DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT PRABOWO'S INAUGURAL SPEECH FOCUSING ON SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AND RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

Teguh Apriyono [1] Ferri Sunsanto [2] Yanshori Revola [3]
State Islamic University (UIN) Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu
Corresponding email : teguhapriyono04@gmail.com,
ferrisusanto@gmail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id, revolyr7@gmail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how meaning is constructed in the inaugural speech of President Prabowo Subianto through the deployment of nominalization, passivization, modality, and rhetorical strategies, and examines the communicative purposes underlying these linguistic choices in the formation of political discourse. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the interplay between language, power, and ideology within the speech. The findings indicate that nominalization and passivization are systematically employed to reframe processes as abstract entities and to background agency, thereby representing policies and national issues as collective responsibilities while maintaining a formal and impersonal tone. Modality, particularly expressions of obligation and high certainty, encodes authority, commitment, and determination, whereas the use of inclusive pronouns such as "we" facilitates audience alignment and collective engagement. In addition, rhetorical strategies, including repetition, parallelism, and appeals to unity, function to foreground key themes, enhance persuasive force, and construct a shared national identity. Overall, the speech operates not merely as a vehicle for articulating governmental vision but as a strategic discursive practice that legitimizes power and shapes social reality within the broader context of political leadership.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics, rhetorical strategies, inaugural speech.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana makna dikonstruksi dalam pidato inaugurasi Presiden Prabowo Subianto melalui penggunaan nominalisasi, pasivisasi, modalitas, dan strategi retorika, serta mengidentifikasi tujuan komunikatif di balik pilihan-pilihan kebahasaan tersebut dalam pembentukan wacana politik. Berlandaskan pada Linguistik Fungsional Sistemik (SFL) dan Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA), penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisis keterkaitan antara bahasa, kekuasaan, dan ideologi dalam pidato tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nominalisasi dan pasivisasi

digunakan secara sistematis untuk merepresentasikan proses sebagai entitas abstrak serta mengaburkan pelaku tindakan, sehingga kebijakan dan isu nasional diposisikan sebagai tanggung jawab kolektif dengan nuansa formal dan impersonal. Modalitas, khususnya yang menunjukkan keharusan dan kepastian tinggi, merepresentasikan otoritas, komitmen, dan ketegasan presiden, sementara penggunaan pronomina inklusif seperti “kita” memperkuat keterlibatan kolektif. Selain itu, strategi retorika seperti pengulangan, paralelisme, dan seruan persatuan berfungsi untuk menegaskan gagasan utama, meningkatkan daya persuasif, serta membangun identitas nasional bersama. Secara keseluruhan, pidato ini tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai sarana penyampaian visi pemerintahan, tetapi juga sebagai praktik diskursif strategis yang melegitimasi kekuasaan dan membentuk realitas sosial dalam konteks kepemimpinan politik.
Kata Kunci: *analisis wacana kritis, linguistik fungsional sistemik, strategi retorika, pidato inaugurasi.*

Catatan : Nomor HP tidak akan dicantumkan, namun sebagai fast respon apabila perbaikan dan keputusan penerimaan jurnal sudah ada.

A. Background

Language plays a crucial role in the political sphere because it functions not only as a tool for communication but also as a means of constructing meaning, shaping ideology, and maintaining and reproducing power. According to van Dijk (2008), political discourse is a social practice that reflects the relationship between language, power, and ideology. Through language, political actors can frame social reality, influence public opinion, and assert their position and the legitimacy of their power.

one of the most strategic forms of political discourse is the presidential address, particularly the inaugural address. The inaugural address holds great symbolic significance because it marks the transition of power and serves as the initial opportunity for a president to articulate the vision, mission, and ideological orientation of his administration. Wodak (2009) asserts that political speeches often contain historical narratives, national identity, and moral legitimacy that are strategically constructed through specific language choices. On October 20, 2024, Prabowo Subianto delivered his first inaugural address as President of the Republic of Indonesia. The inaugural address serves as a crucial ritual marking the transfer of political power from one

administration to the next. Prabowo's speech emphasized his commitment to sincere leadership for all citizens, including those who did not vote for him. (Hariati, 2025)

Inaugural addresses have long been an integral part of Indonesia's presidential tradition (Razuni, 2023), in which ideological rhetoric plays a crucial role in persuading and influencing the audience by promoting specific beliefs, values, or worldviews (Husnussalam & Yana, 2024). Rhetoric in political speeches is designed to inspire, persuade, and shift the audience's perspective. Analyzing the structure of political speeches through a rhetorical approach allows for a deeper understanding of the speech's context, arguments, and overall impact (Martin, 2015).

