

Moral sovereigntism: A co-instantiation appraisal analysis of President Prabowo Subianto's UN address

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Appraisal Theory, Co-instantiation, Discourse Analysis, Prabowo Subianto</p> <p>DOI: https://doi.org/10.22437/langue.v4i1.52491</p> <p>Received: January 8, 2026</p> <p>Reviewed: January 11, 2026</p> <p>Accepted: January 23, 2026</p>	<p>The rise of “post-Western” political discourse presents a significant rhetorical puzzle: how do nationalist leaders perform sovereign strength while simultaneously adhering to the multilateral norms of institutions like the United Nations? This article investigates this “sovereigntist’s dilemma” through a case study of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto’s 2025 UN General Assembly address. While previous research using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has analyzed Appraisal systems in isolation, this study argues that such fragmentation misses the functional unity of political rhetoric. Employing a rigorous “co-instantiation” methodology, we mapped the simultaneous bundling of evaluative resources across the speech (N=335). The findings reveal a dominant “rhetorical trialectic” comprising Attitude: Judgement (26.9%), Engagement: Contraction (23.9%), and Graduation: Force (21.5%). We argue that this specific configuration constructs a stance of “moral sovereigntism,” wherein the speaker co-opts the language of global morality to justify nationalist capacity. By reframing national strength not as a threat to multilateralism but as the only vehicle for achieving it, the speech resolves the ideological contradiction. This study contributes a replicable methodological protocol for analyzing the bundled nature of political stance.</p>

1. Introduction

1.1 State of the Arts

The SFL Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) has proven to be a critical tool for moving beyond what politicians say to how they interpersonally enact their ideologies. A significant body of literature has used Appraisal to map the persuasive stances of political leaders (Alhuthali, 2024; Berracheche, 2020; Combei & Reggi, 2023; Hansson et al., 2022; Noor et al., 2021; Sun & Liu, 2023; Xing, 2025). This research has largely focused on two key systems: Attitude and Engagement. Studies on Attitude have shown it to be a primary resource for ideological alignment. However, findings reveal a strategic divergence. Some studies, like Daulay (2010), found that formal speeches prefer the safer Appreciation (valuing policies) to avoid undesired reactions. In contrast, studies of more combative political discourse, such as Ross and Caldwell (2020) on Trump and Li and Zhu (2019) on Chinese state texts, found a clear dominance of Judgement (evaluating people and behavior) as the key tool for going negative and constructing *positive Self-presentation* and *negative Other-presentation*.

Research on Engagement reveals a similar divergence. While some studies, such as Li et al. (2019), found that leaders may favor dialogic expansion to appear open-minded in domestic contexts, a compelling counter-finding exists. In high-stakes international forums, Zhang and Pei (2018) found that both Xi Jinping and Donald Trump overwhelmingly preferred dialogic contraction to present a unified, strong, and cohesive national vision. This aligns with other findings showing that leaders use contraction to assert authority (Li et al., 2019) or monoglossia to present their views as objective facts (Ademilokun, 2016).

These prior investigations highlight the utility of Appraisal Theory in dissecting political rhetoric, particularly in understanding how leaders manipulate evaluative language to project specific images and achieve rhetorical persuasion (Zhang et al., 2024). This analytical depth is further enhanced by considering the theory's comprehensive approach to detecting evaluative discourse across three systems: Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement. Collectively, these systems offer a robust framework for dissecting the complexities of various forms of communication (Tenorio & Benítez-Castro, 2021).

1.2 Research Gap

Despite the valuable foundation provided by this literature, a critical review reveals two significant limitations. First, the existing empirical findings regarding high-stakes political discourse remain contradictory. It is currently unclear, for instance, whether formal international speeches necessitate the *safe*, policy-focused Appreciation observed by Daulay (2010), or the aggressive Judgement identified by Ross and Caldwell (2020). Similarly, regarding authorial stance, findings oscillate between a preference for Dialogic Expansion (Li et al., 2019) and Dialogic Contraction (Zhang & Pei, 2018), suggesting that the context of a formal international speech is not, by itself, sufficient to predict linguistic strategy.

