

# Framing Power and Ideology in Prabowo Subianto's Presidential Speech

**Riki Nasrullah [1], Arip Budiman [2], Ardiya Prayogi [3], Andik Yuliyanto [4], Parmin [5],  
Hishamudin Isam [6]**

[1] rikinasrullah@unesa.ac.id

[1], [4], [5] Universitas negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

[2] Universitas Sebelas April, Sumedang, Indonesia

[3] Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid, Pekalongan, Indonesia

[6] Universiti Utara Malaysia, Changlun, Malaysia

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## Abstract

Political speeches function not only as formal addresses but also as powerful tools for constructing ideological narratives, legitimizing authority, and influencing public opinion. In a politically polarized and socially diverse country like Indonesia, presidential discourse plays a crucial role in uniting disparate groups and articulating visions for national development and reform. This study critically examines how President Prabowo Subianto frames power and ideology in his 2024 inaugural presidential speech by investigating the linguistic strategies and discursive mechanisms used to construct an image of inclusive leadership, address systemic corruption, and reinforce national identity. Employing a qualitative approach grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research integrates van Dijk's theory of power and ideology, Fairclough's modality theory, Wodak's critical pragmatics, Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, and Moscovici's theory of social representation. The primary data consists of the official transcript of Prabowo's speech, retrieved from government sources and analyzed through purposive sampling to identify ideologically salient segments. These were manually coded for modality, speech acts, metaphorical constructions, and group representations. The analysis reveals that Prabowo constructs an assertive yet inclusive leadership persona by using a high-certainty modality to project confidence in achieving national goals, particularly food and energy self-sufficiency. Deontic expressions frame these goals as collective moral obligations. Assertive and commissive speech acts function to inform and mobilize, reinforcing his credibility and political commitment. Conceptual metaphors such as "journey" and "disease" simplify complex challenges, portraying national development as a shared path forward and corruption as a harmful condition requiring urgent cures. Through social representation, the speech elevates "the lower class" (e.g., farmers, fishermen) as national heroes while depicting corrupt elites as threats to societal well-being. These linguistic strategies form a coherent populist narrative that legitimizes reformist leadership and appeals to collective identity. This study contributes to the field of political discourse analysis in Indonesia by offering a comprehensive, multi-theoretical lens to unpack the ideological functions of language in presidential communication. It also holds practical implications for political speechwriting, civic education, and public engagement by demonstrating how language can be used to construct legitimacy, inspire unity, and frame national priorities in morally persuasive ways.

Keywords: discourse analysis; framing; ideology; pragmatics

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## INTRODUCTION

The political speeches of a leader are among the most potent means to build a narrative of power, convey political ideology, and shape public perception (Lawson & Ocando, 2022; Loner et

al., 2023; Sufi & Yasmin, 2022; Winkler & Jerdén, 2023; Xu, 2022). As a form of political communication, they allow leaders to depict government agendas, mobilize support, and guide how the public understands various socio-economic and political issues. The reproduction of language in political speeches functions both as a communicative tool and an instrument of power (Bantawig, 2019; Bull, 2006; Havas & Chapp, 2016; Kadim, 2022; Schmälzle et al., 2015). Through wide dissemination, language in political discourse helps construct ideologies that solidify domination and sustain power (Dijk, 2006). This makes the study of political speeches especially important in contexts such as Indonesia, where complex and urgent challenges, including social injustice, corruption, and economic disparities, continue to shape the national landscape.

Given Indonesia's socially and politically diverse society, a leader is always expected to use language that evokes inclusivity and fosters national solidarity. In such a pluralistic context, effective political discourse becomes a crucial instrument for bridging divisions and maintaining social cohesion. A president's speech, therefore, is not merely a means to outline policy directions but also serves to project an image of leadership that genuinely embraces all parts of society (Dillion et al., 2024). This inclusive dimension of political communication is especially significant in Indonesia, where citizens come from varied ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds that must be accommodated within a unifying national vision. Since Indonesia displays strong pluralistic characteristics, the language used in presidential discourse should not only articulate policy but also build connectivity among different groups, helping to address persistent problems and injustices that ordinary people face in their daily lives (Ichsan, 2022; Sunarso et al., 2022; Yani et al., 2022). By doing so, political speeches can reinforce a sense of shared identity and collective responsibility, ensuring that governance remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of all citizens, regardless of their backgrounds.

Aside from the challenges of managing a pluralistic society, Indonesia has also long grappled with persistent problems such as social injustice that continues to affect ordinary people and widespread corruption that is widely recognized as one of the major deterrents to sustainable national development. These issues not only undermine public trust in government institutions but also hinder equitable economic growth and social welfare. In this context, the political speeches of a president are expected to play a critical role in addressing such complex problems by providing both moral direction and clear policy guidance that can unite diverse segments of society around common goals. A well-crafted speech does more than articulate policy promises; it signals a leader's commitment to tackling deeply rooted issues while instilling hope and public confidence in the nation's future. By confronting issues like corruption and inequality through inclusive and transparent discourse, presidential speeches can help mobilize collective support, inspire civic engagement, and reinforce the belief that meaningful reforms are both possible and necessary for Indonesia's continued progress.

