unity and solidarity between leader and citizens; constructs a shared national identity and collective struggle.
3	First-person plural exclusive ("we" / <i>kami</i>) <i>"Kami telah mengidentifikasi dan menyelamatkan Rp300 triliun...";</i> <i>"Pemerintah yang saya pimpin..."</i>	Distinguishes government action from the people; shows executive responsibility and institutional authority.
4	Second-person ("you" / <i>saudara-saudara sekalian</i>) <i>"Saudara-saudara sekalian yang saya hormati..."</i>	Formal, respectful address to audience; establishes egalitarian relationship with parliament and citizens; creates dialogical tone.
5	Third-person respectful ("he, she" / <i>beliau</i>) <i>"Presiden Soekarno telah memimpin perjuangan...";</i> <i>"Beliau merintis pembangunan Ibu Kota Nusantara..."</i>	Shows respect and legitimacy for past leaders; emphasizes historical continuity.

6	Third-person general/other (“they” / mereka) “Mereka memandang bahwa pemikiran Bung Karno... tidak relevan lagi...”	Used for out-group / elites / opponents; creates us vs. them dichotomy between patriotic citizens vs. corrupt/greedy elites.
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3.8 Diction

Prabowo's political speech uses carefully chosen words to strike a balance between authority and populism. It uses formal constitutional language alongside culturally relevant words like *gotong royong* and *rakyat kecil*. His choice of words emphasizes struggle, sovereignty, and justice, which bring back memories of the past and make people proud of their country. At the same time, they make current problems seem like moral imperatives. Prabowo builds a discourse that is both rational and emotional by switching between technical policy language and emotionally charged words. This makes his leadership seem both smart and culturally connected to the people. There were some dictions in Prabowo's speech that fit the description in Table 8.

Table 8. Dictions in Prabowo's Speech

No	Diction/Category	Sentence	Meaning
1	Nationalist & Symbolic <i>Kemerdekaan, Kedaulatan, Gotong Royong</i>	“Tujuan kita merdeka adalah untuk merdeka dari kemiskinan, untuk merdeka dari kelaparan, merdeka dari penderitaan.”	Positions independence not only as political freedom but also economic and social liberation; evokes national struggle.
2	Populist & Inclusive <i>Rakyat, Kita, Wong Cilik</i>	“Tujuan kita, tujuan kemerdekaan kita adalah wong cilik iso gemuyu.”	Strengthens solidarity with ordinary citizens, using colloquial diction to create closeness and emotional resonance.
3	Confrontational & Critical <i>Korupsi, Serakah, Serakahnomics</i>	“Pemerintah yang saya pimpin tidak akan membiarkan rakyat Indonesia menjadi korban serakahnomics.”	Labels economic exploitation in a memorable phrase, constructing a moral enemy (greedy elites) versus the people.
4	Policy-Oriented & Rational	“Hari ini kita surplus produksi beras... untuk pertama kali dalam	Provides evidence-based legitimacy, projecting rational and pragmatic leadership capable of delivering concrete results.

	<i>Surplus Pangan, Investasi, Industrialisasi</i>	puluhan tahun Indonesia bisa kembali mengekspor beras dan jagung.”	
5	Cultural & Emotional <i>Budaya kekeluargaan, Gotong Royong</i>	“Demokrasi yang kita anut adalah demokrasi yang sesuai dengan budaya kita. Budaya kekeluargaan, budaya gotong royong.”	Appeals to shared cultural values, presenting democracy as uniquely Indonesian, rooted in harmony and collectivism.

3.9 Metaphor

In Prabowo's 2025 state address, metaphors are used to persuade people by putting abstract political problems in concrete and emotionally powerful terms. The transcript contained 27 metaphorical phrases. Corruption is most often called a "*penyakit*" (disease, 3 times), and greed-driven economics is called "*serakahnomics*" (1 time). Other metaphors compare the country to a "body" that needs to be protected and sovereignty to a "shield" against threats from outside. These raw examples show that metaphorical language is used as a pattern in the speech. These kinds of metaphors make corruption seem like a moral and existential threat, while framing sovereignty and welfare as issues of collective survival. This makes Prabowo's administration seem like both a healer and a defender of the nation. For example, he used the metaphor of corruption as a "*penyakit yang menggerogoti bangsa*" (a disease eroding the nation) to show that it is a long-term problem that needs quick and strong action. In the same way, calling Indonesia "*penonton di tanah air sendiri*" (spectators in their own homeland) makes the country's economic dependence more dramatic and stirs up nationalist feelings to regain sovereignty. These kinds of metaphors not only make complicated social and political issues easier to understand, but they also put them in moral and existential stories where leadership is a cure and unity is the body politic's defense mechanism. From a critical discourse standpoint, these figurative expressions surpass mere stylistic embellishment, serving ideologically to normalize Prabowo's vision of transformative governance and to synchronize public perception with his reform agenda. There were some metaphors in Prabowo's speech that fit the description in Table 9.