Second, and more critically, the field suffers from a pervasive methodological siloing. Scholarship is largely bifurcated into distinct Attitude studies (e.g., Daulay, 2010; Li & Zhu, 2019) and Engagement studies (e.g., Ademilokun, 2016; Zhang & Pei, 2018). By analyzing these systems in isolation, current research obscures the functional co-instantiation of these resources, specifically, how they are bundled together to form a single, coherent rhetorical engine. Consequently, we lack an understanding of how Attitude choices interact with Engagement strategies, or how both are simultaneously intensified by Graduation. The true persuasive mechanism, we argue, likely lies not in any single system, but in the observable pattern of their co-occurrence.

1.3 Research Question

This paper is guided by the following research question: How do the specific appraisal resources (*Judgement + Force + Contraction*) in Prabowo's speech work to resolve a key ideological contradiction, such as performing nationalist strength while adhering to multilateral UN norms?

1.4 Research Novelty

This article addresses this gap by employing a co-instantiation methodology. We analyze the speech not as a collection of isolated features, but as a functionally integrated system. Our novelty is twofold. Methodologically, we move beyond isolated systems to map the speech's dominant rhetorical trialectic: the simultaneous, bundled co-instantiation of Attitude: Judgement, Engagement: Contraction, and Graduation: Force (J+F+C). Theoretically, we argue this (J+F+C) bundle is the linguistic fingerprint of a sophisticated political strategy we term moral sovereigntism.

This approach allows us to refine the findings of previous work. We confirm the findings of Zhang & Pei (2018) that Contraction is key in this context, and we confirm the findings of Ross & Caldwell (2020) that Judgement is a primary tool. Our contribution is to show how these two systems, amplified by Force, are functionally interconnected to resolve a core ideological contradiction.

1.5 The Case Study: Prabowo Subianto's Speech

This study analyzes President Prabowo Subianto's 2025 UN speech. Prabowo represents an ideal case for this investigation due to his political trajectory. Transitioning from a rhetorical style rooted in military command to the diplomatic requirements of a head of state, his discourse naturally embodies the tension between authoritarian certainty (sovereignism) and diplomatic negotiation (multilateralism). Investigating how he resolves this tension offers broader insights into post-Western leadership styles.

2 METHOD

2.1 Research Design & Rationale

This study employs a qualitative, discourse-analytic methodology to conduct an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995). The RQ seeks to understand how a specific linguistic mechanism functions to resolve an ideological contradiction. This necessitates a qualitative design focused on depth, function, and mechanism over the breadth of a quantitative study.

The study uses President Prabowo's 2025 UN General Assembly speech as a lens to look at a much bigger picture. By focusing on this specific event, we can see exactly how a leader balances the need for national sovereignty with the demands of international multilateralism. This case provides a clear, real-world example of how these two conflicting ideas are navigated through language in a high-stakes diplomatic setting.

2.2 Data corpus

2.2.1 Data Sources

The preliminary data collection identified two distinct versions of the speech delivered at the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2025. While they share a common foundation, the differences between the written and spoken forms are central to this research.

a. The official written transcript

The first source is the official text file released by the UN General Assembly documentation center (accessible at https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/80/id_en.pdf). This version, totaling approximately 1,340 words, adheres strictly to standard diplomatic protocols and includes formal Indonesian greetings such as Om Swastiastu and Salam Kebajikan. Because it focuses on generalized policy statements, it represents the intended diplomatic stance of the Indonesian government.

b. The spoken corpus

The second source is a verbatim transcription of the actual speech delivered by President Prabowo, retrieved from the United Nations' official YouTube channel (accessible at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWEwZY_aZ0s). At approximately 1,580 words, this version captures the live performance and includes nuances that the written text does not. By transcribing the video directly, this study accounts for the president's tone, pauses, and unscripted remarks that characterize his personal rhetorical style.

