

Features of Language in President Jokowi's Political Speech on Covid-19 Pandemic Handling in Indonesia

Eni Maharsi^{1,2}

¹Humanities Sciences Study Program, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

²English Literature Study Program, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: enimaharsi@ub.ac.id

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic had forced state leaders to take various actions, one of which was through communicating the pandemic measures. In Indonesian context, the difficult times of the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic had also challenged President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) to communicate his response to handling the pandemic differently from communication prior to the pandemic. Jokowi tried to gain compliance and support which could be identified from the linguistic features in his speeches of pandemic handling. This study discusses linguistic features in Jokowi's COVID-19 speech. Voyant-tool was used as a tool for identifying the most salient linguistic units. Analysis was carried out to determine patterns of lexical choices, to examine how these patterns helped construct the pandemic discursively, and to relate it to Jokowi's pandemic communication goals. Results reveal that first person singular I and first-person plural WE/ US were the most salient features. Second, the choice of structure and lexicon specifically indicated a strategy of inclusivity and the creation of a clear group identity. Inclusive WE functioned as linguistic strategy to build collective identity, sense of solidarity and unity of Indonesian, as well as indicating choice of acting as an interlocutor to equalize social actors. Exclusive WE/ US also emphasized identity, speaker involvement actions, personal pronoun I was persuasion device and marker of interpersonal relationship and positioning as the highest authority, while temporal deixis was employed to urge the sense of urgency.

Keywords: Indonesia; linguistic features; pandemic handling; political speech

INTRODUCTION

In general, political discourse is intended to inform, convince, and mobilize the public, all of which are reflected in the linguistic features of political language (Fetzer and Weizman, 2006). In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, previous studies on political speeches indicate that the specific purpose of world leaders' speeches is to present information to the public, persuade and convince the public to comply with government's pandemic policy measures using specific rhetorical strategies, such as metaphors, euphemistic persuasive strategy, and dysphemism (Atuhura, 2022; Neshkovska & Trajkova, 2020; Olimat, 2020; Rajandran, 2020). Those studies confirm that world leaders conscientiously employed discursive strategies to show how they linguistically chose to develop relationships with their people, and to best secure the

coveted result: the recovery of the country's economy and health, and their power retention.

At the same time, Wodak found that the need for crisis management due to the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to an additional goal in political speeches: reducing the 'fear of death' (2021). This left government leaders no alternative but to rationalize legitimation by appealing to the people with the inclusive pronouns 'our' and 'we'. With regard to the use of pronouns 'Our' and 'We', De Fina (1995) and Santulli (2020) perceive that patterns of political language choices in general are underlined through the pronouns. One important aspect in the strategic choice and use of personal pronouns in political discourse is their function as a tool for the political actors to increase or decrease their involvement with the audience (Flores-Ferrán, 2017)., Flores-Ferran further emphasizes that a speaker's choice of pronouns is to manipulate, persuade, coerce, and attract the audience. In her slightly different perspective, Hunt argues that the most prominent use of personal pronouns in political discourse relates to the construction of interpersonal relationships (2021). Pronouns allow speakers to position themselves as part of or outside of the authority or individual referred to in the text (De Fina, 1995).

Through the choice of proximal pronouns (first person singular or plural), medial (second person), or distal (third person), the speaker places the audience in a closer or further relationship and uses them for persuasive purposes (Zupnik, 1994). Toward this end, pronoun 'We' functions to promote solidarity and to build authority recognition of political actors (Alharbi, 2018; De Fina, 1995). The first-person plural pronoun WE makes the speaker be a participant, namely a person who has shared experiences with other people, including as an authority (Ilie, 2010). At similar purpose, first-person singular pronoun 'I' can be used to build an emotional appeal to the audience (Otieno, 2019). The use of this first-person pronoun by state leaders can be notably influential in situations in which they are striving to invoke a strong emotional response, such as in speech on corona virus disaster aimed to call for safety and health actions. Additionally, pronoun 'I' also indicates construction of legitimation, that is making use of prerogative as employed by Putin and Macron when they took significant measures of pandemic (Amossy, 2022). Therefore, pattern of pronouns use is a continuous indication of the speaker's self-presentation, including elements of the speaker's identity and attitude (Flores-Ferrán, 2017).

With regard to relationship between political communication and political approach, Wodak contends that populist leaders communicate in a way that is resonating and easily accepted by society (2015). Besides, populist leaders often personalize their messages using the word 'I' and the inclusive 'We' to foster a sense of connectedness

with the audience and emphasize a sense of shared identity with their people. In the Indonesian context of crises due to pandemic, President Joko Widodo (hereafter Jokowi) was seen to exercise populist leadership in responding to pandemic (Sakir et al., 2021; Wicaksana, 2022). Thus, this study investigates the most prominent features of language which became linguistic strategy in Jokowi's speeches on COVID-19 pandemic handling in Indonesia.

Strategy of language and political discourse are two sides of a coin. As modern politics and power are exercised primarily through language, not through physical force (Charteris-Black, 2011; Fairclough, 2001), political statements are intended to produce maximum communicative effect which underlines why using one linguistic device is impossible (Charteris-Black, 2004; Musolff, 2016). Accordingly, it is immensely possible that other patterns of language features are also apparent together with pronouns in political discourse. Studies on the linguistic strategies of state leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic have been conducted by a number of scholars (Hunt, 2021; Hyland-Wood et al., 2021; Jaworska, 2021; Mandl & Reis, 2022; Maru et al., 2023). Other studies could be located on the linguistic patterns identified through generative analysis model (for example Montiel et al., 2021), and language features which discussed the rhetorical functions of exact numbers and integers in political discourse regarding COVID-19 (see Billig, 2021). Those studies collectively emphasized the importance of linguistic analysis in understanding political communication through lexicogrammatical, linguistic complexity, and rhetorical devices.

