

Ideological *Rakyat* Word in President Prabowo's Speech

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Abstract

This study examines how the term *rakyat*, 'the people', is constructed in the first presidential speech of Prabowo Subianto. This article uses a mixed-method that includes quantitative corpus analysis and qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Data were obtained from a transcribed official document and constituted as a corpus, which Liu's three-dimensional CDA model analyzed. There are five discourses articulated to the term *rakyat*: nationalism, sacrifice, pro-commoners, popular sovereignty, and human rights. Nationalism is developed in five instances (16.5%), among which three perspectives are employed: national honor discourse, national ethics, and the people as the nation's soul. The narrative of sacrifice is made twice (6.6%) by the level of their sacrifice. Pro-commoner narratives are framed seven times (23.3%) through four angles: food for the people, jobs for the people, subsidies for the people, and people's welfare. The popular sovereignty narrative is invoked 8 times (34.9%) with the three perspectives: of the people, by the people, and for the people. The discourse of human rights is constructed in three ways (9.9%) from the prism of human rights principles. The findings suggest that political rhetoric constructs public opinion, legitimation of rule, and civic activity, as well as social solidarity and trust in the leadership, providing implications for policymakers and scholars on how language produces ideology. This study recommends that policymakers and political actors strategically consider their language choices to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and legitimacy in public communication.

Keywords: Discourse, Ideology, Indonesia, People, President's Speech.

Introduction

The word *rakyat*, 'the people', has been political in Indonesia for some time. In President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural speech for the 2024—2029 term alone, it was used 30 times, highlighting its symbolic power in describing leaders' relationships. As a language used by the highest political authority in the country, *rakyat* is not just any term, but it has a hermeneutic dimension and ideological implications. This aligns with what previous authors have argued: the use of presidential language serves to generate and regenerate ideology, power, and political interests. The apparent reasons for this attention are that presidential speeches, as a medium of communication, have long attracted attention (1-3).

Political speeches are a means of communication employed by the President to construct social reality and articulate government policy (4-6). Speeches function as instruments of persuasion and mediate national identity. US President Barack Obama's speeches are considered instruments used to articulate national development programs and policies, as well as to foster citizen unity (7, 8).

In the Indonesian context, similar tendencies were also seen in previous administrations, which included Sukarno's revolutionary rhetoric (9), Suharto's development discourse (10), Megawati's populist framework (11), and later Joko Widodo's technocratic narrative (12). Overall, these studies confirm that presidential rhetoric serves as a strategic site for negotiating the relationship between the legitimacy of state power and the will of the people.

The President's language is the voice of their ideology. Raymond Williams organizes ideology into three modes of analysis. First, as a doctrine held by a particular group or class of society, divided into fundamental (essential principles) and superstructural (practical legitimating values), to the extent that the latter consider themselves based on the former, there is an ideological relationship. Second, as an ideology—that is, a belief system constructed by a dominant group to maintain existing power relations and disseminated through channels such as education, politics, and the mass media. Third, as one of the

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general processes that generates meaning and interprets events or relationships in society. It is in these dimensions that ideology is key to understanding how linguistic choices encode and naturalize political authority (13).

According to the first paradigm, ideology refers to a set of beliefs developed and maintained by a particular social group or class. It serves as the foundation for political aspirations, shared behavior, and a sense of social belonging. The distinction between foundation and superstructure can be understood through the separation of fundamental ideology and operational ideology (14). Fundamental ideology refers to the fundamental moral/political absolutes, e.g., justice, welfare, or prosperity achieved by most of the general public, that are maintained or advanced within the public's consciousness; operational ideology is how these values are thought to be applied in practice (e.g., specific policies, programs, and rhetoric) (15). The two languages of the State and the national (moral) language of the good act in the presidential discourse as well: on one hand, language is used to express moral ideals of the nation. On the other hand, it indicates how state actions and policies correspond with these ideals.

It is a contradiction of ideological construction that makes moral beliefs subjective and, at the same time, tools for their practical projection in political expression. The ideological orientations are generally based on fundamental moral beliefs that determine how individuals or groups interpret social and scientific truths and collective identity and interests (16). These fundamental ideologies are then expressed through operational ideologies, which serve as adaptive instruments through which political initiatives and public policy positions can be justified (17). Furthermore, ideologies function as cognitive schemes that channel perceptions and structure social behavior in the face of uncertainty, and ideological attitudes ultimately maintain alignment between beliefs and actions (18). In this way, ideologies are always in motion and never simply translate something immutable into the needs of a particular situation, but rather serve to maintain a dialectical relationship between core beliefs and adaptive requirements.

