

Speech Acts, Figures of Speech, and Their Functions in the 2024 Presidential & Vice-Presidential Debates: A Pragmastylistic Study

Mulyono Mulyono*

Department of Language and Literature Education, Graduate School, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia

Mochamad Bayu Firmansyah

Department of Language Education and Literature, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Universitas PGRI Wiranegara, Pasuruan, East Java, Indonesia

Anggoro Abiyyu Ristio Cahyo

Department of Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia

Abstract—This study examines the types and functions of speech acts and figures of speech employed by presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the 2024 Indonesian election debates. It also explores the rhetorical functions of figures of speech within political communication strategies, using a pragmastylistic approach. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, with data drawn from utterance excerpts transcribed from five official debates. The data were categorized by pragmatic function and stylistic form, followed by thematic analysis to reveal patterns linking communicative intent and rhetorical style. The results show that presidential candidates primarily used assertive, commissive, and directive speech acts, often accompanied by hyperbole, sarcasm, and parallelism. In contrast, vice-presidential candidates tended to use expressive, directive, and commissive acts, supported by personification, irony, and antithesis. These combinations served to reinforce political stances, construct leadership personas, and express ideological orientations. The findings confirm that speech acts and figures of speech were not used separately but functioned together as strategic tools in persuasive political discourse. The pragmastylistic approach proved effective in uncovering how political language is constructed as an intentional and context-sensitive discursive act.

Index Terms—political debate, speech acts, figures of speech, rhetorical strategy, pragmastylistics

I. INTRODUCTION

Political debates involving presidential and vice-presidential candidates constitute an essential aspect of contemporary political communication practices and attract widespread attention from various segments of society. Debate forums serve as structured spaces for interaction, allowing candidates to express their political ideas, build their image, and formulate rhetorical appeals aimed at voters (Mulyono et al., 2025). In this high-stakes communicative context, language assumes a strategic role. Each utterance not only conveys referential meaning but also reflects a communicative intent that is consciously constructed within discourse.

Within a pragmatic framework, political utterances are closely related to goal-oriented communicative acts in social interaction (Kasirzadeh & Gabriel, 2023; Mao & He, 2021; Warren & Call, 2022). The meaning of a message does not merely lie in its propositional content but in its impact on the audience, the manifestation of the speaker's intent, and the form of social relations it constructs. Each speech act indicates a communicative stance, interactional strategy, and the relationship between speaker and listener (Bohmann & Ahlers, 2022; Shahid, 2025; Tashiro et al., 2023). These elements serve as indicators of discursive strategies employed to assert authority, build personal credibility, and convey ideological stance.

Speech acts provide a dynamic analytical framework for understanding political discourse, particularly in debates that demand the delivery of both explicit and implicit positions (Lewiński, 2021). The choice of utterance form reflects strategic considerations aimed at persuasion, rebuttal, or shaping public perception. Strategies in debates are reinforced by stylistic elements such as figures of speech (Fordjour & Sikanku, 2022). This serves to increase emotional appeal, stimulate cognitive engagement, and build symbolic associations. Figurative language enables speakers to express criticism implicitly, demonstrate empathy, and embed ideological cues within aesthetically crafted expressions

* Corresponding Author. Email: mulyono@unesa.ac.id

(Mulyono et al., 2025a; Nawab et al., 2025; Nordensvard & Ketola, 2022). In this context, rhetoric becomes a performative tool for shaping public perception and fostering emotional proximity between speaker and audience.

In political debates, the construction of utterances is governed by the structural power of language strategically directed toward designing effective messages (Rasheed et al., 2024; Sutrisno et al., 2024). The representation of meaning in utterances reveals ideological orientations and rhetorical choices shaped by social relations and institutional contexts. Political candidates utilize specific linguistic structures as instruments to convey discursive positions to the public. Lexical choices, syntactic forms, and patterns of speech become crucial devices in crafting messages as organized social practices. Each utterance can be understood as a social action constructed in context and directed toward producing a particular impact in political interaction (Azam, 2024; Fischer et al., 2024; Khater et al., 2024). Sentences in debates reflect linguistic strategies employed to enhance symbolic influence and expand ideological reach in the public sphere.

The way speakers choose their expressions, organize utterances, and interact strategically with others reflects both individual intention and broader social conventions. In many societies, the structure of speech acts is closely tied to the speaker's awareness of politeness, hierarchy, and role expectations. Pragmatic choices may appear natural, but they are actually carefully guided by cultural logic and social position (Achmad et al., 2023; Shahi, 2022). Such dynamics demonstrate that speech is not merely constructed linguistically, but also negotiated socially through culturally embedded expectations.

Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, focuses on meaning formed in social contexts and actual communicative practices. Speech acts, understood as language actions motivated by intention, become the primary unit of analysis in revealing how speakers express opinions, issue instructions, or convey attitudes (Al-Shboul et al., 2024; Mardiana et al., 2025; Searle, 1979; Tajeddin & Bagherkazemi, 2021). Political debates provide a rich context for analyzing assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive speech acts as tools in constructing argumentation, responding to opposition, and influencing public belief.

Stylistics explains how linguistic forms, especially figures of speech, convey communicative and rhetorical functions in discourse. In political communication, figures such as metaphor, irony, hyperbole, and antithesis act as strategies to shape meaning, arouse emotion, and build symbolic associations (Gozali et al., 2025; Ilma et al., 2024; Keraf, 2007; Khasanah & Muslim, 2025). In the context of political debate, their use is strategic for delivering implied criticism, dramatizing policy stances, and eliciting audience emotion. Understanding these patterns provides insight into how ideology is shaped and disseminated through language.

The pragmastylistic approach is the result of an integration between pragmatic and stylistic studies, offering a comprehensive perspective on the relationship between communicative function and linguistic form. A pragmatic and stylistic approach allows for simultaneous analysis of the speaker's intention, verbal expression, language construction, and social context (Widiastuti et al., 2024; Yuwono et al., 2021). Within this framework, language is understood not merely as a medium for conveying meaning but as a symbolic and ideological act that is directly linked to the dynamics of political discourse.

