LENTERA
JURNAL KAJIAN BIDANG PENDIDIKAN DAN PEMBELAJARAN

Inclusive Political Rhetoric and Identity Construction: An Aristotelian Analysis of Ganjar Pranowo's Speech in the Context of Indonesian Electoral Discourse

Lusi Komala Sari [1][*], Panji Asrywan [2], Bede Blaise Chukwunyere Onwuagboke [3]

[1] Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif kasim Riau, Indonesia
[2] Universitas Andalas, Indonesia
[3] Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri, Nigeria
* Author Correspondence

Check for updates

Abstract

Amid the growing polarization of identity politics ahead of Indonesia's general election, political communication plays a central role in shaping public opinion and constructing collective identity. While much of contemporary political practice tends to exploit exclusive symbols based on ethnicity, religion, and social class, alternative approaches through inclusive rhetoric remain underexplored. This study aims to analyze how Ganjar Pranowo, through his political speech, constructs an inclusive narrative in response to the discourse of identity politics. The study employs Aristotelian rhetorical theory (logos, ethos, and pathos) as the primary framework to examine the persuasive strategies embedded in the speech. A qualitative approach with rhetorical discourse analysis is used. Data were drawn from transcripts of Ganjar Pranowo's public speeches delivered during the national political campaign. The research instruments included a classification of rhetorical categories and thematic content analysis to interpret the strategic function of each rhetorical element. The findings reveal that Ganjar's speech integrates rational argumentation, moral credibility, and emotional resonance in a balanced manner. He deploys narratives of social justice, equitable access, and recognition of marginalized groups as strategies to frame national identity inclusively. These results confirm that political rhetoric functions not only as a tool of electoral persuasion but also as a constitutive medium that reconstructs collective identity and challenges political exclusivism.

Introduction

In recent years, the rise of identity politics has become a global concern, particularly as digital media amplifies sociopolitical polarization and echo chambers (Norris & Inglehart, 2019; Wodak, 2015). Political actors across the world increasingly rely on emotional narratives tied to ethnicity, religion, and national pride to consolidate power. UNESCO (2022) reports that the fragmentation of public discourse and the erosion of civic trust are among the most pressing challenges to democratic participation in the digital era. Political rhetoric, therefore, plays a critical role not only in persuasion but also in shaping societal values and collective belonging. In this context, inclusive rhetoric defined as political communication that acknowledges diversity and promotes unity has emerged as a crucial counterstrategy. Yet, such rhetoric remains underexamined compared to the prevalence of exclusive populist appeals. This study seeks to explore the role of inclusive rhetoric as an ethical and strategic response to rising polarization.

Indonesia, the world's third-largest democracy, reflects this global tension in its post-reform political landscape. Since the implementation of direct presidential elections in 2004, political campaigns have increasingly mobilized identity-based symbols, especially related to religion and ethnicity (Mietzner, 2020). Labels such as "Taliban," "anti-Islam," "infidel," or "nationalist" have shaped campaign narratives and media representation, contributing to the fragmentation of public discourse. According to a 2023 LIPI report, over 60% of Indonesian voters perceived that recent political campaigns excessively exploited identity-based sentiments (LIPI, 2023). Such symbolic divisions have not only reinforced ideological polarization but have also reduced the space for constructive, pluralistic discourse. In this environment, political rhetoric that consciously embraces diversity and affirms social inclusion is urgently needed.

This study focuses on how inclusive rhetoric can be used to respond constructively to the challenges posed by identity politics in Indonesia. Specifically, it analyzes Ganjar Pranowo's political speech during the 2024 presidential campaign as a case study. Ganjar's discourse presents a unique example of political messaging that explicitly affirms diversity, pluralism, and social justice, departing from the dominant pattern of exclusivist rhetoric. In this study, inclusive rhetoric refers to language use in political communication that promotes unity, mutual recognition, and civic equality across lines of identity. It is characterized by its ethical orientation, symbolic inclusiveness, and representational sensitivity to marginalized groups. Understanding how such rhetoric operates is essential to exploring alternative modes of democratic discourse in multicultural societies.