2.2.2 Comparative analysis of discrepancies

A comparative analysis reveals significant lexicogrammatical and ideational discrepancies between these two versions. The spoken version is not merely a recitation of the script; instead, it features substantial extemporaneous elaborations that intensify the president's evaluative stance.

a. Ideational specificity

One of the most striking differences lies in the level of detail provided during the live address. Where the written text offers general concerns about "rising sea levels," the spoken version inserts high-specificity clauses, such as the mention of sea levels "*increasing by 5 cm every year*" and the necessity of a "*giant sea wall 480 kilometers in length*." These additions drastically increase the Force of the argument, transforming a vague environmental concern into an urgent, technical crisis.

b. Geopolitical scope

The scope of Indonesia's international commitments also expands significantly in the spoken version. While the written text limits peacekeeping mentions to "*Gaza or elsewhere in Palestine*," the live address explicitly adds "*Ukraine, Sudan, and Libya*" to the list. Furthermore, Prabowo includes a crucial unscripted clause "*we are also willing to contribute financially*."

c. Interpersonal intensity

Finally, the spoken version shifts the interpersonal tone of the address by moving away from rigid formality. The president often omits the scripted formal greetings to address UN officials directly by name, creating a more immediate connection. He also utilizes high-force rhetorical questions absent from the text (e.g., "Who will save the innocent? Who will save the old and women?") to amplify the emotional Affect and moral Judgement of his message.

2.2.2 Rationale for selecting the spoken corpus

Based on these discrepancies, this study utilizes the spoken version (Source 2: spoken address) as the primary corpus. This decision is grounded in the theoretical tenets of SFL Appraisal. Since Appraisal analyzes the interpersonal enactment of stance, the spoken text represents the authentic, realized ideology of the speaker in the moment of performance. The written script represents a sanitized, bureaucratic artifact, whereas the spoken address, with its improvisations, repetitions (e.g., "Right must be right"), and specific additions, constitutes the actual discursive event where the rhetorical trialectic is actively constructed.

2.3 Unit of analysis

The methodology begins by segmenting the text into clauses, or T-units, which establish the primary structural framework for the analysis. However, because rhetorical nuances often transcend simple grammatical boundaries, this study adopts a coding unit based on specific instances of appraisal, in line with the co-instantiation protocol. This flexible approach ensures that the analysis captures evaluative meaning across various scales, whether it is localized in a single modal verb like "must," expressed through a phrase such as "blatant disregard," or woven into the logic of an entire clause. By prioritizing the instance of appraisal over rigid sentence structures, the research can more accurately track how President Prabowo builds his persuasive stance throughout the speech.

2.4 Analytical framework

To answer an RQ focused on persuasive stance and ideological argument, this study employs Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005). While other frameworks (e.g., classical rhetoric, van Dijk's CDA) are adept at identifying broad ideological themes, Appraisal is uniquely suited for this study as it provides a systematic, verifiable, and fine-grained linguistic taxonomy for tracking interpersonal meaning. It allows us to move beyond what is being argued to how the argument is constructed, evaluated, and positioned against alternatives. The framework is composed of three interlocking systems:

2.2.3 Attitude

The system for expressing feelings (Affect), judging character (Judgement), and valuing phenomena (Appreciation). Our RQ, with its focus on nationalist strength (Capacity) and multilateral norms (Propriety), places a necessary focus on the sub-system of Judgement, which is divided into:

- a. Social Esteem: Evaluating capacity, normality, and tenacity (e.g., "...*self-sufficient*...").
- b. Social Sanction: Evaluating propriety and veracity (e.g., "*Right must be right*").

2.2.4 Engagement

The system for managing authorial voice and positioning claims relative to other potential viewpoints. This is critical for analyzing the Contradiction. We distinguish between:

- a. Dialogic Expansion: Resources that open the discursive space to other voices (*may, perhaps, in my view*).
- b. Dialogic Contraction: Resources that close the discursive space, presenting claims as non-negotiable (*must, only, cannot, of course*).

2.2.5 Graduation

The system for scaling the intensity or focus of a claim.

- a. Force: Scaling meaning up or down (e.g., *highest, catastrophic*).
- b. Focus: Sharpening or blurring a category's boundaries (e.g., *The only solution*).

