

ORIGINAL

Political Discourse Space: Critical Cognitive Analysis on Inauguration Speech of President Prabowo

Espacio de Discurso Político: Análisis cognitivo crítico del discurso de toma de posesión del presidente Prabowo

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: this study aims to analyze the inauguration speech of President Prabowo through the lens of Critical Cognitive Analysis, focusing on the interplay between language and ideological representation in political discourse. The research seeks to understand how Prabowo positions himself within the political landscape and addresses both national and international challenges.

Method: employing a qualitative approach grounded in a Critical Cognitive Framework, the study analyzes linguistic elements extracted from online news portals. Data collection and analysis are executed through an interactive model, allowing for simultaneous data presentation, reduction, and conclusion drawing. The analysis incorporates the theoretical foundations of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Cognitive Linguistics.

Results: the findings reveal that Prabowo's speech strategically positions him as a leader with a broad vision, utilizing language to frame national identity, collective goals, and public expectations. The use of deictic expressions and references to historical figures enhances his rhetorical impact, reinforcing his legitimacy as a leader committed to the welfare of the Indonesian people.

Conclusions: Prabowo's inauguration speech exemplifies the effective use of language as a tool for ideological framing and public mobilization. It significantly contributes to understanding the role of political discourse in shaping societal perceptions and collective identity.

Keywords: Critical Cognitive Analysis; Inauguration Speech; Political Discourse; Ideological Representation.

RESUMEN

Objetivos: este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar el discurso inaugural del presidente Prabowo a través de la lente del análisis cognitivo crítico, centrándose en la interacción entre el lenguaje y la representación ideológica en el discurso político. La investigación busca comprender cómo se posiciona Prabowo dentro del panorama político y cómo aborda los desafíos nacionales e internacionales.

Método: empleando un enfoque cualitativo basado en el marco cognitivo crítico, el estudio analiza elementos lingüísticos extraídos de portales de noticias en línea. La recopilación y el análisis de datos se ejecutan a través de un modelo interactivo, lo que permite la presentación simultánea de datos, la reducción y la extracción de conclusiones. El análisis incorpora los fundamentos teóricos del análisis crítico del discurso (ACD) y la lingüística cognitiva.

Resultados: los hallazgos revelan que el discurso de Prabowo lo posiciona estratégicamente como un líder

con una visión amplia, que utiliza el lenguaje para enmarcar la identidad nacional, los objetivos colectivos y las expectativas públicas. El uso de expresiones deícticas y referencias a figuras históricas mejora su impacto retórico, reforzando su legitimidad como un líder comprometido con el bienestar del pueblo indonesio.

Conclusiones: el discurso inaugural de Prabowo ejemplifica el uso eficaz del lenguaje como herramienta para la formulación ideológica y la movilización pública. Contribuye significativamente a la comprensión del papel del discurso político en la configuración de las percepciones sociales y la identidad colectiva

Palabras clave: Análisis Cognitivo Crítico; Discurso Inaugural; Discurso Político; Representación Ideológica.

INTRODUCTION

The president is a key actor in the political world who has a strong influence and gets attention from the public, especially in the use of language. Most of the political language used by the president is in the presidential speeches.^(1,2) One of the presidential speeches that made the public interested was the inauguration speech of the president and vice president. This five-yearly event is held by the state as part of the general election. The content of the inauguration speech that is delivered by the elected president includes expressions of gratitude, commitments, and national policies. This speech also serves as a political communication tool for conveying the vision, mission, and future government work programs.⁽³⁾ In delivering the speech, a president not only engages in personal political rhetoric but also uses communication strategies to align the hope of the people with the government's work programs. This is an interesting aspect to study, how in a speech, a president delivers both national and international issues that are supported by the public.⁽⁴⁾