In the second paradigm, ideology is a contingency of beliefs programmatically created and

maintained by dominant social groups to reproduce power relations. However, ideologies do not appear to emerge spontaneously. Ideology is what allows the world's elites to maintain their privileged positions by constructing belief systems that make them appear moral and essential to the existence of economic and political hierarchies (19). This power doesn't just operate through the crass use of force but also as symbolic acts in education, in media, and in political discourse. The way in which capitalist logic underhandedly penetrates sociology and psychology (in particular), provincializing competition seeking and individualism as universal traits of humans, thereby obfuscating the structural roots of inequality (20). In terms of language, the linguistic practices themselves are full of ideological residues and lead to a new concept he coins as "linguistic racism", by which dominant conventions in the use of language lead otherwise-voiced voices to stand on the margins (21, 22). These are rendered in rhetorical figures, to be found in presidential speeches, that construct the leader's authority as a manifestation of the will of his people. Faced as it is with a unity, harmony, and submissiveness to the nation, then mainstream rhetoric camouflages structural asymmetries behind programmatic inclusivity, which sustains lasting power relations as democracy.

The third paradigm conceives of ideology as a way by which social reality is produced, comprehended, and reproduced as a practice of signification in general. In this sense, ideology is far less a system of beliefs than a force field which organizes the circulation of meaning through discourse, institutions, and everyday life. Sense is not a thing in itself. It is produced by linguistic and semiotic products that privilege one interpretation at the expense of another. Language is functioning here as the site where power and knowledge intersect, where things are said, how they are said, and what goes unsaid all contribute to the shaping of public consciousness (23). The speech is not just a way of ordering what may be said but also thought, and language is conceived as something which predates and therefore makes possible the 'production' of social truths. In this way, ideology is inscribed in processes of meaning reproduction on the daily level that operates through repetition, framing, and normalization. This linguistic repetition as re-inscription of signifiers is on the

part of *rakyat* for dominance can sound familiar and emotionally charged. In this circulation of meaning, the authority of ideology is reaffirmed. It doesn't pertain from outside but coincides with common sense and social being.

The intersection between ideology and language has frequently been explored in the theoretical framework of CDA. Political discourse works as a central locale, learn, wherein ideology is enunciated and argued. The transitivity was mobilized in the 2024 U.S. presidential debate to index ideologically competing positions as candidates used language choices to construct agency and moral authority (24). Similarly, hate speech demonstrates how Pakistani political leaders to demonstrate how ideological polarization is furthered through discursive tactics for constructing a positive self and a negative other (25, 26). This dichotomous presentation is similar to Assad's political discourse, in which linguistic manipulation is employed to validate government policies as just while refuting the opposition narrative (27). More generally, the purview of political discourse analysis is not limited to text-based properties but includes socio-cognitive and ideological aspects of communication, locating discourse as a product and agent of power (28). The prominence of the formation of CDA in China as a transformative methodology for revealing concealed ideological operations in national and institutional settings (29). In this trajectory of scholarship, the present paper places the referent *rakyat* 'the people' in President Prabowo Subianto's speech as an ideologically-constituted construct that mediates between linguistic form and political purpose, where meanings are deployed to legitimize authority and imagine a national community.

Some studies on the language used by Indonesian presidents have examined linguistic elements, such as specific word or phrase choices, to construct and represent presidential political interests. The *rakyat* term, as a recurring motif in Indonesian political discourse, is something that has not received ample attention from scholars. In particular, there is a lack of systematic analysis on how the term *rakyat* is discursively constructed in presidential inaugural speeches, despite its frequent use and symbolic importance in political rhetoric. This gap suggests the need for a focused examination of *rakyat* as an ideological signifier

within formal political discourse. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to examine the ideological construction of the term *rakyat* in presidential inaugural speeches using a CDA approach. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the linguistic realizations of *rakyat*, analyze the discursive mechanisms through which it is positioned, and interpret its ideological functions in relation to political legitimacy and collective identity.

Methodology

The research applied a mixed-method approach, with the quantitative corpus analysis. This approach is intended to analyze both the frequency linguistic structure and conceptual underpinnings of presidential language. In the interpretive discourse analysis of the linguistic process through which ideology is linguistically constructed and reproduced, Liu's CDA model provides a potential avenue to integrate the quantitative linguistic evidence. The mixed design of the perspective that discourse is a text, social practice, as well as an ideological representation (30, 31).

