

Discursive Strategies and Political Identity Construction in Prabowo Subianto's Public Discourse

Nur Sulis Ramadani ✉, Nensilianti Nensilianti, Mahmudah Mahmudah, Usman Usman

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

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Abstract

Digital media has transformed political communication by creating dialogic spaces where political identity and legitimacy are actively constructed through language. This study examines how political identity is discursively produced in President Prabowo Subianto's public discourse as presented in Presiden Prabowo Menjawab, a long-form political interview broadcast on YouTube. The research aims to analyze the linguistic strategies through which political authority is negotiated in a contemporary digital setting. Employing a qualitative design grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis, this study applies Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to a verbatim transcript of the program. The analysis identifies five interrelated discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation through inclusion and exclusion, perspectivization and framing, and intensification and mitigation. The findings reveal that these strategies operate synergistically to anchor leadership claims in biographical experience, moral credibility, experiential authenticity, and quantified performance, while simultaneously managing discursive risk in relation to sensitive issues. The study confirms that political power in digital public discourse is not merely exercised but continuously constructed and negotiated through systematic linguistic practices embedded in specific socio-historical contexts. As a contribution to discourse studies, this research extends the application of the Discourse Historical Approach to long-form digital political interviews and highlights the central role of language in shaping political identity and legitimacy in contemporary digital democracies.

✉ Correspondence address:

Kampus Sekaran FBS UNNES

E-mail: nursulis.240001301007@student.unm.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Digital media has fundamentally reshaped political communication in Indonesia by transforming how political messages are produced, circulated, and interpreted in the public sphere. Platforms such as YouTube have evolved beyond channels for information dissemination into discursive spaces in which political actors construct identities, negotiate authority, and establish legitimacy through language. Unlike conventional political speeches, long-form digital interviews create opportunities for political actors to articulate positions, respond to challenges, and negotiate public representations through sustained interaction. Consequently, political discourse in digital environments needs to be examined not only in terms of linguistic choices but also in relation to the social, historical, and political conditions that shape their meanings (Karim, 2024; Pan et al., 2025; Velasco Molpeceres et al., 2025).

One relevant example of this development is Presiden Prabowo Menjawab, a political interview broadcast on Najwa Shihab's official YouTube channel on April 7, 2025. The program features an extended dialogue between President Prabowo Subianto and six senior journalists, providing a discursive setting in which political positions, leadership claims, and policy justifications are articulated in response to questions and challenges. The extended interview format is particularly relevant for discourse analysis because it allows the examination of how political identity is constructed across different topics and interactional situations rather than through isolated statements. Its digital distribution also places presidential discourse within a media environment in which political messages can reach broad audiences and become part of wider public discussions (Nuraliza et al., 2024).

Prabowo Subianto provides a significant case for examining the relationship between political identity and discursive legitimation. His political trajectory, from his military career during the New Order period through repeated presidential electoral contests to his election as

president, constitutes a historically situated background against which his contemporary leadership identity can be interpreted. This trajectory does not determine the meaning of his statements; rather, it provides a relevant context for examining how biographical experience, political authority, and representations of leadership are articulated in public discourse. The analysis therefore considers how Prabowo's language constructs continuity between his past experiences and present political position while addressing policy issues, public expectations, and potentially contested aspects of political leadership (Ratu et al., 2025; Umam, 2025; Yunanto et al., 2024).

Previous studies have examined Indonesian political communication from several perspectives, including political communication during electoral contests, presupposition in political interviews, representations of power in political speeches, and discourse surrounding particular policy initiatives (Fajar Maulana et al., 2025; Wolbring & Lillywhite, 2023). These studies provide useful foundations for understanding how political meanings are produced and circulated. However, the existing literature cited in this study does not yet establish a sufficiently integrated account of how multiple discursive strategies operate together to construct presidential political identity within a sustained, dialogic digital interview. In particular, the relationship between linguistic strategies, the historical positioning of political actors, and the discursive legitimation of presidential authority requires more systematic examination. This gap is not based on the assumption that previous studies have ignored political identity altogether, but on the need to connect linguistic evidence with socio-historical interpretation within a coherent analytical framework. These studies provide useful foundations for understanding how political meanings are produced and circulated. However, the existing literature cited in this study does not yet establish a sufficiently integrated account of how multiple discursive strategies operate together to construct presidential political identity within a sustained, dialogic digital interview. In particular, the

relationship between linguistic strategies, the historical positioning of political actors, and the discursive legitimation of presidential authority requires more systematic examination. This gap is not based on the assumption that previous studies have ignored political identity altogether, but on the need to connect linguistic evidence with socio-historical interpretation within a coherent analytical framework.