In the Indonesian pandemic context, Jokowi officially declared that Indonesia was in the state of COVID-19 pandemic on March 2, 2020, in the speech delivered at Merdeka Palace, Jakarta. At the same speech event, he also communicated government readiness to take measures of pandemic handling. Over the course of the next two years, the lexical choices in his speeches about COVID-19 pandemic increasingly constructed a relationship of unity and solidarity between himself and the citizens of Indonesia (as will be illustrated below). The initial problem regarding this data set was how Jokowi discursively represented the key elements in the context of COVID-19, namely the corona virus, the increases and decreases in cases, its impact on public health and the country's economy, the measures taken to overcome the impact of the spread of the virus, as well as restrictions on the activities and mobility of citizens in the process. However, investigation into the data indicated relatively few rhetorical devices of the coronavirus disaster metaphor were apparent. Likewise, forms of direct imperative were not frequently used. Instead, the most prominent linguistic features were more interpersonal in nature, namely the choice of pronouns that emphasized unity, solidarity, and mutual cooperation to encourage a unified and compliant pandemic response. Nonetheless, the severity of pandemic required government's

quick responses toward successful handling. In other words, spatial temporal in political discourse became one of the keys in the successful handling of pandemic. This study highlights the power of pronouns and spatial-temporal deixis as the language features that most unveiling the world Jokowi constructed, in particular the relationship established between society and Jokowi himself.

In view of this, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the most salient language features employed by Jokowi in his speeches on COVID-19 pandemic handling?
2. What are the pragmatic and communicative functions that these features convey?

METHOD

COVID-19 pandemic was stated by WHO as a global pandemic on March 11 2020 (Djalante et al., 2020). Considering this, the inclusive collection period for speeches started from the first wave of the pandemic, namely 11 March 2020 to 31 December 2020, and the second wave from 1 January 2021 to 31 August 2021. Data for 2021 is limited to the end of August 2021 due to the end of the second wave of the pandemic which was at the end of July 2021 based on the Indonesian government's statement (Nurita & Wibowo, 2022). During these two waves of pandemic, Jokowi consistently and continuously provided instructions, observed, and monitored pandemic situations. Meanwhile, speeches in 2022 were taken from January to April.

Data were 83 text monologue speeches on handling the pandemic. All speeches were extracted from transcripts available publicly in the official website of the Indonesian Presidency under the Indonesian Cabinet Secretariat (Humas Setkab RI, 2020, 2021, 2022). The speech texts taken as data were identified through speech titles and in-depth reading of their content. Transcripts relating to the topic of handling the pandemic were then downloaded manually, converted into Word document file, stored in the computer, and then classified based on year, date and title of the speech, and then converted as corpus. The corpus of speech texts which had been saved as documents were grouped into three based on year (data for 2020, 2021, 2022).

Identification of the most frequently used linguistic features was carried out with the help of Voyant-tools software, that is an open-source, web-based application for performing text analysis (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2003). The platforms in Voyant-tools are common for analyzing and interpreting large volumes of online texts, especially in early digital humanities contexts (Sampsel, 2018). The working process is by uploading data documents to voyant-tools (Sinclair et al., 2022) to identify the highest frequency of occurrence of lingual units in the text. This corpus can be opened, accessed and used at any time via the site www.voyant-tools.org so that it can be used

as a data archiving method. Voyant-tools is designed to perform to search, link items in text, code, query, annotate, and map research data. Voyant-tools enables the inventory of the most prominent linguistic units that can be mapped as research data and helps identify context in text through the LINKS feature. Since data were still manageable in size, we still did the reading for the data manually and carefully. To simplify the understanding, example of the corpus display in voyant-tools for one speech text was provided in Figure 1. However, the entire speech corpus could be input in one identification.

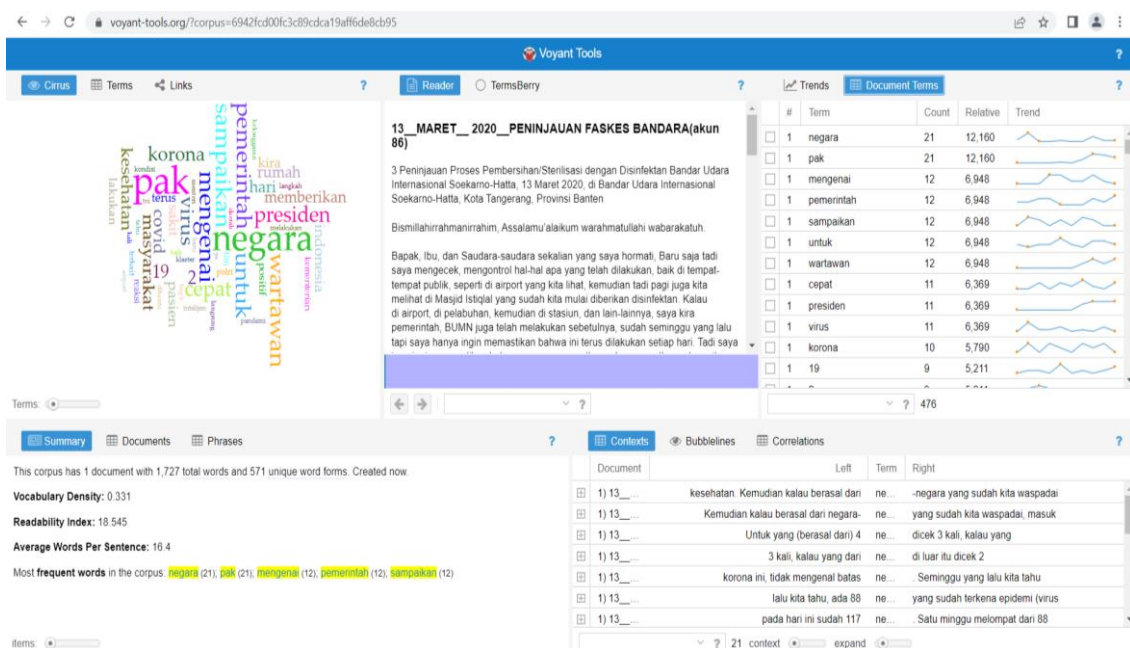


Figure 1. The Highest Frequency of Linguistic Units Performed in Voyant-tools

Data analysis was concentrated on aspects of linguistic features which included lexical patterns related to the representation of the relationship that existed between Jokowi and the Indonesian nation. The focus of lexical analysis was on patterns revealed through word choices. Combining keywords (identified through the title of the speech) and the word frequency list produced word pattern meanings. Examining word in its linguistic context was done as it was essential to ascertain the intended use and determine its contextual effect.