Previous studies have shown that pragmatics and stylistics offer flexibility in analyzing various types of discourse. Widjaya (2021) examined the role of speech acts and figures of speech in *wayang kulit* performances, focusing on the cultural and moral values expressed through character interaction. Dawudi et al. (2020) investigated the illocutionary dimensions and stylistic expressions in the religious discourse of *Suluk Kanan Nabi*. Rahmanda et al. (2024) discussed stylistic strategies marked by snobbism in social media and their implications for the construction of social identity. Busairi (2023) highlighted elements of parody in *Republik Sentilan Sentilun* to demonstrate how language functions as a medium of critique through consciously designed speech acts and figurative styles.

The findings from these studies indicate a strong correlation between linguistic form and communicative function in producing discursive effects. Speech acts reveal the direction and intent of communication, while figures of speech provide expressive force and symbolic meaning that enrich the message. These two elements reflect the complexity of social interaction in discourse and the strategic role of language in the practice of political communication.

This study examines the relationship between speech acts and figures of speech and explores their communicative and rhetorical functions in the strategies of presidential and vice-presidential candidates during the 2024 Indonesian election debates. It is based on the assumption that in political debate language combines form and function to achieve persuasive goals. The analysis uses transcripts from five official debate sessions and treats each utterance as a pragmatic act shaped through stylistic choices to produce specific effects.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore linguistic strategies used in the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential debates. The focus was to identify types of speech acts and figures of speech used by the candidates, and to understand their communicative and rhetorical functions within the debate context. A qualitative method was deemed suitable as the object of analysis is language as a vehicle for meaning-making, persuasion, and image construction within complex communicative structures.

The primary data were derived from five official presidential and vice-presidential debates conducted by the General Election Commission (KPU) in 2024. Complete and accurate transcripts were produced from video recordings,

preserving the context and interactional dynamics of each utterance. Quotations were selected based on pragmatic salience and rhetorical effectiveness, and classified into two main corpora: utterances by presidential candidates and those by vice-presidential candidates.

Data collection was carried out through systematic observation of debate recordings, with detailed note-taking of relevant excerpts. Quotations were selected according to criteria of contextual relevance, clarity of meaning, and expressive power. These excerpts were subsequently categorized based on types of speech acts and figures of speech, providing an initial map of linguistic patterns that reflect rhetorical strategies.

Data analysis proceeded through structured identification, classification, and interpretive processes. The analysis of speech acts was informed by pragmatic theory, while the categorization of figurative language followed conventional stylistic principles. The dialectical relationship between communicative function and linguistic form was analyzed through a pragmatylistic lens. Findings were then organized systematically to address the research questions, highlighting the interplay between communicative intention and rhetorical strategy in constructing influence and political image.

This research did not involve human participants, and all data sources are publicly available. Therefore, ethical clearance was not required.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Types of Speech Acts in the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates

Language plays a dual role as a tool for controlling discourse and as an effective instrument of persuasion for the public in political events. The candidates' statements contain strategic intentions that reflect their communication patterns, ideology, and systematic efforts to shape their image. In the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential debates, the types of speech acts used serve as a primary indicator for understanding how candidates position themselves within the open and competitive dynamics of political discourse. Figure 1 presents a classification of rhetorical devices that emerged in the presidential debates.

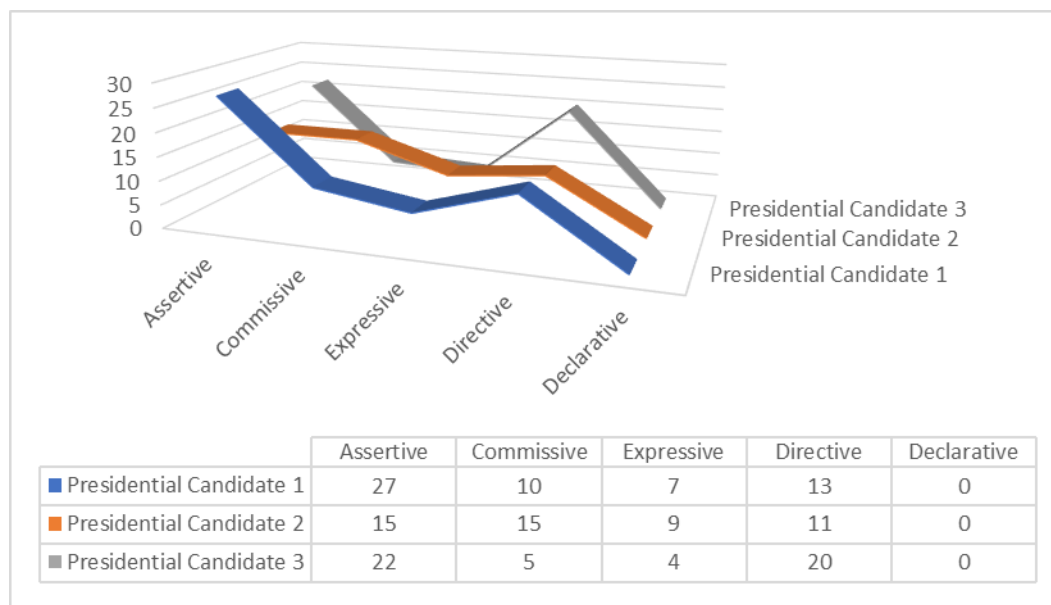


Figure 1. Classification of Speech Acts in Presidential Debates 1, 3, and 5

In the context of political debates, candidates' communication strategies serve as a medium that allows the public to assess their character, vision, and leadership approach. One of the main strategies that stands out is the use of speech acts as a tool for image building and persuasion.

Anies Baswedan's (Presidential Candidate 1) communication style shows a tendency toward a logic- and policy-based approach. Assertive speech acts are the most dominant form in Anies' discourse compared to the other two candidates, with content that focuses heavily on rational assessments and the presentation of policy solutions. For instance, in Debate 1, he stated:

"Koruptor digerakkan dengan undang undang perampasan aset... kpk harus menjadi lembaga yang kuat kembali..." 'Corruptors must be pursued through the asset forfeiture law... the KPK must once again become a strong institution.' (RI, 2023a)

This is an assertive speech act that expresses a firm belief in the need to strengthen the legal system. The strategy reinforces his image as an analytical, data-oriented, and policy-oriented leader.