To address this gap, the present study employs Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), a framework within Critical Discourse Analysis that examines the relationship between discourse, historical context, social practices, and power relations. DHA is appropriate for this research because political identity cannot be adequately understood through lexical or rhetorical features alone; the interpretation of political statements also requires attention to their intertextual and interdiscursive relationships, the historical circumstances in which they occur, and the social actors involved. Through this framework, linguistic choices can be examined as context-dependent practices through which political positions, group boundaries, and claims to legitimacy are constructed and negotiated (Papathanassopoulos & Giannouli, 2025; Velasco Molpeceres et al., 2025).

The analysis is organized around five established discursive strategies associated with DHA: nomination or referential strategies, predication, argumentation, perspectivization or framing, and intensification or mitigation. These strategies provide complementary analytical perspectives. Nomination concerns how social actors, groups, and institutions are named or represented; predication examines the qualities and attributes assigned to them; argumentation investigates the warrants and topoi through which claims are justified; perspectivization addresses the positioning of viewpoints and the representation of perspectives; and intensification or mitigation examines how the force, certainty, or commitment of an utterance is strengthened or weakened. Within this framework, inclusion and exclusion are examined as discursive mechanisms through which social actors and

viewpoints are legitimized, marginalized, or differentiated, rather than treated as an independent sixth strategy. Likewise, framing is interpreted in relation to perspectivization and the representation of viewpoints, while remaining analytically distinguishable from the broader concept of framing where necessary. This distinction is intended to maintain consistency between the theoretical framework and the operational categories used in the analysis. (Abubakar Yunusa & Takim Ajom Okongor, 2025; Negro, 2024; Yeo et al., 2025).

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated application of these five DHA strategies to a long-form presidential interview distributed through digital media in Indonesia. Rather than examining a single linguistic feature, a formal political speech, or an electoral communication text in isolation, the study investigates how different discursive strategies interact across an extended interview to construct political identity and negotiate leadership legitimacy. Its empirical contribution is to provide a contextually grounded analysis of presidential discourse in which biographical references, evaluations of social actors, argumentative justifications, viewpoint positioning, and the modulation of rhetorical force are examined in relation to one another. Its theoretical contribution is to demonstrate how the DHA framework can be operationalized for the analysis of dialogic digital political communication while maintaining a distinction between established theoretical categories and the specific discursive mechanisms identified in the data.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how political identity and leadership legitimacy are discursively constructed in Prabowo Subianto's statements in *Presiden Prabowo Menjawab*. Specifically, it examines how nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization or framing, and intensification or mitigation operate within the interview and how these strategies relate to Indonesia's socio-historical and political context. By connecting textual evidence with contextual interpretation, this study seeks to contribute to critical discourse

studies and to a more systematic understanding of the linguistic practices through which presidential authority is represented and negotiated in contemporary Indonesian digital political discourse.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), as its principal analytical framework. DHA conceptualizes discourse as a form of social practice that is shaped by historical circumstances, institutional relations, and ideological processes. Accordingly, political statements were not interpreted solely on the basis of their linguistic forms but were examined in relation to the interactional context, the representation of social actors, and the broader sociopolitical circumstances in which the discourse was produced.

The application of DHA in this study focused on five established discursive strategies: nomination or referential strategies, predication, argumentation, perspectivization or framing, and intensification or mitigation. These categories were used as analytical guidelines for identifying how political identity and leadership legitimacy were constructed through language. The analytical framework was applied systematically across the collected discourse, while the interpretation of each strategy remained sensitive to its immediate textual context and broader socio-historical significance. (T. Ahmed et al., n.d.; Pan et al., 2025).