Next procedure was analyzing Main Actor Representation in which interrelated lexical items were examined to see their relationships through pronouns. Van Dijk points out that political pronouns are used to express agency, identity, and self-reference and that their use, especially first-person plural pronouns, can be expanded and used according to the needs of the speaker (1993). As one of the important elements in this article, all forms of pronouns were identified, and their most salient use was explored through their linguistic context.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Bab This section explores the main elements in Jokowi's responses on COVID-19 pandemic which were identified through the most salient lexical patterns. The identified elements were related to the persuasive communicative purpose of the speech text, how the speaker (Jokowi) represented citizens as a nation, and himself as part of nation. The focus is how Jokowi, who is considered populist leader (Sakir et al., 2021) built his interpersonal role and strengthened his role as president within this interpersonal role.

Pronoun WE/ US

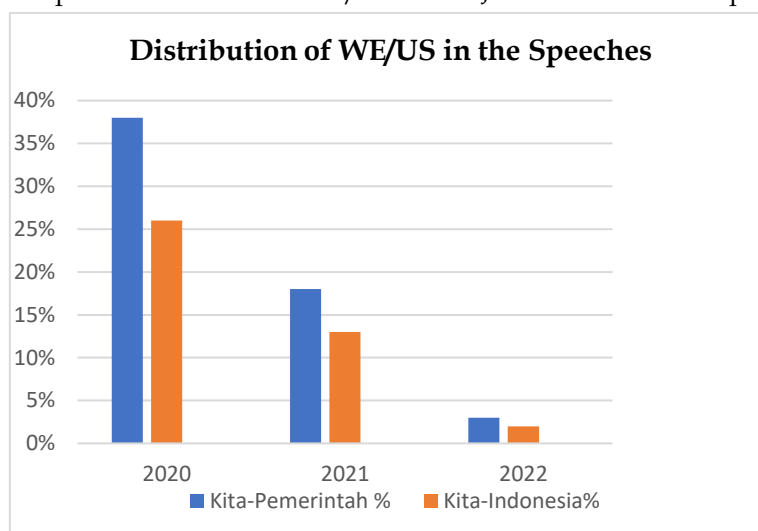
The strongest indicators of linguistic features identified in Jokowi's COVID corpus were the inclusive first-person plural pronouns WE and first-person singular I. Despite the fact of unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, the frequency with which both personal pronouns appear was much higher than the frequency with which the neologism pandemic occurred. Table 1 presents two strongest words in Jokowi's COVID corpus found in Voyant-tools. The words with the highest frequency were pronouns WE/ US with 1,552 occurrences and 'I' with 1,358 occurrences respectively.

Table 1. Pronouns as the Highest Keywords in Jokowi's COVID Corpus

First-Person Pronouns	Order	Frequency
WE/ US	1	1.552
I	2	1.358

In particular, the use of first-plural pronoun WE/ US is fluid in nature (Santulli, 2020). This means that it can expand and recede based on the size of the group being referred to. These different semantic implications underline generic nature and important features of first-person plural WE/ US. However, there were different patterns and tendencies in terms of meaning and placement. The two main meanings of WE in Jokowi's COVID corpus were WE- Government and WE-Indonesia. The grouping of the two meanings of 'WE' reflected the function of the parts in constructing relationship between the speaker and the listener (De Fina, 1995). Meanwhile, investigation on contexts for WE/ US in the Voyant-tools revealed that the 1,552 uses of WE/ US-Government context showed higher frequency which was also applied to each individual utterance. The distribution of 'WE/ US' which referred to government vs. to Indonesian as identified from Voyant-tools is presented in Graph 1.

Graph 1. Distribution of WE/ US in the Jokowi's COVID Corpus



Year of Speech	Number and Percentage of WE-Government	Number and Percentage of WE-Indonesia
2020	587 (38%)	386 (25%)
2021	274 (17.6%)	235 (15%)
2022	38 (2.4%)	32 (2%)

As seen in Graph 1, data on the average number of personal pronouns WE-Government (referring to the government) was 57.4%, and WE-Indonesia (referring to the Indonesian nation) was 42.6%. The results illustrated discrepancy in the use of pronouns in 2020 and 2021 speeches and 2022 speeches. The frequency of pronoun 'WE/ US' in 2020 and 2021 were higher than 2022 which could be caused by the context of the issues being discussed. The themes and issues raised in the speech could indicate priority setting of each year. During the periods of 2020 and 2021 the focus was health measures and economic recovery by which the use of 'WE/ US' became more dominant. The purpose was to emphasize collectivity and solidarity. Meanwhile, priority setting in 2022 was shifted to other issues such as infrastructure development, foreign relations, and Lebaran homecoming policy. This resulted more diverse use of the pronouns.

Inclusive WE as Nation Representation

A simple marker for identifying national representations was to focus on linguistic features with high frequency: inclusive WE. The referents of this deixis were the nouns of the person who is the key. Based on the finding of surrounding context of 'WE/ US' in feature LINK, eight personal nouns could be referred to by first plural pronoun 'WE/ US' is presented in Table 2.

Tabel 2. Keywords of Personal Nouns in Jokowi's COVID Corpus

Word	Frequency (Keyness)
Society	259
State	237
Indonesia	230
Government	208
People	113
World	97
Nation	64
Family	44

Table 2 shows that when used with less mainstream terms of collectivism (togetherness), for example provinces, cities, individual names, and the names of various parties (e.g. state institutions, mass organizations), references of pronoun 'WE' were more on the lexical units of society and the state. In particular, the lexical item community referred to community groups at various scales from Indonesian society, that is from the smallest units such as *RT*, *RW*, (Indonesia's ubiquitous network of neighborhood associations (Jaffrey, 2020), village, to city, district, and country. They reflected the main topic or concern of the speech and served to emphasize a shared understanding of the COVID crisis and the realization that everyone must participate. The following data excerpt (1) illustrates this reference relationship.

- (1) Percayalah *kita bangsa besar, kita bangsa petarung, bangsa pejuang*, insyaallah kita bisa, insyaallah *kita mampu* dalam menghadapi tantangan global yang berat sekarang ini. (24/ 03/ 2020)

Believe that we are a great nation, *we are a fighting nation, a nation of warriors*, God willing, *we can*, God willing, *we are able* to face today's tough global challenges.