The communication style of Prabowo Subianto (Presidential Candidate 2) focuses on the delivery of clear and repeated policy commitments, reflecting the reinforcement of political stance. Commissive speech acts were dominant across multiple segments of the debate, indicating a willingness to fulfill promises and implement programs directly. For example, in Debate 5, he declared:

“Kami bertekad menghilangkan kemiskinan dari Indonesia. Kami bertekad menghilangkan kelaparan dan kurang gizi bagi rakyat Indonesia.” ‘We are determined to eliminate poverty from Indonesia. We are determined to eliminate hunger and malnutrition among the Indonesian people.’ (RI, 2024c)

This is a commissive speech act that affirms a serious intention to bring about tangible social change. The strategy strengthens his image as a decisive, action-driven leader who prioritizes public welfare.

The communication style of Ganjar Pranowo (Presidential Candidate 3) shows a tendency to urge the audience toward concrete action by issuing direct calls for policy change. Directive speech acts stand out in his statements that include instructions or demands. For example, in Debate 5, he asserted:

“Hentikan liberalisasi pendidikan. Hentikan hari ini. Berikanlah kepada para mahasiswa kita proporsi yang benar.” ‘Stop the liberalization of education. Stop it today. Give our students what is rightfully theirs.’ (RI, 2024c)

This directive speech act is firm and directly targets higher education policy. The strategy enhances his image as a progressive leader committed to educational justice and vocal in defending the younger generation.

Within the structure of political debate, vice-presidential candidates play the role of strategic actors tasked with reinforcing arguments and building electoral support. Their speech style reflects responses to issues raised by the opposing presidential candidates. It also aims to portray them as strong companions, capable of standing equally in public discourse. The communicative character of vice-presidential candidates exhibits distinctive dynamics from their presidential counterparts. To better understand these tendencies, Figure 2 presents the classification of speech acts used by each vice-presidential candidate.

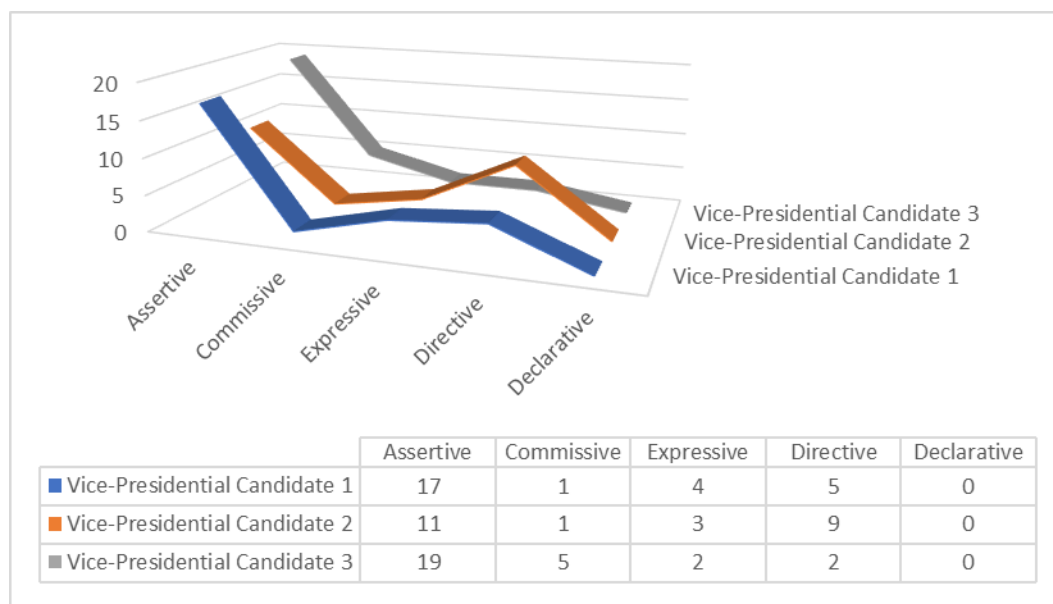


Figure 2. Classification of Illocutionary Speech Acts in Debates 2 and 4 – Vice-Presidential Candidates

In the dynamics of the vice-presidential debates, linguistic strategy functions as a tool for expressing ideological positioning, assertiveness, and leadership style. The dominant type of speech act chosen by each candidate serves as a key indicator of their rhetorical character.

Muhaimin Iskandar's (Vice-Presidential Candidate 1) communication style reflects an emotional rhetorical approach that is close to social reality, characterized by the dominance of expressive speech acts in conveying his stance on various social conditions. His statements often contain expressions of concern that show his alignment with marginalized groups. For example, in Debate 2, he stated:

“Investasi ini harus bergeser menjadi padat karya yang bisa melibatkan seluruh anak bangsa ini...” ‘This kind of investment must shift to labor-intensive projects that can involve all of our nation’s children.’ (RI, 2023b)

The use of expressive speech acts was prominent in expressing concerns about investment practices perceived as unjust. This strategy reinforced Muhaimin Iskandar's image as a responsive leader who is sensitive to issues of social inequality and able to connect with the aspirations of the common people.

Gibran Rakabuming Raka's (Vice-Presidential Candidate 2) communication style reflects an instructional and technocratic leadership approach characterized by the dominance of directive speech acts. The data presented illustrates

a firm attitude in promoting policy implementation and directing concrete development strategies. For instance, in Debate 4, he said:

“Solusinya: IUP-nya dicabut... perusahaan besar wajib gandeng UMKM lokal, pengusaha lokal...” ‘The solution: revoke their mining permits... large corporations must partner with local MSMEs, local entrepreneurs.’ (RI, 2024b)

This is a directive utterance that urges action. The directive form indicates a communication pattern that is solution-oriented and focused on outcomes, reinforcing his image as a responsive, results-driven young leader committed to policy implementation.

The communication style of Mahfud MD (Vice-Presidential Candidate 3) shows a strong orientation toward legal commitment and concrete policy agendas. Commissive speech acts dominate his delivery, reflecting his seriousness about pursuing change in the national governance system. For example, in Debate 4, he stated:

“Kami akan mengembalikan secara bertahap hak rakyat dan... tagih dunia internasional untuk membayar utang yang merusak pembangunan.” ‘We will gradually restore the people's rights and... hold the international community accountable for the debt that has undermined our development.’ (RI, 2024b)

This commissive act expresses a promise of action based on justice and national sovereignty. The style reinforces his image as a reformist figure who consistently advocates for legal integrity, ethical governance, and public welfare.