Against this backdrop, this study examines how President Prabowo Subianto's inauguration speech functions as a strategic use of language to frame a vision of national independence, social justice, and moral reform. Drawing on linguistic tools such as modality, conceptual metaphors, and speech acts, the analysis explores how specific discursive strategies are used to construct power and ideology in ways that can mobilize support and shape public perception. This is particularly important in Indonesia's evolving democratic landscape, where ideological contestations and political polarization continue to challenge national unity. In such a context, the ability of presidential discourse to connect with diverse audiences, promote solidarity, and articulate a clear national direction has become increasingly critical. Understanding how these rhetorical and linguistic features operate within a high-stakes political speech not only sheds light on the leadership image being projected but also highlights how language can function as a tool for building credibility and reinforcing an inclusive identity. Therefore, a critical analysis of Prabowo's inaugural address provides valuable insights into how a leader seeks to balance assertiveness with inclusivity, using discourse to bridge social divisions and instill confidence in the nation's future.

This focus aligns with the broader field of political discourse studies, which has expanded exponentially in recent years as its area of attention has shifted towards unveiling how political leaders use language to achieve and sustain political power and shape public opinion. Van Dijk (2006) explained in his theory of Power and Ideology that discourse is a crucial element in

producing political dominance. Language would, therefore, be utilized to build ideologies that reinforce power and create narratives that unite or separate certain social groups. In this regard, inclusive discourse would be used in political speeches to construct an image of the leader as one who embraces all groups of society, while exclusive discourse could strengthen polarization.

Building upon Van Dijk's macro-level focus on discourse and ideological power, other scholars have examined more specific linguistic features that contribute to the construction of political authority. One such feature is modality, which has been extensively explored by Fairclough in the context of political discourse. Fairclough's research into Modality Theory in Political Discourse shows how political leaders use modality to show confidence in the proposed policy or vision (Cap, 2020). Modality is thus a handmaid for developing public trust in political propositions, meaning a high degree of modality increases the belief of a political leader in the public eye (Cap, 2020). In President Prabowo's speech, modality is engaged to denote certainty of realization towards the set national goals, such as food self-sufficiency, which aims to boost public confidence in his ability to lead the country.

While Fairclough's work highlights how modality expresses a leader's stance and degree of certainty, another key aspect of political discourse is how language performs actions that persuade and mobilize audiences. Wodak's approach to Critical Pragmatics builds on this by emphasizing the role of speech acts in shaping political meaning and engagement. Wodak's approach to Critical Pragmatics has kept urging speech acts to the fore in political discourse. As represented by Wodak (2011), assertive and commitment speech acts occur in political speech and do not merely inform but function as words for mobilizing the audience. Assertive speech acts show social truths that must be faced, while commitment speech acts show the seriousness of a leader in overcoming such challenges. Another line of Wodak's research addresses how politicians use language to create effective ties with the public and mobilize toward joint action.

Given these interrelated perspectives on how language builds, conveys, and performs power in political contexts, this study brings them together into an integrated analytical approach. This study aims to critically analyze how power and ideology are framed in Prabowo Subianto's presidential speech, particularly through discursive strategies that shape public perception and mobilize support. To achieve this, a multi-theoretical framework is necessary. Van Dijk's theory of power and ideology provides the macro-level foundation for understanding how political dominance is constructed through language. However, to understand the interpersonal and rhetorical mechanisms within the speech, Fairclough's modality theory is crucial in analyzing how certainty and commitment are linguistically expressed to enhance credibility and trust. In addition, Wodak's critical pragmatics is needed to dissect the speech acts that do not just inform but actively persuade and mobilize the audience. These theories are not interchangeable; each addresses a different dimension of meaning—ideological, attitudinal, and pragmatic. The interplay among these three dimensions allows for a more holistic and layered understanding of how Prabowo's speech constructs an image of leadership that is assertive, inclusive, and ideologically powerful.

Previous studies on political discourse have explored how political leaders use various rhetorical strategies to influence public perception and consolidate power. For example, Castro Seixas (2021) examined how metaphors such as "war," "journey," and "disease" are employed to simplify complex political challenges and mobilize collective emotions; although this study was situated in the context of COVID-19 discourse in Europe, the metaphorical strategies are potentially transferable to other settings like Indonesia. Similarly, Halfacree (1993) emphasized how constructing moral binaries, such as framing "ordinary people" against "corrupt elites", serves as a powerful discursive tool for building populist narratives. Kadim (2022), in her critical discourse analysis of Trump's campaign speeches, highlighted how modality and metaphor work together to reinforce ideological stances. Havas and Chapp (2016) focused on how the verb aspect in presidential speeches can influence the audience's emotional processing, demonstrating how subtle language choices shape engagement. Bantawig (2019) and Bull (2006) analyzed discourse markers and audience cues in political speeches in Asia and the UK respectively, showing how speech elements are strategically orchestrated to elicit support. However, most of these studies have been conducted in Euro-American contexts or focused on Western leaders. Few have synthesized these discourse strategies, specifically modality, metaphor, speech acts, and social

representation, within a single interdisciplinary framework applied to contemporary Indonesian political speeches, particularly in examining the leadership narrative of newly inaugurated figures like President Prabowo Subianto.