Political discourse plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, ideology, and social structures. This discourse serves as a means for politicians to influence, persuade, and consolidate power. In the Indonesian context, political speeches have played a significant role in defining national identity, addressing social issues, and establishing the legitimacy of leadership (Entman, 2021). Indonesia's political landscape is characterized by diversity and complexity shaped by history, culture, and socio-political dynamics (Titley, 2022). As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation, Indonesia faces various challenges related to unity, development, and democracy. Political speeches often reflect these challenges by addressing themes of nationalism, progress, and inclusivity.

Prabowo Subianto, a former general and long-time political figure, is a controversial yet influential figure in Indonesian politics. His political rhetoric frequently emphasizes nationalism, economic sovereignty, and social justice. These themes align with his image as a strong and decisive leader, appealing to segments of the Indonesian electorate who value stability and security. However, at the same time, Prabowo's speeches are frequently criticized for their populist and militaristic undertones, which reflect his background and ideological leanings (Bhatia et al., 2023).

His inaugural address as president marked a pivotal moment in his political journey, serving as both a statement of vision for the nation and an effort to consolidate support across

various segments of society (Sutarman, 2024). Therefore, the speech can be viewed as a microcosm of Indonesian political discourse that reflects the tensions, aspirations, and power dynamics within the national governance system.

This study analyzes the inauguration speech of Prabowo Subianto, a prominent political figure in Indonesia, using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework developed by Teun A. van Dijk. Van Dijk (1993) asserts that discourse is a form of social practice closely tied to power and ideology. Politicians use language not only to convey policies but also to assert dominance, legitimize actions, and construct specific identities. In this context, discourse analysis of political figures such as Prabowo Subianto provides important insights into the dynamics of power and ideology in the Indonesian political arena. Prabowo's speech at the presidential inauguration is a rich text for analysis. As a moment of transition, the presidential inauguration speech is inherently rich in ideological and symbolic meaning. Such speeches reflect the speaker's vision, values, and intentions while seeking to unite and mobilize the audience.

Teun A. van Dijk's CDA framework provides a comprehensive methodology for analyzing political discourse. Van Dijk (2008) views discourse as a multidimensional phenomenon comprising textual, cognitive, and social dimensions. His approach integrates linguistic structural analysis, such as syntax and semantics, with broader contextual factors, such as power relations in society and historical conditions.

This study employs a Discourse Analysis approach with a focus on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Halliday. According to Halliday and Hasan (2014), language is viewed as a system of meaning that humans use to perform social functions. SFL emphasizes three metafunctions of language: the ideational metafunction (how experiences are represented), the interpersonal metafunction (how social relationships are constructed), and the textual metafunction (how messages are organized coherently). This approach allows researchers to examine how grammatical structure, lexical choices, and linguistic processes in the inaugural address are used to construct specific meanings.

Additionally, this study examines the rhetorical strategies employed in President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural address. Rhetoric, as explained by Aristotle, encompasses three main aspects: the speaker's credibility, emotional appeal, and the logic of the argument. These rhetorical strategies play a crucial role in shaping the persuasive power of political speeches and influencing the audience both emotionally and rationally. This analysis of rhetorical strategies is combined with a critical discourse analysis perspective to uncover the ideological objectives underlying language use.

B. Research method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive qualitative method, as it focuses on the analysis of meaning, interpretation, and the function of language in social and political contexts, particularly in President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural address. The research data consists of the text of the inaugural address obtained from official government sources to ensure the authenticity and validity of the data. In the analysis process, this study integrates two main theoretical frameworks, namely Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). CDA is used to examine the relationship between language, power, and ideology, as well as to uncover implicit meanings and communicative purposes within the discourse, while SFL is used to analyze linguistic aspects through the three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The focus of the analysis includes the use of nominalization, passivization, modality, and rhetorical strategies in the inaugural address. The analysis process is conducted in several stages, namely intensive reading of the text, grouping of data based on linguistic categories, analysis of the function of each linguistic feature, and interpretation of meaning within the social and political context. Thus, this method allows for a comprehensive understanding of how language is used strategically to construct meaning, represent power, and reinforce political legitimacy in the discourse of the inaugural address.