Data Source and Research Object

The primary data consisted of verbal statements produced by President Prabowo Subianto in Presiden Prabowo Menjawab, broadcast on Najwa Shihab's official YouTube channel on April 7, 2025. The program lasted approximately three hours and thirty minutes and featured an extended interview between Prabowo and six senior journalists. The president's statements constituted the primary object of analysis, while the journalists' questions were

considered contextual elements for interpreting the responses and identifying the interactional circumstances in which particular discursive strategies emerged. (Rexsy & Putri, 2025; Yunanto et al., 2024).

Data were collected through documentation and systematic observation. The video was obtained from the official YouTube channel and transcribed verbatim in its original language. The transcription preserved lexical choices, repetitions, pauses, and emphatic expressions to maintain the linguistic characteristics of the original discourse. The resulting transcript comprised approximately 63 pages and served as the primary textual corpus for analysis. Following transcription, the researchers reviewed the video alongside the transcript to maintain consistency between the recorded statements and the textual data. Observational notes were also prepared to document relevant paralinguistic features, including intonation, emphasis, and pauses, when these features contributed to the interpretation of particular statements. Such features were used as contextual support rather than as independent analytical categories. The journalists' questions and the surrounding conversational exchanges were retained as contextual references to avoid interpreting the president's statements in isolation. (Dahal, 2025).

In addition to verbal elements, observational notes were taken to capture relevant paralinguistic features such as intonation, emphasis, and pauses when they contributed to the interpretation of discursive strategies. Paralinguistic cues such as tone, pitch, and pauses are critical in understanding meaning beyond lexical content, as they reflect how speakers construct emphasis, stance and interpersonal alignment features commonly analyzed in multimodal discourse studies. (Dahal, 2025) These features were not analyzed as separate data but were used to support the interpretation of meaning in specific discourse segments, aligning with approaches in qualitative research that integrate non-verbal information to enrich contextual interpretation (Dahal, 2025).

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis consisted of discourse segments, including clauses, sentences, and thematic stretches of speech that expressed identifiable representational, evaluative, or argumentative meanings. The transcript was examined in its entirety to identify statements relevant to the construction of political identity, the representation of social actors, the justification of policy positions, and the negotiation of leadership legitimacy. (Fajar Maulana et al., 2025; Oh & Kim, 2025). Segmentation was guided by changes in topic, argumentative structure, referential focus, and rhetorical emphasis. Statements were not selected solely because they contained particular keywords; instead, their relevance was determined by examining the function of the utterance within its surrounding discourse. Each segment was interpreted in relation to the preceding question, the speaker's response, and the broader conversational context whenever these elements were necessary to establish its meaning.

The segmented data were subsequently organized according to their dominant discursive functions. Where a statement appeared to perform more than one function, its classification was determined by examining the linguistic evidence and the role of the statement in the surrounding argument. This procedure allowed the analysis to account for the interrelated nature of discursive strategies without automatically treating each utterance as belonging exclusively to a single category.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data coding was conducted manually through repeated close readings of the transcript, guided by the theoretical framework of DHA. The coding process involved identifying relevant discourse segments, examining their linguistic features, assigning provisional analytical categories, and reviewing the classifications against the contextual meaning of each segment. The five strategies were operationalized through the following analytical indicators. (Dahal, 2025).

First, nomination or referential strategies were identified by examining how individuals, social groups, institutions, and political actors were named, referred to, or classified. The analysis considered personal pronouns, proper names, occupational and institutional labels, collective references, and expressions that established relationships among political actors. The purpose was to determine how particular forms of reference positioned Prabowo and other actors within the political narrative. (Dahal, 2025).

Second, predication strategies were identified through linguistic expressions that attributed characteristics, qualities, actions, or evaluations to individuals, groups, and institutions. Relevant indicators included evaluative adjectives, descriptive expressions, moral assessments, and statements that portrayed actors as competent, responsible, disadvantaged, problematic, or otherwise socially significant. The analysis examined how these attributes contributed to the construction of leadership identity and the representation of institutional performance. (Herzog et al., 2025).