Although considerable research has explored how political discourse frames power and ideology, few studies have integrated recent approaches such as power and control, modality, critical pragmatics, conceptual metaphor, and social representation within a single framework, especially in the context of contemporary Indonesian presidential speeches. This lack of synthesis represents a clear research gap in Indonesian political discourse studies, where previous works have often focused on Western leaders or treated these strategies in isolation. The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary, multi-theoretical approach that combines van Dijk's theory of power and ideology, Fairclough's modality theory, and Wodak's critical pragmatics, supported by insights from conceptual metaphor and social representation theory. By triangulating these perspectives, this research uncovers how multiple layers of meaning operate within President Prabowo Subianto's inauguration speech: from macro-level ideological positioning and the construction of moral binaries to rhetorical strategies that express certainty and commitment, and pragmatic speech acts that mobilize support and build public trust. This multi-layered analysis reveals how the speech constructs a narrative of inclusive leadership, anti-corruption, and national independence that responds to Indonesia's socially and politically pluralistic challenges. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How does President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural speech construct power and ideology through discourse strategies? (2) What role do modality, speech acts, conceptual metaphors, and social representations play in shaping the leadership narrative? (3) How do these linguistic strategies function to legitimize Prabowo's leadership, mobilize support, and address social and political challenges in Indonesia's pluralistic society? This integrated approach contributes new insights to the field by demonstrating the value of combining complementary discourse frameworks to analyze leadership narratives in the Indonesian context.

## METHOD

The primary data of this qualitative study is the transcript of President Prabowo Subianto's inauguration speech as the President of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2024–2029 term. The official speech was retrieved from publicly accessible sources, specifically from the official Presidential Secretariat YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-WC6xcLghI>) and the official website of the Cabinet Secretariat (<https://setkab.go.id>), both accessed on 21 October 2025. Segments of the speech were selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives—particularly those that contain discursive markers of power and ideology such as modality expressions indicating certainty or obligation, speech acts of assertion or commitment, metaphorical constructions related to national struggle and corruption, and social representations of "the people" and "the elites." Sections that were purely ceremonial, introductory greetings, or factual descriptions without ideological or persuasive markers were excluded. The selected data segments were transcribed manually and double-checked to ensure accuracy before being coded for analysis.

The analytical process began with selecting segments of Prabowo's speech that are theoretically relevant to the study's objectives. The selection was guided by the operational criteria derived from each theoretical framework. Van Dijk's theory of power and ideology was used to identify discourse structures that reproduce dominance and group polarization. Segments containing lexical items and thematic oppositions that frame "the people" as moral subjects versus "the elites" as corrupt antagonists, an ideological dichotomy central to Prabowo's narrative are selected. Later on, Fairclough's modality theory was used to code expressions of certainty and obligation (e.g., "I am sure...", "we must...") since they reflect the speaker's epistemic stance and authority. High-modality expressions were prioritized as they indicate political confidence and leadership positioning. Not to mention, Wodak's critical pragmatics informed the identification of *assertive* speech acts (e.g., stating facts about corruption or inequality) and *commisive* speech acts (e.g., promising national reforms), which demonstrate how the speech performs actions aimed at persuading and mobilizing the public. Additionally, Lakoff & Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory

was used to pinpoint metaphorical expressions (e.g., corruption as a "disease", and national development as a "journey") that reduce complex political issues to more relatable mental models. Lastly, Moscovici's theory of social representation helped identify how groups (e.g., farmers, fishermen, political elites) are categorized and attributed roles (heroes vs. enemies), often through evaluative language and semantic framing.

## ANALYSIS

### Power and Ideology in Prabowo's Presidential Speech

This section analyzes how Prabowo's presidential speech constructs power relations and ideological positioning, particularly the concepts of group polarization, positive self-representation, and negative other-representation. Van Dijk (2006, 2018) emphasizes how discourse structures such as lexical choices, thematic emphasis, and actor description are used to legitimize power while marginalizing opponents. The details are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Mapping Power and Ideological Framing in Prabowo's Speech Based on van Dijk's Discourse Strategies

Discourse Segment	Discourse Strategy	Theoretical Indicator (Van Dijk)	Ideological Function
"We will run the leadership... including those who did not vote for me."	Inclusion	<i>Positive self-representation</i>	Projects Prabowo as a unifying leader who transcends political divisions, constructing an image of inclusive governance.
"Collusion between political government officials and rogue businessmen."	Blame Attribution	<i>Negative other-representation</i>	Constructs the elite as morally corrupt, framing them as enemies of the people and legitimizing populist intervention.
"Let us be united to face these challenges."	Call for Unity	<i>Group polarization (us vs. them)</i>	Strengthens in-group solidarity by appealing to national identity, portraying 'us' (the people) against 'them' (corrupt actors).
"We must dare to face the challenges that come from ourselves."	Self-reflection	<i>Ideological transparency</i>	Positions Prabowo's leadership as morally courageous and self-critical, distancing it from denial or blame-shifting.
"Too many leaks of corruption in our country."	Problem Emphasis	<i>The thematic focus on corruption</i>	Establishes corruption as a central threat to national progress, justifying the need for strong, reformist leadership.