The advantage of Liu's CDA model is that it allows for the combining of quantitative linguistic evidence in addition to interpretive discourse analysis, facilitating a richer understanding of how ideology is formed linguistically and how it maintains itself (32). Although the analysis in this study involves detailed descriptions of linguistic patterns, the research is not intended to be merely descriptive. Rather, it adopts a qualitative CDA approach to uncover the ideological functions embedded in political language. CDA is particularly suited to this objective because it conceptualizes discourse as a form of social practice through which power relations and ideological meanings are constructed and sustained. By employing Liu's three-dimensional CDA framework, this study moves beyond surface-level description to interpret how textual features, discursive strategies, and social contexts interact to produce political meaning. The qualitative interpretive approach is therefore justified as it enables an in-depth examination of ideological processes that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative or purely formal linguistic methods. This study takes President Prabowo Subianto's first speech, which was given on October 20, 2024, as a case here during his term (2024–2029). The

data are in the form of linguistic utterances that contained the word *rakyat* 'the people'. The data collection used in this study is documentary analysis, whereby the text was gathered, cleaned, and organized as a corpus for systematic scrutiny. This study employed a purposive sampling strategy to select data that were directly relevant to the research objectives. The corpus consisted of presidential inaugural speeches that explicitly contained the term *rakyat*, as these speeches represent formal political texts with high symbolic

and ideological significance. The unit of analysis was defined as sentences or clauses in which *rakyat* appeared either explicitly or implicitly as a referential subject. Only utterances that contributed to ideological meaning-making, such as representations of collective identity, authority, or legitimacy, were included in the analysis.

The analytical procedures used in this study can be seen by a visualization of the conceptual framework in Figure 1 below.

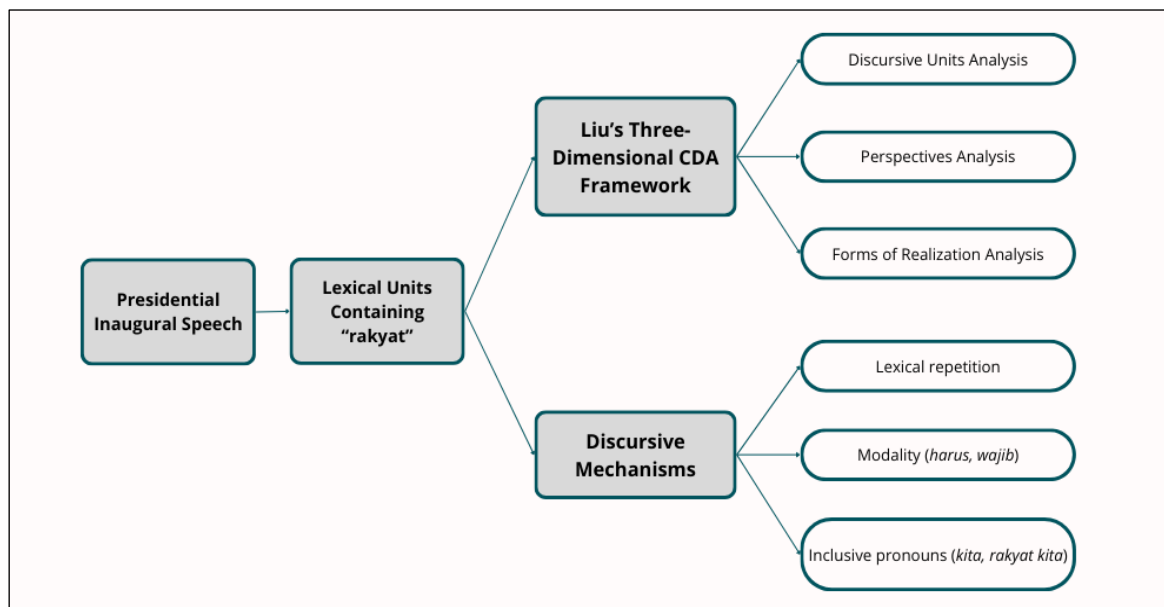


Figure 1: Analytical Model of the Ideological Construction of *Rakyat* in President Prabowo Subianto's Speech

Figure 1 illustrates the analytical model employed in this study, showing the process through which lexical units containing *rakyat* are examined using Liu's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework. The model integrates textual, discursive, and social dimensions with operational discursive mechanisms to explain how *rakyat* functions as an ideological signifier in presidential inaugural speeches. Data analysis proceeded based on Liu's three dimensions of the CDA model: discursive unit analysis, which indicates ideological constructions via intertextual relations; perspective analysis, which interprets the semantic and ideological orientations of discourse; and form of realization analysis, which investigates diction, grammatical structures, and sentence patterns to reveal how ideology is encoded (32). The use of Liu's three dimensional of the CDA framework in this study is motivated by its comprehensive capacity to examine political

discourse as both a linguistic and an ideological practice. This framework enables an integrated analysis of textual features, discursive practices, and social practices, allowing the systematic exploration of the relationship between linguistic choices, meaning production, and power relations. Grounded in the CDA tradition, Liu's model offers a more operational formulation by linking concrete linguistic units to discursive mechanisms that shape ideology, particularly in contemporary political discourse, where ideological meanings are often constructed implicitly (27, 28). In the context of this study, Liu's three-dimensional framework is considered especially suitable for analyzing the ideological construction of the term *rakyat* in presidential inaugural speeches, as it facilitates a holistic understanding of how the term is represented, produced, and interpreted in relation to political legitimacy and collective identity formation. Both qualitative interpretation and

quantitative corpus frequency analysis were performed to discover the way *rakyat* functions as an ideological keyword that constructs representations of power, authority, and collective identity in Prabowo's political discourse.