2.3 Analytical procedure: The co-instantiation protocol

To capture the evaluative density of the speech, this study rejected a mutually exclusive coding approach in favor of a co-instantiation methodology. Following the annotation principles outlined by Read and Carroll (2010), the analysis moved beyond isolated lexical items to identify Appraising Groups (an evaluative head coupled with its modifiers) as the primary locus of meaning. The analysis followed a rigorous three-phase protocol.

2.3.1 Phase 1: The re-coding process (tagging)

The transcript was coded using a matrix in Microsoft Excel. Unlike traditional matrices where one row equals one clause, in this study, each row represented a single instance of appraisal. This structure allowed for the detailed mapping of co-instantiation.

Table 1. Sample Extract of the Co-instantiation Coding Matrix

Unit of Analysis (Clause ID)	Lexis/Phrase (The specific text)	Appraisal System	Category/Sub-system	Note (Ambiguity Resolution/Function)
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Cl. 85	"...blatant disregard..."	Graduation	Force (Intensification: High)	Adjective intensifies the negative judgement.
Cl. 85	"...blatant disregard..."	Attitude	Judgement (-Propriety)	Evaluates the violation of international law.
Cl. 92	"We must reject..."	Attitude	Judgement (-Propriety)	Implicit judgement that the doctrine is morally wrong.
Cl. 92	"We must reject..."	Engagement	Contraction (Proclaim: Pronounce)	High-value modality ("must") closes down debate.
Cl. 115	"The only solution..."	Graduation	Focus (Sharpen: Valuer)	Sharpens the category to exclude alternatives.
Cl. 115	"The only solution..."	Engagement	Contraction (Proclaim: Concur)	Presents the solution as an unavoidable fact.

Coding utilized an a priori codebook based strictly on Martin and White (2005). For every clause, the analyst applied three simultaneous interrogatives. If a clause contained bundled meanings (e.g., simultaneous Judgement and Force), it was entered into the matrix as multiple rows sharing the same Clause ID.

- a. Attitude Check: Is a behavior judged, object valued, or emotion expressed?
- b. Graduation Check: Is the intensity scaled or boundaries sharpened?
- c. Engagement Check: Is the source Monoglossic or Heteroglossic?

In cases of ambiguity, such as distinguishing between Tenacity and Propriety, classification was determined by the prosodic dominance of the surrounding co-text, recorded in the "Note" column. Table 1 illustrates how a single clause generates multiple instances of appraisal in this format.

2.3.2 Phase 2: Reliability and verification

To ensure the rigour of the coding process, intra-rater reliability was established. The entire dataset was coded by the primary researcher and then re-coded after a two-week interval. This time gap was implemented to mitigate memory bias and ensure that the application of coding criteria remained stable and consistent over time. Discrepancies between the first and second coding passes were reviewed against the a priori definitions to reach a final determination.

2.3.3 Phase 3: Percentages and interpretation

The analysis moved from initial coding to a statistical summary by calculating the dataset (N), which was operationalized by summing the total rows in the coding matrix. This process yielded a total of N=335 instances of appraisal, a figure that empirically captures the hyper-evaluative nature of the speech. By converting these raw totals into percentages, the study can more clearly illustrate how single clauses often perform double or triple rhetorical duty. This numerical breakdown serves as the foundation for the final interpretative phase, allowing for a precise comparison of which rhetorical strategies dominate the President's address

2.4 Rigour and the role of percentages

This is a qualitative study; it is not a mixed-methods design. The percentages presented in the Findings (Table 1) is not intended for statistical generalization but serves two crucial functions for analytical rigour. First, as an Internal Heuristic, the quantitative data provides a "macro" profile of the entire speech, empirically justifying the "micro" focus of the qualitative analysis.

It demonstrates that the features identified (Judgement, Force, Contraction) are not anomalous but are, in fact, the dominant, systemic features of the text. Second, by first mapping the entire linguistic landscape (Table 1), we ensure that the qualitative examples selected in Findings are demonstrably representative of the speech's core rhetorical signature, rather than being isolated, convenient anecdotes. This makes the subsequent interpretive claims more robust and verifiable.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 The overall percentage landscape

The analysis of the speech (N=335 instances of appraisal) reveals a highly deliberate rhetorical profile. As Table 2 demonstrates, the speech is overwhelmingly dominated by the three systems that form the "rhetorical trialectic."