The construction in (1) indicates the importance of the motivational aspect for national unity in facing the pandemic. Lexical items to underline a sense of inclusive group identity is *kita bangsa besar, kita bangsa petarung, bangsa pejuang* (we are a great nation, we are a nation of warrior, a fighting nation).

Another lexical item important in the representation of the nation related to the government's commitment was the word family. Family represented government's presence among the people, in the sense that being among families who needed attention and assistance due to the pandemic. Extract (2) provides example of the lexical item being discussed.

- (2) *Kita sedang menyiapkan program bantuan sosial khusus untuk 3,7 juta berbasis keluarga.* (07/ 04/ 2020).

We (government) are preparing a special family-based social assistance program for 3.7 million families.

Jokowi explicitly stated the government's (WE) presence among Indonesian people and families affected by the non-natural disaster of the pandemic. Speech (2) indicates efforts to maintain national and family resilience in which government intervention seemed to be highly emphasized.

Inclusive WE as Representation of Indonesian Government

The meaning of WE-Government was expressed through the verbs following WE. The verbs were useful for showing the government's dominant role, such as practical contributions, decision making, and expressions of readiness for pandemic measures realized through verbal construction and performative construction. The verbs following WE-Government construction were indicated as referring to government intervention and action. A collection of verbs to announce handling strategies, systems and policies, as well as government readiness measures were *siap* (prepared), *kerja/ bekerja/ kerjakan* (work/ do), *jaga/ menjaga* (maintain/ keep), *laksanakan/ melaksanakan* (carry out/ execute), *gunakan/ menggunakan* (use/ harness). Utterance (3) presents example of the use of this verb group.

(3) Yang keempat, *kita menyiapkan rencana* kontingensi kesiapan layanan rumah sakit baik rumah sakit rujukan (19/ 03/ 2020).

Fourth, *we* prepare a contingency plan for hospital service readiness at both referral hospitals.

(4) Saya juga melihat sarana prasarana *telah siap*, baik untuk ruang penanganan pasien, baik ventilator, semuanya *sudah siap*, APD juga *siap*.

I also saw that the infrastructure was ready, both for patient handling rooms, both ventilators, everything was ready, PPE was also ready.

In relation to leadership and crisis communication, the findings presented above revealed that Jokowi employed 'WE/ US' for several strategic reasons. By using the pronoun, Jokowi emphasized a message that handling the pandemic was a shared responsibility. This helped create awareness that every individual had their role in facing the pandemic. Apart from that, Jokowi was trying to build the image of a leader who was close and cared about his people as well as built public's trust and compliance with government policies and directions.

In meantime, command verbs (as expected to be used by state leader) were not used intensively. Several verbs such as *larang, setop, cegah, dan hambat* (prohibit, stop, prevent, and inhibit) with the subject of WE-Government had no explicit power to

prohibit or compel. Instead, the form of verbs, which avoided controlling, could be seen in the use of nominative and passive forms as exemplified in (4).

- (4) Memang harus ada *perluasan* kapasitas penampungan kendaraan menuju pelabuhan penyeberangan. Waktu antre kendaraan untuk naik angkutan penyeberangan *harus dipangkas*, kemudian juga *penambahan* kapal penyeberangan dan *perluasan* dermaga yang pada seperti di Pelabuhan Merak, ini *harus dilihat* secara detail lagi (24/ 05/ 2022).

Indeed, there must be an expansion of vehicle storage capacity to the ferry port. The queue time for vehicles to board ferry transportation must be cut, then also the addition of ferry boats and the expansion of piers, such as at Merak Harbor, this must be looked at in more detail.

The use of the nominative (active) and passive forms in (4) could indicate strategic purpose: reducing personalization and diverting attention to focus on the policy or action being announced, and emphasis on the process or result without being direct reference to the actor or subject. The use of nominative additions and expansions (4) and passive forms should be seen as the way to avoid criticism. The speaker's actions seemed to be blurring of control and rendering the speaker's agentic status opaque (Fairclough, 2001). The use of specific verbs could be a powerful tool to influence people's attitudes and behavior, as well as to strengthen intended political messages without losing the positive self-image that Jokowi intended to maintain.

- (5) Data-data yang kita miliki ini sangat komplet dan dari data-data itulah *kita memutuskan kebijakan-kebijakan* (24/ 06/ 2020).

The data that we *have* is exceptionally complete and from that data we decide policies.

Meanwhile, the referent of WE in (5) was government expressing 'institutional identity' (when Jokowi spoke on behalf of a government institution). This WE benefited Jokowi as it included his audience as members of a reference class who had the potential to produce an understanding of the speaker's (Jokowi's) perspective. This process could function to facilitate the fulfilment of the speech's main goal: to link the space of the COVID-19 speech to the structure, roles, and involvement of participants through the linguistic indicators of WE pronoun.

WE as Representation of Indonesian Nation

The use of WE-Indonesia was intended to support the construction of a more inclusive discursive identity of the nation (Santulli, 2020) and reflected the potential of the plural first pronoun in building solidarity (De Fina, 1995; Zupnik, 1994). This potential was achieved through the construction of the speaker (Jokowi) as one member of a

larger group (the Indonesian nation) and part of the experience of the event being discussed (the COVID-19 pandemic). By positioning himself as one with the entire nation, Jokowi increased the sense of unity within large groups (Wodak, 2021). Jokowi's following speech provides an illustration of how the WE-Indonesia pattern was constructed.

- (6) Vaksinasi COVID-19 ini penting *kita lakukan* untuk memutus rantai penularan Virus Korona ini dan memberikan perlindungan kesehatan kepada kita dan keselamatan, keamanan bagi *kita semuanya*, masyarakat Indonesia, dan membantu percepatan proses pemulihan ekonomi (13/ 01/ 2021).

It is important for us to carry out the COVID-19 vaccination to break the chain of transmission of the Corona Virus and provide health protection for us and safety and security for all of us, the Indonesian people, and help accelerate the economic recovery process.