Results

The Construction of Ideology in Discourse

Thematic, orientational, and organizational senses are employed for an intertextual construction of ideology in discourse, as ideological meanings emerge through thematic selection, perspective

alignment, and organizational structuring within texts, particularly in political discourse (30, 32). It uncovers 5 ideological discourses behind the word *rakyat*, 'the people'. The five ideological discourses are: nationalism, sacrifice, pro-commoners, sovereignty, and human rights. Each discourse has sub-components that are presented as perspectives, for they are based on ideas that have been conceptualized and practiced in the Indonesian context.

Table 1 shows the number of times the words appear for each category and sub-category of perspective.

Table 1: The Ideological Construction of Prabowo's Speech

| Discourse | Perspective | Total Number |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|
| Nationalism | National honor | 1 (3.3%) |
| | National ethics | 1 (3.3%) |
| | The people as the core element of a nation | 3 (9.9%) |
| | Sub total | 5 (16.5%) |
| Sacrifice | The people as fighters, people's sacrifice | 2 (6.6%) |
| | Sub total | 2 (6.6%) |
| Pro-commoners | Food for the people | 2 (6.6%) |
| | Employment for the people | 1 (3.3%) |
| | Subsidies for the people | 1 (3.3%) |
| | People's welfare | 3 (9.9%) |
| | Sub total | 7 (23.3%) |
| Popular sovereignty | From the people | 5 (16.5%) |
| | By the people | 3 (9.9%) |
| | For the people | 5 (16.5%) |
| | Sub total | 13 (34.9%) |
| Human right | Principle implementation of human rights | 3 (9.9%) |
| | Sub total | 3 (9.9%) |

From the analysis of President Prabowo Subianto's speech, the role ambiguity, *rakyat*, and the people are different from one another. They show that the discourse of popular sovereignty is in the main position, among all types of ideological expressions, with 34.9% of representations. This indicates that Prabowo's rhetoric is based on democratic acceptance and participation. The continual allusions to phrases such as "from the people," "by the people," and "for the people" indicate an attempt on the part of the speaker to link his authority to the mandate of constituents—resonating with Indonesia's constitutional doctrine as a sovereign state of a citizens' republic. This is compounding a populist orientation that not only centers power and moral legitimacy in the general will of citizens, but also in elites or institutions.

The discourse of *pro-commoners* (23.3%) emerges as the second most salient ideological cluster. This theme also contains mentions of social welfare, food security, employment, and subsidy, suggesting a materialist and welfare-related aspect of populism. Through this rhetoric, the address produces an impression of a leader who is in touch with the people's pain but also stands to speak for them. The focus on economic justice and an assurance of the fulfillment of the necessities can be read as a tactical rhetorical tool to gain relational closeness with lower-and middle-class groups, rendered usually as the moral heart of the nation in populist rhetoric.

The discourses of nationalism or national context (16.5%), sacrifice (6.6%), and human rights (9.9%) reinforce the ideological superstructure, supplying emotional and moral content.

Nationalism is channeled through issues of community identity, national ethos, and the importance of people to the very concept/knowledge/idea of what a nation is, all of which potentially create a single story in the sense that they form barriers for solidarity. The rhetoric of sacrifice dovetails with this neatly, as it brands the masses as soldiers and saviors of the nation, ideals that also play into notions of commitment and endurance.

Perspective in Discourse

Perspective in National Discourse

National honor refers to the dignity of a nation. This dignity is defined by the acknowledgment and reverence of Indonesia by other countries in the world. Such acknowledgment is witnessed in the fact that foreign delegates are part of Prabowo Subianto's inauguration state speech as Indonesia's new president. The second perspective, on "national ethics," focuses on standards of behavior among countries. Principiistic acts of international ethics. This context is recognized by Prabowo in giving thanks to the representatives from member countries of the forum. The notion of "the people as the pillar of the nation" is a discourse on Indonesian nationalism founded on the democratic ideology adopted by the state. Citizens are above the state, and any policy is aimed at their benefit. Three sentences in the discourse fall into this view.