C. Research Findings and Discussion

The results of the study indicate that President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural address was dominated by

the use of nominalization, passivization, modality, and rhetorical strategies as the primary tools for constructing meaning. Nominalization, which was dominated by material processes (66.7%), served to transform processes into abstract entities, thereby representing national policies and issues as collective phenomena. Passivization is used to obscure the actor and shift the focus to the event or the result of the action. Modality indicates a degree of necessity and certainty that reflects the president's commitment and authority, while the use of inclusive pronouns reinforces audience engagement. Additionally, rhetorical strategies such as parallelism, repetition, and calls for unity are used to emphasize the main message and enhance persuasive power. These findings align with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, which emphasizes the functions of language in representing experience (ideational), building interpersonal relationships, and structuring texts cohesively. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the use of these features indicates that language in the speech is not neutral but is strategically employed to build power, construct social reality, and reinforce political legitimacy.

Table 1. Distribution of Nominalization by Process Type

No	Type of Process	Total	Persentase
1	Material	28	66,7%
2	Mental	8	19,0%
3	Relasional	6	14,3%
	Total	42	100%

E. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, this study yielded two main findings. First, the meaning in President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural address was realized through linguistic and rhetorical strategies, particularly the dominance of Ideational Grammatical Metaphor (IGM) in the form of nominalization. The dominance of material processes (66.7%) indicates that meaning is constructed as a sequence of concrete actions and a tangible agenda, thereby transforming dynamic processes into more formal and authoritative entities. Additionally, the use of high-modality verbs such as "must" and "will" reflects authority and strong commitment, while passivization

conveys an objective and impersonal tone, particularly within historical and religious contexts. Rhetorical strategies such as parallelism and repetition serve to strengthen textual cohesion and emphasize the values of unity and nationalism. Second, the use of these linguistic elements serves a strategic purpose in political communication: to abstract and objectify national issues without blaming specific actors, thereby maintaining political stability while legitimizing power by positioning leadership as an institutional mandate. Furthermore, the combination of rhetorical strategies and strong modalities also aims to mobilize public support, build trust, and create a sense of urgency regarding the government's agenda.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that English teachers integrate SFL-based critical discourse analysis into their teaching by utilizing public figures' speeches as instructional materials, so that students understand that grammar is a strategic choice in communication. Prospective teachers are encouraged to deepen their understanding of grammatical metaphors and modality to support objective academic writing skills and persuasive communication. Future researchers are advised to develop classroom action research on the use of speech analysis to enhance critical literacy and to examine textual metafunction (theme-rheme) aspects to assess discourse coherence. Additionally, the general public is encouraged to adopt a more critical approach to understanding political discourse, particularly in recognizing how language can obscure the actors behind an issue.

REFERENCES

Ba'dulu, M. A. (2009). *Introduction to Linguistic*. Badan Universitas Negeri Makassar.

Bhatia, V. K., et al. (2023). *Analyzing political rhetoric: Multimodal approaches*. Routledge.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Allyn and Bacon.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2nd ed.). Edward Arnold.

Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis. In *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*.

O'Halloran, K. L. (2021). Multimodal Discourse Analysis. In *Bloomsbury Companion to Discourse Analysis*.

Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about. In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*.

Kazemian, B., & Hashemi, S. (2014). Critical discourse analysis of Barack Obama's speeches. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(6), 1178–1187.

Megah, S. I., & Mohd. Noor, S. N. F. (2021). Ideological construction in Soekarno's speeches. *Cahaya Pendidikan*, 7(2).

Puji Hariati, P., & Purwarno. (2025). Ideological rhetoric in Prabowo's inauguration speech. *JOALL*, 10(1), 136–156.

Razuni, G. (2023). Bung Karno's political thought. *Jurnal Wacana Politik*, 8(2), 223–234