Auxiliary Verb Following WE

Furthermore, the linguistic feature that most directly shows its function in the kami-Indonesian pattern series is the auxiliary verb. Auxiliary verbs with high frequency in Jokowi's COVID corpus include *harus* (must), *akan* (will), and *bisa* (can/ be able to). The modal must that follows we-Indonesia reflects more of the motivational element of the speech and is usually found in the penultimate part (the second part before the end of the speech). Capital should also reflect a focus on pandemic policy compliance messages and the high urgency of current action. One phrase in Jokowi's COVID corpus, we (all) must, refers to WE-the government and WE-Indonesia followed by an adjective or verb and becomes a strong directive sentence as in example (7):

- (7) Sekarang tidak ada tawar-menawar, saya sudah sampaikan satu juta harus! Agustus, dua juta harus! Karena kunci dari pemulihan ekonomi adalah urusan COVID-19 ini harus bisa kita selesaikan. (30/ 06/ 2021).

No more haggling for now, I've told one million, must be! August, two million, must be! Because the key to economic recovery is that *we must be able* to resolve the COVID-19 issue.

WE followed with modal auxiliaries *harus* (must) and *bisa* (be able to) can be inferred that all citizens have obligations for actions carried out together as nation. As for in extract (8), modal verbs *harus* (must) sounded more forceful and dogmatic. This modal auxiliary expressed strong obligations even though it explained WE inclusively. The strength of this modal verb is supported by the clause *Sekarang tidak ada tawar-menawar* (No more haggling for now) and repetition of the modal *harus* must. The use of *kita harus* (we must) in Jokowi's COVID speech was supposed to create a substantial

impact on the audience side since it emphasized imperative of what the audience should have had done.

It can be inferred from the explanation above that *kita* (WE) was inclusive in nature. It was used to mobilize two different groups: (1) government, state institutions, and political leaders (WE-Government); (2) all Indonesian citizens (WE/ US-Indonesia). The modal verb *harus* (must) for the first group was almost exclusively used in its deontic meaning, namely indicating an obligation to work hard to control the pandemic and arousing a sense of responsibility as a state apparatus. On the other hand, *harus* (must) for group two was mostly an appeal to follow the new rules for eliminating pandemic.

Exclusive WE as Representation of Indonesian Government

The first-person plural form of the pronoun that also referred to the government was the exclusive WE. The first plural pronoun *Kami* WE could be considered as an expression of first-person pluralization of Jokowi and his government. Its semantic boundaries were determined in the inherent context and could be explored through its communicative purpose. The non-prototypical use of the WE-Government focused on themes in the context of reporting on pandemic handling and it semantically excluded the listener. The exclusive form of WE-Government occurred in speech situations that were different from WE-government, namely exchanges between Jokowi and his government with state institutions DPR RI, BPK or large organizations such as Muhammadiyah or MUI. In this way, the interpretation of personal pronouns could be shifted towards the recipient, resulting in a listener dominant form (De Cock, 2011).

Based on the results of analysis thereover, the 'WE' and exclusive 'WE' with government references in Jokowi's COVID corpus could be summarized and presented in the following two-by-two grid.

Figure 2. Clusivity of WE/ US in Jokowi's COVID Corpus

		Include Listener	
		Yes	No
Speaker Included (Jokowi)	Yes	WE-Government (<i>Kita</i> / WE-Inclusive)	WE-Government (<i>Kami</i> / We-Exclusive)
	No	I and You (and probably Them- all apparatus in Jokowi's government)	I and Them (but not You: DPR, BPK)
	No	You (not identified in data)	Them

The verb group for exclusive WE referred to government contained performative elements. The use of *Kami-Pemerintah* (WE-Government) and its accompanying verbs is exemplified in sentences (8) and (9).

- (8) Vaksinasi perdana ini dilakukan setelah kita mendapatkan izin penggunaan darurat Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) dari BPOM dan juga telah keluarnya fatwa halal dari Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). *Kami mengucapkan terima kasih yang sebesar-besarnya* (13/ 01/ 2021).

This initial vaccination was carried out after we obtained an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) permit from BPOM as well as the issuance of halal fatwa from the *Indonesian Ulema Council* (MUI). We express our deepest gratitude.

- (9) Para menteri dan seluruh jajaran pemerintah sedang bekerja keras untuk menyiapkan aturan-aturan ini, pekan depan akan kami sampaikan kepada seluruh masyarakat (14/ 04/ 2022).

Ministers and all levels of government are working hard to prepare these regulations, next week we will convey them to the entire community.

The performative verbs in examples (8) and (9) reflected their function, that is an indirect choice of government in expressing control over the state severe condition. As a paradigmatic discursive choice, performative disclosure made this speech act less direct because it was aimed at making the public believe that they (WE-Government) were in the process of making decision. In the verbs used with WE-Government, one characteristic could be indicated in which is a reflection or expression of power distance between the government and the public (including institutions other than state administrators) was exercised. WE also characterized Jokowi's position in the context of his accountability for handling the pandemic, establishing speech roles and social hierarchy. On the other hand, the perspective of the form of self-presentation was very dependent on Jokowi's representation in his impersonal form. Often, this implied consensus or a collective mandate. Thus, the use of WE became one way of legitimizing pandemic management policies.

Pronoun I as Tool for Persuasion and Interpersonal Relations

Another linguistic feature that was salient in its relational function was the use of the first-person singular pronoun *Saya* (I). The high frequency use of *saya* (I) in the corpus 1,358 (cf. Table 1) reveals two main functions: (1) as a device of persuasion and showing solidarity and empathy; (2) as exercise of state leader power and institutional legitimacy.

The first-person pronoun *saya* (I) in Jokowi's COVID speech was the most important interpersonal persuasion device. In lighter phrases, such as *Saya kira* (I think), *Saya ingin* (I would like to), and *Saya berharap* (I hope), the pronoun signalled Jokowi's

personal involvement in expressing solidarity and empathy where all occurrences of the verb following I for that function led to this pattern *Saya + mengerti* (I + understand); *Saya + paham* (I + fathom); *Saya + tahu* (I + know); *Saya + mengucapkan* (I + say). When speaking about the ban, Jokowi emphasized his understanding of the hardships and sacrifices the government demanded from all citizens (10).

- (10) *Saya mengerti* kita semuanya pasti rindu sanak saudara di saat-saat seperti ini, apalagi di Lebaran nanti. Tapi, mari kita utamakan keselamatan bersama dengan tidak mudik ke kampung halaman (01/ 04/ 2021).