Table 2: Overall Findings: Distribution of Appraisal (N=335)

System	Category/Sub-system	Occurrence	Percentage (of N=335)
ATTITUDE	(Total)	142	42.4%
	Judgement (Propriety, Capacity, etc.)	90	26.9%
	Affect (Security, Satisfaction, etc.)	44	13.1%
	Appreciation (Valuation, etc.)	8	2.4%
ENGAGEMENT	(Total)	110	32.8%
	Contraction (Proclaim, Disclaim, Counter)	80	23.9%
	Monogloss (Bare Assertion)	15	4.5%
	Expansion (Entertain, Attribute)	15	4.5%
GRADUATION	(Total)	83	24.8%
	Force (Intensification, Vigour)	72	21.5%
	Focus (Sharpen)	11	3.3%
GRAND TOTAL		335	100.0%

This percentage profile empirically confirms the speech's rhetorical engine. First and foremost, the discourse is dominated by Judgement (26.9%), revealing that the address is primarily an act of moral and capacity-based evaluation rather than a neutral policy statement. Crucially, this evaluative content is delivered through an overwhelmingly contractive stance (23.9%). By utilizing high-value modality such as must, cannot, and only, the speaker presents his claims as non-negotiable, leaving almost no discursive space for alternative viewpoints, a finding underscored by the marginal presence of Expansion resources (4.5%). Finally, this authoritative posture is consistently amplified by Force (21.5%), ensuring that the speaker's moral verdicts are delivered with maximum intensity (very, great, complete, all).

3.2 Qualitative deployment: The trialectic as vehicle

The (J+F+C) mechanism is the same tool used to construct both sides of the ideological contradiction. First, the J+F+C is constructed the nationalist strength or to project Indonesia as a powerful, autonomous, and capable actor (Judgement: +Capacity and +Tenacity). This way, Judgement (+Capacity) is asserted with high Force and Contraction.

Table 3: Data (Examples showing the J+F+C bundle)

a.	“...highest rice production... in our history.” J (Judgement: +Capacity) + F (Force: <i>highest</i>) + F (Force: <i>in our history</i>).
b.	“We are now self-sufficient...” J (Judgement: +Capacity) + C (Contraction: Proclaim - <i>is/are as fact</i>).
c.	“We are confident... Indonesia will be the granary of the world.” C (Contraction: <i>We are confident</i>) + J (Judgement: +Capacity) + F (Force/Vigour: <i>granary...</i>) + C (Contraction: <i>will be</i>).
d.	“Indonesia is shifting decisively... towards renewable...” J (Judgement: +Capacity) + F (Force: <i>decisively</i>).
e.	“We are committed to meeting our... obligations.” J (Judgement: +Tenacity) + C (Contraction: <i>is committed</i>).
f.	“...not by slogans but by immediate steps.” J (Judgement: +Capacity) + C (Contraction: Counter) + F (Focus: <i>immediate</i>).
g.	“We have to start now.” J (Judgement: +Tenacity) + C (Contraction: Proclaim - <i>have to</i>).

Second, Trialectic is used to perform multilateral morality. This way, the J+F+C functions to align Indonesia with the “correct” global values of peace and justice (Judgement: +Propriety). This (+Propriety) is not suggested; it is proclaimed as a non-negotiable moral absolute, again using Force (F) and Contraction (C).

Table 4: Data (Examples showing the J+F+C bundle)

a.	“We must reject this doctrine.” J (Judgement: -Propriety of the doctrine) + C (Contraction: Proclaim - <i>must reject</i>).
b.	“Right must be right.” J (Judgement: +Propriety) + C (Contraction: Proclaim - <i>must be</i>) + F (Focus: Sharpen - via repetition).
c.	“The <i>only</i> solution is...” J (Judgement: +Propriety, by implication) + F (Focus: <i>only</i>) + C (Contraction: Proclaim - <i>is</i>).
d.	“...a <i>catastrophic</i> situation...” J (Judgement: -Propriety) + F (Force: <i>catastrophic</i>).
e.	“... <i>blatant disregard</i> for international law...” J (Judgement: -Propriety) + F (Force: <i>blatant</i>).
f.	“We must never be silent...” J (Judgement: +Propriety) + C (Contraction: Proclaim - <i>must never</i>).
g.	“We must act now.” J (Judgement: +Propriety) + C (Contraction: Proclaim - <i>must act</i>).
h.	“Might <i>cannot be</i> right.” J (Judgement: -Propriety) + C (Contraction: Disclaim - <i>cannot be</i>).

