

Doublespeak in Political Jargon: A Lutzian Analysis of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Debate

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Abstract

This study examines the use of political jargon in Indonesia's 2024 presidential debate through the lens of William Lutz's Doublespeak theory. It aims to identify how jargon functions as a rhetorical strategy to frame political reality and shape public perception. Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzes transcripts from the first official debate (December 12, 2023). The findings show that jargon is systematically employed by all candidates, with Anies Baswedan accounting for 41.03% of instances, followed by Ganjar Pranowo (33.33%) and Prabowo Subianto (25.64%). Beyond frequency, each candidate demonstrates distinct discursive orientations: technocratic-legal framing, symbolic-institutional abstraction, and hybrid populist formulation. The study finds that jargon functions not only to construct credibility but also has the potential to operate as doublespeak when it obscures policy substance, reduces clarity, and limits public accessibility. Theoretically, this research contributes by positioning jargon along a continuum between necessary policy complexity and strategic ambiguity within political discourse. These findings highlight the role of language as a strategic

resource in political communication and underscore the importance of critical media literacy in democratic contexts.

Keywords: *Political jargon, Doublespeak, Political Communication, Presidential debate*

1. Introduction

Ahead of the 2024 Indonesian general elections, political communication has become increasingly dynamic, particularly through presidential and vice-presidential debates organized by the General Elections Commission (KPU). Since the introduction of direct elections in 2004, these debates have evolved into strategic platforms for conveying policy agendas while simultaneously shaping public perception and voter preferences (Antari, 2018). In 2024, five debate sessions were conducted between December 12, 2023, and February 4, 2024, serving not only as forums for policy articulation but also as arenas of rhetorical contestation.

In political contexts, language functions not merely as a communicative tool but as an instrument of power, capable of shaping ideology, constructing social reality, and influencing public opinion (Ibrahim, 1996). From a sociolinguistic perspective, language also plays a crucial role in identity construction and social control (Wareing, 2007). Within this framework, political discourse often employs strategic linguistic devices to manage meaning and perception. One such strategy is *Doublespeak*, as conceptualized by Lutz, which refers to language that deliberately obscures, distorts, or disguises meaning to mislead audiences or deflect responsibility (Lutz, 1989).

Among the forms of *Doublespeak*, jargon occupies a critical position. While jargon is conventionally understood as specialized terminology used within professional communities to ensure precision and efficiency, its use outside such contexts may obscure meaning and limit public comprehension (Lutz, 1989). In political discourse, the deployment of technical or bureaucratic terminology often serves not only to signal expertise but also to construct authority, frame issues strategically, and, in some cases, conceal substantive ambiguities. Thus, jargon operates not merely as a linguistic feature but as a rhetorical strategy embedded within broader mechanisms of ideological control. In this study, *Doublespeak* theory is employed as an analytical framework to identify, classify, and interpret the use of jargon as a strategy for meaning manipulation in political discourse.

In the context of the 2024 Indonesian presidential debates, the use of jargon becomes particularly significant. These debates frequently function as rhetorical battlegrounds in which candidates compete not only through policy arguments but also through strategic language use. The

increasing public attention to debate discourse further underscores this issue. For instance, analysis of audience responses on the official KPU YouTube channel indicates shifting public sentiment, with neutral responses dominating the first debate (76.3%) but negative sentiment rising significantly in subsequent debates (Nurrahmah, 2024). Similarly, data from INDEF reveal widespread public engagement accompanied by criticism regarding the lack of substantive clarity in later debates (Gading, 2024). These findings suggest growing public concern over the clarity and transparency of political communication, thereby reinforcing the relevance of examining how jargon may function as a form of Doublespeak in shaping public understanding.

Despite the growing body of research on political discourse, previous studies have largely focused on general discourse analysis, euphemism, or stylistic features in presidential debates (Wanfau et al., 2020; Wahyuningsih, 2020; Ali, 2022; Kurniawati et al., 2022; Fizriyani et al., 2023). However, these studies tend to treat linguistic features descriptively and have not specifically examined jargon as a form of Doublespeak within the context of the 2024 debates, nor have they sufficiently addressed its role in shaping public understanding. This indicates a clear research gap in the intersection between Doublespeak theory and contemporary Indonesian political discourse.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the use of jargon as a form of Doublespeak in the first 2024 Indonesian presidential debate. The focus on the first debate is analytically justified, as it represents the initial stage of public framing, where candidates establish dominant narratives, rhetorical strategies, and communicative patterns that influence subsequent debates. This justification clarifies the scope of the study by emphasizing the first debate as a critical moment of discourse formation.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What forms of jargon, such as Doublespeak, are used by candidates in the first 2024 presidential debate? (2) How do these linguistic forms function in obscuring meaning or shaping public perception?