I understand that we all miss our relatives at times like this, especially during Eid. But let's prioritize safety by not returning to our hometown.

The government imposed a ban on Lebaran homecoming 2020 and 2021. This ban was a hard demand considering that it is an important tradition of the Indonesian Muslim community. Jokowi realized this by saying the verb phrase *Saya mengerti* (I understand) in (10). It became a sign of the importance of interpersonal persuasion and building relationships with the audience. The verb *mengerti* (understand) functioned to emphasize empathy for the elimination of the Muslim tradition of meeting relatives on Eid. Jokowi justified the introduction of the restrictions as an absolute necessity. These restrictions or prohibitions were not a policy to control citizens but a temporary measure to save lives.

Saya I also functioned as a way of showing commitment in creating bonds and appreciation for the nation's sacrifices as illustrated in quote (11) (cf. Jaworska, 2021; De Fina, 1995).

- (11) Kita harus menghargai pengorbanan para dokter, perawat, tenaga medis, paramedis yang telah berminggu-minggu bahkan berbulan-bulan bekerja keras menyelamatkan pasien dan tidak bertemu keluarga. Saya di lapangan, *saya tahu mengenai ini* (16/ 11/ 2020).

We must appreciate the sacrifices of doctors, nurses, medical personnel, paramedics who have worked hard for weeks or even months to save patients and have not seen their families. I'm on the ground, *I know about this*.

Meanwhile, the collocation of *Saya* (I) for *berterima kasih* (thank) is *mengucapkan* (to say) and *menyampaikan* (express). When Jokowi used the phrase *Saya mengucapkan* (I say), he did so to express the verbal process of saying 'thank you'. The relevance of personal thanks was strengthened through the verb expressing thank you as a special collocation of I. Thanks were not only addressed to government officials and institutions, medical personnel, mass organizations, religious communities, and citizens, but specifically went to people who follow government regulations (12):

(12) Pada kesempatan yang baik ini *saya ingin menyampaikan ucapan terima kasih* yang sebesar-besarnya kepada seluruh masyarakat yang telah melaksanakan mudik dengan tertib dan mengikuti anjuran serta aturan pemerintah, baik terkait dengan protokol kesehatan, terkait dengan vaksinasi, dan rekayasa lalu lintas yang kita lakukan (24/ 05/ 2022).

On this good opportunity, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who have carried out their homecoming in an orderly manner and followed the government's recommendations and regulations, both related to health protocols, related to vaccinations, and the traffic engineering that we carry out.

Personal Pronoun I as Institutional Legitimacy and Authority

Apart from the functions of solidarity and empathy, Jokowi speaking in the first person was also related to the assumption of institutional legitimacy and authority as the state leader. The collocations *saya+sampaikan* (I+express), *saya+ minta* (I+insist), *saya+harap* (I+hope/ expect), *saya+tegaskan* (I+emphasize), *saya+perintahkan* (I+instruct), *saya+cek/ mengecek* (I+check/ examine), *saya+ulang-ulang/ mengulang* (I+repeat), *saya+lihat/ melihat* (I+see) were used to carry out the function of institutional legitimacy and authority. This function is exemplified in extract (13):

(13) Untuk itu, *saya instruksikan dan saya perintahkan kepada seluruh jajaran kabinet, kementerian, lembaga, dan pemerintah daerah* untuk memprioritaskan program vaksinasi pada tahun anggaran 2021 (16/ 12/ 2020).

For this reason, I instruct and order all levels of the cabinet, ministries, institutions, and regional governments to prioritize the vaccination program in the 2021 fiscal year.

The high use of the personal pronoun *Saya* (I) in speech indicated a heroic way of leadership rather than a way of leadership with distributed functions (McHale, 2022). The high using of self-expression I could be interpreted as a way of legitimizing the role as the highest authority. The pronoun I in Jokowi's speech exhibited instructive characteristics that revealed how its use revealed or obscured Jokowi's sense of self in the systemic context of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, *Saya* (I) in Jokowi's COVID speech showed that he combined heroic leadership and leadership with distributed functions (a leadership method based on a collaborative decision-making system). In addition, the speech communication process where there was a high frequency of *Saya* (I) could be employed as a barometer to measure the relative health of Jokowi's long-term leadership and state stability (post-pandemic). The choice of words and speaking style, the high use of 'I' showed that Jokowi was confident with his actions, that he would be successful to bring Indonesia get through pandemic.

Present Time Deixis of Events and Actions

Linguistic feature was also prominent is the use of present tense deixis *saat ini/ sekarang ini* (105), *sekarang* now (72), *hari ini today* (89), *nanti* later (134). This is not surprising since every communicative act is always anchored in space and time. Apart from that, speakers need to position themselves in the spatio-temporal context. The presence of this pandemic context was mainly related to the type of monologic speech discourse where there was no opportunity to directly negotiate with the interlocutor. Jokowi's speeches regarding COVID-19 were prone to be monologic and rarely involved direct interaction with the audience for several practical and strategic reasons: safety and health protocols, communication efficiency, and message and narrative control. Monologic format enabled Jokowi to control the message and narrative he wanted to convey to the public. Speeches delivered monologically could often be accessed by more people through mass media or online platforms. This allowed important information about COVID-19 and government policies to reach all parts of the country quickly.

However, not all context elements were presented. Speakers in political speeches strategically emphasized some elements of space and time, while other elements were not used for the purpose of creating a shared social space and/ or supporting the speaker's argument (Fetzer, 2011). Through the frequent use of *sekarang/ saat ini* (now/ at the time being), Jokowi chose to emphasize the current situation so that his speech was full of elements of hastening action and elements of urgency. *Now* was mostly used in a direct appeal to the audience to urge action now or in a description of the current situation (14).

- (14) Jadi yang paling penting program-program padat karya diperbanyak, bangun sekolah padat karya, bangun irigasi padat karya, *karena rakyat sekarang ini butuh pekerjaan dan butuh income* (26/ 03/ 2021).

So the most important thing is to increase labor-intensive programs, build labor-intensive schools, build labor-intensive irrigation, because people now need work and need income.