These segments reflect how power is articulated discursively through oppositional framing—between 'the people' (*petani, nelayan, rakyat biasa*) and 'the corrupt elite' (*pejabat, pengusaha nakal*). By foregrounding inclusion and moral dichotomies, the speech aligns with Van Dijk's notion of ideological square: emphasizing the positive attributes of the in-group (Prabowo and the people) and the negative of the out-group (corrupt elites). Through this strategic discourse, Prabowo not only legitimizes his leadership claim but also constructs a simplified moral narrative that positions him as both a reformer and a protector of national integrity. The repeated use of inclusive phrases and corruption-related themes reveals how power is exercised discursively to shape public perception and mobilize support.

When Prabowo exclaims, "We will run the leadership.... including those who did not vote for me," his leadership is open to everyone, including all Indonesians, regardless of their political choice. That gives an impression of him as a leader who would wish to include all people, underlining his image as a figure committed to broad national interest. Prabowo promotes inclusive leadership and constructs clear opposition between poor, struggling "lower class" and businessmen and political officials who are perceived as corrupt. From the speech "Collusion between political government officials. and rogue businessmen, how Prabowo tried to position small people as a moral right and shift the blame of injustice and corruption to the elite," one can see. By this, he builds a narrative that the small people are victims of injustice, and corrupt elites are those that need to be fixed and controlled so that the country may run more fairly and cleanly.

In some parts of the speech, Prabowo also invited all the elements of society to unite and face common challenges. For example, he says, "Let us be united to face these challenges," in this

rallying call for the collaboration of different groups to solve the nation's problems. This dialogue reveals the ideology of unity and solidarity, placing Prabowo Subianto in a leadership position supportive of national cooperation toward various considerable challenges from inside and outside the borders of Indonesia that threaten the nation. Further, Prabowo also/Administratively employs phrases and words showing that challenges do not only emanate from outside but also from within. In his statement, "We must dare to face the challenges that come from ourselves," he shows how important it is to look within a nation as improvement emanates from within. This phrase would imply that solutions to the nation's problems must also come from its internal strength and entrench its commitment to improvements within the country.

Another critical stress that Prabowo underlined strongly was the problem of corruption itself as one serious threat to national development. He said, "We have to face the fact that there are too many leaks of corruption in our country," he emphasized the urgency of addressing it. Corruption has been portrayed as an issue that threatens to enormously damage the continuity of development and welfare within a country. The following sentence would mean that Prabowo is committed to purging corruption, which is an essential agenda with which he tries to strengthen the state.

Prabowo uses a discourse strategy to position himself as an inclusive leader, embracing all, no matter what the constituent elements of the nation are. He also underlined the issue of social injustice by constructing an opposition between hardworking, familiar people and corrupt elites, reinforcing his image as a defender of the interests of the ordinary people. In this text, power is combined with ideology to carve out a political narrative that sets the seal on integrity and justice while encouraging cooperation and national unity.

Through the statement, "We must have the courage to admit that there are too many leaks from our budget," Prabowo underscored transparency and accountability within the government. The call for eradicating corruption is a good test of the will of Prabowo in urging the nation toward more vigilance and being more active in a drive to nip corruption practices that deter development. Such an analysis highlights only how the speech of Prabowo builds a discourse of solidarity, transparency, and bravery to face national challenges. The discourse of power being propagated involves not only the ordinary people as an essential part of the state but also an invitation of all components of the nation to jointly defeat corruption and injustice to attain a more just and prosperous country.

### Modalities and Attitude Evaluation in Speech

This section analyzes the modality system in Prabowo's speech, particularly the concept of epistemic and deontic modality as tools for constructing speaker authority, certainty, and political stance. According to Fairclough (2014), modality reflects the speaker's attitude toward the proposition and helps realize ideological positions.

Table 2. Classification of Discourse Segments by Modality Type, Fairclough's Theoretical Indicators, and Their Ideological Implications in Political Discourse

Discourse Segment	Type of Modality	Theoretical Indicator (Fairclough)	Ideological Function
"I am sure within 4 to 5 years we will be self-sufficient in food."	Epistemic (certainty)	<i>High certainty modality</i>	Projects confidence and authority, reinforcing Prabowo's image as a decisive leader with clear development targets.
"We must dare to face the challenges that come from ourselves."	Deontic (obligation)	<i>Moral necessity</i>	Emphasizes collective responsibility, constructing national improvement as a shared ethical task.
"Let us be united to face these challenges."	Deontic (invitation)	<i>Strategic mobilization</i>	Positions the leader as a unifier and guide, calling for mass participation in facing systemic threats.
"Let us dare to be introspective."	Epistemic (caution/low certainty)	<i>Reflective stance</i>	Balances assertiveness with humility, legitimizing his critique by showing awareness of internal shortcomings.