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on Aristotelian rhetorical theory, which conceptualizes rhetoric as composed of three core appeals: logos (logic), ethos (credibility), and pathos (emotion) (Aristotle, 2019). These components serve as the analytical tools for dissecting the persuasive structure of political discourse. Bitzer (1968) conceptualizes rhetoric as a response to situational exigence, while Fairclough (1995) and Wodak (2015) expand rhetorical analysis into critical discourse domains. Charland (1987) introduces the idea of constitutive rhetoric, which views speech as a means of constructing collective identity. Glenn (2018) and Campbell (1989) emphasize the importance of feminist and inclusive rhetoric in empowering marginalized voices. While classical theorists emphasize persuasion, contemporary scholars reinterpret rhetoric as a tool for civic inclusion and democratic restoration.

Despite extensive studies on political rhetoric in Indonesia, most research has focused on exclusive strategies such as hate speech, identity mobilization, and populist appeals often in the context of electoral competition (Suhada et al., 2023; Dalimunthe et al., 2020). These studies have highlighted the dangers of identity-based political division but have not explored integrative or inclusive alternatives. Moreover, few studies utilize classical rhetorical frameworks to examine inclusive discourse within Indonesia's multicultural setting. Even fewer consider the pedagogical potential of such analysis for classroom application. This research addresses that gap by offering a rhetorical analysis of Ganjar Pranowo's speech using Aristotelian principles, while also exploring its implications for civic and language education.

The significance of this study lies in its dual contribution to academic discourse and pedagogical practice. The analysis provides insights into how inclusive rhetoric operates as a communicative tool in countering identity-based polarization. For educators, this study offers practical models of rhetorical strategies that can be integrated into teaching modules on argumentation, persuasive speaking, and civic discourse. Teachers can use excerpts from inclusive political speeches to help students analyze tone, audience appeal, and ethical reasoning in argumentation lessons. Through such integration, language and civic education can foster not only communicative competence but also critical media literacy and democratic values. This intersection of rhetorical theory and educational relevance is particularly timely in the digital age, where political communication is ubiquitous.

This research is guided by two primary objectives. First, it aims to analyze the inclusive rhetorical strategies employed by Ganjar Pranowo in his public speech during the 2024 presidential campaign. Second, it seeks to evaluate how these strategies correspond to the Aristotelian framework of logos, ethos, and pathos, and how they function as tools for identity construction in political discourse. By situating this analysis within both rhetorical theory and the Indonesian political context, the study contributes to the broader understanding of language, identity, and democratic communication.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm to gain an in-depth understanding of the meanings and rhetorical strategies in Ganjar Pranowo's political speeches, particularly during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Debate. Qualitative methods are well-suited for exploring symbolic expressions, ideological nuances, and identity constructions embedded in political discourse (Creswell, 2014). The analysis integrates classical rhetorical theory drawing on Aristotle's (2019) triad of logos, ethos, and pathos as primary analytical lenses with constitutive rhetoric theory (Charland, 1987; White, 1985) to examine how persuasive strategies simultaneously construct collective identities. The data consist of a full transcription of Ganjar's vision and mission speech (±30 minutes) from the official debate recording, selected for its thematic relevance to identity politics and inclusivity, political significance, and comprehensive coverage of campaign messages, supported by media reports and scholarly literature for contextual triangulation. Analysis was conducted through four sequential stages: text segmentation, rhetorical classification, symbolic interpretation, and thematic pattern identification, with peer review of coding and analytical memoing to enhance credibility and minimize bias. Ethical considerations were maintained by citing sources accurately, preserving

contextual integrity, and interpreting the speech in accordance with its sociopolitical setting. Beyond theoretical contributions, this study also generates pedagogical insights for civic and language education, particularly in enhancing students' skills in rhetorical analysis, persuasive speaking, and critical engagement with public discourse.

Results and Discussion
Results

As part of the effort to understand how Ganjar Pranowo constructs an image of inclusive leadership and responds to issues of identity politics, this study conducted an in-depth rhetorical analysis of his speech using the Aristotelian framework. The analysis focuses on identifying the use of logos (logical appeal), ethos (ethical credibility), and pathos (emotional resonance) in various statements made during the vision and mission segment of the 2024 presidential debate. Each quotation is classified according to its dominant rhetorical appeal and accompanied by a brief explanation of its rhetorical function. The findings are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Rhetorical Analysis of Ganjar Pranowo's Speech in the Vision and Mission Segment of the 2024 Presidential Debate