B. Types of Figurative Language in the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates

The language used in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential debates was expressive, rhetorical, and deeply embedded in strategic communication. One of the key rhetorical tools employed by the candidates to generate persuasive impact and implied suggestion was the use of figurative language. In this study, the figures of speech identified were classified into four primary categories: comparison, contrast, satire, and emphasis. The comparison category includes metaphor, simile, personification, and cultural allusion. Contrast category consists of antithesis and hyperbole. The satirical category encompasses irony, cynicism, and sarcasm. Meanwhile, the emphasis category includes repetition, parallelism, and rhetorical questions. These four categories reflect the strategic functions of figurative language in conveying messages, reinforcing attitudes, and shaping the candidates’ communicative style throughout the debates. Figure 3 below illustrates the distribution of these classifications, which serves as the analytical foundation for the subsequent discussion.

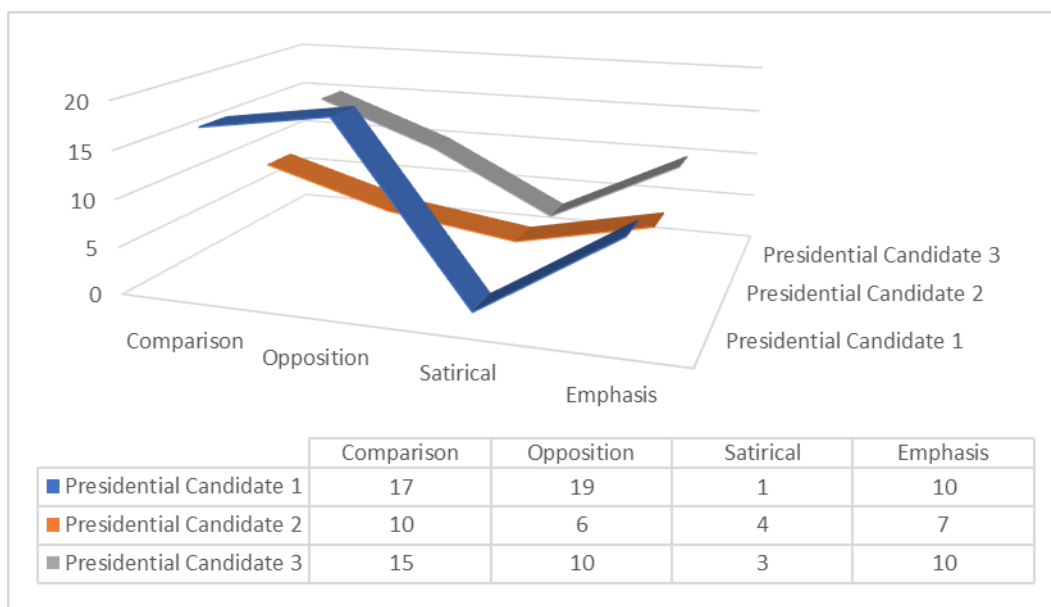


Figure 3. Classification of Figurative Language in Presidential Debates 1, 3, and 5

In the dynamics of presidential debates, figurative language serves as a rhetorical device employed to enhance the persuasive power of political communication. Each candidate demonstrates a distinct tendency in selecting specific types of figures of speech as part of their strategic message delivery. The dominant use of certain tropes reflects both the communicative character and the ideological stance that each candidate seeks to assert in the public forum.

The rhetorical style of Anies Baswedan (Presidential Candidate 1) tends to reflect a confrontational and emotional approach in critiquing policy. The use of hyperbole strengthens the intensity of rejection and amplifies the rhetorical impact of his statements. For instance, in Debate 3, he stated:

“bukan hanya di sektor pemerintahan, tapi di seluruh keluarga” ‘not only in the government sector, but in every household’ (RI, 2024a)

This is an example of hyperbole that exaggerates the scope of the issue to emphasize its perceived widespread impact. The purpose of such exaggeration is to highlight that the negative effects of certain policies extend into the very fabric

of everyday life. This strategy reinforces his image as a critical leader who dares to expose systemic problems to draw public attention.

Prabowo Subianto's (Presidential Candidate 2) communication strategy shows a tendency to convey criticism through the use of sharp sarcasm. Sarcasm is used to indirectly reject opponents' arguments, yet still deliver a strong semantic impact. In Debate 1, he remarked:

"Kalau gampang menyalahkan angin, hujan... tidak perlu ada pemerintahan" 'If we're quick to blame the wind and the rain... then we don't need a government' (RI, 2023a)

This is a sarcastic statement aimed at discrediting those perceived as deflecting accountability for policy failures. It expresses rejection without overt confrontation and portrays Prabowo as a firm communicator who is unafraid to respond forcefully using rhetorically charged language within the formal bounds of debate.

The rhetorical style of Ganjar Pranowo (Presidential Candidate 3) prioritizes semantic reinforcement through rhythmic and orderly language structures. He employs parallelism to convey ideas with consistent and systematic rhetorical force. In Debate 5, he stated:

"mereka akan melahirkan bayi-bayi yang sehat, yang kuat" 'they will give birth to babies who are healthy, who are strong' (RI, 2024c)

This demonstrates syntactic repetition to emphasize aspirations for the nation's future generations. The parallel structure delivers a persuasive effect by projecting consistency of thought and memorable cadence. This strategy supports Ganjar's image as an organized leader with firm convictions in the solutions he proposes.

Rhetorical style also shaped the performance of the vice-presidential candidates, each of whom projected a distinctive communicative character and strategy. Figurative language in their utterances reinforced their messages while shaping their persona as responsive partners capable of addressing issues with their own stylistic identity. In their supporting roles, the vice-presidential candidates embedded symbolic strength in their statements to counter opponents and construct narratives aligned with their respective presidential nominees. To illustrate these tendencies, Figure 4 presents the classification of figurative language used by each vice-presidential candidate across the five debate sessions.