"Indonesia is ready to become the world's food barn."	Epistemic (assertion)	<i>Visionary commitment</i>	Frames the nation's potential with optimism, embedding leadership discourse within a global, future-oriented vision.
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The analysis of Modality and Evaluation shows the vital modality of certainty that Prabowo used in Example 1 to inform others of his confidence in Indonesia. When Prabowo says, "I am sure within 4 to 5 years we will be self-sufficient in food," he is sure that Indonesia will get food and energy independence within the suggested time frame. The latter statement confirms his leading image, emphasizing immediate results and tangible results to build public confidence in his ambitious plans. The modality of certainty used in this speech indicates that Prabowo is committed to the vision for a more independent future.

Fairclough asserts that modality is not just a grammatical feature but a discursive choice that indexes power relations. In Prabowo's speech, high epistemic modality (e.g., "I am sure") is used to assert confidence in policy direction and reinforce the credibility of political promises. Meanwhile, deontic modality (e.g., "We must") constructs collective agency, signaling both leadership responsibility and public obligation. By alternating between strong assertions and calls for reflection, Prabowo projects an image of strategic certainty balanced with moral introspection. This dual use of modality affirms his ideological stance as a confident, yet ethically grounded leader who offers not only solutions but also invites participatory transformation.

Besides speaking optimistically about the future, Prabowo reflects on current and past conditions. Using sentences such as "Let us dare to be introspective," he invites Indonesians to become much more contemplative about themselves. Prabowo displays a rhetorical emphasis on reflection and a desire to acknowledge existing weaknesses. The invitation above demonstrates his encouragement to the nation to admit past mistakes and do better in the future boldly. This balances optimism with the awareness of reality that is far from perfection.

Additionally, food self-sufficiency statements like "I am sure" depict very high usages of certainty modality, reflecting his confidence in attaining energy and food self-sufficiency for Indonesia. This modality of certainty, therefore, reinforces Prabowo's position as a strong leader in the perspective of creating a clear direction for the nation's development. In contrast, the call for "introspection," which denotes lower modality, is to recognize the challenges faced today. Prabowo is also very optimistic when he says that Indonesia is ready to become the world's food barn. This shows that he believes Indonesia is not only food independent but can also become an essential factor in the international arena. An expression of global vision, not merely domestic, wherein Indonesia is projected as the great force to be recognized in the food sector.

In the case of the theory used, the modality of certainty emphasizes the speaker's attitude or belief in the proposition conveyed. According to Fairclough (2014), modality can express the speaker's attitude about something, such as certainty, doubt, or recognition. Through certainty modality, the ambitious policy direction underlined in this speech enables Prabowo to build an image of confident leadership regarding long-term solutions, such as achieving food self-sufficiency. In marked contrast, low modality about assessing past conditions reveals the awareness that something is lacking and must be put right. The balance here is drawn by optimism, which remains vital for the future. Modality in this speech brings into being the combination of what will happen in the future and the reflective awareness of a situation at present, or a balance between solid political convictions and critical evaluation of reality encountered. Prabowo could build a speech that accounted for his commitment to attaining vital strategic objectives set by Indonesia and reflected an in-depth awareness of the challenges faced.

### Speech Acts in Critical Pragmatics

Using the Critical Pragmatics framework, this section analyzes how assertive and commissive speech acts are employed in Prabowo Subianto's presidential speech to perform ideological functions—namely to inform, mobilize, and build trust. Speech acts are seen not merely as functional utterances but as tools of discourse power, strategically used to legitimize political authority and build narrative coherence (Wodak et al., 2018).

Table 3. Mapping of Speech Acts and Their Ideological Functions in Political Discourse: A Critical Pragmatics Approach

Discourse Segment	Speech Act Type	Pragmatic Indicator	Ideological Function
"We still see some of our brothers and sisters who have not enjoyed the fruits of independence."	Assertive	<i>Statement of fact</i>	Highlights ongoing inequality, creating a shared problem perception and justifying political intervention.
"I am sure that within 4 to 5 years we will be self-sufficient in food."	Commissive	<i>Policy commitment</i>	Demonstrates visionary planning and builds public trust in leadership capability.
"We must have the courage to admit that there are too many leaks from our budget."	Assertive + Moral appeal	<i>Constructed transparency</i>	Reinforces the leader's integrity and courage, while implicitly critiquing past governance.
"We will run the leadership... including those who did not vote for me."	Commissive (inclusive)	<i>Democratic gesture</i>	Positions the speaker as embracing all citizens, reframing political competition as national unity.

Taken together, assertive and commissive speech acts reveal the dual role of the speaker: as a diagnostician of national problems and as a reformist promising transformative change. Assertive speech acts are used to construct a shared reality—often pointing to social problems like inequality or corruption. These acts serve to align the speaker with the public's lived experience and enhance perceived authenticity. By asserting the presence of inequality or internal flaws, Prabowo signals awareness and honesty. Commissive speech acts, on the other hand, are used to declare intent and build expectations. These utterances construct an image of a leader with a clear plan and a strong will to deliver reform. Statements like "we will be self-sufficient in food" signal not just a promise, but a strategic vision that frames Prabowo's leadership as solutions-oriented.

