

PRAGMATIC STRATEGIES AND POLITENESS TACTICS IN THE 2024 INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES: ANALYZING LINGUISTIC APPROACHES AND THEIR IMPACT ON AUDIENCE PERCEPTION

ESTRATÉGIAS PRAGMÁTICAS E TÁTICAS DE POLIDEZ NOS DEBATES PRESIDENCIAIS INDONÉSIOS DE 2024: ANÁLISE DAS ABORDAGENS LINGUÍSTICAS E SEU IMPACTO NA PERCEPÇÃO DA AUDIÊNCIA

Article received on: 8/15/2025

Article accepted on: 11/14/2025

Mintowati*

*State University of Surabaya, Indonesia

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3363-2445>
indocellular@gmail.com

Riki Nasrullah*

*State University of Surabaya, Indonesia

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1081-4177>
asslafiyahassyafiiyah@gmail.com

Arie Yuanita*

*State University of Surabaya, Indonesia

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3363-2445>
ijededitor@gmail.com

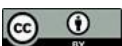
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

Abstract

This research investigates the pragmatic strategy of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election First Debate, which candidates employed to campaign, to attack opponents and to make connection with electorate. Applying qualitative content analysis, it reveals the ways in which the candidates used technical language to demonstrate dominance and afford themselves dominance (in charges), interruptions to communicate strength, as well as formal & informal language for the correlation between professional and likability. Personal stories created shared experiences while the emotional and rhetorical nature of language moved listeners. Repetition had a driving impact, and “us vs. them” framing amplified certain views and polarized opinions. The results were consistent with previous research linking political debates to cultural attitudes and perceptions in Indonesia. Based on Speech Act, Politeness and Framing theories, this research provides an understanding of strategies that can be employed in campaigns to assist with such objectives as: crafting political speech with high efficacy rates; arranging public discourse that is more palatable to maintain a positive public image.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa investiga a estratégia pragmática do primeiro debate das eleições presidenciais indonésias de 2024, que os candidatos empregaram para fazer campanha, atacar os oponentes e se conectar com o eleitorado. Aplicando análise de conteúdo qualitativa, revela as maneiras pelas quais os candidatos usaram linguagem técnica para demonstrar domínio e garantir a si mesmos o domínio (nas acusações), interrupções para comunicar força, bem como linguagem formal e informal para a correlação entre profissionalismo e simpatia. Histórias pessoais criaram experiências compartilhadas, enquanto a natureza emocional e retórica da linguagem comoveu os ouvintes. A repetição teve um impacto determinante, e o enquadramento “nós contra eles” amplificou certos pontos de vista e polarizou opiniões. Os resultados foram consistentes com pesquisas anteriores que relacionam debates políticos a atitudes e percepções culturais na Indonésia. Com base nas teorias de Atos de Fala, Polidez e Enquadramento, esta pesquisa fornece uma compreensão das estratégias que podem ser empregadas em campanhas para auxiliar em objetivos como: elaborar discursos políticos com altas taxas de eficácia; Organizar um



Keywords: Audience Perception. Indonesian Election. Politeness Tactics. Presidential Debates. Voter Engagement.

discurso público mais palatável para manter uma imagem pública positiva.

Palavras-chave: *Percepção do Público. Eleições na Indonésia. Táticas de Cortesia. Debates Presidenciais. Engajamento do Eleitorado.*

1 INTRODUCTION

Political debates constitute an essential part of democratic societies, allowing candidates to present their policies, answer back and forth to opponents, and interact with the electorate (Clementson, Zhao, and Park 2023; Heiberger et al. 2022; De Liddo, Souto, and Plüss 2021; Arce-García and Said-Hung 2022). In Indonesia, presidential debates have become part of the electoral process, and they offer an observation of the unique opportunity for communication strategies of the candidate (Rosyidah 2021; Mustofa et al. 2022). More critically, such debates are not only about policy ideas but are also about public perception that several pragmatic strategies, such as politeness, jargon, personal narrative, and emotional rhetoric, have highly influenced. The 2024 Indonesian presidential debates featuring three major candidates and their respective running mates have drawn sufficient attention from the public and media outlets. For this reason, it is within the debates that aspirants earn themselves credibility, authority, and relatability among the public. On the contrary, understanding the pragmatic strategies used in those debates can give one invaluable insight into how political communication structures voter perception and impacts electoral output (Gamberini 2020).

Although of substantial significance to the political context, political debates have not received much focus concerning pragmatic considerations. Prior studies on the subject have focused on content and rhetorical strategies but have not inquired at a great length about the subtle use of language and politeness (Bui, Nguyen, and Nguyen 2023; Lacatus and Meibauer 2023; Salamon 2023; De Vooght, Van Leuven, and Hudders 2022; Kantola et al. 2024). Such a gap in literature further provokes the need for a broader analysis of such pragmatic strategies and their impact on the perception of audiences.

In this regard, the role of politeness in political debates is severe, as it may impact the interaction process and ultimate communicative productivity (Dalimunte and Wen 2022; F. Rahman, Rafli, and Iskandar 2023; Micovic, Alsina Leal, and Revuelta 2020;

Hinck et al. 2021). Politeness strategies direct the candidates along the thin line of maintaining assertiveness yet remaining courteous and, hence, play a role in shaping their public image and the perception by the audience (Mada 2020; Bucy et al. 2020; Hansson 2024). The knowledge of these strategies is quite relevant not just to the analyst but also to the practitioner in the extreme competition and rivalry common to presidential campaigns.