Research on the language of the president has been conducted by several researchers. The first is a study on the nationalist political discourse in President Sukarno's speech on August 17, 1965. The results of this research revealed values such as (1) unity and cohesion, (2) revolution integrated into the spirit of the nation, and (3) imperialism as the main enemy of the Indonesian people. These three values were implemented as one of the strategies to maintain the security, resilience, and peace of Indonesia. Research about the construction of presidential political language is written by the mass media and society (both the general public and elites). It can be found in several contemporary studies. Duile & Tamma analyzed symbolism and political language in Indonesia's 2019 election, particularly in the narratives of fake news (hoaxes), by analyzing campaign posters. They found that Islam and nationalism served as ideological references implemented by both sides in the 2019 presidential election. The partners of the Prabowo-Sandiaga pair often emphasized the theme of Islam as part of their political identity, which was reflected in their use of religious symbols in their campaign, such as images of mosques or expressions referencing Islamic values.⁽⁵⁾ Meanwhile, the partner of Jokowi-Ma'ruf incorporated Islamic symbols through Ma'ruf Amin's candidacy as vice president while highlighting a nationalist narrative by emphasizing state symbols such as the red and white flag or national unity.⁽⁶⁾

As a linguistic phenomenon, political discourse is studied through a new perspective that integrates Cognitive Linguistics with Critical Discourse Analysis then known as Critical Cognitive.⁽⁷⁾ Cognitive Linguistics focuses on language as a reflection of cognitive processes in understanding reality by identifying concepts such as conceptual metaphors, prototypes, and cognitive structures of language.⁽⁸⁾ This means that language is both a linguistic entity and a way of thinking and interacting with the reality surrounding its users.⁽⁹⁾ This understanding leads to the conclusion that a word in linguistics is not solely determined by its referent but also by the speaker's (user's) understanding of the object.⁽¹⁰⁾

Cognitive linguistics identifies the speaker's (user's) thought process when constructing language and how they use language while thinking about something.⁽¹¹⁾ Arifin (2017) explains that cognitive linguistics is a branch of linguistic studies that analyzes meaning from various aspects and applies it in multiple ways in language use. Cognitive linguistics aligns with the theory of linguistic relativity developed by Sapir and Whorf, which argues that language influences the speaker's thought process.⁽¹²⁾ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that focuses on the ideological, social, and political aspects of language practices.⁽¹³⁾ This approach seeks to uncover the power and dominance behind language use by individuals or specific social groups. At the same time, it can reveal how language is used to maintain or transform social structures within society. CDA analyzes texts to identify signs of ideology, bias, or linguistic inequality.⁽¹⁴⁾

The direction of CDA analysis leads to the conclusion that Critical Discourse Analysis is a form of language analysis that adopts a critical language paradigm. Its critical positioning lies in ideology and power as the primary units of analysis.⁽¹⁵⁾ In some studies, this approach is perceived as an opposition to descriptive discourse analysis, which treats discourse merely as a textual phenomenon. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model is one of the most prominent approaches. The model used by Van Dijk is often referred to as "social cognition." Van Dijk's concept explains that discourse analysis is not limited to textual analysis alone. Instead, text is viewed as a productive activity that involves knowledge as a key element influencing text formation.⁽¹⁶⁾ Van Dijk

encourages the analysis of both text and the social structures, dominance, and power dynamics at play within society, as well as how cognition and awareness shape and influence specific texts. He structures his analysis into three dimensions: (1) text, (2) social cognition, and (3) social context, which together form an integrated unit of analysis.

The integration of these two fields then be called Critical Cognitive. Critical Cognitive examines linguistic structures through what Hart refers to as the “process of construal.” This process describes how individuals use language to conceptualize a particular experience or reality. One aspect of construal used as the theoretical framework in this study is positioning. Forms of positioning strategies, whether deictic or modal, have been widely studied in Cognitive Linguistics.⁽¹⁷⁾ These strategies relate to how elements within a text are interconnected and how propositions in the text are linked to the speaker and listener, both in terms of knowledge (epistemological) and values (axiological).⁽¹⁸⁾ The application of positioning strategies heavily depends on our ability to construct a relative understanding based on a specific perspective.