Saat ini/ sekarang ini (at present) could be referred to today, at the present moment or in the sense of 'at the current state'. When Jokowi made a statement today, references were particularly made to actions taken or policies being implemented on that day. Temporal deixis could produce forced meaning of conflicts or events that are imminent, important, and historical. Thus, rapid response efforts and preventive measures different from normal situations were necessary. This temporal deixis became a reference device for current events that strengthened the legitimacy of Jokowi's quick actions. The use of temporal deixis was indeed one of the discursive

strategies that aroused fear of the virus, and legitimized the actions taken by governments in countries around the world to face the threat of COVID-19 (Alshanawani, 2021).

On the other hand, (Cap, 2013) argues that in political speeches future events must refer to current events. The collection of premises from past and present events serves as the premise of the future. This means that temporal deixis was one of Jokowi's legitimizing devices in conveying actions for the present or determining actions for the future through a collection of previous actions as in (15):

- (15) *Lonjakan ini sudah diperkirakan dan diantisipasi oleh pemerintah dengan kesiapan-kesiapan kita yang sudah jauh lebih baik dibandingkan tahun-tahun lalu, baik dari segi rumah sakit, obat-obatan dan oksigen, fasilitas isolasi maupun tenaga kesehatan, dan kondisi rumah sakit hingga saat ini juga masih terkendali. (03/ 02/ 2022).*

This surge has been predicted and anticipated by the government with much better preparations than in the previous years, both in terms of hospitals, medicines and oxygen, isolation facilities and health workers, and hospital conditions to date. All still under control

The current temporal deictic framework in extract (15) clearly contrasted the unstable past *pada awal pandemi* (at the beginning of pandemic) with handling actions for the future which were more organized and indicated the government's readiness. The actions that had been prepared were conveyed through the juxtaposition of facts existed in the past framework *segi rumah sakit, obat-obatan, dan oksigen* (in terms of hospitals, medicines, and oxygen) and what had been prepared and carried out in the current framework *fasilitas isolasi, tenaga kesehatan, dan kondisi rumah sakit* (isolation facilities, health workers, and hospital conditions) which might have continued to be conducted in the future *hingga saat ini juga masih terkendali* (until now all are is still under control). Therefore, temporal deixis turned into one of salient linguistic features as evidenced by the frequent use of *sekarang* (now), *sekarang ini* (at the time being), *saat ini* (at present), *hari ini* (today). Those temporal deictic expressions can convey power relations by framing events in their current temporal context. The use of temporal deixis was to emphasize the sense of urgency of the pandemic handling. At the same time, temporal deictic expressions manifested how Jokowi positioned himself as an agent of change in responding to current disaster. By controlling the timeframe, Jokowi attempted to shape the narrative and asserted his authority over the direction of pandemic measures.

Synthesis of Linguistic Features and Their Functions

Analysis of prominent language features in Jokowi's COVID speech reveals the types of linguistic strategies that can lead to an understanding of Jokowi's leadership in

times of (health) crisis. First, the crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic demanded a quick response and relied on solidarity and joint action became Jokowi's strategy and was conveyed through the choice of linguistic features described above. High use of WE as interpersonal relationship signaling devices, especially ours, provided the most important example of this strategy.

Another prominent feature of Jokowi's COVID speech is working together, namely building a special relationship between the President and the nation. The construction of the joint role of President/ society/ nation/ people was a central component of Jokowi's leadership during the pandemic. The labelling of overcoming COVID-19 as a national obligation and responsibility, as well as the choice of verbs and modalities to support the framework of social distance and the relationship between the speaker and his audience, did not imply strong political dynamics. In particular, the structural and lexical choices in Jokowi's COVID speech demonstrated a strategy of inclusivity and group identity creation. The use of the plural personal pronoun WE, which moved between two broad discursive identities and represented a level of exclusivity in terms of its referent: WE-Government, and WE-Indonesian. The meaning of WE-Government was several times found in the 'actions' part of the speech where the provisions and restrictions set by the government were outlined. Verbs related to WE-Government obscured the real differences in terms of political power and obligations inherent in the relationship between the president and his administration. Meanwhile, verbs that collocated with we-Indonesia aimed to motivate the nation to act in the common interest, increased solidarity (De Fina, 1995) and emphasized the shared responsibilities faced by the country, as well as implied concern for interpersonal relations. The health crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic required compliance with handling rules and policies. This was once again emphasized by Jokowi through the frequent use of the modal verb *Harus* (must). The modal verbs highlighted the importance of action and the ability to perform necessary actions while emphasizing the need for discipline. In addition, group identity marker words such as nation and all were used, especially in the increasingly prominent cohortative movements of subsequent speeches, to strengthen the construction of the nation as warriors working together to survive COVID-19.

CONCLUSION

The linguistic features which represent Jokowi's particular choice in his speeches of COVID pandemic handling became one of his communication strategies for successful handling of the pandemic. The use of 'WE/ US' and 'I' were quite frequent in speeches. The employment of first singular and plural pronouns signified Jokowi's purposeful linguistic choice as the highest authority with which he showed his

authoritative power. At the same time, the linguistic evidence elaborated above also implies that Jokowi constructed himself as part of the nation, as a person who did not only care but also control with the purpose of producing obedience and not resistance. In this way, Jokowi explicitly formed or described himself as part of the Indonesian government and nation group. The pronominal choices reflected differences in how Jokowi presented himself in relation to his individual self and as the president of Indonesia in the political arena. This attributive reading resulted in two-in-one contribution: (1) property contribution as President (President Joko Widodo), and (2) individual contribution as part of Indonesian people (Joko Widodo). Apart from that, for Jokowi, decisions that lead to restrictions on personal freedom and community freedom need to be justified through explanations that he believes are logical. Overall, analysis on linguistic features in political speech of pandemic handling demonstrate how Jokowi asserts his authority, shaped perceptions, gained compliance, and influenced the communication dynamics of pandemic handling in Indonesia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This article is part of the author's dissertation with Dr. Suhandano, M.A. as promoter and Prof. Dr. Wening Udasmoro, M.Hum, DEA as co-promoter at the Doctoral Program in Humanities Sciences, Gadjah Mada University funded by Brawijaya University.