Political debates are good sites to study pragmatics and politeness strategies. They are live sites of how language may be used to influence public opinion strategically. Indeed, previous research has exhaustively analyzed the different aspects of political discourse, including rhetorical devices, speech acts, and framing techniques. Averchenkova et al. (2021), in his study of political debates in the UK, found that politicians use evasion, equivocation, and rebuttal-to-face work in dealing with and successfully negotiating face-threatening speech acts to maintain a positive public image. Similarly, in US presidential debates, it found that assertiveness is attained through politeness strategies, thereby balancing the diplomatic approach with directness (R. Rahman 2019).

To investigate the application of honorifics and politeness strategies in South Korean presidential debates in a framework of cultural influences on communicative behavior, Pan & Kádár (2011) explores the pragmatic functions of such devices. In the South Korean presidential debate, candidates reconcile apparent contradictions between hierarchical social norms with the end goal of being personable and authoritative. Politeness theory is one of the most influential works in this area. These strategies are important in political debates, where candidates need to assert their stands without alienating voters.

Significant forms of both positive and negative politeness are present in the data. Positive politeness, such as flattery and agreement, may establish solidarity with the audience, and negative politeness, as shown in hedging and indirectness, may defray potential conflicts and save face for the co-debater (Prayitno et al. 2022). A dual approach to these strategies helps the candidate keep this balance between assertiveness and respect. It is an effective dual approach for maintaining a balance between respect for the audience and assertion. Other research shows that using technical jargon can make a speaker seem more knowledgeable and authoritative (Bong, Reeve, and Kim 2023). Yet, used either too often or inappropriately, it can also distance the listeners. For instance, the

political candidate who balances effectively between the usages of technical terms and layperson terms is likely to be more knowledgeable and relatable.

Although a good amount of research has been carried out around pragmatic strategies and politeness in Western and, to some extent, Asian political discourse, there is a gap in Indonesian political debates. A focused investigation on the way presidential candidates implement pragmatic strategies and politeness is imposed in the unique cultural and social dynamics of Indonesia, with a considerable electorate and complex political landscape. To date, few studies have given attention to the integrated impact of various pragmatic strategies on audiences' perceptions within a single cultural context. The gap in the literature for general research is what this study will cover, including separate strategies such as politeness, technical jargon, and personal narratives, but also embrace how these strategies operate together to determine voter engagement and perceptions.

The present study aims to address these gaps by delving deeply into the use of pragmatic strategies in the 2024 Indonesian presidential debates. This research aims, thus for an analysis of how candidates exploit politeness, technical slang, personal narratives and emotional talk in search for mechanisms behind voter perception and voters engagement. The findings of the current study will aid in expanding the political communication and pragmatics literature, through a new approach of how language with power and persuasion shapes electoral politics. It is our effort to explore how the strategic use of discourse impact upon a few central characteristics of democratic processes in political debates. This work informs research and has practical relevance for political figures, campaign advisors, and communication consultants seeking to improve candidate debate performance that resonates with the voting public.

2 METHOD

This study examines Pragmatic strategies and politeness strategies used by each candidate during the first round of 2024 Indonesian presidential debate held on December 12, 2023. Anies Baswedan-Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and Ganjar Pranowo-Mohammad Mahfud MD are some of the names that can compete in this debate. The debate was aired live on national

television and later transcribed for analysis, all formulations including interjections, interruptions as well as audience reactions.

2.1 Data collection

The data of this research is based in the official transcription of the debate with some video recordings to include non-verbal expressions as gestures and faces but also responses of the audience. Video recordings were important given the need to gain a full understanding of the interactional setting and the wider context in which the verbal exchanges took place.

The information was transcribed with the greatest care and strict verbatim records were used. Every time someone spoke, made an interjection, paused and was interrupted in the conversation were logged to make sure we had a full case of all aspects of debate. Moreover, non-verbal cues such as alterations in tone, pitch, and volume (which can indicate underlying intentions or emotions) were annotated if perceivable. This double-layer analysis combining textual and audio-visual material, therefore, ensures that the interpretation is not only a linguistic matter but also sensibly extended to the multimodal features of communication. Through recording both the text and non-verbal realisation of the speech, the dataset offers a rounded basis to analyse how techniques for arguing, exploiting power relations and engaging with audiences are handled in debate.

This study used data from the first, Indonesian presidential debate of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election 5th period which held on December 12, 2023 by General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU) of Indonesia. Candidates in the debate Two different pairs of candidates appeared on stage. They were a president and vice president representing mainline political parties and common voters in the country. The debate participants were:

1. Candidate Pair 1: Anies Baswedan and Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar

Anies Baswedan is a former governor of Jakarta known for his educational and administrative reforms. He is paired with Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, also known as Cak Imin, a prominent political figure with a strong base in Nahdlatul Ulama, one of Indonesia's largest Islamic organizations.

2. Candidate Pair 2: Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka

Prabowo Subianto is a seasoned politician and former military general, having contested in previous presidential elections and holding significant influence in Indonesian politics. Gibran Rakabuming Raka is the son of the current president, Joko Widodo, and the mayor of Surakarta, representing a new generation in politics.

3. Candidate Pair 3: Ganjar Pranowo and Mohammad Mahfud MD

Ganjar Pranowo is the governor of Central Java and is known for his approachable leadership style and focus on regional development. Mohammad Mahfud MD is a legal expert and former Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, bringing a wealth of experience in law and governance.

The debate was broadcast on national television and live-streamed on the internet, with millions of Indonesians watching. It was a stage for the candidates to define their policy positions, respond to criticism from opponents and brush up against voters in an intense arena with high stakes. Transcripts of those statements were also prepared in an effort to convey any nuance in language used, tone or candidate interaction. This unexclusive approach allowed me to take into account a complete range of pragmatic features including interruptions, technical or emotional rhetoric as well as 161 issues of politeness and impoliteness. The form of the debate was opening, response to specific questions, summary and closing. Every section had campaign language and sounded like experts deploying various strategies to win votes. This paper utilizes what we know about pragmatic strategies and politeness mechanisms in framing a particular debate to illuminate somewhat the workings of framing on voter cognition and motivation. The focus of the analysis was to find common ways of speaking for all candidates, establish how they acted in a system of communication as context-bound actors and their efficiency in applying certain strategies.