The critical Pragmatic framework made it possible to understand how Prabowo uses various speech acts in his speech to mobilize his audience into collective consciousness. One of the most dominant speech acts is an assertive speech act, which Prabowo used to convey the nation's state in such a way that besides informing about it, it also directed his audience's attention toward realities needing corrective action. This line of his utterance, "We still see some of our brothers and sisters who have not enjoyed the fruits of independence," reminds people of Indonesia's social inequality today. This assertive speech act provides facts and consolidates the audience, refreshing the reality that much work still must be done to achieve social justice and equality. It creates a context in which the audience is expected to act based on understanding the challenges still faced.

Another speech act that is obvious in this speech is commitment. One explicit speech is from Prabowo, wherein he says, "I am sure that within 4 to 5 years we will be self-sufficient in food," showing the pledge for genuine change. The commitment also increases his leadership image, allowing him to think about long-term commitments and bear the responsibility to realize the strategic goals of their vision. In this case, Prabowo was not making a political promise but showing confidence in the future of food and energy independence in Indonesia. Such commitment speech acts are significant in building public trust because they show Prabowo is ready to lead by taking concrete actions.

Within the framework of Critical Pragmatics, Prabowo's assertive and committed Speech Acts serve a dual purpose. On the one hand, the assertive speech acts build collective awareness of the problems to be overcome; on the other, the commitment speech acts profess that solutions to said problems were well thought out and will become actual policies. The combination of these two kinds of speech acts shows that Prabowo's speech is informative and persuasive since he wants the audience to mobilize and support his vision and mission.

The assertive speech acts used by Prabowo showed the nation's actual condition, which still faced grave challenges. When uttering, "We still see some of our brothers and sisters who have not enjoyed the fruits of independence," Prabowo implicitly conveyed that although the nation has

made many achievements, there are still inequalities that must be overcome. It is a way of raising the audience's awareness to not be too complacent with existing achievements but rather to focus on the social and economic improvements needed. With this approach, it becomes clear that the discourse constructed by Prabowo seeks to keep the nation aware of its social responsibility to people who continue to be left behind.

On the other hand, in the speech act of commitment, Prabowo showed belief in the moves that would be taken towards ambitious goals. By saying, "I am sure that within 4 to 5 years we will be self-sufficient in food," Prabowo makes a definite statement about the future course of policies that should minimize imports and maximize the nation's self-sufficiency in food. This speech also indicates the degree of Prabowo's confidence in his leadership in executing these goals in a relatively short period. Therefore, this illocutionary commitment is not only a political promise but an account to establish public confidence that the leader can attain these goals in concrete terms. In addition, Prabowo uses his assertive speech act to convey realities that must be addressed. In contrast, his committed speech instills confidence that solutions to these problems are planned and will materialize. From this speech, one sees how Prabowo combines critical awareness with a strong commitment since the use of language will get the whole nation up, face challenges, and achieve outstanding national achievements.

These rhetorical elements, modality of certainty, conceptual metaphors, and commitment speech acts, appear in a coordinated sequence throughout the speech. For instance, in stating "I am sure within 4 to 5 years we will be self-sufficient in food," Prabowo combines certainty modality and a speech act of commitment. This is further supported by his use of metaphor, framing corruption as a "disease" that weakens the nation. Such strategic alignment of linguistic features constructs a persuasive narrative of confident, solution-oriented leadership.

### Conceptual Metaphors in Prabowo's Speech

This section applies Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980, 2003) to identify and interpret how metaphors in Prabowo Subianto's speech serve as cognitive tools that simplify complex political realities. Metaphors map abstract political issues into familiar domains (e.g., health, journey), thereby shaping public perception and guiding ideological interpretation.

Table 4. Mapping of Conceptual Metaphors and Their Ideological Functions in Political Discourse: A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective (Lakoff & Johnson)

Metaphorical Expression	Source Domain	Target Domain	Cognitive Framing	Ideological Function
"Let us face the threats and dangers with courage."	Journey / Battle	National development	Presents national progress as a challenging but surmountable path requiring bravery and unity.	Constructs Prabowo as a courageous leader uniting people against adversity.
"There are too many leaks from our budget."	Health / Pathology	Corruption	Corruption is conceptualized as an illness weakening the national body.	Frames Prabowo as a restorer of national health; implies urgency and moral clarity.
"Corruption is a disease that we must cure."	Health	Governance Ethics	Portrays corruption as systemic and malignant, needing collective action.	Legitimizes anti-corruption agenda as a national moral imperative.
"We will navigate this journey together."	Travel	National reform	Shared movement toward a better future.	Builds national solidarity and collective purpose.

President Prabowo has continually used metaphors to frame obstacles that Indonesia faces. Among such metaphors that caught the eye was the journey metaphor: the feeling of the Indonesian nation now in progress underway, but with significant obstacles. Prabowo's speech, "Let us face the threats and dangers with courage," Encourages the people to treat those challenges as part of the nation's journey to cross into a better future. The metaphor shows not only their

existence but also the importance of courage and determination in facing every danger that lies ahead. Using this travel metaphor, Prabowo frames a mindset in which the Indonesian nation needs to be prepared to walk through a path full of challenges. Still, obstacles can be overcome with passion and strength.