This study offers a novel contribution by specifically examining jargon as a form of Doublespeak in the 2024 Indonesian presidential debate, highlighting its role not only as a linguistic feature but as a strategic mechanism for ideological framing and meaning manipulation in contemporary political discourse. Furthermore, it provides practical implications for enhancing political literacy by fostering critical awareness of language use in democratic processes.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using qualitative content analysis to examine the use of jargon as a form of Doublespeak in political discourse. The focus of the research is on identifying the forms and functions of political jargon used by candidates in the 2024 Indonesian presidential debate as a rhetorical strategy for framing political reality and influencing public perception.

The primary data consist of verbal utterances produced by the candidates—Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo—transcribed from the official recording of the first 2024 presidential debate (December 12, 2023) available on the KPU YouTube channel. The selection of the first debate is analytically justified, as it represents the initial stage of discourse construction in which candidates establish their dominant rhetorical strategies and communicative patterns.

Data collection was conducted through systematic observation and documentation. The debate recording was transcribed using orthographic transcription, focusing on lexical choices and sentence structures relevant to the identification of jargon. The transcription process involved repeated listening and cross-checking between audio-visual data and written transcripts to ensure accuracy, thereby strengthening the transparency of data collection procedures.

While prosodic and non-verbal features were not the primary focus, emphasis was placed on verbal expressions that potentially reflect meaning manipulation.

- 1) Data analysis was carried out using qualitative content analysis (Bungin, 2011), involving several stages: identification of linguistic units containing potential jargon,
- 2) classification of jargon based on Doublespeak categories adapted from Lutz (1989), particularly jargon used outside its professional context,
- 3) interpretation of their communicative functions in obscuring meaning, framing issues, or constructing authority, and
- 4) contextualization of these findings within the broader socio-political discourse (Eriyanto, 2011).

This stepwise analytical procedure clarifies how jargon is systematically identified and categorized within the Doublespeak framework.

To ensure analytical rigor, a coding scheme was developed based on Doublespeak theory, including indicators such as technicality, abstraction, ambiguity, and contextual mismatch between term usage and audience comprehension. Coding was conducted iteratively, with continuous

comparison between data segments to maintain consistency in categorization.

To enhance reliability, the coding process was conducted with repeated verification and consistency checks across data segments to ensure stable and systematic categorization.

Rather than methodological triangulation in the sense of multiple data sources, this study applies theoretical integration by combining Doublespeak theory (Lutz, 1989), with insights from political discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1997) and a semiotic-pragmatic perspective. This approach clarifies the analytical integration of multiple theoretical perspectives, addressing the limitation of superficial triangulation.

While the analysis focuses on a single debate, this limitation is addressed by emphasizing depth of analysis rather than generalization, allowing for a detailed examination of linguistic strategies in their initial discursive formation.