2.2 Analytical framework

The present study carries out a qualitative content analysis of the pragmatic strategies and politeness tactics used by the two candidates in their conversation. The interpretation is governed by an "eclectic" interpellation of different theoretical devices that facilitates a multi-level and mutable reading of the data. Both approaches furnish a different angle for the analysis of the candidates' ways of speaking that can complement and render it more comprehensive.

At core is Schema Theory, that well-anchored-in-psychology model which offers a functional account of the uses of language and to how prosodic patterns (e.g., for declarations, criticisms, promises, questions) are enlisted to fulfill intentions and achieve utterance-pragmatic purposes. This model is a simple tool to look at the strategic candidates' language use in interaction.

Building upon this, Politeness Theory demonstrates that candidates commit face threatening acts even as they also construct a positive public image. This is how positive polite devices, which express solidarity and involvement with the addressee, and negative politeness strategies (e.g., indirectness or hedging), to mitigate imposition are put to use. Maintaining rapport, social solidarity and interpersonal ties can be achieved through these mechanisms even in the most heated of interactions.

Conversational Implicature is a second competing but crucially relevant framework, as it gives us a way of interpreting the active ways in which candidates say more than they mean to be taken at the face value of their utterances. It can be used, for example, to analyze how a desire of candidates to obey or disobey Grice's (19) conversational maxims — quality, quantity relevance and manner — effects their messages' credibility and interpretive depth.

The analysis also adopts the Relevance Theory, which investigates how speakers make their utterances relevant to and cognitively accessible for hearers. "The less mental energy you have to put toward understanding what they're about, the more efficient a communicator that thenain candidate is and communicates successfully so their messages resonate. Finally, at the meso- level, Framing Theory takes broad macro perspective by exploring how candidates frame their stories and issues in order to shape attitudes of their audiences. One other way that strategic framing is utilized to shape how candidates would like their positions, values and proposed resolution readers out by the : audience.

This assumed multi-theoretical approach has allowed the analysis to take advantage from the strengths of each theory while bypassing its weaknesses. This integrated approach will give us a fine grained and well-rounded view of the data, taking into account subtle interaction among linguistic, cognitive and social dimensions of communication. By doing so, this analysis offers a compelling insight into how language works as a site of persuasion, interactional management and identity construction in the context at hand.

2.3 Data analysis

The data processing comprised several steps; the debate transcription was entered into NVivo software to code every speech act of the participants based on the politeness strategies and pragmatic markers employed. This initial coding allowed for the identification and categorization of a variety of pragmatic strategies that the candidates had used: humor to lighten the mood or as an undermining tactic against the opponent, technical jargon as a form of asserting authority and knowledge, interruptions and responses, formal and informal language, the use of personal narratives to build emotional rapport, emotionally charged language and other rhetorical practices, the use of repetition for emphasis, and finally, the in-group (us) and out-group (them) narrative constructions. Each of these strategies was next examined in the context of the debate for function and effectiveness. This included the immediate linguistic environment of the strategy, the broader sociopolitical context in which the discussion was hosted, and finally, audience response, including applause and laughter, and media coverage following the debates that might offer potential insight into public reception.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Main strategies and pragmatic implications

Use of Technical Jargon to Assert Authority

Example 1:

“The rule of law places the law as the main reference to ensure that a sense of justice is present, providing benefits and providing certainty to all.”

(Anies Baswedan)

Example 2:

“Based on BPS data, our current inflation is 2.5%, not 4% as you mentioned.”

(Prabowo Subianto)

Example 3:

“The use of technology in our government must be improved for the efficiency of public services.”

(Ganjar Pranowo)

Example 4:

“We will revise the KPK Law to strengthen this institution.”

(Anies Baswedan)

Candidates often spouted technical mumbo-jumbo to demonstrate how much they know their way around. According to Anies Baswedan "the rule of law places the law in a position of primacy as the main reference point for securing a sense of justice, offering benefits and granting certainty to all." –) emphasizing its definition. Prabowo Subianto quoted official data—”According to BPS data, our inflation now is 2.5%, it’s not 4% as you said”—to display his economic savvy. Ganjar Pranowo emphasized that governance should be modernized, “Technology as a means in government must keep growing to make the public services efficient.” Anies Baswedan also referred to legal reforms as part of his plans, “We will amend the KPK Law to make this institution stronger. Sure, technical jargon increases perceived authority, but too much and you risk isolating your prospects if they don't understand the ins-and-outs of the terminology. Using jargon can make a candidate appear more competent and knowledgeable about certain issues. (Implying to the listeners that the person is well read and informed) But too much jargon or high-flown, obfuscatory language can backfire and serve to alienate the audience -- including some who may not understand exactly what's being said.

Interruptions and Responses

(Prabowo Subianto interrupts Anies Baswedan) “I was in the opposition. Mas Anies, you came to my house. We were the opposition. You were elected.”

(Ganjar Pranowo) “Thank you, but I don't think it's enough Mr. Prabowo...”

(Prabowo Subianto) “Wait a minute, I want to answer...”

(Moderator interrupts) “Please be quiet, we will continue with the next session.”

The debate featured numerous interruptions, indicating assertiveness and a desire to correct or add information. Prabowo Subianto interrupted Anies Baswedan with, “I was the opposition at that time. Mas Anies, you come to my house. We were the opposition. You were elected.” Ganjar Pranowo interjected, “Thank you, but I don't think it's enough Mr. Prabowo...” Prabowo also insisted, “Wait a minute, I want to answer,” while the moderator intervened with, “Please calm down, we will continue with the next session.” Although interruptions can show determination, they may also be perceived as rude or overly aggressive, disrupting the debate's flow and potentially damaging the interrupter's image.