Data [1] ... *di hadapan seluruh rakyat Indonesia...*

'... before the entire Indonesian people..'

Data [2] ... *dengan mengutamakan kepentingan seluruh rakyat Indonesia...*

'...by prioritizing the interests of all Indonesian people..'

Data [3] ... *mengutamakan kepentingan bangsa dan rakyat Indonesia...*

'... prioritizing the interests of the nation and the Indonesian people..'

Nationality that is in the national discourse of Prabowo Subianto's maiden speech, which constructs *rakyat* 'the people', not only symbolically but also functionally as a part of the state. Data [1] positions the *rakyat* as an entity that is acknowledged in a formal and institutionally recognized aspect of government. Here, however, the people are established as the executive's presumed partners in state management. The quote emphasizes the responsibility that the exercise of leadership places upon its wielder

toward the country's constituents, institutionalized respect between those who possess power and those over whom it is exercised. This narrativization presents *rakyat* as a source of legitimacy where political power only ever becomes legitimized when it is practiced in the exteriorized public space for their knowledge and recognition. Both Datas [2] and [3] are parts of a single ideological paradigm. Both say the principle that *rakyat* are not only part of governance and policy-making, but in fact the highest goal of them all. That quote includes passages of Christian framing, positioning the President as a servant-leader whose authority flows from his obligation to serve. It confirms the quintessential democratic principle that "sovereignty is vested in and exercised by the people," that regarded as the repository of all powers, and state organs are their agents.

Perspective in Sacrifice Discourse

According to Table 1, one perspective is: The discourse of kill and sacrifice. The people's sacrifice viewpoint can be the only interpretive way in reading the *rakyat* aspect of that discourse. This point of view is confirmed by Datas [4] and [5]. First function approaches people who have provided logistic assistance, including clothes, food, and accommodation. The second is that people are placed as one of the elements in being active agents to resist invasion.

Data [4] *Tidak hanya pemimpin-pemimpin, tetapi keberanian rakyat kita menghadapi segala tantangan bahkan invasi-invasi dari bangsa lain.*

'It was not only the leaders, but also the courage of our people in facing all challenges, including invasions by foreign nations.'

Data [5] *Dan kita harus paham dan ingat selalu pengorbanan yang paling besar adalah pengorbanan dari rakyat kita yang paling miskin, wong cilik yang berjuang, yang memberi makan kepada pejuang-pejuang.*

'And we must understand and always remember that the greatest sacrifice came from our poorest citizens, the commoners who struggled and provided sustenance for the fighters.'

From Data [4], the *rakyat* are depicted in a position as freedom fighters, who play an equal role with national leaders in their independence. This statement rewrites historical accounts by emphasizing mass heroism rather than elite leadership, and underscores that the nation's

power comes not from a few people. Here, "the people" is cast as the moral essence of a nation, and their invisible but material contributions are acknowledged for its survival.

Data [5] make up an ideological discourse that idealizes the sacrifice of the people as an integrating moral text. This language dovetails with the populist rhetoric that regularly crops up in political discussion to reassert the ruling and led classes' shared interests. By acknowledging *wong cilik* (the common people) as the true bearers of sacrifice, Prabowo's speech reconstructs a national memory that valorizes the collective struggle and reinforces the ideological foundation of people-centered nationalism.

Perspective in Pro-commoners

Commoners are often framed as a social group that had a collective identity with their life experience, such as suffering, exploitation, and injustice. It is this collective identity that becomes meaningful in their discourses of resistance and unity. In the context of CDA, this theme can be used to examine how discourses on commoners are deployed to create (memories of) shared experiences between them. The President's speech does not mention any type of occupation but rather addresses the needs of society. A minimum of three types of government help are found to be required through the data.

Data [6] *Apakah kita sadar bahwa rakyat kita dan anak-anak kita banyak yang kurang gizi?*

'Are we aware that many of our people and children are suffering from malnutrition?'

Data [7] *Banyak rakyat yang tidak dapat pekerjaan yang baik?*

'Are we aware that many of our people are unable to obtain decent employment?'

Data [8] *Kita harus mampu memproduksi dan memenuhi kebutuhan pangan seluruh rakyat Indonesia.*

'We must be able to produce and meet the food needs of all Indonesian people.'

Data [9] *Juga semua subsidi bantuan kepada rakyat kita yang masih dalam keadaan susah harus kita yakin subsidi-subsidi itu sampai kepada mereka yang membutuhkan.*

'All subsidies and assistance for our people who are still struggling must be ensured to reach those who truly need.'