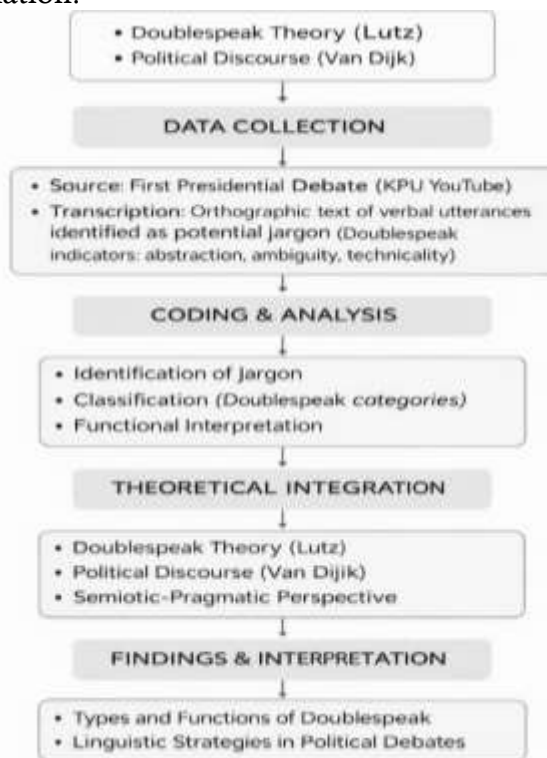


Figure 1. Research Diagram

3. Results

3.1. Anies Baswedan's Use of Jargon as Doublespeak

In political communication, technical terminology is often associated with credibility and intellectual authority. However, within the

framework of William Lutz, such language may also function as Doublespeak when used outside its specialized context, potentially reducing accessibility and obscuring meaning. The analysis of the first 2024 presidential debate identifies 16 instances of jargon in Anies Baswedan's utterances. Rather than appearing randomly, these instances cluster into three dominant discursive domains: (1) legal-political framing, (2) technocratic-bureaucratic governance, and (3) ideological-normative positioning.

3.1.1 Legal-Political Jargon and Issue Classification

A recurring pattern is the use of legal and security terminology to frame complex issues through institutional categories. For example:

“separatism,” “terrorism,” “criminal,” “human rights violations” (Debate 1, 56:52–57:47)

These terms appear in the context of discussing the Papua conflict. Instead of elaborating on specific cases or policy mechanisms, the speaker employs a cluster of high-level classifications. This indicates a shift from explanation to categorization, where social realities are framed through legal labels.

Similarly, references such as:

“asset seizure law,” “KPK Law revision,” “ethical standards” (Debate 1, 1:19:37–1:20:34)

Articles 14 and 15 of Law No. 1 of 1946,” ITE Law,” “political financing reform” (Debate 1, 1:24:12–1:26:11)

Draw on formal legal discourse but lack specification of implementation. Within Lutz's framework, this reflects jargon that may signal expertise while limiting substantive clarity.

Further instances include:

“legal products,” “public dialogue,” “rule of law” (Debate 1, 2:01:04–2:01:54)

“The legal aspect has already been resolved” (Debate 1, 2:16:36–2:17:28)

These expressions reinforce a legalistic framing of issues, yet their generality leaves interpretive space open. This pattern aligns with Teun A. van Dijk's perspective that discourse structures social reality by controlling the level of specificity and framing through which issues are presented. (Van Dijk, 1997).

3.1.2 Technocratic and Bureaucratic Jargon as Governance Representation

Another dominant pattern involves technocratic and administrative terminology, which constructs an image of modern governance. For instance:

“Jaki... a super app” (Debate 1, 1:02:57–1:03:57)

“Paris Hotline” (Debate 1, 1:07:55–1:09:47)

These terms signal innovation and digitalization, yet remain semantically under-explained, especially for non-specialist audiences. Similarly, bureaucratic expressions such as:

“remuneration” “transparent promotion” (Debate 1, 1:35:11–1:36:07)

“judiciary,” “merit system” (Debate 1, 1:47:13–1:48:10)

“meritocratic” (Debate 1, 1:50:41–1:51:41)

Project administrative competence while abstracting away from operational detail. Rather than clarifying policy mechanisms, these terms function to symbolize institutional efficiency.

Technocratic discourse is further reinforced through:

“electric-based public transportation... ASN contribution 4–7%” (Debate 1, 1:58:26–2:00:23)

“electrification,” “conversion,” “emission testing” (Debate 1, 2:06:46–2:08:44)

“engaging scientists,” “satellite imagery,” “using data” (Debate 1, 2:09:52–2:10:41)

These expressions introduce a scientific register, suggesting data-driven policymaking. However, the absence of methodological explanation indicates that this reflects what Norman Fairclough conceptualizes as scientific framing, where technical language foregrounds rationality while simultaneously backgrounding social complexity and power relations (Fairclough, 2003).

3.1.3 Ideological Jargon and Normative Positioning

The third pattern involves ideological expressions that operate at a normative level. For example:

“democratic processes,” “people’s sovereignty,” “decision-making” (Debate 1, 1:29:48–1:30:40)

“rule-of-law state” vs. “power state” (Debate 1, 2:29:30–2:31:30)

These terms articulate moral and political positions but lack operational specification. Their function is less about policy explanation and more about constructing legitimacy through value-laden language.