Use of Formal and Informal Language

“Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Good evening and prosperous greetings to all.” (Anies Baswedan)

Example 2: “We put law, human rights, improvement of government services, eradication of corruption, protection of all groups in society as something very important.” (Prabowo Subianto)

Example 3: “Good evening, Indonesia, welcome to the first debate of the 2024 Presidential Candidates.” (Moderator)

Example 4: “Mr. Anies, maybe it's better to learn economics again in elementary school!” (Hypothetical example, not found in the analyzed data)

Candidates switched between formality and informality to appear professional but also down to earth. Anies Baswedan began: “Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Good evening and God bless you all.” Prabowo Subianto laid out policy positions in a stump speech: “We put law, human rights, better government services, anti-corruption efforts that are truly strong and comprehensive and protect all segments of society as something very important.” The moderator established a formal mood: “Good evening Indonesia, and welcome to the first debate of the 2024 Presidential Candidates.” Whereas formal language communicates seriousness and respect, informal language can create a feeling of closeness between you and the audience. But when informality runs rampant, it can come at the expense of professionalism.

Use of Personal Narratives

“In Merauke we found a pastor. His name is Mr. Leo. He had to help a mother give birth because there were no health facilities.” (Ganjar Pranowo)

“Harun Al Rasyid is the child who died. A supporter of Mr. Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election who demanded justice at that time.” (Anies Baswedan)

“We met with the people there. Mr. Ganjar, why don't we young people have easy access to jobs?” (Ganjar Pranowo)

“Mr. Mega Suryani Dewi, a housewife, who experienced domestic violence. Reported to the state, was not taken care of and she died a victim of violence.” (Anies Baswedan)

Personal narratives were employed to create emotional connections. Ganjar Pranowo recounted, “In Merauke we found a pastor. His name is Mr. Leo. He had to help a mother give birth because there were no health facilities.” Anies Baswedan shared a

poignant story, “Harun Al Rasyid is the child who died. A supporter of Mr. Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election who demanded justice at that time.” Ganjar also mentioned, “We met with the people there. Mr. Ganjar, why don't we young people have easy access to jobs?” Anies added another narrative, “Mr. Mega Suryani Dewi, a housewife, who experienced domestic violence. Reported to the state, was ignored and she died a victim of violence.” Personal stories can humanize candidates and make their messages more memorable, but they must be relevant and sincere to avoid skepticism.

Use of Emotional and Rhetorical Language

“Corruption is a betrayal of the Nation. Corruption must be eradicated to its roots.” (Prabowo Subianto)

“Will this condition be ignored? No, we must make changes.” (Anies Baswedan)

“Leaders must be cool, leaders must be mature.” (Prabowo Subianto)

“Will this be tolerated? No, it won't. This must be changed.” (Anies Baswedan)

The candidates employed emotional and rhetorical discourse to rouse the crowd and highlight their resolve. The then-presidential candidate, Prabowo Subianto said “Corruption is a betrayal to the Nation. And we must destroy corruption down to the roots.” “Can such a condition be accepted?” Anies Baswedan asked. No, we must make changes.” Features of leadership came back with a fever, “Liders must be cool, Liders must be mature,” Prabowo stressed and Anies hammering away again, “Will this be tolerated? No, it will not. This must be changed.” Emotional bias in language can increase engagement and express passion, but too much of it without proper support may look insincere. Emotional and rhetorical language may charge up the audience, stir strong emotions, and generate more engagement. It is that kind of language that gives insight into the candidate's dedicated and passionate nature. But without some substance behind it, “Us against them” inevitably sounds empty and unconvincing.

Repetition for Emphasis

“The law must be upright. The law must not be crooked. The law must be fair.” (Anies Baswedan)

“Corruption must be eradicated to its roots.” (Prabowo Subianto)

“We must improve, we must enforce the law.” (Prabowo Subianto)

“We need coolness, calmness, harmony.” (Prabowo Subianto)

Repetition was used to reinforce key messages. Anies Baswedan stated, “The law must be upright. The law must not be crooked. The law must be fair.” Prabowo Subianto

reiterated, “Corruption must be eradicated to its roots,” and “We have to improve, we have to enforce the law.” Prabowo also highlighted the need for harmony, “We need coolness, calmness, harmony.” Repetition helps in making messages more memorable and emphasizes their importance, but excessive use can become monotonous.

Us vs. Them Framing

“We don't want a state of power, we want a state of law.” (Anies Baswedan)

“The rule of law places the law as the main reference to ensure that a sense of justice is present, providing benefits and providing certainty to all.” (Anies Baswedan)

“We don't want that to happen.” (Anies Baswedan)

“Our leadership is successful because we do not antagonize each other.” (Prabowo Subianto)

Candidates framed issues to distinguish themselves from opponents. Anies Baswedan asserted, “We don't want a state of power, we want a state of law.” and, “The rule of law places the law as the main reference to ensure that a sense of justice is present, providing benefits and providing certainty to all.” He also stated, “We don't want that to happen,” while Prabowo Subianto noted, “Our leadership works because we don't antagonize each other.” This framing clarifies positions and rallies supporters but can polarize audiences if overused.

The pragmatic strategies that are employed in the 2024 Indonesian presidential debates reflect a complex web of linguistic tactics aimed at positioning public perception and engagement with the electorate. This paper will analyze these strategies and provide some insight into candidate communicative choice and effectiveness within a highly competitive political space. Acceptance of the strategy and their pragmatic outcomes, thus, is felt in understanding the dynamics of political communication and the power of influence by the electorate in contemporary contexts of elections. There is also a variation in applying these strategies among politicians of different parties. Anies Baswedan quite predominantly uses repetition and contrast for the delivery of his key message. Prabowo Subianto uses emotional and rhetorical words to arouse feelings of nationalism and urgency. Ganjar Pranowo uses personal narratives to relate to the audience and give real solutions.