Third, argumentation strategies were identified by examining how political claims, evaluations, and policy positions were justified. The analysis focused on argumentative relations between claims and their supporting reasons, including appeals to personal experience, references to social conditions, comparisons with other countries, and justifications based on particular values or assumptions. Where the data supported such an interpretation, the analysis also considered the argumentative topoi underlying the justification, such as appeals to urgency, consequences, responsibility, or practical necessity. Inclusion and exclusion were examined within this category as mechanisms through which particular actors, experiences, or viewpoints were legitimized, marginalized, or questioned.

Fourth, perspectivization or framing strategies were identified by examining how the speaker positioned viewpoints, represented particular perspectives, and guided the interpretation of political issues. Relevant

indicators included expressions of personal stance, explicit or implicit attribution of viewpoints, reported speech, evaluative positioning, and rhetorical framing that foregrounded particular moral, pragmatic, or national considerations. The analysis investigated how these linguistic choices oriented the audience toward specific interpretations of policy issues and political relationships.

Fifth, intensification and mitigation strategies were identified by examining linguistic devices that strengthened or weakened the force of statements. Intensification indicators included emphatic expressions, categorical assertions, repetition, and numerical or temporal references when they functioned to reinforce the speaker's claims. Mitigation indicators included hedging expressions, qualifications, modal constructions, and other forms of linguistic restraint that reduced the categorical force of an assertion or limited the scope of a commitment. These features were interpreted in relation to the degree of certainty, emphasis, or commitment conveyed in the relevant discourse segment.

The five categories were applied as theoretically informed analytical guidelines rather than as isolated linguistic labels. In particular, the analysis distinguished between the presence of a linguistic feature and its discursive function. For example, the use of a personal pronoun was not automatically interpreted as a nomination strategy with political significance; its classification depended on how the reference positioned the speaker or another actor within the discourse. Similarly, numerical information was considered an intensification device only when its contextual function supported the strengthening of a claim. This distinction helped ensure that the analysis remained grounded in the relationship between linguistic form, communicative function, and contextual meaning. (Herzog et al., 2025).

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

The analysis integrated the five DHA strategies with an iterative qualitative analysis process comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. These stages were

interconnected and involved repeated movement between textual evidence, analytical categories, and contextual interpretation.

The first stage involved data reduction and familiarization. The researchers reviewed the transcript repeatedly to identify discourse segments relevant to political identity construction and leadership legitimation. Segments were selected according to their substantive relevance to the research objectives and their potential to reveal the representation of political actors, the attribution of qualities, the justification of claims, the positioning of viewpoints, or the modulation of rhetorical force (S. K. Ahmed et al., 2025).

The second stage involved coding and analytical categorization. Each relevant segment was examined in terms of its linguistic features and assigned to one or more of the five DHA strategies where justified by the evidence. The researchers then compared segments within the same category to identify recurring patterns, similarities, and differences in the construction of political identity. Coding decisions were reviewed against the operational indicators to maintain consistency between the theoretical framework and the empirical data (Humphreys et al., 2021).

The third stage involved contextual and discourse-historical interpretation. The coded segments were interpreted in relation to their immediate interactional context and the broader political and historical circumstances relevant to the statements. This stage examined how references to personal experience, evaluations of social actors, argumentative justifications, viewpoint positioning, and the modulation of rhetorical force contributed to the construction of leadership identity and legitimacy. Historical and sociopolitical context was used to clarify the significance of the discourse rather than to replace evidence from the transcript (Lin et al., 2025).

The fourth stage involved cross-category comparison and synthesis. Findings from the five categories were compared to determine how the strategies operated in conjunction with one another across different topics and interactional situations. This procedure enabled the

researchers to move beyond the identification of isolated linguistic features toward an explanation of the broader discursive patterns through which political authority was represented and negotiated.

Finally, the researchers drew conclusions by integrating the recurring patterns with the study's theoretical framework and research objectives. The resulting interpretations were supported by relevant transcript excerpts and contextual explanations. In this way, the analytical process connected micro-level linguistic evidence with broader questions of political identity, power relations, and leadership legitimacy in Indonesian digital political discourse.