Table 9. Metaphor in Prabowo's Speech

No	Metaphor	Meaning
1	<i>"Berdiri di atas kaki kita sendiri"</i>	Highlights Indonesia's goal of economic and political independence. This reflects Prabowo's nationalist stance, consistent with his long-time advocacy for food, energy, and defense self-sufficiency.
2	<i>"Ibarat sebuah badan, kalau darahnya terus mengalir keluar, maka pada suatu titik badan itu akan mati."</i>	The state is compared to a human body, and national wealth is like blood. Leakage of wealth = bleeding to death, stressing urgency of protecting resources.
3	<i>"Kita berperang merebut kemerdekaan dengan senjata dan diplomasi..."</i>	Independence and present challenges are framed as battles. Highlights sacrifice, unity, and legitimizes firm policies as part of a continuous struggle.
4	<i>"Kalau kita konsekuen menjalankan rancang bangun para pendiri bangsa... bangsa kita akan selamat."</i>	The constitution is described as a "blueprint" or planned design. Suggests following the founders' vision ensures survival and stability.
5	<i>"Bangsa Indonesia harus berani melihat penyakit-penyakit yang ada di tubuh kita agar bisa diperbaiki."</i>	Corruption/systemic flaws = national diseases. Diagnosis (acknowledging corruption) is needed for treatment (reform). Implies government as healer.
6	<i>"Negara kita diberi karunia oleh Allah SWT, sumber daya yang melimpah ruah."</i>	Natural resources are divine gifts that overflow. Mismanagement = betrayal of blessings. Frames resource control as moral and spiritual duty.

4. DISCUSSION

The results respond to the primary research inquiry: the linguistic and rhetorical strategies utilized in Prabowo's speech to unmask his political legitimacy, presidential identity, ideological stance within the Indonesian context. At the macrostructural level, three prevailing themes emerged: historical continuity with the struggle for independence, moral denunciation of corruption, and the primacy of welfare as a facet of sovereignty. These themes show how Prabowo uses collective memory, moral framing, and constitutional mandates to make his presidency fit with both national values and pressing social issues. At the microstructural level, the frequent use of inclusive pronouns (*kita*, 24 instances) and the strategic use of metaphors (27 instances, including "*penyakit*" and "*serakahnomics*") show how language choices can build solidarity, frame corruption as a moral disease, and make welfare part of patriotic discourse. The findings indicate that Prabowo's discourse strategically integrates linguistic and ideological elements across various analytical levels to reinforce legitimacy, unify domestic audiences, and situate Indonesia within a global context.

4.1 Social Cognition Analysis

The social cognition aspect of Prabowo's speech illustrates the interaction among shared knowledge, ideological framing, and collective memory in influencing the creation and interpretation of his message. Prabowo invokes the historical legacy of Indonesia's founding fathers and past presidents to activate shared mental models of nationalism, positioning his policies as a continuation of the nation's struggle for sovereignty and justice. This discursive strategy resonates with [Van Dijk's \(1998\)](#) notion of "sociocognitive frameworks," where political actors rely on socially shared beliefs to legitimize their ideological positions. His allusions to Soekarno, Hatta, Syahrir, and other figures assume that the audience is already aware of their authority and ideological significance, thereby legitimizing his appeal to constitutional values as exemplified in the 1945 Constitution.

Prabowo's leadership is based on three overlapping belief systems: populism, which sees the government as protecting the people from corrupt elites and exploitative interests; nationalism, which stresses self-sufficiency in food, resource sovereignty, and economic independence; and a culturally specific form of democracy, which he contrasts with Western confrontational politics by presenting it instead as based on gotong-royong, harmony, and mutual respect. These discursive strategies align with public sentiments that regard corruption, inequality, and dependency as enduring national issues, thereby bolstering confidence in his agenda. The strategic use of pronouns deepens the divide in thought between "us" (the rakyat, farmers, workers, and patriotic entrepreneurs) and "them" (corrupt bureaucrats, manipulative businessmen, and foreign exploiters). This encourages solidarity while directing anger at outside enemies. This corresponds with [Mangila's \(2024\)](#) theory of populist rhetoric, wherein the formulation of antagonistic binaries serves to establish political boundaries and galvanize collective identity. [Mardiana \(2020\)](#) notes that Indonesian populist leaders often utilize nationalist economic narratives to position themselves as protectors of sovereignty in opposition to globalization and foreign influence.