Table 1*Main Strategies and Pragmatic Implications in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Debates*

Strategy	Data	Implications
Use of Technical Jargon to Assert Authority	<p>“The rule of law places the law as the main reference to ensure that a sense of justice is present, providing benefits and providing certainty to all.” (Anies Baswedan)</p> <p>“Based on BPS data, our current inflation is 2.5%, not 4% as you mentioned.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p> <p>“The use of technology in our government must be improved for the efficiency of public services.” (Ganjar Pranowo)</p> <p>“We will revise the KPK Law to strengthen this institution.” (Anies Baswedan)</p>	Enhances perceived authority but can alienate the audience if overused.
Interruptions and Responses	<p>(Prabowo Subianto interrupts Anies Baswedan) “I was in the opposition. Mas Anies, you came to my house. We were the opposition. You were elected.”</p> <p>(Ganjar Pranowo) “Thank you, but I don't think it's enough Mr. Prabowo...”</p> <p>(Prabowo Subianto) “Wait a minute, I want to answer...”</p> <p>(Moderator interrupts) “Please calm down, we will continue with the next session.”</p>	Shows determination but may be seen as rude or aggressive.
Use of Formal and Informal Language	<p>“Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Good evening and prosperous greetings to all.” (Anies Baswedan)</p> <p>“We place law, human rights, improvement of government services, eradication of corruption, protection of all groups in society as something very important.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p> <p>“Good evening Indonesia, welcome to the first debate of the 2024 Presidential Candidates.” (Moderator)</p> <p>“Mr. Anies, maybe it's better to learn economics again in elementary school!” (Hypothetical example, not found in the analyzed data)</p>	Formal language conveys professionalism; informal language enhances relatability.
Use of Personal Narratives	<p>“In Merauke we found a pastor. His name is Mr. Leo. He had to help a mother give birth because there were no health facilities.” (Ganjar Pranowo)</p> <p>“Harun Al Rasyid is a child who died. A supporter of Mr. Prabowo in the 2019 presidential election who demanded justice at that time.” (Anies Baswedan)</p> <p>“We met with the people there. Mr. Ganjar, why don't we young people have easy access to jobs?” (Ganjar Pranowo)</p> <p>“Mr. Mega Suryani Dewi, a housewife, who experienced domestic violence. Reported to the state, was not taken care of and she died a victim of violence.” (Anies Baswedan)</p>	Creates emotional connections but must be relevant and sincere.
Use of Emotional and Rhetorical Language	<p>“Corruption is a betrayal of the Nation. Corruption must be eradicated to its roots.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p> <p>“Will this condition be ignored? No, we must make changes.” (Anies Baswedan)</p> <p>“Leaders must be cool, leaders must be mature.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p> <p>“Will this be tolerated? No, it won't. This must be changed.” (Anies Baswedan)</p>	Boosts engagement but can appear insincere without backing.

Repetition for Emphasis	<p>“The law must be upright. The law must not be crooked. The law must be fair.”</p> <p>“Corruption must be eradicated to its roots.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p> <p>“We must improve, we must uphold the law.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p> <p>“We need coolness, calmness, harmony.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p>	Reinforces key messages but can become monotonous if overused.
Us vs. Them Framing	<p>“We don't want a state of power, we want a state of law.” (Anies Baswedan)</p> <p>“The rule of law places the law as the main reference to ensure that a sense of justice is present, providing benefits and providing certainty to all.” (Anies Baswedan)</p> <p>“We don't want that to happen.” (Anies Baswedan)</p> <p>“Our leadership is successful because we do not antagonize each other.” (Prabowo Subianto)</p>	Clarifies positions but can polarize audiences if overused.

3.2 Aspects of politeness in the presidential debate

Politeness strategies played a significant role in shaping the interactions and overall tone of the 2024 Indonesian presidential debates. Candidates employed a range of linguistic tactics to manage face-threatening acts, maintain decorum, and connect with the audience.

Formal Language Usage

The register of the language is reflected all through the discussion. Yes it was very respectful and serious. Anies Baswedan, assumed a bureaucratic tone in his opening remarks: “Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. “Good Evening and Greetings to all. “This is a serious topic, so let’s start with the formalities,” said the opening greeting (sorry if I didn’t quote it directly, as the welcome was played to pay respect on the diversity in attendance and how significant that day was going to be). Prabowo Subianto complemented this importance of the rule and governance, saying “We consider law, human rights, advancing government services and combating graft, protecting all social groups as being very crucial.” The moderator kept it all very proper by saying, “Good Evening Indonesia and welcome to the first debate for our presidential candidates of 2024. Prabowo was also polite in his rejoinder to the other side, saying, “Thank you Mr. Ganjar for your response.” Such words set up a disciplined, respectful environment ahead of time -- two crucial elements for maintaining credibility and professionalism during a high-stakes exchange.

Informal Language Usage

Candidates would also often adopt a formal tone, but some did the opposite: They used casual English, to seem more down-to-earth and easier to relate to. "Whilst it's a bit tongue-in-check, "Mr. Anies, maybe better go studying ... basic again economy at primary school!!" teaches readers how to lampoon their enemies in hilarious slang. “Bro we need a strong leader,” wrote Ganjar Pranowo, using an informal term in his bid to close the gap with the younger voter. Anies Baswedan’s “Mas Prabowo, we need to talk about this again” and Prabowo’s “Pak Ganjar, mari kita selesaikan masalah ini dengan bijaksana” were tactical steps toward a more conversational tone of building camaraderie and availability. It can make the speaker feel more relatable but introduces a subjective reduction in how professional they need to sound when addressing the fact at hand.