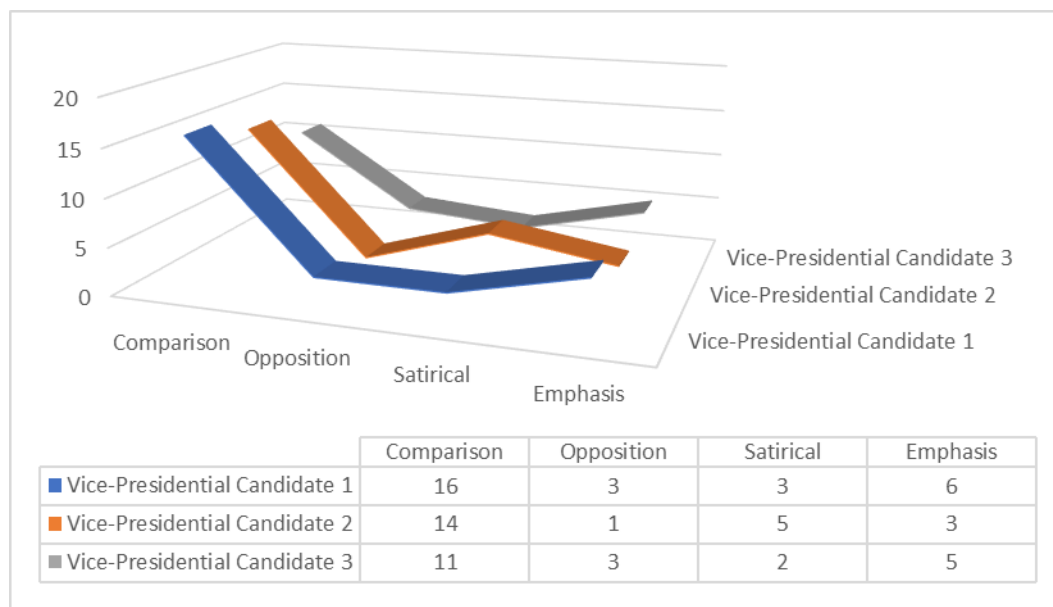


Figure 4. Classification of Figurative Language in Vice-Presidential Debates 2 and 4

In the interactions among vice-presidential candidates during the debates, the use of figurative language functioned as a communicative tactic to sharpen ideas and enhance rhetorical appeal. Tropes were employed not merely for stylistic embellishment, but to reinforce ideological positions and construct distinctive leadership impressions. Each candidate exhibited a unique tendency in their dominant use of figurative language to articulate key messages.

The rhetorical style of Muhaimin Iskandar (Vice-Presidential Candidate 1) reveals an effort to compare social realities with human-like entities through figurative expression. Personification was employed to portray institutions or abstract concepts as if they possessed human traits. In Debate 2, he stated:

"pemerintah memberi fasilitas yang memadai" 'the government provides adequate facilities' (RI, 2023b)

This is an example of personification in which the state is attributed agency and deliberateness. The purpose of using this trope is to emphasize that policy responsibility is not neutral or passive, but a result of conscious, directed action. This strategy reinforces critical messages through subtle rhetorical means while embedding evaluative positioning regarding the state's role in public service.

Gibran Rakabuming Raka (Vice-Presidential Candidate 2) adopted a communication strategy marked by indirect critique through refined insinuation. He employed irony to underscore dissonance between expectation and reality in a clever and implicit manner. For example, in Debate 4, he remarked:

“saya lagi nyari jawabannya Prof Mahfud... malah menjelaskan ekonomi hijau” ‘I was looking for the answer, Prof. Mahfud... but instead he explained green economy’ (RI, 2024b)

This is an instance of irony directed at an opponent, subtly expressing dissatisfaction with the course of the discussion without making it explicit. Such a strategy projects the image of a nimble communicator capable of delivering sharp criticism without engaging in overt confrontation.

The rhetorical strategy of Mahfud MD (Vice-Presidential Candidate 3) reflects an argumentative approach that emphasizes semantic contrast within the structure of his statements. He employed antithesis to stress conceptual opposition in a direct and logical manner. In Debate 2, he stated:

“infrastruktur itu tidak hanya jembatan... tetapi juga regulasi dan digitalisasi” ‘infrastructure is not just about bridges... but also about regulations and digitalization’ (RI, 2023b)

This antithetical construction contrasts physical and regulatory elements as two facets of development. It frames conceptual opposition within a unified sentence to assert that development should not be narrowly defined in material terms alone. This rhetorical structure enhances Mahfud’s image as a communicator who integrates rational principles with a deep understanding of policy formulation.

C. The Function of Figurative Language in Political Speech Acts Strategy

The use of figurative language in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential debates is not merely a stylistic ornament but a strategic component that reinforces the function of political speech acts. The relationship between pragmatic intent and rhetorical form demonstrates how figurative language supports the framing of attitudes, thoughts, and the political persona of each candidate.

Anies Baswedan’s (Presidential Candidate 1) communication style reflects a logic-based approach and policy reasoning. Assertive speech acts are employed to deliver rational evaluations of the system and the proposed solutions. Debate 1 data *“Koruptor digerakkan dengan undang undang perampasan aset... kpk harus menjadi lembaga yang kuat kembali...”* ‘Corruptors should be acted upon through the asset forfeiture law... the KPK must become a strong institution again’ (RI, 2023a) expresses a belief in the necessity of legal reinforcement. The function of hyperbole intensifies criticism, as in Debate 3 *“bukan hanya di sektor pemerintahan, tapi di seluruh keluarga”* ‘not only in the government sector, but in every family’ (RI, 2024a), which exaggerates the scale of the issue to stress the urgency of change. This combination reinforces Anies’s rhetorical position as a critical, logical figure focused on systemic impact.

Prabowo Subianto’s (Presidential Candidate 2) communication style is characterized by straightforward and emphatic policy commitments. Commissive speech acts are dominant, reflecting a firm intention to implement social programs. Debate 5 data *“Kami bertekad menghilangkan kemiskinan dari Indonesia. Kami bertekad menghilangkan kelaparan dan kurang gizi bagi rakyat Indonesia.”* ‘We are determined to eliminate poverty from Indonesia. We are determined to eliminate hunger and malnutrition among the Indonesian people’ (RI, 2024c) demonstrates explicit commitment through repetition. Rhetorical force is also supported by sarcasm in Debate 1 *“Kalau gampang menyalahkan angin, hujan... tidak perlu ada pemerintahan”* ‘If blaming the wind and rain is that easy... then there’s no need for a government’ (RI, 2023a), which conveys sharp critique within formal constraints. Together, these strengthen his image as a decisive leader unafraid of direct criticism.