Similarly:

“review” “reinvestigation,” “the institution is safe” (Debate 1, 2:19:18–2:20:14)

Illustrates the use of abstract institutional language that leaves agency and outcomes unspecified. Rather than clarifying accountability, such expressions maintain interpretive flexibility.

3.1.4 Analytical Synthesis

Across these domains, Anies Baswedan’s use of jargon demonstrates a consistent pattern in which language functions to:

- a) classify issues through legal and institutional categories,

- b) project technocratic competence and administrative rationality, and
- c) construct ideological legitimacy through normative expressions.

Importantly, these functions do not necessarily indicate deliberate manipulation. Some terms may reflect genuine policy complexity. However, these findings reinforce William Lutz’s argument that jargon, when used outside its specialized context, can operate as a mechanism of meaning management, where clarity is partially subordinated to the construction of authority and political positioning (Lutz, 1989).

Table 1. Distribution and Function of Jargon in Anies Baswedan’s Utterances

No	Jargon Expression	Category	Discursive Function
1	“Separatism,” “terrorism,” “human rights violations”	Legal–political	Issue classification and authority framing
2	“Jaki,” “super app”	Technocratic	Modernization signaling
3	“Paris Hotline”	Technocratic	Symbolic innovation framing
4	“Asset seizure law,” “KPK Law revision”	Legal–political	Reform legitimacy construction
5	“ITE Law,” “Articles 14 and 15 of Law No. 1 of 1946”	Legal–political	Institutional reference without elaboration
6	“People’s sovereignty,” “democratic processes”	Ideological	Normative legitimacy construction
7	“Remuneration,” “transparent promotion”	Bureaucratic	Administrative professionalism signaling
8	“Judiciary,” “merit system”	Bureaucratic	Institutional reform framing
9	“Meritocratic”	Bureaucratic	Abstract system justification
10	“Electric-based public transportation”	Technocratic	Data-driven governance framing
11	“Rule of law,” “public dialogue”	Legal–political	Procedural legitimacy construction
12	“Electrification,” “emission testing”	Technocratic	Scientific policy framing

No	Jargon Expression	Category	Discursive Function
13	“Satellite imagery,” “using data”	Technocratic	Scientific credibility signaling
14	“Legal aspect has been resolved”	Legal– political	Closure framing without detail
15	“Review,” “reinvestigation”	Bureaucratic	Institutional control representation
16	“Rule-of-law state,” “power state”	Ideological	Binary moral positioning

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of jargon across discursive domains, highlighting how linguistic forms function beyond communication as mechanisms of framing and meaning management.

3.2. Prabowo Subianto’s Use of Jargon as Doublespeak

Within the framework of Doublespeak, jargon functions not only as specialized terminology but also as a discursive strategy that may obscure meaning when deployed outside its professional context. As argued by Lutz, such language can construct authority while limiting public accessibility to policy substance (Lutz, 1989). This also resonates with Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic power, where language operates as a means of domination by structuring what can be legitimately understood in public discourse (Bourdieu, 1991).

The analysis of the first 2024 presidential debate identifies 13 instances of jargon in Prabowo Subianto’s utterances. These instances do not appear randomly but cluster into three dominant discursive domains: (1) security–legal framing, (2) technocratic–institutional governance, and (3) symbolic–ideological positioning.

3.2.1 *Security–Legal Jargon and Conflict Framing*

A prominent pattern is the use of security and legal terminology to frame political issues through institutional and coercive categories. For example:

“*separatists,*” “*terrorist groups,*” “*law enforcement,*” “*social services*” (Debate 1, 53:22–56:25).

These expressions construct socio-political conflict through institutional classification rather than contextual explanation. The use of such terminology shifts the discussion from social complexity to simplified legal categories, potentially narrowing interpretive space.

Similarly:

“*leadership,*” “*state management,*” “*law enforcement,*” “*human rights*” (Debate 1, 33:52–37:54)

Present governance through abstract administrative concepts without operational detail. This reflects what Lutz identifies as jargon that signals expertise while limiting substantive clarity (Lutz, 1989)..