Trustworthiness and Analytical Rigor

Analytical rigor was addressed through repeated engagement with the transcript, explicit operational definitions, and systematic comparison between linguistic evidence and theoretical categories. The researchers revisited relevant discourse segments to examine whether their assigned categories were consistent with the stated analytical indicators and whether the resulting interpretations were supported by the surrounding conversational context.

The analysis also emphasized the traceability of interpretations to the primary data. Relevant statements were used to substantiate claims about discursive strategies, while contextual notes helped clarify the circumstances in which those statements occurred. Theoretical consistency was maintained by distinguishing the five established DHA strategies from the specific mechanisms identified within them, including the use of inclusion and exclusion in argumentative practices.

These procedures were intended to strengthen the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings. Rather than claiming statistical generalizability, the study sought to provide a contextually grounded interpretation of the linguistic practices through which political identity and leadership legitimacy were constructed in the selected digital political interview.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the empirical findings of the study based on the application of Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to the verbal discourse produced by President Prabowo Subianto in *Presiden Prabowo Menjawab*. The analysis identifies five recurring discursive strategies that structure the construction of political identity and authority in the program: nomination (naming), predication (characterization), argumentation through inclusion and exclusion, perspectivization and framing, and intensification and mitigation. These strategies emerge consistently across discourse segments and operate as patterned linguistic practices rather than isolated rhetorical choices.

1. Nomination (Naming)

The analysis reveals that nomination strategies are used to position social actors and institutions within a coherent narrative of leadership. President Prabowo frequently refers to himself using the first-person pronoun *I (saya)*, anchoring his discourse in personal experience and long-term involvement. Temporal expressions such as *for decades*, *since I was young*, and references to past military roles establish a biographical continuity that frames the speaker as an experienced and historically grounded actor.

In addition to self-reference, other actors are discursively constructed through selective naming practices. Farmers are consistently referred to as collective victims of systemic failure, while ministers are described through hierarchical nomination that emphasizes executive authority, particularly through phrases such as *the ministers I selected*. These naming choices delineate relational roles within the political structure and foreground leadership responsibility.

2. Predication (Characterization)

Predication strategies assign evaluative attributes to actors and institutions. The findings show that President Prabowo characterizes himself using attributes associated with

discipline, commitment, and self-awareness. References to late-night communications with ministers highlight intensity of work and personal dedication, while self-evaluative statements, such as assigning himself a moderate performance score, construct an image of humility and reflexivity.

Conversely, bureaucratic systems and political practices are characterized negatively through descriptors that frame them as problematic or morally compromised. Political actors at the regional level are depicted as constrained by reciprocal obligations to supporters, indicating a recurring attribution of dependency and transactional governance. These predicative patterns consistently distinguish between idealized leadership values and existing institutional shortcomings.

3. Argumentation through Inclusion and Exclusion

Argumentative strategies operate by delineating symbolic boundaries between included and excluded groups. The analysis identifies the recurrent use of experiential argumentation, particularly narratives of direct engagement with rural communities, to legitimize epistemic authority. Rural spaces are constructed as sites of authentic knowledge derived from firsthand observation, while alternative perspectives are implicitly marginalized.

In other instances, argumentative exclusion is achieved through questioning the legitimacy of critical actors. By raising doubts about the authenticity of protest movements, the discourse redirects attention from policy substance to the credibility of dissenting voices. Additionally, references to international policy examples, such as programs implemented in India and Brazil, function as argumentative

appeals to external authority, reinforcing acceptance through comparative validation.

4. Perspectivization and Framing

Framing strategies shape how issues are perceived by emphasizing particular moral or pragmatic dimensions. The results show a recurring use of urgency framing, especially through metaphors related to hunger and immediacy, which foreground human need over procedural deliberation. This framing positions policy implementation as a matter of moral necessity rather than administrative choice.

National framing is also evident through appeals to self-reliance and sovereignty. Expressions emphasizing independence from external assistance frame economic policy within a broader narrative of national resilience. Additionally, reconciliation framing emerges through references to former critics being incorporated into governance structures, presenting political opposition as transformable into cooperative engagement.

5. Intensification and Mitigation

The final set of strategies concerns the modulation of certainty and emphasis. Intensification is achieved through the use of precise numerical data, projected timelines, and large-scale figures, which present policy outcomes as measurable and goal-oriented. These elements function to strengthen claims of effectiveness and progress.