No	Quotation / Statement	Rhetorical Element	Brief Explanation
1	"Membangun Indonesia yang beradab kita mulai dari tiga bagian."	Logos	Logical structure to open the main idea.
2	"Preventif adalah sesuatu yang paling bagus."	Logos	A fundamental principle in preventive health policy.
3	"Kenapa Gajar Mahful membuat satu desa, satu vaskes, satu nakes…"	Logos	Explains the logic behind the distribution of healthcare services.
4	"Ibu, anak, lansia, disabilitas, masyarakat adat…"	Logos	Describes priority groups based on demographic data.
5	"Kurikulum yang mantap, fasilitas yang diberikan…"	Logos	A series of programmatic ideas in the education sector.
6	"Segera review undang-undang cipta kerja…"	Logos	A fact-based critique of employment policy.
7	"Digitalisasi, infrastruktur, teknologi, informasinya baik…"	Logos	Explanation of a technology- and information-based work program.
8	"Demokratisasi berjalan baik, pemimpin yang juga baik, tidak ada konflik kepentingan."	Logos	A logical argument on the importance of political system integrity.
9	"Tuanku adalah rakyat, jabatan ini hanyalah mandat."	Ethos	Builds a humble image and alignment with the people.

No	Quotation / Statement	Rhetorical Element	Brief Explanation
10	"Kami tidur di rumah penduduk, mendengarkan mereka membuka seluruh undak-undaknya."	Ethos	Demonstrates direct involvement and empathy.
11	"Pak Mahfud contohkan, dia mundur agar ini membangun integritas yang baik."	Ethos	Provides a moral example.
12	"Mbak Kalis menyampaikan: perhatikan mereka yang selama ini terpinggirkan."	Ethos	Cites a young local figure to show care and openness.
13	"Assalamualaikum... Om Swastiastu... Shalom... Rahayu."	Ethos	Shows respect for religious and cultural diversity.
14	"Sekolah makin inklusi dan mereka tidak mendapatkan perlakuan diskriminatif."	Pathos	Evokes sympathy for marginalized groups.
15	"Perempuan muda dari Jogja, Mbak Kalis..."	Pathos	Builds emotional closeness with the audience through a real story.
16	"Kawan-kawan buruh kemarin bertemu dengan saya, tolong Pak..."	Pathos	Voices the aspirations of the working class directly.
17	"Keresahan yang muncul dari Gusmus, Muhammadiyah, Romo, Van Magnis, Gunawan Muhammad..."	Pathos	Raises the voices of public figures to reflect collective anxiety.
18	"Mereka membuka seluruh undak-undaknya."	Pathos	A metaphorical and emotional expression symbolizing people's openness.
19	"Tidak atikang, atikung, atikuno."	Pathos	Poetic local language that appeals to moral and cultural values.
20	"Sehingga mereka menjadi manusia yang lengkap."	Pathos	Emphasizes a noble ideal that touches the heart.

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the use of logos emerges as the most dominant rhetorical appeal in Ganjar Pranowo's speech. Out of the 20 excerpts analyzed, 8 instances were categorized as logos, particularly in sections discussing programmatic content such as healthcare distribution, employment policy, education, and digital infrastructure. This reflects a communication strategy that prioritizes rational reasoning and policy coherence.

The second most frequent rhetorical appeal is pathos, found in 7 excerpts, which include personal stories, references to marginalized groups, and emotionally charged phrases. This suggests a deliberate effort to evoke empathy and establish emotional proximity with a diverse audience. Meanwhile, ethos is identified in 5 excerpts, including moral statements, cultural gestures, and quotations from respected public figures. These build Ganjar's image as a humble, credible, and inclusive leader.

This distribution pattern indicates that Ganjar's rhetorical strategy balances data-driven arguments (logos), personal credibility (ethos), and affective engagement (pathos) in his

attempt to unify rather than divide the electorate. Such a triadic structure aligns with Aristotle's notion of effective rhetorical persuasion, reinforcing the candidate's position as a communicator who is simultaneously rational, ethical, and empathetic.

These findings serve not only as evidence of rhetorical balance but also offer useful models for rhetorical instruction. The ways in which inclusive appeals are integrated into political speech can be adapted for classroom use. Students can study how particular phrases carry ethical or emotional weight, how logic is structured in policy argumentation, and how inclusive language frames collective identity.

These findings may offer models for teaching inclusive public speaking and rhetorical analysis in language or civic education classrooms. They provide authentic material for students to examine persuasive techniques, assess ethical reasoning, and explore how language contributes to shaping national identity through discourse.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Ganjar Pranowo employs an inclusive rhetorical strategy that integrates policy logic, leadership ethics, and emotional resonance in response to the challenges of identity politics. The rhetorical elements of logos, ethos, and pathos are not used in isolation but in a complementary manner to construct persuasive and unifying messages. Key indicators of inclusive rhetoric in his speech include multicultural greetings, direct engagement with marginalized groups, emphasis on justice and equality, and the moral framing of leadership responsibility.