Further instances include:

“legal experts say there is no problem,” “the decision is final” (Debate 1, 1:48:25–1:50:18)

This invokes legal authority to reinforce claims. Such expressions function to close interpretive debate by appealing to institutional legitimacy rather than providing a transparent justification.

From a discourse perspective, this aligns with Van Dijk, who argues that discourse structures reality by controlling framing and access to information (Van Dijk, 1997). Similarly, Entman emphasizes that framing involves selecting certain aspects of reality while excluding others, thereby shaping how audiences interpret political issues. (Entman, 1993).

3.2.2 *Technocratic and Institutional Jargon as Governance Representation*

Another dominant pattern involves technocratic and bureaucratic terminology, which constructs an image of administrative control and policy competence. For example:

“Kartu Tani (Farmer Card)” (Debate 1, 1:04:10–1:04:51) represents policy through administrative labeling without evaluative explanation, reducing the possibility for critical assessment.

Similarly:

“bureaucracy,” “KPK,” “Ombudsman,” “BPK,” “BPKP,” “Inspectorate,” “corruption mitigation” (Debate 1, 1:10:10–1:21:48)

Demonstrate cumulative institutional referencing. Rather than elaborating performance or outcomes, these expressions symbolically construct an image of governance capacity and institutional control.

Technocratic abstraction is also evident in:

“geopolitical factors,” “ideological factors” (Debate 1, 58:20–58:51)

Which elevate discussion into abstract analytical categories while avoiding concrete policy elaboration. This abstraction aligns with Laclau’s concept of empty signifiers, where political language maintains strategic vagueness to accommodate multiple interpretations. (Laclau, 2005).

Economic and development discourse further appears in:

“downstreaming” (Debate 1, 1:55:43–1:56:14) is a term that signals strategic planning but remains undefined operationally, thus limiting public comprehension.

Scientific framing is reflected in:

“the highest pollution index in the world” (Debate 1, 2:05:39–2:06:29)

“steps that can be realistically taken within five years...” (Debate 1, 2:08:58–2:09:31)

These expressions introduce a data-oriented register; however, the absence of methodological explanation indicates what Fairclough conceptualizes as *scientific framing*, where technical language foregrounds rationality while backgrounding evidential transparency (Fairclough, 2003). This pattern also reflects Lakoff's argument that framing simplifies complex realities into cognitively accessible structures that may shape public interpretation (Lakoff, 2004).

3.2.3 Symbolic and Ideological Jargon

The third pattern involves symbolic and normative expressions that function at the level of political legitimacy rather than policy explanation. For example:

"democracy does not work" (Debate 1, 1:26:28–1:27:28)

"mandate from the people" (Debate 1, 1:32:48–1:33:43)

These expressions condense complex political processes into simplified symbolic claims, emphasizing legitimacy while minimizing structural explanation.

Similarly:

"upholding the constitution," "legal commitment," "merit system" (Debate 1, 1:36:24–1:37:28) project normative authority without specifying implementation mechanisms.

Sloganistic expressions further reinforce this pattern:

"Indonesia Maju Coalition," "the foundation already built," "leap to become a great nation" (Debate 1, 2:31:50–2:33:54)

These phrases operate primarily at an affective level, mobilizing collective imagination rather than conveying policy substance. Such expressions also reflect persuasive ambiguity, which, according to Koniak and Cwalina, can enhance audience acceptance while avoiding explicit commitments (Koniak, P., & Cwalina, 2022).

3.2.4 Analytical Synthesis

Across these domains, Prabowo Subianto's use of jargon demonstrates three primary discursive functions:

- a) framing issues through security and legal classifications,
- b) projecting technocratic competence and institutional control, and
- c) constructing symbolic legitimacy through normative and sloganistic language.

Importantly, these patterns do not necessarily indicate deliberate manipulation. Some expressions may reflect the inherent complexity of policy discourse. However, consistent with Lutz, the data suggest that jargon can function as a mechanism of meaning management, where clarity is partially subordinated to the construction of authority and political positioning (Lutz, 1989).

This finding is further reinforced by Fairclough, who views language as a site of power in which meaning is strategically controlled (Fairclough, 2001), and by Scheufele (Scheufele, 2000), who highlights how framing influences public perception in political communication.