Ganjar Pranowo’s (Presidential Candidate 3) communication shows a tendency to drive concrete policy reform. Directive speech acts are employed in firm appeals, such as Debate 5 *“Hentikan liberalisasi pendidikan. Hentikan hari ini. Berikanlah kepada para mahasiswa kita proporsi yang benar.”* ‘Stop the liberalization of education. Stop it today. Give our students their rightful share’ (RI, 2024c), which expresses a clear demand for educational reform. The use of parallelism reinforces argumentative structure, as in *“mereka akan melahirkan bayi-bayi yang sehat, yang kuat”* ‘they will give birth to healthy babies, strong ones’ (RI, 2024c), creating a persuasive rhythm and semantic stability. This combination builds his image as a progressive, straightforward figure aligned with social justice.

Muhaimin Iskandar’s (Vice-Presidential Candidate 1) communication style expresses strong emotional responses to social inequality. Expressive speech acts are used to voice concern over policies considered unjust. Debate 2 data *“Investasi ini harus bergeser menjadi padat karya yang bisa melibatkan seluruh anak bangsa ini...”* ‘This investment must shift to labor-intensive programs that can involve all the nation’s children’ (RI, 2023b) highlights his alignment with marginalized groups. Rhetorical function is strengthened by personification, such as *“pemerintah memberi fasilitas”* ‘the government provides facilities’, attributing active agency to state institutions. This reinforces a sense of state responsibility as a proactive actor in public policy.

Gibran Rakabuming Raka (Vice-Presidential Candidate 2) exhibits a directive communication pattern focused on concrete problem-solving. Debate 4 data *“Solusinya: IUP-nya dicabut... perusahaan besar wajib gandeng UMKM lokal, pengusaha lokal...”* ‘The solution: revoke the permits... large corporations must partner with local MSMEs and entrepreneurs’ (RI, 2024b) shows directive speech acts in economic development. Stylistic function is reinforced by irony, as seen in *“saya lagi nyari jawabannya Prof Mahfud... malah menjelaskan ekonomi hijau”* ‘I was looking for your answer, Prof. Mahfud... but you explained the green economy instead’ (RI, 2024b), which subtly critiques the course of the debate. This presents Gibran as a responsive and tactically sharp communicator.

Mahfud MD's (Vice-Presidential Candidate 3) communication centers on commitment to law enforcement and justice. Commissive speech acts are used to assert readiness to implement governmental reforms. Debate 4 data "*Kami akan mengembalikan secara bertahap hak rakyat dan... tagih dunia internasional untuk membayar utang yang merusak pembangunan.*" 'We will gradually restore the people's rights and... demand the international world repay debts that harm development' (RI, 2024b) shows a pledge toward justice. Antithesis is employed to highlight semantic contrasts, as in Debate 2 "*infrastruktur itu tidak hanya jembatan... tetapi juga regulasi dan digitalisasi*" 'infrastructure is not just bridges... but also regulation and digitalization' (RI, 2023b), framing development beyond physical constructs. This builds Mahfud's persona as a thoughtful, strategic policymaker.

The function of figurative language in the debates lies in its ability to strengthen the pragmatic intention behind each speech act. Figurative expressions not only embellish structure but act as rhetorical strategies shaping public perception of each candidate's credibility and political posture. The integration of stylistic and pragmatic strategies indicates that political discourse is not merely informational, but a calculated tool to construct ideological positions and influence audience reception in a contested political arena.

IV. CONCLUSION

The communication strategies employed in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential debates demonstrate an integration between speech act selection and rhetorical figures as part of a deliberate rhetorical construction. Assertive, commissive, directive, and expressive speech acts were used to convey attitudes, policy commitments, calls to action, and emotional responses to public issues. Each type of utterance reflects the candidates' communicative tendencies and ideological orientations.

The use of rhetorical figures such as hyperbole, sarcasm, parallelism, irony, personification, and antithesis served to reinforce messages, clarify meaning, and construct a distinctive leadership persona. Each rhetorical figure was strategically selected to produce rhetorical impact aligned with the pragmatic intentions of political utterances. Rhetorical strength was constructed not only through syntactic structure but also through the symbolic and aesthetic content of language style.

The analysis reveals that linguistic strategies in debates are not context-independent; rather, they are integral to efforts to construct public image, maintain ideological stance, and influence public opinion. The synergy between stylistic form and pragmatic function shapes political utterances as meaningful and context-sensitive communicative acts.

The pragmatylistic approach employed in this study has proven effective in uncovering both the functional and expressive dimensions of political language. These findings broaden our understanding of the role of language within the discursive arena of electoral contestation and contribute to the development of stylistic-pragmatic studies in the context of Indonesian political communication.

Methodologically, the analytical model developed here may be applied to other forms of political discourse, including parliamentary speeches, social media campaigns, and local-level debate forums. Future research is recommended to examine audience responses to these rhetorical patterns and to explore their relationship with persuasive effectiveness and the construction of public perception in competitive political contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Head of the Indonesian Literature Study Program, the Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Arts, the Institute for Research and Community Service, and the Rector of Universitas Negeri Surabaya for the implementation of this research.