In contrast, mitigation strategies are employed when addressing sensitive or controversial issues. Hedging expressions such as *in principle*, *if possible*, and *not necessarily* reduce the force of categorical commitments, allowing flexibility while maintaining a stance of firmness. These patterns demonstrate deliberate control over discursive intensity depending on issue sensitivity.

Table 1. Discursive Strategies Identified in Prabowo Subianto's Public Discourse

Discursive Strategy	Linguistic Features	Primary Discursive Function	Illustrative Focus
Nomination (Naming)	First-person pronouns, hierarchical references, collective labels	Positioning actors and leadership roles	Self as experienced leader; farmers as systemic victims

Predication (Characterization)		Evaluative adjectives, self-assessment, moral descriptors	Constructing leadership attributes and institutional images	Discipline, humility, bureaucratic deficiency
Argumentation (Inclusion/Exclusion)		Experiential narratives, delegitimizing questions, comparative references	Establishing epistemic authority and group boundaries	Rural authenticity vs. elite distance
Perspectivization Framing	/	Metaphors, urgency markers, national rhetoric	Shaping moral and pragmatic interpretations	Hunger urgency; national self-reliance
Intensification Mitigation	/	Numerical data, temporal projections, hedging expressions	Regulating certainty and political risk	Program effectiveness; sensitive policy stances

Discussion

This study demonstrates that political identity in digital public discourse is constructed through the interaction of multiple discursive strategies rather than through isolated linguistic choices. The application of Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) reveals how nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification or mitigation contribute to the representation of leadership and the negotiation of political legitimacy. To establish the empirical basis of these interpretations, the discussion examines specific statements from President Prabowo Subianto in *Presiden Prabowo Menjawab*, connecting their linguistic characteristics with their immediate interactional context and broader sociopolitical significance. (Ma & Crosthwaite, 2026; McEntee-Atalianis & Vessey, 2025; Sutanto et al., 2025).

Discursive Naming and the Construction of Epistemic Authority

Nomination strategies play an important role in constructing political identity by positioning the speaker in relation to personal experience and political authority. The findings indicate that Prabowo's recurring first-person references and references to his previous experiences establish biographical continuity between his past involvement in public affairs and his current presidential position. Through these forms of self-reference, personal history becomes

a resource for presenting the speaker as an experienced political actor. (McEntee-Atalianis & Vessey, 2025; Negro, 2024).

From a DHA perspective, nomination is not merely a matter of identifying individuals; it also concerns how social actors are represented and positioned within discourse. In this case, references to personal experience contribute to a leadership narrative grounded in historical continuity. Such a representation may strengthen the speaker's claim to epistemic authority by presenting political knowledge as derived from prolonged involvement rather than solely from formal institutional status. However, the significance of this strategy depends on how personal experience is connected to the claims being advanced. (Negro, 2024).

The representation of other social actors further illustrates the relationship between nomination and political positioning. The findings identify farmers as collectively disadvantaged actors and ministers as figures situated within a hierarchical executive structure. These representations organize the relationships among leadership, government institutions, and the public. By assigning social actors particular discursive positions, nomination contributes to the construction of a political narrative in which leadership responsibility and institutional authority are foregrounded.

These findings suggest that nomination functions as a component of political legitimization

by organizing the identities and relationships through which leadership is represented. Its contribution becomes more evident when considered alongside predication, which assigns evaluative characteristics to the actors identified through nomination.

Predication and the Moralization of Leadership

Predication strategies contribute to the moral dimension of political identity construction by assigning particular qualities and evaluations to political actors and institutions. The findings indicate that Prabowo's discourse presents leadership through attributes associated with discipline, dedication, and self-awareness. References to intensive communication with ministers and self-evaluation of performance contribute to a representation of leadership that combines commitment to work with an acknowledgment of personal limitations (Negro, 2024).

These representations are significant because leadership legitimacy is constructed not only through claims of formal authority but also through the qualities associated with its exercise. The attribution of discipline and dedication can support a representation of the leader as personally involved in governmental responsibilities. Similarly, self-evaluation may present leadership as reflective rather than entirely self-congratulatory. Within a critical discourse perspective, these characteristics are understood as evaluative meanings produced through language rather than as independent evidence of the speaker's actual performance (Negro, 2024).