Table 2. Distribution and Function of Jargon in Prabowo Subianto’s Utterances

No	Jargon Expression	Category	Discursive Function
1	“state management,” “law enforcement”	Legal– bureaucratic	Abstract governance framing
2	“separatists,” “terrorists”	Security–legal	Conflict classification
3	“geopolitical factors”	Strategic	Issue abstraction
4	“Kartu Tani”	Administrative	Policy labeling without evaluation
5	“KPK,” “BPK,” “Ombudsman”	Institutional	Symbolic authority construction
6	“downstreaming”	Technocratic	Development framing
7	“pollution index”	Scientific	Data-based authority claim
8	“mandate from the people”	Ideological	Legitimacy construction
9	“merit system”	Bureaucratic	Reform signaling
10	“Indonesia Maju Coalition”	Sloganistic	Emotional mobilization

Table 2 summarizes how jargon is distributed across domains and demonstrates its function not merely as a linguistic feature, but as a discursive mechanism for framing political reality and managing meaning.

3.3. Ganjar Pranowo’s Use of Jargon as Doublespeak

In contemporary political discourse, language operates not only as a communicative medium but also as a strategic instrument for shaping public perception and structuring social reality. Within this framework, Lutz conceptualizes jargon as a form of *Doublespeak* when technical or semi-technical language is used outside its specialized context, potentially obscuring meaning while projecting expertise (Lutz, 1996). This perspective is reinforced by critical discourse approaches, which view language as a mechanism of power and control (Fairclough, 2003). Recent studies further demonstrate that political actors employ ambiguity and technical language to maintain flexibility and influence audience interpretation (Mironina, A. Yu., & Porchesku, 2023).

Against this backdrop, Ganjar Pranowo's discourse in the first 2024 presidential debate reveals a systematic use of jargon that operates across technocratic, bureaucratic, and ideological domains.

3.3.1 *Technocratic Jargon and the Rationalization of Governance*

Ganjar frequently employs technocratic expressions associated with development and governance:

“governance,” “incentives,” “superior human resources,” “religious moderation,” “internet access” (Debate 1, 38:32–42:34).

These terms construct a rational and modern policy image, yet remain abstract and minimally operational. From the perspective of Lutz, such language exemplifies how jargon can “explain without truly explaining,” projecting competence while limiting clarity (Lutz, 1996).

At the same time, this pattern aligns with Lakoff, who argues that political language activates cognitive frames that shape public understanding without requiring detailed elaboration (Lakoff, 2004). Contemporary research also shows that such abstraction functions as argumentative ambiguity, enabling politicians to appear competent while avoiding specific commitments (Koniak, P., & Cwalina, 2022).

A similar tendency is evident in:

“Musrenbang,” “Lapor Gup,” “government super apps” (Debate 1, 1:01:22–1:02:38). These terms signal bureaucratic innovation and digital governance. However, for broader audiences, they remain semi-opaque. This supports findings by Mironina & Porches that technocratic language often operates as an evasive strategy, presenting policies as neutral and technical while reducing public scrutiny (Mironina, A. Yu., & Porchesku, 2023).

3.3.2 *Bureaucratic Jargon and Symbolic Authority*

Ganjar's discourse also reflects the use of bureaucratic and institutional terminology:

“meritocracy” (Debate 1, 1:17:53–1:19:22)

“aggregation,” “cadre recruitment,” “political education” (Debate 1, 1:28:20–1:29:21).

These expressions convey institutional competence but remain conceptually dense and operationally vague. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this reflects what Bourdieu defines as *symbolic power*, where mastery of specialized language legitimizes authority while excluding non-expert audiences (Bourdieu, 1991).

Similarly:

“ease of doing business,” “vocational school,” “affirmative actions” (Debate 1, 1:53:33–1:55:33).

These policy buzzwords simplify complex socio-economic issues into neutral technocratic terms. This aligns with Entman's framing theory,

where language highlights certain aspects of reality while obscuring others, guiding interpretation without explicit argumentation (Entman, 1993). Recent studies further show that such terminology can reduce perceived controversy by reframing issues in administrative terms (Shubina, E. L., & Sedova, 2021).