REFERENCES

- [1] Achmad, S., Miolo, S. T., Katili, A., & Bouti, S. (2023). Identifying Linguistic and Speech Acts Variations of the Buginese Tribe Through Socio-Pragmatic Analysis in Establishing Daily Discourse Interactions. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(6), 1698–1709. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1406.29>
- [2] Al-Shboul, O. K., Al-Khawaldeh, N. N., Hamdan, H. J., & Alqbailat, N. (2024). Macro and Micro Analysis of Motivational Speech Acts in Biden's Political Speech. *International Journal of Society, Culture and Language*, 12(1), 362–373. <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijscsl.2024.2016326.3273>
- [3] Azam, S. (2024). Pragma-Rhetoric Analysis of Political Discourse: A Case of Pakistan's Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's Victory Speech. *UCP Journal of Languages & Literature*, 2(1), 61–80. <https://doi.org/10.24312/ucp-jll.02.01.370>
- [4] Bohmann, A., & Ahlers, W. (2022). Stance in Narration: Finding Structure in Complex Sociolinguistic Variation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 26(1), 65–83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12533>
- [5] Busairi, M. (2023). *Satir imitasi dalam parodi Republik Sentilan Sentilun: Kajian pragmatistika* [Imitative satire in the parody of Republik Sentilan Sentilun: A pragma-stylistic study]. *Mabasan: Masyarakat Bahasa & Sastra Nusantara*, 17(1), 79–96. <https://doi.org/10.26499/mab.v17i1.647>
- [6] Dawudi, D. A., Nurhadi, D., & Pratita, I. I. (2020). *Ungkapan cinta dalam Suluk Kanan Nabi: Kajian pragmatistika* [Expressions of love in Suluk Kanan Nabi: A pragma-stylistic study]. *Tafhim Al-'Ilmi : Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam*, 16(1), 121–236. <https://doi.org/10.37459/tafhim.v16i01.206>

- [7] Fischer, A., Joosse, S., Strandell, J., Söderberg, N., Johansson, K., & Boonstra, W. J. (2024). How Justice Shapes Transition Governance—a Discourse Analysis of Swedish Policy Debates. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 67(9), 1998–2016. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2023.2177842>
- [8] Fordjour, N. K. O., & Sikanku, G. E. (2022). Vice-Presidential Candidates, Language Frames, and Functions Across Two Continental Divides: An Analysis of Acceptance Speeches. *International Journal of Communication*, 16(1), 864–882. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/18056>
- [9] Gozali, J., Mansoor, A. Z., & Satria, F. (2025). Study of the visual rhetoric of advertising in the BCA campaign “Don’t know? Kasih No!” (Audio visual version). *Serat Rupa: Journal of Design*, 9(1), 83–100. <https://doi.org/10.28932/srjd.v9i1.8994>
- [10] Ilma, A., Hindun, H., Nailatunnajah, N., & Sabirin, A. B. (2024). Anies Baswedan’s speech style and rhetorical usage in the 2024 election dispute lawsuit speech. *Geram: Jurnal Pendidikan, Bahasa, Dan Sastra*, 12(1), 143–154. [https://doi.org/10.25299/geram.2024.vol12\(1\).17087143](https://doi.org/10.25299/geram.2024.vol12(1).17087143)
- [11] Kasirzadeh, A., & Gabriel, I. (2023). In Conversation with Artificial Intelligence: Aligning language Models with Human Values. *Philosophy and Technology*, 36(2), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-023-00606-x>
- [12] Keraf, G. (2007). *Diksi dan Gaya Bahasa* [Diction and language style]. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [13] Khasanah, U., & Muslim, M. (2025). *Penggunaan majas perbandingan dalam novel Luka Cita karya Valerie Patkar* [Use of comparative figures of speech in the novel *Luka Cita* by Valerie Patkar]. *Lingua Franca: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Pengajarannya*, 4(1), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.37680/lingua>
- [14] Khater, H. A., Altakhaineh, A. R. M., & Dahnous, F. (2024). Pragmatic analysis of King Abdullah’s speech: exploring speech acts and societal context. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 11(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2433879>
- [15] Lewiński, M. (2021). Illocutionary pluralism. *Synthese*, 199(3–4), 6687–6714. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-021-03087-7>
- [16] Mao, T., & He, S. (2021). An Integrated Approach to Pragmatic Competence: Its Framework and Properties. *SAGE Open*, 11(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211011472>
- [17] Mardiana, D., Rokhman, F., Rustono, & Mardikantoro, H. B. (2025). Speech Act of Political Figures in the Discourse of Educational Development: an Interpersonal Pragmatic Approach. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2025.2463728>
- [18] Mulyono, M., Laksono, K., Wuryaningrum, R., & Cahyo, A. A. R. (2025). The Application of Politeness Principles in Speech Acts in the 2024 Presidential Election Debate. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2025.2495479>
- [19] Mulyono, M., Rhubido, D., Kusumaningsih, D., Mukhzaamilah, M., Yuliyanto, A., & Cahyo, A. A. R. (2025). The Functions of Vulgar Language in Basa Suroboyoan During Social Interactions Within Urban Communities. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(8), 2759–2769. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1508.34>
- [20] Nawab, H. U., Jamil, S., & Ullah, K. (2025). Language, Politics, and Power: Unveiling Putin’s Annexation Narrative through Fairclough’s Model. *Journal of Social Science Archives*, 8(1), 37–49. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5290126>
- [21] Nordensvard, J., & Ketola, M. (2022). Populism as an Act of Storytelling: Analyzing the Climate Change Narratives of Donald Trump and Greta Thunberg as Populist Truth-tellers. *Environmental Politics*, 31(5), 861–882. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2021.1996818>
- [22] Rahmanda, N. F., Yohanes, B., & Mintowati, M. (2024). Pendidikan Karakter melalui Strategi Penggunaan Snobisme dalam Wacana Humor pada Akun Instagram Nopek Novian: Kajian Pragmatistika. *Jurnal Education and Development Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan*, 12(1), 308–316. <https://doi.org/10.37081/ed.v12i1.5423>
- [23] Rasheed, M., Imran, D. S., & Ullah, D. R. (2024). A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Discursive Strategies Employed in the United States Presidential Debates of 2016. *Al-Mahdi Research Journal (MRJ)*, 5(4), 525–536. <https://ojs.mrj.com.pk/index.php/MRJ/article/view/373>
- [24] RI, K. (2023a, December 12). *Debat Pertama Calon Presiden Pemilu Tahun 2024* [First Presidential Debate of the 2024 Election] [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yNO0YS846kU&t=3532s> (accessed July 3, 2025)
- [25] RI, K. (2023b, December 22). *Debat Kedua Calon Wakil Presiden Pemilu Tahun 2024* [Second Vice Presidential Debate of the 2024 Election] [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzC828FYrwm&t=1740s> (accessed July 7, 2025)
- [26] RI, K. (2024a, January 7). *Debat Ketiga Calon Presiden Pemilu Tahun 2024* [Third Presidential Debate of the 2024 Election] [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJdt-HBBGlo> (accessed July 14, 2025)
- [27] RI, K. (2024b, January 21). *Debat Keempat Calon Wakil Presiden Pemilu Tahun 2024* [Fourth Vice Presidential Debate of the 2024 Election] [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anuQxiXpQ7I&t=11s> (accessed July 20, 2025)
- [28] RI, K. (2024c, February 4). *Debat Kelima Calon Presiden Pemilu Tahun 2024* [Fifth Presidential Debate of the 2024 Election] [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8J66JxvmEzo> (accessed July 25, 2025)
- [29] Searle, J. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511609213>
- [30] Shahi, B. M. V. (2022). Pragmatic Competence of Iranian EFL Learners in the Light of Refusal Speech Act. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13(1), 58–65. <https://doi.org/10.17507/JLTR.1301.07>
- [31] Shahid, S. (2025). The Pragmatics of Encouragement: An Inquiry Into Defaults Vis-à-vis Inferences. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 237(1), 97–112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2025.01.013>
- [32] Sutrisno, D., Martina, M., Karsana, D., Annury, M. N., Adri, A., Damayanti, W., Nurhidayah, A. M., & Juliastuty, D. (2024). Semiotic Analysis of Psycholinguistic Strategies in Indonesian President Candidates’ Debates 2024: Unraveling Linguistic Signifiers and Mental Processes in Argumentative Discourse. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*, 65(5), 943–976. <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i5.7251>
- [33] Tajeddin, Z., & Bagherkazemi, M. (2021). Implicit and Explicit Pragmatic Learning Strategies: Their Factorial Structure and Relationship with Speech Act Knowledge. *TESOL-EJ*, 25(3), 1–28. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1331742>
- [34] Tashiro, A., Imamura, M., Kumano, S., & Otsuka, K. (2023). Analyzing and Recognizing Interlocutors’ Gaze Functions from Multimodal Nonverbal Cues. *ACM International Conference Proceeding Series*, 1(1), 33–41. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3577190.3614152>