Conversely, the findings show that bureaucratic systems and certain political practices are represented through negative evaluations. Regional political actors are described as operating within reciprocal obligations to supporters, suggesting a representation of political relationships shaped by dependency and transactional considerations. Such evaluations establish a contrast between the leadership qualities being emphasized and the institutional shortcomings being criticized.

This contrast may contribute to a reform-oriented leadership narrative in which the speaker is positioned in relation to practices presented as problematic. Nevertheless, the analysis must distinguish between the representation of institutional conditions in political discourse and the independent verification of those conditions. The significance of predication lies in how these evaluations organize moral distinctions and contribute to the discursive construction of leadership legitimacy.

3. Argumentation, Inclusion, Exclusion, and Political Legitimation

Argumentation strategies reveal how political claims are justified and how particular forms of knowledge are presented as legitimate. The findings indicate that narratives of direct engagement with rural communities are used to establish proximity between the speaker and the experiences of ordinary citizens. By invoking firsthand observations, political discourse can present personal experience as a basis for understanding social problems and supporting policy positions (Ma & Crosthwaite, 2026).

Within DHA, the analytical focus is not limited to identifying references to experience but extends to the relationship between claims and the reasons offered to justify them. Experiential narratives may function as argumentative resources when personal observations are used to support a broader interpretation of social conditions or governmental priorities. Such narratives can strengthen the representation of the speaker as knowledgeable about public needs, although personal experience alone does not establish the validity of every policy claim derived from it. (Ma & Crosthwaite, 2026).

Argumentation also operates through the representation of dissenting actors. The findings indicate that questioning the authenticity of protest movements can redirect attention from the substance of policy criticism toward the credibility of those expressing it. When this occurs, the legitimacy of the critic becomes part of the argumentative issue. This mechanism may narrow the discursive space available for considering alternative interpretations if the evaluation of the speaker or group takes

precedence over engagement with the criticism itself.

References to international policy examples, including programs associated with India and Brazil, provide another argumentative resource. Comparative references can support policy claims by presenting external experiences as relevant precedents. Their argumentative significance depends on how the comparison is constructed, which similarities are emphasized, and how the cited experience is connected to the proposed policy position.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that argumentation contributes to political legitimation by connecting claims with personal experience, evaluations of other actors, and comparative examples. Inclusion and exclusion are relevant within this process because discourse can privilege certain experiences and viewpoints while questioning or marginalizing others. These mechanisms should be understood as features of argumentative and representational practices rather than as independent strategies detached from the DHA framework.

4. Perspectivization and Framing as Moral and Pragmatic Orientation

Perspectivization and framing shape how political issues are presented and interpreted by foregrounding particular viewpoints, values, and priorities. The findings reveal the use of urgency framing, particularly through references and metaphors associated with hunger and immediate human needs. Such framing places the consequences of policy decisions at the center of the political narrative and presents implementation as a response to pressing social concerns. (Ma & Crosthwaite, 2026).

The discursive significance of urgency framing lies in how it establishes a hierarchy of considerations. When immediate human needs are foregrounded, policy effectiveness and the consequences of delay may become more prominent than procedural deliberation. This does not necessarily mean that procedural considerations are explicitly rejected; rather, the framing directs attention toward a particular basis for evaluating political action. From a DHA

perspective, the interpretation requires consideration of how the issue is represented, which values are emphasized, and how the framing relates to the speaker's broader argument (Ma & Crosthwaite, 2026).

National framing further contributes to the construction of political identity through appeals to self-reliance and sovereignty. The findings indicate that references to independence from external assistance situate economic policy within a broader narrative of national resilience. Through this orientation, policy decisions may be represented as expressions of collective autonomy rather than merely as technical or administrative choices.

Reconciliation framing is also evident in the representation of former political critics as potential participants in governance. This discourse presents political opposition as a condition that can be transformed into cooperation. Such a representation may contribute to a narrative of national unity by redefining political differences in terms of opportunities for collaboration. At the same time, the implications of this framing depend on how political disagreement and cooperation are represented in the broader discourse.