3.3 Interpretation: Resolving the Contradiction

3.3.1 The core argument: Moral sovereigntism

The findings show the contradiction is resolved through a sophisticated rhetorical maneuver: the (J+F+C) trialectic is used to reframe Nationalist Strength as the only true expression of Multilateral Morality. Prabowo does not balance the two poles; however, he subsumes multilateralism within his nationalism. We term this specific strategy *moral sovereigntism* as a posture that uses the moral language of Judgement: Propriety (e.g., *must be right*) to justify a nationalist, sovereigntist agenda based on Judgement: Capacity (e.g., self-sufficient).

3.3.2 How the resolution works

The resolution of the sovereigntist's dilemma unfolds through a distinct three-stage rhetorical progression. First, the trialectic is deployed to systematically de-legitimize the status quo.

Before asserting a new vision, the speaker must first judge the current multilateral system as a moral failure. This is achieved through highly intensified Negative Judgement and Affect, portraying a world defined by “*blatant disregard for international law*” and “*human folly fueled by... hatred.*” The emotional stakes are raised through visceral imagery of the “*innocent crying for help*” and victims “*dying of starvation.*” Within this landscape of failure, the rhetorical question “*Can we remain silent?*” functions not merely as an inquiry, but as a damning, Propriety Judgement on the world's inaction.

Subsequently, the speech executes a critical pivot by equating strength with morality. Having established that the “old” multilateralism is defined by passivity, typified by the unanswered questions “*Will there be no answer?*”, the speaker proposes a “new” multilateralism predicated on active capacity. Here, the contradiction is resolved by arguing that Judgement: +Propriety (“*doing the right thing*”) is functionally impossible without Judgement: +Capacity (“*the power to act*”). This is linguistically realized through a stark binary opposition: against the passive silence of the international community, the speaker juxtaposes Indonesia's active, nationalist assertions: “*We are prepared to deploy 20,000,*” “*we are now self-sufficient,*” and “*we are shifting decisively.*” In this framework, nationalist strength is no longer a deviation from global norms; yet, it is the prerequisite for upholding them.

Finally, the (J+F+C) trialectic acts as the gavel that seals this argument. The rhetorical re-framing is locked in place through a high density of Contractive resources. By deploying absolute, non-negotiable phrasing such as “*must reject,*” “*cannot be right,*” and “*the only solution,*” the speaker constricts the discursive space, presenting his synthesis not as one policy option among many, but as an absolute moral truth. Ultimately, the contradiction is resolved through this linguistic engine: Indonesia's national strength is presented not as a threat to the UN's norms, but as the only vehicle capable of saving them.

4. DISCUSSION

This section situates the findings within the broader academic conversation. The “rhetorical trialectic” (J+F+C) identified in this speech both confirms and challenges previous research on political appraisal.

4.1 The dominance of judgement & contraction

This study found that Judgement (26.9%) was by far the dominant Attitude, dwarfing Appreciation (2.4%). This aligns with studies like Ross and Caldwell (2020) on Trump and Li and Zhu (2019) on Chinese political texts, both of which found Judgement to be the primary linguistic tool for ideological work. It is the resource used for *going negative* (Ross & Caldwell, 2020) and establishing *positive Self-presentation and negative Other-presentation* (Li & Zhu, 2019). Prabowo does exactly this: he uses +Judgement (e.g., +Capacity in “*self-sufficient*”) for Indonesia (*Self*) and –Judgement (e.g., –Propriety in “*blatant disregard*”) for the failed global system (*Other*).