4.2 Social Context Analysis

Prabowo's 2025 state address must be understood in the larger social, political, and economic context of modern-day Indonesia. His discourse is not isolated; instead, it mirrors, reacts to, and influences the dynamics of Indonesian democracy, governance, and global standing. Three principal contextual dimensions can be discerned. The first context is the strengthening of Indonesia's democratic institutions after President Joko Widodo peacefully handed over power to Prabowo. Prabowo talks about how the smooth transition is proof of

Indonesia's "mature democracy" in his speech. This claim fits with what we know from comparing different cases: changing leaders and having a clear line of succession can make a regime more legitimate and boost public trust, even when informal practices are still in place. [Mowafy \(2022\)](#). Scholars warn that Indonesia's democratic resilience has often coexisted with entrenched patronage and oligarchic networks, making it hard to tell a clear story of linear consolidation ([Mardiana 2020](#); [Mardikantoro, et al. 2020](#); [Mariyani et al. 2024](#)). In a world where democracy is in decline, Indonesia's orderly transition lets the elites show that the country is stable to both domestic and international audiences ([Lenora 2023](#); [Lestari and Andiansyah 2024](#)). Consequently, the address should be interpreted as both an indication of Indonesia's ability to adapt democratically in the face of global autocratic pressures and as a rhetorical strategy that positions Indonesia as a legitimate democratic participant, while possibly minimizing existing vulnerabilities associated with polarization and clientelism ([Kuswoyo and Siregar 2019](#)).

A second context is Indonesia's ongoing fight against structural inequality, poverty in rural areas, and uneven development. Prabowo's repeated focus on food security, free healthy meals, and the well-being of farmers is based on the fact that resources are still very unevenly distributed in a developing country. His criticism of "*serakahnomics*" resonates with public discontent regarding oligarchic dominance and elite appropriation of national wealth. This discursive strategy mirrors enduring academic insights that Indonesia's political economy has been influenced by entrenched oligarchic networks, which sustain inequality even amidst democratic governance. Prabowo's populist framing of distributive justice corresponds with characterization of the mobilization of welfare-oriented promises to garner mass support amid socio-economic discontent.

Lastly, Prabowo's speech must be understood in the context of Indonesia's important role in global geopolitics. His comments about Indonesia's desire to be a moral voice in international affairs and a regional leader are shown by his support for Palestine, BRICS membership, and trade talks with the EU and the U.S. This shows that Indonesia is trying to stay "non-aligned" in its foreign policy while also dealing with global power blocs. Scholars have long observed that Indonesia's foreign policy is influenced by the doctrine of "*bebas-aktif*" (free and active), which underscores autonomy in decision-making while fostering international cooperation ([Juwita et al. 2024](#)). Recent studies indicate that Indonesia's growing involvement with emerging platforms like BRICS signifies not only pragmatic economic objectives but also symbolic aspirations of solidarity. This wider geopolitical focus fits right in with Prabowo's talking points, such as his focus on sovereignty as a way to build economic

resilience, his view of welfare policies as essential to national independence, and his view of Indonesia's dignity on the world stage. Prabowo's speech can be seen as both a continuation of Indonesia's "*bebas-aktif*" tradition and an attempt to frame the country as both a sovereign, self-sufficient power and a bridge-builder in a world that is becoming more divided.

Prabowo's speech is not just a political speech for Indonesia; it is also a way of talking about Indonesia's place in the world. He does this by using historical figures to show continuity, framing corruption as a threat to national integrity, and linking welfare policies to sovereignty and international recognition. It lays out a plan for governing that combines national sovereignty, social justice, and global importance. This shows both the problems and hopes that Indonesia has for the 21st century.

4.3 Discourse Analysis of Prabowo's Leadership Narratives: Rhetoric and Social Cognition

Prabowo's leadership narrative, as presented in his 2025 state address, exemplifies a strategic integration of rhetorical persuasion and social cognition. The Results show that his speech used a lot of historical references to Indonesia's founding fathers and the *Generasi '45* (see Macro Theme 1). This put his leadership in the context of a long history of national struggle and sacrifice. This rhetorical tactic creates a link between Prabowo and past leaders, making him both the inheritor and executor of Indonesia's founding vision. These appeals to collective memory are in line with [Mathew \(2021\)](#), which talks about how historical references can make modern political power seem more legitimate. They are also similar to strategies used in Indonesian discourse, where references to Soekarno or Suharto are used to connect current agendas to ideological legacies. His focus on food sovereignty, anti-corruption measures, and welfare expansion (see Macro Themes 2 and 3) also creates a story of transformative but responsible leadership. Consequently, Prabowo's speech can be interpreted as both a successful rhetorical performance based on the themes identified in the Results and a discursive intervention whose transformative capacity is dependent on overarching structural constraints.