Together, urgency, national, and reconciliation framing demonstrate how perspectivization directs attention toward particular moral and pragmatic interpretations of political issues. These strategies contribute to political identity construction by connecting leadership claims with representations of public need, national independence, and collective cooperation.

5. Intensification, Mitigation, and Discursive Risk Management

Intensification and mitigation concern the degree of force, certainty, and commitment expressed in political discourse. The findings indicate that numerical information, projected timelines, and large-scale figures are used to present policy outcomes as measurable and goal-oriented. When such information reinforces a claim about performance or future objectives, it can function as an intensification device by

making the statement appear more precise and concrete (Abbas et al., 2025).

The discursive significance of quantification lies in its relationship to the claims being advanced. Numerical references can strengthen the presentation of policy commitments by providing specific measures against which progress may be understood. However, the presence of numerical information does not independently establish policy effectiveness. The analysis therefore distinguishes between the rhetorical function of presenting a policy as measurable and the empirical verification of its actual outcomes. (Abbas et al., 2025).

In contrast, mitigation strategies appear in statements addressing sensitive or controversial issues. The findings identify qualifying expressions such as *in principle*, *if possible*, and not necessarily as linguistic devices that may limit the categorical force of a statement. Such expressions can qualify the scope of a commitment, acknowledge conditions, or leave room for alternative interpretations. Their function depends on the surrounding discourse and the specific claim being qualified.

The relationship between intensification and mitigation illustrates how political discourse can combine strong assertions with qualified commitments. While intensification can reinforce representations of competence and progress, mitigation can preserve flexibility when addressing issues involving uncertainty or competing considerations. This pattern is relevant to the analysis of leadership legitimacy because it shows how the force of political statements is adjusted across different discursive contexts.

Nevertheless, the use of mitigation should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of a deliberate intention to avoid accountability. A critical interpretation must be grounded in the linguistic form, the interactional context, and the role of the statement within the broader discourse. This distinction helps prevent the attribution of motives that cannot be established from textual evidence alone.

6. Synthesis of the Discussion

The findings demonstrate that political identity in Presiden Prabowo Menjawab is constructed through the interaction of five discursive strategies. Nomination positions the speaker and other social actors within the political narrative; predication assigns evaluative characteristics to those actors; argumentation provides justifications for political claims; perspectivization and framing orient interpretations of policy and political relationships; and intensification or mitigation regulates the force and certainty of statements.

These strategies are analytically distinguishable but may operate simultaneously within the same discourse segment. Their combined significance lies in how they connect biographical experience, moral credibility, representations of social actors, policy justification, and claims of measurable performance. This interaction supports the broader argument that political authority is not merely expressed through formal institutional status but is also represented and negotiated through language.

By applying DHA to a long-form digital political interview, this study contributes to the analysis of political communication in Indonesia by examining how linguistic choices acquire significance within a specific interactional and socio-historical setting. The findings underscore the importance of interpreting political discourse through the relationship between textual features, argumentative practices, and contextual conditions. They also highlight the need to distinguish between the leadership identity constructed through discourse and the independent assessment of political performance.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that political leadership in digital public discourse is discursively constructed through a coherent configuration of interrelated linguistic strategies rather than isolated rhetorical acts. By applying the Discourse Historical Approach to a long-form political interview, the findings show how nomination, predication, argumentation,

framing, and intensity management operate together to produce political identity and legitimize authority within a dialogic media environment. These strategies enable the speaker to anchor leadership claims in biographical experience, moral credibility, experiential authenticity, and quantified performance while simultaneously regulating discursive risk in relation to sensitive issues. The study confirms the central argument of critical discourse theory that power is enacted and negotiated through systematic language practices embedded in specific socio-historical contexts. As a scholarly contribution, this research extends the application of the Discourse Historical Approach to contemporary digital political interviews and highlights the importance of interactional settings and intensity modulation in political identity construction. Beyond its theoretical implications, the study offers analytical insight into how mediated political discourse shapes public perception in digital democracies, underscoring the relevance of critical discourse analysis for understanding the linguistic mechanisms through which political authority is established and maintained.

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