The travel metaphor ensures that Prabowo steers his audience to perceive the nation's problems as not intractable but part of a process that involves bold steps. It corroborates the idea that even though the situation is complex, the Indonesian nation can overcome the bad times and forge ahead with unity and courage. This metaphor explains clearly that courage is not an option but a duty to take whenever danger appears. Through the metaphor of Prabowo's travels, confidence can be injected to ensure that the Indonesian nation will be in an excellent position to face any obstacle that comes along the way of the struggle with determination and unity.

Prabowo also applied a health metaphor to the problem of corruption in Indonesia. Here, corruption is equated with a parasitic disease gnawing into the very resource base of the nation and thus weakening the country's foundations: "There are too many leaks from our budget.". By using this metaphor, Prabowo gives the impression that corruption is not simply an administrative error or behavioral deviation but a dangerous threat that jeopardizes the "health" of the whole nation. The health metaphor presently suggests that corruption needs to be tackled immediately, as it constantly spreads to destroy the country's entire social and economic system.

The health metaphor portrays corruption as something that needs to be "cured" to recover and get the nation back on track. Through this metaphor, corruption is deemed not only as a political issue but also as a disease threatening the nation's core, invoking urgency and the need for systemic "healing." This metaphor creates a moral dichotomy between "reformers" (the government under Prabowo) and "infectious agents" (corrupt elites), reinforcing the populist narrative of cleansing the state. That means firm action must be taken to weed out the "disease" of corruption in government and the economic system. Such a portrayal of corruption as a kind of disease helps the audience realize that the problem is not only financially destructive but also hurts the integrity and strength of the country. Eradicating corruption, therefore, is among the top priorities that must be made to maintain the "health" of the nation and secure a more stable future.

In general, the application of metaphors in this speech is how to arrive at an in-depth understanding of the nation's problems and the resolution that must be made towards those problems. A travel metaphor pictured that although the road was full of upsets, the Indonesian nation had the strength to keep on with the journey courageously with the spirit of unity. On the other hand, the health metaphor insists that corruption is a big problem that needs to be dealt with as quickly as possible and by all means since it is one of the significant threats to the country's sustainability.

### Social Representation in Political Discourse

This section applies Moscovici's Social Representation Theory (1980) to analyze how Prabowo Subianto's speech constructs representations of social groups, particularly the "*lower class*" versus "*corrupt elites*". These representations help structure public understanding of national challenges, delineate moral boundaries, and legitimize leadership narratives.

Table 5. Mapping Group Representations and Ideological Functions in Political Discourse: A Social Representation Theory Perspective

Representation	Group Framed	Key Linguistic Indicators	Social Role Ascribed	Ideological Implication
"Those who feed are the farmers... the fishermen..."	<i>Lower Class</i> (petani, nelayan, rakyat biasa)	Repetitive affirmation of contribution ("feed", "support", "build")	Heroes of the nation, economic foundation	Establishes moral authority of lower class ( <i>rakyat kecil</i> ) as the backbone of Indonesia's welfare
"Rogue businessmen... unpatriotic officials..."	<i>Corrupt Elites</i> (pejabat, pengusaha nakal)	Derogatory metaphors ("rogue", "unpatriotic", "leak")	Threats to national integrity	Constructs a scapegoat class; legitimizes reform and populist leadership

"We must protect the small people..."	<i>Us (We) vs. Them (Elites)</i>	Pronoun shift ("we", "them")	Collective identity of struggle and protection	Builds solidarity, frames leadership as guardian of the oppressed
"Our budget has been leaked..."	<i>Corruption as elite behavior</i>	Metaphor of leakage and loss	Economic sabotage by the elite	Reinforces urgency of anti-elitist reforms

These representations operate discursively to construct a binary moral order: the "*ordinary*" (honest, hardworking) versus the "*elite*" (corrupt, exploitative). Prabowo positions himself as an ally of the marginalized and a moral reformer confronting structural injustice. By emphasizing the contributions of rural communities and framing the elite as a threat, the speech activates ingroup-outgroup dynamics. This reinforces emotional identification with "the people" while isolating elites as symbolic enemies of progress. This analysis explains how Prabowo's speech naturalizes populist narratives through recurring evaluative labels, selective role assignment, and ideological alignment. The result is a collective mental map in which national restoration is achievable only through political realignment, placing lower class or *rakyat kecil* at the center and delegitimizing elite privilege.

President Prabowo has constantly represented the "lower class" as heroes who have contributed so much to the nation's struggle and the national economy. As can be elucidated from his statement, "Those who feed are the farmers in the villages, those who feed are the fishermen," Prabowo recognized the significant contribution made by the lower class, farmers, and fishermen in building Indonesia's economic base. The expression not only dignifies the role but also strengthens the position of the lower class as an essential element in the welfare and sustainability of the nation. What Prabowo does with this discourse, as clear as day is building an image of himself as a leader protecting and fighting for the interests of lower class while building up an emotional connection to the audiences coming from social classes that might feel marginalized or not taken seriously.