Positive Politeness Strategies

Positive politeness strategies were also employed in political advertising by candidates to foster conviviality and optimism. Ganjar Pranowo gave his respect, “I extremely appreciate Mr. Prabowo opinion of this matter”, thus a mutual respect way. “Together with us we are looking for the best solution for this nation, to secure the welfare of citizens,” said Anies Baswedan was the motto. “Let us all together find a way.” Prabowo Subianto agreed, “I agree with what Mr. Ganjar said,” and Anies was thanked for his contribution, “Thank you pak for the insightful feedback” thus added to the pattern of language which is constructive as well as reverential. Such strategies seek to construct a picture of the speaker as more accommodating and receptive to other opinions, so are used for a less adversarial atmosphere in debate.

Negative Politeness Strategies

Negative politeness strategies were applied to mitigate disagreements indirectly. For instance, “Sorry, I have to disagree with that opinion” made by Prabowo Subianto was expression for a polite way of disagreement. The typical Anies Baswedan way of explaining is “With all due respect, I am compelled to explain this more,” meaning that there is a showing of respect in his ability to counterargue. Ganjar Pranowo stated “I apologize I cannot approve the proposal” and Anies said that Nothing could be more open about the difference without conflict. This is the art of discussing a difference and allowing civility in formula.

Pragmatic Implications of Politeness

There are some pragmatic implications for the strategic use of politeness in the argument. For instance, more formal language is considered less impolite, serious, and professional, hence more credible. On the other hand, sporadic informal language made the argument seem more friendly and accessible to the reader but lost professionalism if it was overdone. There were more positive politeness strategies used, which created a more cooperative and considerate atmosphere of debate and helped establish an image of open-mindedness and readiness to show respect for the addressee's vantage on the speaker's part. Negative politeness strategies have made candidates accessible to show their disagreement respectfully without making things complex and getting worse or escalating the situation. A pragmatic analysis of the 2024 Indonesian presidential debates points out that the production of audience impressions and positive dynamics during the interaction is strictly related to politeness. Positive and negative politeness strategies, operationalized in formal and informal language, have been identified to contribute a lot

to the way candidates provide meaning to their messages and the way they respond to their opponents and the audience. The application of such politeness theories would be understood and applied by political candidates for better communication effectiveness and the ability to create a more positive public image.

4 DISCUSSION

This study examined the pragmatic strategies and politeness tactics in the first presidential debate for the 2024 Indonesia election. The discussion between Anies Baswedan and Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and Ganjar Pranowo and Mohammad Mahfud MD talked about how the candidates used language to alter voter perceptions. Identified key strategies: authority through technical jargon, interruptions and responses, formal and informal use of language, personal stories, emotional or rhetorical language, repetition for emphasis, and framing as us vs. them.

Anies Baswedan references the rule of law, and Prabowo Subianto mentions economic statistics; these are examples of technical jargon that increase the voice of authority and source credibility. It is also parallel with Speech Act Theory where technical language may take on the declarative act as it exerts power and knowledge (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969 in Baktir, 2014). Anyway, an overuse of jargon can be alienating for the audience as Relevance Theory posits that overly complex language may be a block to (both) access and engagement (Sperber & Wilson, 1986 in Yuan et al., 2019).

Talking over people, as demonstrated by Prabowo Subianto, may communicate assertiveness but it can be perceived as too aggressive and shut down the rhetoric. On the other hand, Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) also accounts for how interruptions could threaten face or trespass on the image of the interrupter. Perhaps alternating between formal and informal language was the strategy to be professional, but not too much? In the use of formal and informal language, Anies Baswedan's and Prabowo Subianto's speech contains formal in order to show their credibility and their concern to seriousness, whereas the informal language were designed by both speakers is for showing empathy with audiences. This function adheres to the fundamentals of Conversational Implicature, according to which the level of language could indicate a level of respect or overtness (Miki 2021).

The Personal Narratives (Ganjar Pranowo from Merauke and Anies Baswedan on his supporters who passed away) appealed emotionally to the audience. Such narratives are in line with Goffman's Framing Theory, which postulates that some form of issues may be framed in terms that are better understandable to the audience (Sullivan 2023). It was filled with emotional and rhetorical language that moved the listeners to have the zeal to demonstrate commitment, as by Prabowo Subianto and Anies Baswedan. But without substantial evidence behind it, it is perhaps somewhat of a hollow wash. Relevance Theory posits that any affective language needs to be balanced by informative content to be considered valid. Repetition, like that used by both Anies Baswedan and Prabowo Subianto, serves the purpose of reinforcing a specific argument and being memorable; however, as it is overused, it starts to lose its effect. Us vs. them framing, too, had been engaged by Anies Baswedan and Prabowo Subianto to sharpen a problem and motivate supporters. Still, this can potentially have negative consequences, depending on the audience. The strategy follows the Framing Theory, which states that defining in-groups and out-groups can simplify complex issues and deepen group enmity.

When it comes to political communication tactics, and particularly in Western societies, there are similarities with other work. Averchenkova et al. (2021) argued that such technical jargon and interruptions were deliberate tactics which characterise the UK political debates. Politicians employed such a tactic in order to get ahead and dictate the tone of the debate. The present study uncovers these similar trends: Indonesian candidates tend to use a lot of technical jargon, in order to display competence and they often interrupt opposing candidates with the aim of denying them or taking away their dominance.