Based on Langacker’s perspective, it is known as a “viewpoint” and can be analyzed in two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. Langacker said that the vertical dimension is the “vantage point,” while the horizontal dimension is called “orientation”.⁽¹⁹⁾ This perspective can also be understood in terms of varying distances from the described event or scene. In the taxonomy proposed by Croft and Cruse (2024), deixis and the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, as discussed by Langacker, are also considered examples of a perspectival system.

The Discourse Space Theory (DST) by ⁽²⁰⁾ argues that during the process of communication, listeners construct a mental space that represents the world depicted in discourse. This mental space, referred to as the discourse space, is structured around three interacting axes: the socio-spatial axis (S), the temporal axis (T), and the modal axis (M).⁽²¹⁾ Each of these axes indicates a distance from a deictic reference point related to the ongoing communicative event. This theory also emphasizes that such constructions are not limited to spatial-temporal dimensions (“here” and “now”) but also encompass social dimensions (“us” vs. “them”) and moral values regarding what is right or wrong.⁽²²⁾ Each axis has two opposing poles, with several intermediary points that illustrate the nuances of this polarization. This study examines how President Prabowo’s inauguration speech is analyzed using the discourse space theory within the framework of critical cognitive studies.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach based on the Critical Cognitive Framework. The use of a qualitative approach can be identified through the characteristics of the data collection. The data were obtained from online news portals in the form of news texts containing linguistic elements such as words, phrases, sentences, and texts.⁽²³⁾ This data selection aligns with several Critical Cognitive studies that use lexicon, sentences, and discourse as research data. The interactive analysis model that is developed by Miles and Huberman was used in this research. It was the procedure for data collection and analysis that is interactive and simultaneous. The flow of the interactive model does not follow rigid steps in data collection and analysis but rather resembles an interactive process in which all components influence one another.⁽²⁴⁾ Data collection is carried out simultaneously with data reduction and presentation, while preliminary conclusions are drawn and continuously tested as the research data collection progresses.⁽²⁵⁾ This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the data being analyzed. The model of data collection is an integral part of the data analysis process, which is based on three key components: reduction, presentation, and drawing the conclusion. These three components interact dynamically throughout the research process.⁽²⁶⁾

RESULTS

Social identity and ideological perspectives that are placed in discourse through language construction by an individual or group are referred to as positioning. The concept of positioning is closely related to framing and deixis in social cognition. Positioning in political discourse is used to make the public image and perception of an individual or group. The positioning in President Prabowo’s inauguration speech is as follows.

S represents the socio-spatial axis that includes all the actors in President Prabowo’s inaugural speech above. All these actors are narrated as equal, all close to Prabowo because they are in the speaker’s proximization space.⁽²⁷⁾ There is an upward arrow from the deontic center, illustrating that Prabowo holds authority or takes action toward these actors. The Md element, or deontic modality, conveys what is considered good according to the speaker. These elements move in and out of the speaker’s cognitive space. The act of “showing respect” is a form of goodness received by the speaker from external parties, marked by an arrow pointing toward the deixis center. Conversely, an arrow moving away from the deixis center represents the actions that Prabowo has considered or intends to take. These policies include eliminating corruption, achieving food and energy self-sufficiency, and ensuring freedom from fear, poverty, hunger, oppression, ignorance, and suffering.⁽²⁸⁾ On the temporal axis, Prabowo’s speech encompasses events from the past, present, and future. Arrows pointing left and right away from the core of the cognitive space represent the events mentioned in Prabowo’s speech.