3.3.3 Ideological Jargon and Strategic Framing

Ganjar also employs ideological and aspirational expressions:

“national strategic projects continue,” “Indonesia 2045 as a developed nation” (Debate 1, 1:56:29–1:57:14)

“Indonesia-centric” (Debate 1, 1:57:33–1:58:13).

These terms function as forward-looking narratives rather than operational policies. Within discourse theory, such expressions resemble what Laclau calls *empty signifiers*, which unify audiences while remaining open to multiple interpretations (Laclau, 2005).

Similarly:

“historical call” (Debate 1, 2:34:09–2:36:09).

This phrase operates at an emotional level, strengthening collective identification rather than conveying policy substance. In line with Smith (2021), such symbolic language reinforces legitimacy while minimizing the need for empirical justification.

3.3.4 Legal–Moral Jargon and Discursive Legitimacy

Ganjar’s discourse also incorporates legal and moral terminology:

“human rights violations,” “legal process,” “KKR law” (Debate 1, 2:17:41–2:19:05)

“fact finders,” “values to be emulated” (Debate 1, 2:20:30–2:21:18)

These expressions construct an ethical stance while remaining non-operational. From a critical discourse perspective, this reflects Fairclough’s concept of hegemonic discourse, where language naturalizes authority and limits contestation (Fairclough, 2001).

Additionally, recent linguistic studies indicate that such abstract moral language often functions as a form of discursive mitigation, softening sensitive issues and avoiding direct accountability (Jing-Schmidt, 2022).

3.3.5 Analytical Synthesis

Across these domains, Ganjar Pranowo’s use of jargon demonstrates three interconnected discursive functions:

- a) Rationalizing governance through technocratic language
- b) Constructing authority via bureaucratic and institutional terminology
- c) Framing legitimacy through ideological and normative expressions

Importantly, these patterns do not necessarily imply deliberate manipulation. As noted by Koniak & Cwalina (2022), ambiguity in

political communication may also enhance perceived competence and strategic flexibility. However, consistent with Lutz (1989; 1996) and Fairclough (2003), the findings suggest that jargon operates as a mechanism of meaning management, where clarity is partially subordinated to the construction of authority, legitimacy, and persuasive framing.

Table 3. Distribution and Discursive Function of Ganjar Pranowo’s Jargon

No.	Jargon Expression	Category	Discursive Function
1	“governance”, “incentives”, “superior human resources”, “religious moderation”, “internet access”	Technocratic– developmental	Projects a rational and modern policy orientation while constructing technocratic authority without operational clarity
2	“dialogue model”	Conflict– resolution	Frames inclusivity and deliberation, but remains procedurally abstract without concrete implementation
3	“Musrenbang”, “Lapor Gup”, “government super apps”	Digital– bureaucratic	Signals administrative innovation while creating institutional exclusivity for non-specialist audiences
4	“farmer data”, “fertilizer quota”, “HKTI”	Sectoral– agricultural	Builds an experiential leadership ethos but limits evaluative scrutiny of policy effectiveness
5	“meritocracy”	Institutional reform	Signals fairness and professionalism while masking structural inequalities through normative abstraction
6	“political promises”	Normative– political	Constructs symbolic commitment without enforceable

No.	Jargon Expression	Category	Discursive Function
7	“aggregation”, “cadre recruitment”, “political education”	Political– scientific	accountability mechanisms Demonstrates technical knowledge and reinforces discursive authority, limiting public contestation
8	“ease of doing business”, “vocational school”, “affirmative action”	Socio-economic policy	Simplifies complex socio-economic issues into neutral technocratic language, reducing critical engagement
9	“national strategic projects”, “Indonesia 2045 as a developed nation”	Developmental– sloganistic	Constructs an aspirational national vision with high symbolic value but limited policy specificity
10	“IKN”, “Indonesia- centric”	Administrative– ideological	Frames development within a hegemonic national narrative while minimizing operational detail
11	“victim justice”, “legal process”, “human rights violations”, “KKR law”	Legal–human rights	Builds moral legitimacy through legal discourse while reinforcing symbolic authority
12	“fact finders”, “values to be emulated”	Moral– institutional	Establishes ethical credibility but maintains interpretive ambiguity and limited accountability
13	“Forkopimcam members”, “historical call”	Bureaucratic– ideological	Combines bureaucratic exclusivity with emotional mobilization, obscuring concrete meaning

Table 3 shows that Ganjar Pranowo's jargon is predominantly situated within technocratic and developmental domains, where abstraction, symbolic framing, and limited operational specification function as key features of political communication.