The pro-commoners narrative in President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural address objectifies

rakyat, the people, as a homogenous identity for those who face economic insecurity, social injustice, and limited access to basic needs. This verbal formulation describes the people's identity as more than merely the target of government action, but also as the moral foundation that legitimizes state engagement in social welfare. Having secured the jobs, food security, and subsidies, emphasis reinforces the central position of economic justice in terms of ideological narrative in his state.

Indeed, Datas [6] and [7] depict the population at large as a population lacking in respect to both nutrition and employment. Rhetoricity in language, but using language at each level. Data [8] pushes this concern a bit further and moves the question of food, which is central to security, productivity, and distribution, essentially an act of strategy by the state in enabling people's rights. Meanwhile, Data [9] underscores the need to ensure that assistance in subsidies or aid reaches the people. It highlights accountability and transparency as indispensable components of governance. Together, these four points of data coalesce into an intricately constructed narrative that renders the state simultaneously protector and provider in relation to which *rakyat* occupies a pedestal as the reference point for integrating social and economic policy.

Perspective in the discourse of popular sovereignty

The discourse of sovereignty is a political tradition that places the people as the originator of power in the state. In most cases, the ideal of popular sovereignty is linked with the norms of justice, equality, and participation. In the popular sovereignty narrative, the ultimate power of the state is in the people's hands. This discourse inspires a country to follow the concept of *from, by, and for the people*. The strength of a nation is derived from the citizenry, governing for the people (by representatives), and striving in accord with what is best for all. This research found evidence for the perspective of popular sovereignty, from the people and by the people. The following data also indicates this.

Data [10] *Kita harus selalu ingat, setiap pemimpin dalam setiap tingkatan harus selalu ingat, pekerjaan kita harus untuk rakyat.*

'We must always remember, every leader at every level must always remember, our work must be for the people.'

Data [11] *Pemimpin yang harus bekerja untuk rakyat.*

'Leaders must work for the people.'

Data [12] *Kedaulatan itu adalah kedaulatan rakyat* 'sovereignty is the sovereignty of the people.'

Data [13] *Rakyat harus bebas dari ketakutan, bebas dari kemiskinan, bebas dari kelaparan, bebas dari kebodohan, bebas dari penindasan, bebas dari penderitaan.*

'People must be free from fear, free from poverty, free from hunger, free from ignorance, free from oppression, free from suffering.'

The evidence demonstrates that the language of popular sovereignty is highly salient through repeated references to *rakyat*, 'the people', as the fount and repository of power and authority. In the Datas [10] and [11], the use of imperative and declarative that is "*harus selalu ingat*" 'should always remember' and "*harus bekerja untuk rakyat*" 'should work for people' is used to consolidate that leadership and government position, as a matter of course, are essentially public-oriented. The lexical use of *rakyat* as the central actors and the direct beneficiaries of all political action points to a language emphasis on inclusivity and representation.

In Data [12], the enunciation "*Kedaulatan itu adalah kedaulatan rakyat*" explicitly identifies sovereignty with a collective subject of agency. This order implies a grammatical structure that identifies the two elements on equal terms, where neither is subordinated to the other, which indicates that there is no higher ground of authority than people's judgment. Consequently, Data [13] extends the conceptualization of popular sovereignty by linking it with basic human needs like fear-free and poverty, hunger, ignorance, oppression, and suffering-free.

Perspective in the discourse of human rights

Human rights is the symbol of human values used by countries, international organizations, and civil society. So that *human rights* are preserved and people's ability to resist mistreatment is maintained. The first is the "*right to self-determination*" of all peoples. The second relates to the "*right to freedom from hunger.*" The first point of view is reflected by two data and the second is exemplified by one datum. One of the substances in

President Prabowo's speech is through the conceptualization of "*the right to independence*". This can seed data below.

Data [14] *Karena itu kita punya prinsip kita harus solider membela rakyat yang tertindas di dunia ini.*

'Therefore, we have a principle that we must stand in solidarity to defend the oppressed people in the world.'

Data [15] *Karena itu kita mendukung kemerdekaan rakyat Palestina.*

'Therefore, we support the independence of the Palestinian people.'

Data [16] *Beliau berpikir kalau kita lockdown bagaimana wong cilik, warteg, ojol, rakyat yang makannya dari upah harian.*

'He argues that if we implement a lockdown, what will happen to commoners, small eateries, online motorcycle drivers, and the people who depend on daily wages?'

The human rights discourse in President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural address presents *rakyat*, the people, as both a national and universal subject of justice. In this context, human rights are not limited to domestic welfare issues but extend to global solidarity and moral responsibility among nations. The discourse constructs two dominant perspectives: the right to independence and the right to freedom from hunger. Both reflect the moral and ideological dimensions of Indonesia's political stance as a democratic nation that upholds justice, equality, and human dignity.