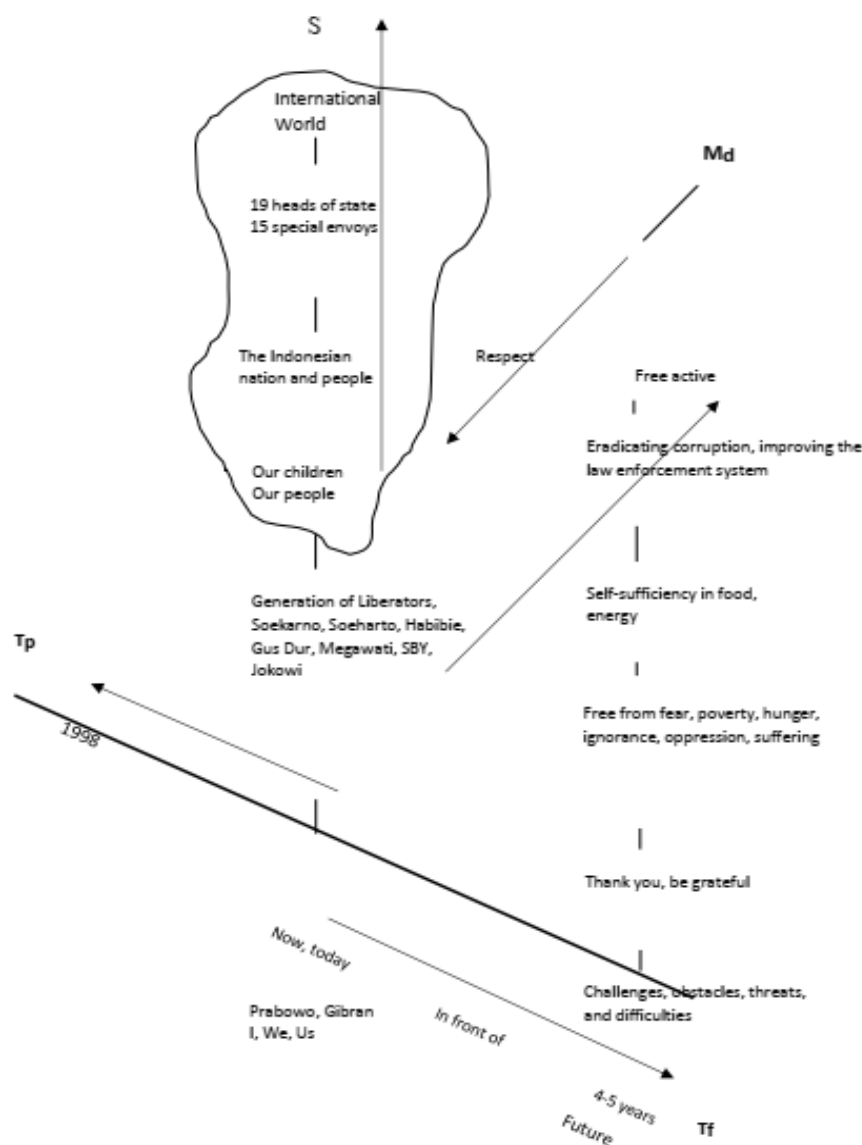


Figure 1. Ideological Framework of Prabowo's Inauguration Speech

Here are some excerpts containing actors, deontic modality, and temporal elements; (1) "Today, we are attended by 19 heads of state, 19 heads of government, and 15 special envoys from other friendly nations". (2) "Now, I invite my fellow countrymen, especially leaders from all sectors, intellectuals, religious scholars, entrepreneurs, political leaders, youth, and students, to bravely face these challenges". (3) "... they have come here to honor the nation and the people of Indonesia". (4) "We must face the future with optimism, but we must also have the courage to confront the challenges, obstacles, threats, and difficulties in our future". (5) "Are we aware that many of our people and children are malnourished?" (6) "I have declared that Indonesia must achieve food self-sufficiency as soon as possible." (7) "The government I will lead will focus on achieving energy self-sufficiency." (8) "We are a nation that must be grateful to the generation of liberators." (9) "We are also grateful to President Soeharto..." (10) "We thank President Habibie..." (11) "We thank President Megawati for resolving the economic crises following the 1998 crash..." (12) "We must thank President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who led Indonesia through a severe crisis..." (13) "Now, we also express our gratitude to the 7th President of the Republic of Indonesia, President Joko Widodo..." (14) "...and eradicate corruption by improving the system and enforcing the law..." (15) "The people must be free from fear, free from poverty, free from hunger, free from ignorance, free from oppression, and free from suffering." (16) "In facing the international world, Indonesia chooses a free and active, non-aligned path." (17) "This is what endangers our future and the future of our children." (18) "I am confident that at the latest, in 4-5 years, we will achieve food self-sufficiency."