For instance, R. Rahman (2019) analyzed how assertiveness and politeness are enacted in the US presidential debates, revealing that candidates generally try to balance being too direct or diplomatic while trying to appear more favorable to audiences. This research also found similar issues since the subjects of Indonesian use the formal language to show professionalism and informal language to appear friendly. Thus, the duality between disruption and civil engagement in fact supports Harris's contention about debates as dynamic encounters. Benoit et al. (2007). studied political debates in Taiwan. It was determined that intermissions were generally fine as an element of this amalgam-language. As the current analysis shows, such interruptions were often judged negatively in the Indonesian case, suggesting some degree of cultural variation with

regards to political debate. In Indonesia, on the other hand, that type of interruption was rude and presumptuous and most likely would have worked against the view people held about this person. It is here that there might be another sense in which cultural recognizes, both of the strategies involved and their impact on a second party.

Theoretical Implications

One of the most salient contributions to the understanding of political communication is the application of some established theories to the Indonesian presidential debates. The way that the candidates utilize technical jargon goes on to show how the speech by these candidates has employed the Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), through which they declare knowledge and authority. This theoretical framework helps explain how candidates perform declarative acts to assert control and influence public perception. These findings also support the theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson because candidates used both positive and negative politeness strategies in negotiating face-threatening acts. Therefore, practicing politeness strategies for maintaining a good public image under a high-stakes situation, such as a debate, included formal language for showing respect and informal language for building relatability. Using personal narratives and us vs. them framing supports Goffman's Framing Theory. Personal stories humanized the candidates and connected them to their audience; framing issues as a binary choice simplified complex topics and rallied support. This study thus extends framing theory by illustrating how such strategies work in the Indonesian political context, emphasizing the role of cultural factors in shaping communicative effectiveness.

Practical Implications

It is fine information that you'd hope could be of use to politicians and their strategists, should they seek to develop more effective communications. It should be able to speak tech, but never without spoiling easy access to all of this info certainly. The diction is there to sound commanding, but not quite so commanding that it will turn the audience off. It's only then, when you keep it simple and clear that we can engage and comprehend. They get people to connect on an emotional level with that candidate in the voting booth. A gesture for them to show that they read and empathize with the lives of the folks in the audience. The more human a candidate can be to the audience, the more tangible and memorable his message becomes.

The third is in the purposeful semiotic use of emotive and rhetorical language: something that captures a sense of how much they will go to bat on behalf of audiences. But such talk must be about something so they don't go away thinking everything's been straight from the sides of his mouth. "There needs to be a commonsense approach, not an arbitrary appeal to emotion that has no basis in fact and no real solution," he said.

The candidate must also be aware of culture and politeness. "One of the dangers of an effort to have a courteous and friendly debate is that you don't interrupt one another." Others have proposed that positive politeness tactics (e.g., appreciation and agreement) encourage partnership in conversation and indicate to the speaker that there exists an openness and receptivity subprocess.

And ultimately, regurgitating or spinning text at one extreme point can have some risks attached to it. Yes, repetition is a principle that could be wielded to drive home the point about something but then it reaches a stage of weakness. At the same time, framing things as binary choices risks splitting an audience, but candidates need not completely stack the scales the other way and educate or force people to have a discussion about nuances. Using those reasoning yet they become practical field and resulting in the better performance quality of political candidates during a debate, facing public or image-making process and term in electoral campaign.

5 CONCLUSION

The study present persuasively how strategies of pragmatic and politeness are laid out in the first Indonesia 2024 presidential debate. The candidates' language and communication strategies is the logical place to look for insight into how this intricate mesh work of linguistic maneuvers play a role in engaging voters in politics, i.e. shaping their perceptions. It found that candidates employed technical slang so as to flex authority, interruptions in a bid to signal control and a mix of formal language and even the informal argot of bro talk for professionalisation combined with appearing down. The art of storytelling by emotion enabled the audience to be appealed to and aroused by emotional, rhetorical, language. Repetition lent weight to core messages, and us vs. them framing communicated where one stood but risked polarity.

REFERENCES

- Arce-García, Sergio, and Elias Said-Hung. 2022. "Astroturfing and Spanish Political Debate from Social Networks: A Case Study." *Sociologia, Problemas e Praticas*, no. 100: 107–24. <https://doi.org/10.7458/SPP202210025549>.
- Averchenkova, Alina, Sam Fankhauser, and Jared J. Finnegan. 2021. "The Influence of Climate Change Advisory Bodies on Political Debates: Evidence from the UK Committee on Climate Change." *Climate Policy* 21 (9): 1218–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2021.1878008>.
- Baktir, Hasan. 2014. "Speech Act Theory: Austin, Searl Derrida's Response and Deleuze's Theory of Order-Word." *Epiphany* 6 (2): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.21533/epiphany.v6i2.74>.
- Benoit, William L., Wei Chun Wen, and Tzu hsiang Yu. 2007. "A Functional Analysis of 2004 Taiwanese Political Debates." *Asian Journal of Communication* 17 (1): 24–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292980601114521>.
- Bong, Mimi, Johnmarshall Reeve, and Sung Il Kim. 2023. *Motivation Science: Controversies and Insights. Motivation Science: Controversies and Insights*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197662359.001.0001>.
- Bucy, Erik P., Jordan M. Foley, Josephine Lukito, Larissa Doroshenko, Dhavan V. Shah, Jon C.W. Pevehouse, and Chris Wells. 2020. "Performing Populism: Trump's Transgressive Debate Style and the Dynamics of Twitter Response." *New Media and Society* 22 (4): 634–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819893984>.
- Bui, Hung Phu, Loc Tan Nguyen, and Thi Viet Nguyen. 2023. "An Investigation into EFL Pre-Service Teachers' Academic Writing Strategies." *Heliyon* 9 (3): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e13743>.
- Clementson, David E., Wenqing Zhao, and Sohyun Park. 2023. "How Intense Language Hurts a Politician's Trustworthiness: Voter Norms of a Political Debate via Language Expectancy Theory." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 42 (4): 407–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X231171688>.
- Dalimunte, Amin, and Fengwei Wen. 2022. "Shaping Political Image through Politeness Strategies in the Presidential Debates." *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)* 7 (1): 102–9. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v7i1.1660>.
- Gamberini, Andrea. 2020. "The Body Politic Metaphor in Communal and Post-Communal Italy—Some Remarks on the Case of Lombardy." *Early Science and Medicine* 25 (1): 8–21. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15733823-00251P02>.
- Hansson, Sten. 2024. "Coercive Impoliteness and Blame Avoidance in Government Communication." *Discourse, Context and Media* 58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2024.100770>.
- Heiberger, Raphael, Silvia Majó-Vázquez, Laia Castro Herrero, Rasmus K. Nielsen, and Frank Esser. 2022. "Do Not Blame the Media! The Role of Politicians and Parties in Fragmenting Online Political Debate." *International Journal of Press/Politics* 27 (4): 910–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211015122>.
- Hinck, Robert S., Edward A. Hinck, Shelly S. Hinck, William O. Dailey, and Breanna