However, this contrasts significantly with Daulay (2010), who found formal inaugural speeches preferred *safer* Appreciation to avoid provoking reactions. It also contrasts with Aljuraywi and Alyousef's (2022) finding that Biden's team preferred policy-focused Appreciation. The choice here of Judgement is not *safe*; however, it is a deliberate, assertive moral stance. This signals Prabowo's speech is less about policy objects (Appreciation) and more about the moral character of nations (Judgement).

The second is the dominance of Contraction (23.9%) over Expansion (4.5%), highly significant when contextualized. This finding is supported by Zhang and Pei (2018), who analyzed speeches by Xi Jinping and Donald Trump at the World Economic Forum. They also found a clear preference for Contraction over Expansion. The interpretation is identical, that is in a high-stakes international forum, leaders use contractive language (*must, only, will be*) to project a “*strong, unified, and cohesive national vision*” (Zhang & Pei, 2018). However, this finding is contra with two studies. First, it contrasts with Li et al. (2019), where the politician (Carrie Lam) used more Expansion than Contraction. This is clearly context-dependent that Lam was managing a domestic issue and needed to appear *open-minded*. Prabowo, like Xi and Trump in Zhang & Pei's study, is asserting a national vision, not opening it for discussion. Second, it refutes the *bare assertion* model found by Ademilokun (2016). Prabowo's speech is not dominated by Monoglossia (15 instances); yet, is dominated by heteroglossic argument (80 instances of Contraction). He is not just stating facts; he is actively engaging and rejecting potential counter-arguments (*must reject..., cannot be...*).

4.2 Implications for theory and analysis

While the individual findings on Judgement and Contraction align with existing literature, the primary contribution of this research lies in identifying the rhetorical trialectic, the interplay of Judgement, Force, and Contraction. Previous studies, such as those by Daulay (2010) on Attitude and Li et al., (2019) on Engagement tend to analyze these systems in parallel, often overlooking how they overlap in practice. By validating the co-instantiation method, this study demonstrates that these systems actually function together as a single rhetorical engine where the Contraction seals the Judgement and the Force provides the necessary amplification. Finally, this (J+F+C) bundle functions as the specific linguistic pattern of President Prabowo's moral sovereigntism strategy, which offers a more integrated view of how political identity is constructed.

4.3 Implications for political discourse analysis

This study reveals a sophisticated linguistic playbook for sovereigntism, in which nationalist strength is asserted from within the very heart of globalist institutions. Rather than adopting an anti-UN stance, President Prabowo's address represents a strategic “post-Western” pivot that seeks to redefine the organization's moral center from an Indonesian perspective. The findings highlight a complex synthesis of rhetorical strategies, blending the “self-promotion” techniques noted in populist discourse (Rahmaida & Cahyono, 2022) with the “negative Othering” patterns often found in geopolitical critiques (Li & Zhu, 2019)

By constructing the “Self” through the lens of positive Judgement and Capacity, while simultaneously framing the “Other”, the existing global system, through negative Judgement and a lack of moral Propriety, the speech effectively establishes national capability as the new moral standard for international leadership.

5. Limitations and future research

The findings presented here must be interpreted within the boundaries of a single case study design. While the quantitative profile detailed in Table 1 offers a precise snapshot of this specific discursive event, it remains specific to this text and the unique geopolitical context of the UN General Assembly. Consequently, this study invites future research to determine the transferability of the rhetorical trialectic. Specifically, comparative research is needed to investigate President Prabowo's domestic oratory to determine whether the (J+F+C) configuration is a permanent feature of his political idiolect or a specialized register reserved for the international stage.

Furthermore, broader comparative studies are necessary to situate these findings within the global discourse of nationalism. Future scholarship could productively test the specific quantitative ratios identified here, such as the dominance of Judgement (26.9%) relative to Contraction (23.9%), against speeches by other nationalist leaders in the same forum, extending the comparative methodologies employed by scholars like Zhang and Pei (2018). Ultimately, such inquiries would serve to clarify whether moral sovereigntism is a rhetorical style uniquely emerging from the Global South, or a universal linguistic tool inherent to the discourse of strongman politics.

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