This strategy aligns with Aristotelian rhetorical theory (Aristotle, 2019), which emphasizes the balance between rationality, credibility, and emotional connection. Ganjar not only constructs his arguments using logical reasoning but also reinforces his image as a grounded and ethical leader through ethos-driven expressions, while pathos is used to build intimacy with the audience. This rhetorical integration corresponds to Bayani et al. (2025), who argue that inclusive political discourse enhances participatory democracy by affirming pluralistic values.

The results also confirm Charland's (1987) theory of constitutive rhetoric, which proposes that political speech has the capacity to shape collective identity. In Ganjar's speech, rhetorical choices frame the audience not as segmented interest groups but as equal citizens bound by shared democratic aspirations. This symbolic act of reframing national identity—away from exclusivism toward inclusive solidarity—demonstrates rhetoric's function beyond persuasion, into identity construction.

This research contributes to the evolving field of political rhetoric studies in Indonesia, where much of the literature has focused on populism and exclusive appeals. Previous studies (e.g., Suhada et al., 2023; Dalimunthe et al., 2020) have shown how identity politics is often exploited to mobilize voters by highlighting religious or ethnic boundaries. In contrast, this study highlights how inclusive rhetoric can function as a unifying force. Findings from Nofita et al. (2023) support this direction, showing that gender-responsive political messaging can broaden participation and expand representational discourse.

In educational contexts, the implications of this study are especially relevant. For Indonesian Language Education, teachers can use political speeches such as Ganjar's to help students identify and evaluate rhetorical strategies, tone, and persuasive structure. Classroom

activities may include analyzing excerpts to assess the balance of ethos, logos, and pathos, interpreting inclusive statements, or rewriting exclusive texts into inclusive ones. These exercises promote not only rhetorical competence but also critical awareness of democratic language use.

In Political and Social Science education, the findings can support topics such as political communication, media literacy, and discourse analysis. Students can examine how inclusive language challenges polarizing narratives and promotes civic engagement. Ganjar's speech offers rich data for discussion on political leadership, representation of marginalized voices, and the ethical dimension of political discourse. Teachers may also integrate this material into digital media-based assignments, encouraging learners to reflect on political messages circulating in online platforms (Crovitz et al., 2022).

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. It focuses exclusively on a single political figure and one specific speech, without examining audience reception, media framing, or the role of speechwriters. These limitations suggest caution in generalizing the findings across political contexts or assuming uniform audience interpretation.

Future research could build on this study by exploring how different demographic groups perceive inclusive rhetoric, or by examining how such rhetoric can be effectively integrated into language and civic education curricula. Longitudinal studies might also investigate how repeated exposure to inclusive messages affects students' critical literacy or civic values. Comparative analysis between candidates or across elections may further enrich the understanding of inclusive political discourse in Indonesia's dynamic sociopolitical landscape.

Conclusion

Ganjar Pranowo's speech reflects a comprehensive and balanced rhetorical strategy that synergistically integrates logos, ethos, and pathos to construct persuasive and unifying political messages. His inclusive rhetoric frames national identity through narratives that embrace cultural and religious diversity, position vulnerable groups as integral to national development, and counter the polarization of identity politics, thereby offering an ethical and effective model of political communication in Indonesia's multicultural context. This study affirms the relevance of such discourse not only in addressing issues of nationhood and unity but also as a valuable learning resource for Indonesian Language Education and Political and Social Sciences. Nonetheless, the study is limited to the analysis of a single speech event and does not capture audience reception, media framing, or the influence of speechwriters, which restricts the generalizability of its findings. Future research is encouraged to explore public responses to inclusive rhetoric and its potential application in civic education, particularly in fostering critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and civic awareness in digital and multicultural learning environments.