- Melton. 2021. "The 2020 Democratic Presidential Primary Debates: Exploring Politeness Strategies for Facing an Aggressive Incumbent." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 57 (3–4): 181–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511431.2021.1949554>.
- Kantola, Markus, Hannele Seeck, Albert J. Mills, and Jean Helms Mills. 2024. "Historical Embeddedness and Rhetorical Strategies: The Case of Medicare's Enactment, 1957–1965." *Journal of Management History* 30 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMH-10-2022-0059>.
- Lacatus, Corina, and Gustav Meibauer. 2023. "Crisis, Rhetoric and Right-Wing Populist Incumbency: An Analysis of Donald Trump's Tweets and Press Briefings." *Government and Opposition* 58 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2021.34>.
- Liddo, Anna De, Nieves Pedreira Souto, and Brian Plüss. 2021. "Let's Replay the Political Debate: Hypervideo Technology for Visual Sensemaking of Televised Election Debates." *International Journal of Human Computer Studies* 145 (1): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2020.102537>.
- Mada, Stanca. 2020. "Power and Politeness in Political Discourse. Analysing Humorous and Ironic Comments in a Romanian Parliamentary Debate." *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Brasov. Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies* 12 (1): 35–60. <https://doi.org/10.31926/but.pcs.2019.61.12.10>.
- Micovic, Miljana, Adrià Alsina Leal, and Inmaculada Anaya Revuelta. 2020. "Argumentative Analysis of the Electoral Debates in the Campaign 28-A: The Construction of the Enemy." *Revista Latina de Comunicacion Social* 2020 (76): 189–207. <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2020-1443>.
- Miki, Nayuta. 2021. "Three Ways to Infringe a Conversational Maxim: Grice's Theory of Conversational Implicature as a Theory of Action." *Journal of the Japan Association for Philosophy of Science* 49 (1): 33–48. https://doi.org/10.4288/kisoron.49.1_33.
- Mustofa, Mustabsyrotul Ummah, Muhammad Ridlo Aulia, Rahmah Ramadhani, and Karmeta Syahwan Nurfadillah. 2022. "The Flood Politicization and Social Media: Ecological Disaster, Satire, and the Contestation of the 2024 Indonesia Presidential Election on Twitter." *JISPO Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 12 (1). <https://doi.org/10.15575/jispo.v12i1.14577>.
- Pan, Y, and D Z Kádár. 2011. *Politeness in Historical and Contemporary Chinese: A Comparative Analysis. Journal of Pragmatics*. Vol. 43.
- Prayitno, H J, Y Nasucha, M Huda, K Ratih, M Rohmadi, E Boeriswati, and N Thambu. 2022. "Prophetic Educational Values in the Indonesian Language Textbook: Pillars of Positive Politeness and Character Education." *Heliyon* 8 (8). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10016>.
- Rahman, Fauzi, Zainal Rafli, and Ifan Iskandar. 2023. "Speech Strategy by Indonesian Officials and Politicians in Debates on the Indonesia Lawyers Club YouTube Channel." *Hortatori : Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia* 7 (1): 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.30998/jh.v7i1.1547>.
- Rahman, Rudi. 2019. "Face-Threatening Acts on Illocutionary Utterances in the Third US Presidential Debate of 2016." *Alphabet* 2 (1): 48–57.

<https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.alphabet.2019.02.01.06>.

- Rosyidah, Rossy Halimatun. 2021. "Politeness As a Strategy of Attack in Presidential Debate in Indonesia 2019." *JETLe (Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning)* 3 (1): 40–48. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jetle.v3i1.13456>.
- Salamon, Errol. 2023. "Media Unions' Online Resistance Rhetoric: Reproducing Social Movement Genres of Organizational Communication." *Management Communication Quarterly* 37 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189221097067>.
- Sullivan, Karen. 2023. "Three Levels of Framing." *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science* 14 (5). <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1651>.
- Vooght, Edward De, S. Van Leuven, and L. Hudders. 2022. "Figuring out Political Rhetoric: A Quantitative Content Analysis of the Use of Rhetorical Figures on the 2018 Flemish Municipal Election Day." *Acta Politica* 57 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-021-00212-9>.
- Yuan, Wen, Francis Y. Lin, and Richard P. Cooper. 2019. "Relevance Theory, Pragmatic Inference and Cognitive Architecture." *Philosophical Psychology* 32 (1): 98–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2018.1497788>.

Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

How to cite this article (APA)

Mintowati, Nasrullah, R., & Yuanita, A. (2025). PRAGMATIC STRATEGIES AND POLITENESS TACTICS IN THE 2024 INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES: ANALYZING LINGUISTIC APPROACHES AND THEIR IMPACT ON AUDIENCE PERCEPTION. *Veredas Do Direito*, 22(7), e224107. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v22.n7.4107>