REFERENCES

- Alharbi, A. (2018). Towards a performative theory of solidarity discourse. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 5(1495044), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2018.1495044>
- Alshanawani, S. M. (2021). Fear Generation and Policy Legitimization Through Proximization of Threat in COVID-19 Discourse. *Cairo Studies in English*, 2(2021), 164-188. <https://doi.org/10.21608/cse.2022.59476.1088>
- Amossy, R. (2022). Constructing political legitimacy and authority in discourse. *Argumentation et Analyse Du Discours*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.4000/aad.6398>
- Atuhura, D. (2022). The Metaphor of War in Political Discourse on COVID-19 in Uganda. *Frontiers in Communication*, 6(746007). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2021.746007>
- Cap, P. (2013). *Proximization: The Pragmatics of Symbolic Distance Crossing*. John Benjamin.
- Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis* (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

- Charteris-Black, J. (2011). *Politicians and Rhetoric*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230319899>
- De Cock, B. (2011). Why we can be you: The use of 1st person plural forms with hearer reference in English and Spanish. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 2762–2775. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.04.009>
- De Fina, A. (1995). Pronominal choice, identity, and solidarity in political discourse. *Text and Talk: Interdisciplinary Journal For the Study of Discourse*, 15(3), 379–419. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.1.1995.15.3.379>
- Djalante, R., Lassa, J., Setiamarga, D., Sudjatma, A., Indrawan, M., & Haryanto, B. (2020). Review and analysis of current responses to COVID-19 in Indonesia: Period of January to March 2020. *Progress in Disaster Science*, 6(100091), 1–9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2020.100091>
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Fetzer, A. (2011). Here is the difference, here is the passion, here is the chance to be part of greater change: Strategic Context Importation in political discourse. In *Context and Contexts* (pp. 115–146). Benjamin.
- Flores-Ferrán, N. (2017). “I’m very Good at and maybe that’s Why I’m Center Stage...”: Pronominal Deixis and Trump. *English Linguistics Research*, 6(1), 74–87.
- Humas Setkab RI. (2020). *Transkripsi Pidato Presiden Joko Widodo*. Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia. setkab.go.id/pidato
- Humas Setkab RI. (2021). *Transkripsi Pidato Presiden Joko Widodo*. Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia. setkab.go.id/pidato
- Humas Setkab RI. (2022). *Transkrip Pidato Presiden Joko Widodo*. Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia. <https://setkab.go.id/category/transkrip-pidato/>
- Hunt, S. (2021). COVID and the South African Family: Cyril Ramaphosa, President or father? *Discourse, Context & Media*, 44(100541), 12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2021.100541>
- Hyland-Wood, B., Gardner, J., Leask, J., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2021). Toward effective government communication strategies in the era of COVID-19. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(30), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00701-w>
- Ilie, C. (2010). Strategic uses of parliamentary forms of address: The case of the U.K. Parliament and the Swedish Riksdag. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(2010), 885–911. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2009.08.017>

- Jaffrey, S. (2020, November 17). *The role of neighbourhood leaders in Indonesia's COVID-19 response* [New Perspective on South Asia]. New Mandala.
- Jaworska, S. (2021). The Discourse of Angela Merkel's Media Communications during the First Wave of the Pandemic. *Discourse, Context, and Media (ScienceDirect, Elsevier)*, 42(2021), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2021.100506>
- McHale, D. L. (2022, January 7). *The politics of pronouns* [Sex and gender, Social and behavioural]. The British Psychological Society. <https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/politics-pronouns>
- Montiel, C. J., Uyheng, J., & Dela Paz, E. (2021). The Language of Pandemic Leaderships: Mapping Political Rhetoric During the COVID-19 Outbreak. *Political Psychology*, 42(5), 747-766. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12753>
- Musolff, A. (2016). *Political Metaphor Analysis*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Neshkovska, S., & Trajkova, Z. (2020). Coronavirus-inspired Metaphors in Political Discourse. *Thesis International Research Journal*, 9(2), 98-132.
- Nurita, D., & Wibowo, E. A. (2022, March 3). 2 Tahun Pandemi Covid-19, Ringkasan Perjalanan Wabah Corona di Indonesia. *Tempo.com*. asional.tempo.co/read/1566720/2-tahun-pandemi-covid-19-ringkasan-perjalanan-wabah-corona-di-indonesia.
- Olimat, S. N. (2020). Words as Powerful Weapons: Dysphemism in Trump's Covid-19 Speeches. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 26((3)), 17-29. <https://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2020-2603-02>.
- Otieno, R. F. (2019). Metaphors in Political Discourse in Kenya: Unifying or Divisive? *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 9(2), 62-83. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v9i2.14918>
- Rajandran, K. (2020). A Long Battle Ahead': Malaysian and Singaporean Prime Ministers Employ War Metaphors for COVID-19. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 20((3)), 261-267. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2020-2003-1>
- Sakir, Abhipraya, F. A., & Mutiarin, D. (2021). From Downplaying to Giving Illiberal Responses: Jokowi's Populist Leadership Amidst COVID-19. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 626.
- Sampsel, L. J. (2018). Voyant Tools. *Music Reference Service Quarterly*, 21(03), 153-157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10588167.2018.1496754>

- Santulli, F. (2020). We Shall Fight: Speaker-Exclusive We as a Grammatical Metaphor. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 12(4), 43–64. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v12i4.16931>
- Sinclair, S., MacDonald, A., & et all. (2022). *Voyant-tools* [English; GitHub]. <https://voyant-tools.org/docs/#!/guide/corpuscreator>
- Sinclair, S., & Rockwell, G. (2003). *Voyant Tools* (2.2) [English]. <https://voyant-tools.org/>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 249–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006>
- Wicaksana, I. G. W. (2022). Why does populism not make populist foreign policy? Indonesia under Jokowi. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 76(6), 634–652. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2022.2071834>
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wings Populist Discourses Mean* (1st ed.). Sage Publications.
- Wodak, R. (2021). Crisis communication and crisis management during COVID-19. *Global Discourse an Interdisciplinary Journal of Current Affairs*, 11(3), 329–353. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204378921X16100431230102>
- Zupnik, Y.-J. (1994). A pragmatic analysis of the use of person deixis in political discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 21, 339–383. [https://doi.org/SSDI0378-2166\(93\)E0036-Y](https://doi.org/SSDI0378-2166(93)E0036-Y)