Apart from acknowledging the lower class' contribution, it also underscored a political narrative which, if understood in the context of political competition, would mean that Prabowo Subianto's leadership would enforce deep reform toward improving the conditions for the lower class. Prabowo uses the lower class as symbols of simplicity, hard work, and sacrifice and thus invites the audience to observe the people as an integral part of the nation's history and economy that is often forgotten. Hence, Prabowo harnesses the narrative that he will be a strong leader who pays attention to the interests of those who usually do not get the attention or recognition they deserve.

On the other hand, Prabowo frames corrupt business people and officials as common enemies who threaten the future of Indonesia. What can be seen in that statement is that the "rogue businessmen/unpatriotic businessmen" constitute a sharp moral divide between the honest lower class and the corrupt opportunistic elite. It is a discourse strategy that attempts to isolate and highlight the business people and officials perceived as taking advantage of people's economic hardship. By pitting hardworking people against unpatriotic business people, Prabowo underlines the idea that corruption and collusion among elites is a grave threat to the nation's development. Such a representation assists in fortifying the impression that the major problems of Indonesia, such as poverty and economic inequality, are the result of a small group of elites plundering Indonesia for their gain.

These social representations consolidate this opposition between "us" and "them" within the political discourse of Prabowo, whereby "us" are all small people which he must fight for; "them" are businessmen and officials and, therefore, enemies to be fought against. By creating this clear opposition, Prabowo constructs a strong narrative on how far-reaching systemic improvements are needed: one that focuses on building up the small people and purging elites regarded as corrupt. The nature of the narrative is such that audiences are invited to consider Prabowo's leadership as the solution to the problems created by these elites.

These social representations also help Prabowo build a self-image that presents him as a leader committed to eradicating corruption and fighting for social justice. By identifying corrupt businesspeople and officials as goblins threatening national welfare, Prabowo emphasizes that his top priority is to ensure state resources are used for the people, not to enrich a handful of elites. This gives moral direction to his leadership and reinforces the view that a clean government is the only way to achieve greater prosperity for all Indonesians.

In this regard, the representation of the lower class as heroes and corrupt élites as enemies enables the public to perceive who to support and fight in national politics. This theory mainly focuses on how social groups are represented in public discourses to shape and influence public opinion. Prabowo's speech uses these social representations to consolidate the support of ordinary people, consider the nation's foundation, and simultaneously invite the audience to identify corrupt business people and officials as threats that should be eliminated for a better nation's future.

Therefore, the use of social representations in Prabowo's oration does not serve only to reward the lower class but also to spell out the moral opposition between the hard-working people and the elites perceived as harming the country. It merely reinforces the people's narrative of Prabowo's leadership, that it would capture the interests of the lower class and purge the country of unpatriotic businesspeople and officials as a precursor towards realizing social justice and prosperity for all Indonesians.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the construction of power and ideology in President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural address is systematically realized through identifiable linguistic strategies rooted in critical discourse and pragmatic analysis. The speech reveals a binary social structure that positions ordinary people as moral heroes and corrupt elites as threats, legitimizing a populist and reformist political identity through deliberate lexical contrasts, evaluative expressions, and group polarization that mobilize solidarity and moral positioning. Modality, particularly high-certainty and obligation expressions, underpins an image of confident, decisive leadership, while assertive and commissive speech acts highlight social inequalities and project clear policy commitments that strengthen public trust. Conceptual metaphors of journey and health further simplify complex issues like corruption, framing them as manageable threats and reinforcing a narrative of restorative, action-oriented leadership. These findings demonstrate that linguistic indicators, modality, speech acts, metaphors, and social representation, function not merely as stylistic choices but as ideological instruments that construe national reality, galvanize public sentiment, and project political legitimacy. In the context of Indonesia's pluralistic society, this inclusive, moral discourse strategy becomes especially significant for consolidating support amid polarization. Practically, the results offer valuable insights for political actors, speechwriters, and communication strategists on how to craft persuasive yet ethically grounded messages that resonate across social divides. Metaphorical framing, such as depicting corruption as a disease, helps translate abstract problems into emotionally engaging, easily understood narratives that mobilize collective action. This research thus advances our understanding of how political language encodes social meaning and performs ideological work, demonstrating the value of systematically mapping linguistic features to reveal how discourse shapes public perception and aligns leadership with broader socio-political narratives. Future research may build on these insights by examining how audiences receive and interpret such discourse or by comparing similar strategies used by other political figures, further enriching the study of political discourse in Indonesia.

One limitation of this study is that it analyzes only a single keynote speech, which narrows the scope of its findings. Additionally, this research does not examine how audiences receive or interpret the speech, an aspect that could provide valuable insights into the actual impact of the discourse strategies employed. Although the multi-theoretical framework adopted here offers a robust basis for analyzing political language, there remains room to deepen the exploration of other pragmatic features within political discourse. Future research could broaden the focus by comparing speeches delivered by former presidents or other political figures to reveal variations in how power and ideology are constructed across different leadership contexts in Indonesia. Further, incorporating audience reception studies would help assess how effectively these discursive

strategies resonate with the public. Interdisciplinary approaches that combine critical discourse analysis with interviews or questionnaires could enrich our understanding of the relationship between political language and its real-world influence, providing a more comprehensive view of how discourse shapes public perception and political legitimacy.

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