- [35] Warren, E., & Call, J. (2022). Inferential Communication: Bridging the Gap Between Intentional and Ostensive Communication in Non-human Primates. *Hypothesis and Theory*, 12(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.718251>
- [36] Widiastuti, Y., Santoso, A., & Sumadi, S. (2024). Presupposition of repetition speech flavour in Denny Sumargo's podcast with Laura Anna. *KEMBARA: Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, 10(2), 402–413. <https://doi.org/10.22219/kembara.v10i2.29972>
- [37] Widjaya, S. F. (2021). Bahasa rinengga dalam pertunjukan wayang kulit lakon *Temuruning Wahyu Toh Jali* oleh dhalang Ki Ali Mudho Siswoko: Kajian pragmatistika [Figurative language in the *Wayang Kulit* performance *Temuruning Wahyu Toh Jali* by puppeteer Ki Ali Mudho Siswoko: A pragmatist study]. *Jurnal Online Baradha*, 17(3), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.26740/job.v17n3.p1265-1282>
- [38] Yuwono, P. P., Pairin, U., & Nuryanta, B. (2021). Tuturan dalam kotbah pendeta di Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan Kota Surabaya [Speech acts in the sermons of pastors at the Gereja Kristen Jawi Wetan in Surabaya City]. *Jurnal Education and Development*, 9(3), 311–315. <https://journal.ipts.ac.id/index.php/ED/article/view/2860>



Mulyono was born on October 16, 1966. He earned his Bachelor of Education (Drs.) in 1990 from IKIP Negeri Surabaya, majoring in Indonesian Language and Literature Education; his Master of Linguistics (M.Hum.) in 1998 from Padjadjaran University, Bandung, Indonesia; and his doctorate in Linguistics Program, in 2018 from Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia.

He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Language and Literature Education, Graduate School, Universitas Negeri Surabaya (State University of Surabaya), Surabaya, Indonesia. He holds the rank of Associate Professor and is actively engaged in research across the fields of language, education, and culture. His primary area of expertise is pragmasyntax, where he has made significant contributions to the development of linguistic theory. He has published in several high-quality international journals, including *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* (Scopus-indexed, Q1), *Cogent Arts & Humanities* (Scopus-indexed, Q1), and *IJJET* (*International Journal of Instructional and Educational Technology*, Scopus-indexed, Q3). His current research focuses on syntax, pragmatics, and stylistic features in political discourse and language education. His recent study investigates the application of politeness principles, speech acts, and figures of speech in the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential debates.

Dr. Mulyono is actively involved in professional academic communities and frequently contributes as both a peer reviewer and a published author. He can be contacted via email at mulyono@unesa.ac.id, and his ORCID iD is <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1611-6617>.



Mochamad Bayu Firmansyah was born on January 31st in Indonesia. He earned his doctorate in 2020 from the State University of Malang, majoring in Indonesian Language Education. He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Language Education and Literature, Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Universitas PGRI Wiranegara, Pasuruan, East Java, Indonesia.

He is actively engaged in research on Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Multimodal Learning, and Multimodal Literature. He has previously served as Vice Rector for Student Affairs at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara and is currently the Head of the Language Development Center at the same university. He also contributes as a peer reviewer for several Indonesian academic journals.

Dr. Firmansyah is a member of ADOBSI (Association of Language and Literature Lecturers) and HISKI (Association of Indonesian Literature Scholars). He is actively involved in academic and editorial committees in the field of Indonesian language and literature. He can be contacted at firmansyahbayu970@gmail.com, and his ORCID iD is <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4705-2436>.



Anggoro Abiyu Ristio Cahyo was born on November 14, 2000. He earned his Bachelor of Education (S.Pd.) in Indonesian Language and Literature Education in 2023, and his Master of Education (M.Pd.) in Indonesian Language Education in 2025. Both degrees were obtained from Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia.

He has published several academic works in the fields of education, language, and literature. His research includes a study on integrating traditional arts with digital technology in BIPA instruction (published in *IJJET*, a Scopus Q3-indexed international journal); a cultural literary analysis of local wisdom in Nh. Dini's novel *Tirai Menurun* (published in *Disastra*, SINTA 2); and an article on speech acts in YouTube talk shows (published in *Diskursus*, SINTA 4).

Mr. Cahyo is currently developing research in the areas of pragmatics and stylistics. He can be contacted via email at anggoro.23002@mhs.unesa.ac.id, and his ORCID iD is <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-0143-5958>.