The positioning illustrated by the concepts of actors, goodness, and time above shows that Prabowo is a president with a broad vision. He does not only focus on local issues but also considers international matters

through his independent and active policies. Prabowo is also portrayed as a president with pro-people policies, as all the “goodness” within his conceptual framework is directed toward the people.⁽²⁹⁾

DISCUSSION

The intersection of CDA and CL aligns well with the foundational works of Fairclough and van Dijk which emphasize the relationship between language, power, and social ideology. Fairclough’s model encourages a critical examination of how discourse shapes and is shaped by social structures and power dynamics, while van Dijk’s social cognition perspective enriches this analysis by linking text to broader social contexts.⁽¹⁵⁾ This dual approach enables a nuanced understanding of how Prabowo’s speech serves as both a narrative of personal and national identity and a mobilization tool against perceived social injustices.

The findings regarding Prabowo’s strategic positioning within his speech echo previous studies that demonstrate the importance of positioning as a mechanism for framing public perceptions.⁽¹⁷⁾ Positioning in political discourse can serve to align leaders with specific values and ideologies, effectively guiding public opinion. As highlighted by Seyranian, the framing utilized in political speeches can significantly influence societal perceptions and behaviors, effectively shaping the discourse surrounding national identity and collective goals.⁽³⁰⁾

This analysis also draws from cognitive linguistics theories, particularly the concepts of construal and perspective in discourse.⁽³¹⁾ By employing these concepts, Prabowo’s speech reflects a cognitive strategy that seeks to unite his audience around shared values and national goals, thus fostering a sense of collective identity and purpose. The employment of deictic expressions and modal language as discussed by Cap illustrates how Prabowo navigates various discursive dimensions to position himself favorably about the audience, thereby enhancing his rhetorical impact.

The incorporation of historical figures such as Soekarno and Sukarno’s values in the speech aligns with the findings of ⁽³²⁾, where the establishment of a lineage of leadership is used to create a sense of legitimacy and continuity. This framing serves to reinforce Prabowo’s identity within the political landscape as akin to revered leaders of the nation, providing a cognitive anchor for the audience’s perceptions of his potential governance.

CONCLUSIONS

Proximization Theory is one of the linguistic theories that emerge from social cognition and critical discourse analysis. The cognitive-linguistic approach to the discourse introduces a representation of Discourse Space within cognitive linguistics, incorporating the speaker’s awareness of the context in discourse. Proximization Theory focuses on ideology and perspective in discourse. The landscape of proximization discourse plays a role in supporting critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the study of media discourse, political discourse, racism, identity, gender inequality, and more. Analyzing texts using CDA involves addressing issues related to the conceptual organization of Discourse Space (DS), particularly in terms of its symbolic reconfiguration. Therefore, any CDA practice may require the proximization framework to account for both the initial and target configurations of DS. A crucial aspect of this analysis is the proven capacity of the STA model to identify specific lexico-grammatical choices responsible for the strategic enactment of conceptual shifts. Political discourse, in particular, extensively utilizes lexical material to position the leader as the actor related to identity, ideology, power, and policies, whether pro or contra to the people.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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