Datas [14] and [15] are thus data of the independence view, which demonstrate Indonesia's solidarity with other oppressed nations in the world, particularly through its attitude toward Palestine. Indonesia has positioned itself with the phrase "*we must stand in unity*" on an international scale regarding demands for justice and sovereignty. This formula draws a connection between national identity and global humanitarianism and embodies the ideological proposition that self-determination is an entitlement of every NATO nation. The reference to Palestine also contributes toward the intertextual signs that locate Indonesia's history of colonial struggle in global registers of oppression and liberation. Data [16] represents the right to freedom from hunger, contextualized within domestic socio-economic realities. The reference to commoners, small eateries, online motorcycle drivers, and daily wage earners situates the

discourse within the lived experiences of marginalized citizens.

Collectively, these data reveal a multidimensional construction of human rights that integrates both international solidarity and internal social

protection. The *rakyat* is thus framed not merely as a passive recipient of rights but as the embodiment of human dignity whose welfare and freedom define the legitimacy of state governance.



Figure 2: Discourse Perspectives on *Rakyat* in President Prabowo Subianto's Speech

Figure 2 indicates that commoner is a key topic of the President and are most often spoken of in conjunction with basic human needs, such as nutrition, labor, food security, and subsidy equality. Each of these themes represents a given type of socio-political orientation that constitutes the people as the main object of state responsibility. Instead of framing particular professions, it frames the common good and collective development, thereby strengthening the idea of commoners as a unitary social entity.

From the point of view of a CDA, such a linguistic construction may be seen as employing rhetorical solidarity. The ubiquitous use of *rakyat kita* 'our people' is an inclusive device that serves as a bridge to narrow the social distance between the governing elite and the governed. Moreover, the choice of need and obligation items, such as *harus mampu* 'must be able to' and *harus kita yakin* 'must we ensure', is indicative of a commitment modality that involves moral commitment. This discursive construction of leadership as empathetic but still commanding follows more general populist tactics in political discourse, where leaders identify

themselves with the struggles and hopes of ordinary people.

Discussion

The findings in this research demonstrate how, in his speech, President Prabowo Subianto constructs *rakyat*, the people's term, as the leading actor and moral anchor in various ideological discourses. On the micro-level level language use in the form of inclusive pronouns, imperative modus, and lexical repetition makes up for a participatory people-centered orientation. When have performance sections, such as *harus selalu ingat* 'must always remember' and *pekerjaan kita harus untuk rakyat* 'our work must be for the people' performatively construct the principle of accountability, and place leadership on a discourse-based correlation to public welfare (21, 22, 33).

At the macro level, the linguistic constructs fit within broader ideational structures across five major discourses. The language of nationalism focuses on inclusive leadership, with the president depicted as the custodian of all citizens' interests. Sacrifice accentuates the historical role of commoners in protecting independence, portray-

ing them as moral guideposts and willing participants in nation-making. The pro-commoners discourse contributes with a structure based on problem-solution, in which social problems like malnutrition, unemployment, and inequality are addressed through a series of rules that naturalize state intervention hierarchy; thus reasserting the legitimacy of policy ironically for the public's sake (24, 34). Popular sovereignty locates the source of people's authority beyond electoral activities in economic and social self-reliance. Last, the human rights frame broadens this horizon to include both domestic and international levels, with an emphasis on solidarity, justice, and protection of the marginalized groups, which act to bolster the narrative of people as a legitimate recipient of governance (27, 35).

These are compatible with major theoretical claims in CDA. Power and ideology discourses are the means through which social relations, authority, and legitimacy are realized in linguistic structures (32). The frequent characterization of the *rakyat* as both agent and victim seems to reinforce van Dijk's idea that language works on mental models and social cognition as a part of making sense, within rare dimensions such as this, of governance and political legitimacy in the public imagination. Likewise, the micro-linguistic regularities—vocabulary and grammar choice, as well as repetition—serve to reproduce macro-ideological structures of society, a feat displayed here in the way Prabowo's speech systematically connects ordinary people with state power and national identity (31).

In contrast, new work from political ideology and discourse suggests that these narratives are more than reflections of social values; rather, they function to produce public polarization, bias, and collective reasoning (16-18). The ideological narratives place moral, socio-economic priorities in order; therefore, the discourses about the *rakyat* are always equally about historical sacrifice, contemporary social welfare centers, and democratic sovereignty alike (19, 20). The use of inclusive and moral language echoes findings from analyses in other political speech contexts (28, 29, 36).

The micro and macro forms of analysis taken together imply that Prabowo's inaugural speech not only symbolically constructs the *rakyat* as the

symbolic and functional center of a nation, but they also emphasize how political speeches are crucial sites in which critical discourse works to produce legitimacy, solidarity, and moral authority. The convergent validity of the findings for CDA theory and existing findings accentuates that linguistic constructions are a robust medium of conveying ideological and social meaning across national and global boundaries in political discourse (16, 27).