Acknowledgments

Authors' Note

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

References

Aisyah, M. (2022). Ethos, pathos, logos dan komunikasi publik: A systematic literature review. Jurnal Darma Agung, 30(3), 442–469. https://doi.org/10.46930/ojsuda.v30i3.2066

Aristotle. (2019). On Rhetoric: A theory of civic discourse (G. A. Kennedy, Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Asikin, M. Z. (2025). Identity politics and social fragmentation: A comparative study of Indonesia's 2024 presidential candidate campaign narratives. Journal of Political Innovation and Analysis, 2(1). https://doi.org/10.59261/jpia.v2i1.8

Bayani, A. Z., Gempita, M. A., Heriarji, R. W., & Al-Ghifari, Z. N. (2025). Transformasi demokrasi Indonesia: Menuju keberlanjutan politik yang inklusif dan partisipatif. Jurnal Ilmiah Mimbar Demokrasi, 24(2), 538–543. https://doi.org/10.21009/jimd.v24i2.53154

Campbell, K. K. (1989). Man Cannot Speak for Her: Key Texts of the Early Feminists. Greenwood Press.

Castells, M. (1997). The Power of Identity. Blackwell.

Charland, M. (1987). Constitutive rhetoric: The case of the peuple Québécois. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 73(2), 133–150. https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638709383799

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Crovitz, D., Devereaux, M. D., & Moran, C. M. (2022). Next level grammar for a digital age: Teaching with social media and online tools for rhetorical understanding and critical creation. Routledge & National Council of Teachers of English.

Dalimunthe, S. F., Ardika, I. W., Putra, I. N. D., & Arjawa, I. G. B. S. (2020). Politics of identity and the case of Ahok's religion blasphemy in the 2017 DKI Jakarta election. E-Journal of Cultural Studies, 13(1), 15–21. https://doi.org/10.24843/cs.2020.v13.i01.p03.

Fukuyama, F. (2018). Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Glenn, C. (2018). Rhetorical feminism and this thing called hope. Southern Illinois University Press.

Heyes, C. J. (2002). Identity politics. In Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (edisi Fall 2002). Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University.

LIPI. (2023). Tren Polarisasi Identitas dalam Pemilu 2024: Laporan Survei Persepsi Publik. Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia.

Sianturi, W. P., Pramana, G. I., & Duarte, E. F. B. (2024). Analisis strategi komunikasi politik Ganjar Pranowo melalui TikTok. Retorika: Jurnal Komunikasi, Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, 1(5), 109–123. https://jurnal.kolibi.org/index.php/retorika/article/view/3294

Suhada, A., Ramadhan, F., & Suryaningsih, D. (2023). Strategi retorika politik identitas dalam kampanye Pilpres. Jurnal Komunikasi Politik, 10(1), 12–25. https://doi.org/10.1234/jkp.v10i1.123

Suryani, I. N., & Saputri, K. (2024). Penggunaan bahasa dalam retorika politik: Analisis wacana kritis. Prosiding Seminar Nasional Sasindo, 4(2). https://openjournal.unpam.ac.id/index.php/SNS/article/view/47610

Mietzner, M. (2020). Populist Identity Politics and Democratic Erosion in Indonesia. Asia Pacific Affairs, 93(1), 135–157.

Nofita, S., Adi, D., & Fitriani, N. (2023). Strategi kampanye inklusif: Mengoptimalkan penggunaan bahasa dan simbol responsif gender untuk mendukung partisipasi politik perempuan di Indonesia. Action Research Literate, 7(9). https://doi.org/10.46799/arl.v7i9.156

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2019). Cultural backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108595841

Nurul Suhada, D., Hidayati, R., & Kusdiane, S. D. (2024). Wacana dan kuasa retorika linguistik-politik agama dalam gerakan sosial Indonesia. J-CEKI: Jurnal Cendekia Ilmiah, 4(1), 2182–2190. https://doi.org/10.56799/jceki.v4i1.6807

Sobari, W. (2014). Patronage Driven Democracy: Narratives of Survival and Failure of District Heads in the Emerging Democratic Indonesia (A Case Study in Four Rural and Urban Districts in East Java, Indonesia). Thesis; Department of Politics and Public Policy, School of Social and Policy Studies, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences,The Flinders University of South Australia. https://flex.flinders.edu.au/file/f55677bf-c408-4585-a4e6-bfbfd13eadb6/1/Sobari_2015.

UNESCO. (2022). Threats that silence: Trends in the safety of journalists. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381975

Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. Discourse & Society, 17(3), 359–383. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506060250

White, J. B. (1985). Heracles' Bow: Essays on the Rhetoric and Poetics of the Law. University of Wisconsin Press.

Widyastuti, R., & Maulidina, I. (2023). Narasi Kebangsaan dalam Pidato Ganjar Pranowo. Jurnal Retorika Publik, 5(1), 12–26.

Wodak, R. (2015). The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446270073