This rhetoric is not only stylistic but also ideological, illustrating what [van Dijk \(1988\)](#) describes as the formulation of positive self-presentation in political discourse. The Results demonstrate that Prabowo's frequent employment of inclusive pronouns, such as *kita* ("we"), strategically blurs the distinction between leader and citizens, thereby portraying his leadership as legitimate and trustworthy (refer to Pronoun Analysis). His use of metaphors, such as calling corruption a "disease" and greed-driven practices "*serakahnomics*", also works as a negative other-presentation that makes elites or businesses that are seen as threats to the people's welfare

seem less legitimate. These choices are reinforced by assertive speech acts that frame his commitments as moral imperatives rather than discretionary policies.

5. CONCLUSION

From the description of the research findings above, it can be inferred that Prabowo's inaugural state speech provides the most substantial theoretical contributions regarding the function of historical narratives in shaping collective cognition and maintaining political legitimacy. Prabowo does not just talk about Indonesia's founding fathers and past presidents; he also brings back shared memories of the country. These stories help the audience link their current situation to a larger national story that goes back to independence.

This focus on collective memory also shows how political talk can be used to build identity. Historical accomplishments and challenges are not merely remembered but recontextualized to benefit the present. Prabowo's story says that every past leader has helped create a vision of progress that his government must continue. This shows that history is not just a static reference, but a way to talk about things that gives authority and sets expectations. In theory, this emphasizes the cognitive aspect of discourse as a mechanism for perpetuating ideology via selective memory and collective cultural frameworks. Another contribution is the enhancement of theoretical comprehension of populist rhetoric in discourse studies. Populism is conventionally perceived as a political approach founded on emotional appeals and the establishment of a dichotomy between “the people” and “the elite.” Prabowo's speech, on the other hand, shows a more complicated use of populist language. He uses populist language by saying he is protecting “*wong cilik*” (ordinary people) from greedy elites, but at the same time he justifies real government policies like free nutritious meals, changes to the education system, and food sovereignty. This duality indicates that populist rhetoric in Indonesian politics functions both as a mobilization strategy and a legitimizing mechanism for governance. The combination of emotional appeals with policy justification shows how populist discourse can build support for government programs by framing them as the will of the people. This adds to the theoretical discussion by showing that populism isn't always destabilizing; it can also be a way of talking that strengthens people's trust in government institutions. This discovery contests the reductionist perspective of populism as solely anti-establishment rhetoric, highlighting its potential function in democratic consolidation. Prabowo's focus on Indonesia's peaceful democratic transition contributes to theoretical discourse regarding democracy in transitional societies. The speech makes Indonesia look like a model of democratic resilience in the Global South by framing the transfer of power from Joko Widodo to his administration

as orderly, honorable, and praised around the world. This has consequences for CDA, which has traditionally concentrated on Western contexts. It shows how stories of national pride, international recognition, and political maturity are used to build democratic legitimacy. Prabowo also puts Indonesia's democracy in the context of the world by talking about how it is a member of groups like BRICS and how it wants to promote peace around the world. This global positioning manifested as Prabowo's "intertextuality" in political discourse, wherein domestic legitimacy was contingent upon international recognition. In theory, this broadens the scope of CDA by showing how discourses of democracy in non-Western settings provide both domestic reassurance and global soft power. It questions Eurocentric ideas and shows how transitional states use discourse in a strategic way to claim political maturity and international authority.

Finally, the analysis presents a robust empirical case for van Dijk's text; cognition; society triangle. Prabowo's speech shows how audiences use familiar cultural and ideological schemas to understand rhetorical strategies at the textual level, like pronouns ("we," "our"), evaluative terms ("*serakahnomics*"), and culturally embedded expressions ("*wong cilik iso gemuyu*"). These strategies assist citizens in comprehending political reality through the lens of collective values such as unity, justice, and sovereignty. At the societal level, these cognitive effects manifest as the reinforcement of social structures, especially in legitimizing state intervention to combat corruption, food insecurity, and economic exploitation. In this regard, the speech illustrates how discourse facilitates the interaction among language, cognition, and social structure. It bolsters the assertion that political discourse is not solely descriptive but also constitutive, actively influencing collective beliefs and legitimizing institutional practices. This theoretical contribution enhances the explanatory capacity of CDA by offering empirical evidence of the connection between cognitive mechanisms, textual attributes, and societal outcomes.

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