Some theoretical and practical implications can be gleaned from these findings. Theoretically, the analysis illustrates in a very practical sense how CDA enables us to study how political language creates social identities and power relations as well as legitimacy. By demonstrating how various micro-propositional linguistic choices (e.g. pronouns, imperatives, and lexical repetition) connect with macro-level ideological systems, the paper provides social theoretical support the mutual constitution of language-cognition and structures-agency (31, 32). It expands on previous research on political discourse insofar as it shows how nationalist, sacrificial, and populist themes of a pro-commoner's type (35).

On a practical, the results have implications for policymakers, political communicators, and civil society. It therefore follows that a political speech which projects the image of *rakyat* as the soul and moral authority in governance makes for greater trust and citizenship participation, and social solidarity. Furthermore, the hybridity that the discourse displays between human rights and global solidarity is indicative of political communication being able to influence not just domestic societal cooperation but even self-image vis-à-vis other states and inter-state relations. These reflections show that the clever use of language and framing can be wielded in a strategic approach that promotes inclusive governance, social justice, and legitimacy domestically as well as internationally (16, 18, 27).

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the analysis focuses exclusively on presidential inaugural speeches as formal political texts, and therefore the results are not intended to be generalized to other forms of political discourse or governmental communication. Second, as CDA inherently involves interpretive judgment, the findings are shaped by the theoretical framework and analytical perspective adopted by the

researcher. Third, the study concentrates on the ideological construction of the term *rakyat* without systematically comparing it to other potentially related political signifiers that may perform similar discursive functions. Nevertheless, these limitations do not undermine the significance of the findings; rather, they highlight opportunities for future research to expand the scope of data, apply comparative approaches, or incorporate alternative analytical frameworks.

This study adheres to established ethical principles in qualitative research. The data analyzed consist exclusively of publicly available presidential inaugural speeches, which are part of the public political record and do not involve human subjects in an interactive or experimental context. As such, formal ethical approval was not required. Nevertheless, ethical considerations were observed by ensuring accurate representation of the original texts, avoiding selective or misleading quotations, and maintaining analytical integrity throughout the research process. The analysis was conducted with a critical yet non-judgmental stance, focusing on discursive structures rather than personal attributes of political actors. By treating the data as public discourse rather than individual expression, the study minimizes ethical risk while maintaining scholarly responsibility.

Conclusion

The results show that the word *rakyat*, 'the people', is framed by five main constructed socio-ideological frames which legitimize this definition; they are nationalism, sacrifice, pro-common people, popular sovereignty, and human rights. Nationalism is cited 16.5% of the time and emphasizes covenant/national ethics, and posits people as part of the identity of the state, so that they cannot be divorced from national honor. Sacrifice (6.6%) honors the collective sacrifice of downtrodden mortals across time immemorial. The pro-commoners narrative, represented with 23.3% of their instances, puts pressure on people simply because it talks about food security, employment issues, subsidies, and general well-being that revolve around people in order to put common citizens at the heart of politics and public policy-making. Popular sovereignty 34.9% Popular sovereignty is the belief that it's not a country's elected leaders who have ultimate

power; rather, it is the people themselves. Human Rights Human rights appear in 9.9% of the messages, which either focus on protecting the freedom, welfare, and justice of people. It is, in effect, the case that within the country today, political discourse can only produce populist sovereignty themes and issues on behalf of commoners—or rather forms of a rightist populism—whereas nationalism, sacrifice, and human rights complement.

There are two significant implications of these findings. In the first place, they point out the importance of political language (and hence views on society and citizens' rights, duties, and status) in state-community communication processes, noting that a people-centered narrative is key to democratic governance and policy acceptance. Second, the findings highlight the importance of incorporating common people's views regarding politics in communication practice to undertake discourses that acknowledge their past sacrifices, socio-economic needs, and basic human rights, to increase civic participation, social harmony, and citizen trust towards their leaders. These observations have implications for policy makers, political communicators, and scholars of "how language works" in constituting ideology, building support, and mediating the power relations between state and society.

Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its focus on a specific genre of political discourse and a single key term, which constrains the generalizability of the findings. Future research may expand the scope of analysis by incorporating other political texts, comparative discourse contexts, or additional ideological signifiers to further explore the dynamics of political language and power.

Abbreviations

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis.

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All authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article.

Data Availability

The complete research data is available and can be accessed in this research report.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance

The authors declare that no AI-generated tools were used in this article.

Ethics approval

The authors declare that this research complies with research ethics and has obtained permission from the copyright holders of the data sources.

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