The analyses in Sections 3.1–3.3 demonstrate that the use of jargon by each candidate is not incidental but systematically patterned within their respective discursive strategies. Across Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo, jargon consistently functions beyond its referential role, operating as a rhetorical device that structures meaning, projects authority, and regulates the level of interpretive accessibility.

While each candidate exhibits distinct tendencies—ranging from technocratic formalization to symbolic abstraction and hybrid populist framing—the data collectively indicate that jargon serves as a strategic resource for managing political communication, these findings provide the empirical foundation for a broader comparative analysis presented in the following section, which synthesizes frequency, typology, and communicative patterns to examine how jargon operates as doublespeak at the systemic level of political discourse.

4. Discussion

4.1. Rhetorical Analysis of Political Jargon Used by Presidential Candidates in the 2024 Debate

Building upon the findings presented in Sections 3.1–3.3, this section synthesizes the patterns of jargon use across the three candidates to examine their broader rhetorical and discursive implications. While the previous analysis focused on candidate-specific data, the following discussion moves toward a comparative and theoretical interpretation, positioning jargon as a central mechanism of doublespeak in contemporary political communication.

In the context of the 2024 Indonesian presidential debate, all three candidates—Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo—demonstrate a shared tendency to deploy jargon as a rhetorical resource. However, their patterns differ in intensity, orientation, and communicative function, reflecting distinct political styles and discursive strategies.

4.1.1 *Frequency of Jargon Usage*

These quantitative findings are directly derived from the categorized data presented in Sections 3.1–3.3, where each instance of jargon was identified and classified based on its discursive function.

Based on the total identified instances ($N = 39$), the distribution of jargon usage shows a relatively balanced yet analytically significant variation. Anies Baswedan accounts for 16 instances (41.03%), followed

by Ganjar Pranowo with 13 instances (33.33%), and Prabowo Subianto with 10 instances (25.64%).

While all candidates actively employ jargon, Anies demonstrates the highest intensity, indicating a stronger reliance on technocratic, legal, and institutional terminology. Ganjar occupies a middle position, combining technocratic and populist expressions, whereas Prabowo exhibits comparatively lower frequency but maintains a consistent use of symbolic and institutional language.

This distribution suggests that jargon has become a central feature of contemporary electoral discourse. It is not merely used to convey policy substance but also to construct political authority, signal expertise, and manage audience interpretation. In line with Lutz's theory, this frequency reflects how linguistic complexity can function as a subtle mechanism of meaning control, where clarity is partially subordinated to rhetorical positioning.

This tendency is further supported by contemporary findings that highlight how political discourse often prioritizes image construction over substantive clarity, leading to perceptions that debates lack educational value for the public (Hutabarat, 2024).

4.1.2 Dominant Types of Jargon per Candidate

As previously identified in the candidate-specific analyses, each speaker demonstrates a distinct clustering of jargon types, which can now be comparatively examined.

The variation among candidates becomes more evident when examining the dominant types of jargon employed.

Anies Baswedan demonstrates a strong inclination toward:

- a) Legal–juridical jargon
- b) Technocratic–scientific terminology
- c) Ideological expressions

This combination constructs an image of a rational, reform-oriented leader. His discourse reflects what Fairclough conceptualizes as the technologization of discourse, where technical language is used to institutionalize authority and normalize policy perspectives, even when operational clarity is limited (Fairclough, 2003).

Moreover, such usage aligns with findings that doublespeak operates as a mechanism of institutional control, where language constructs authority while limiting interpretive access (Smith, 2021).

Prabowo Subianto, by contrast, predominantly employs:

- a) Bureaucratic and institutional jargon
- b) Security-related terminology
- c) Sloganistic expressions

This pattern emphasizes authority, control, and stability. However, the repetitive and abstract nature of such terms aligns with what Lutz identifies as symbolic language, which projects strength and legitimacy while minimizing substantive explanation (Lutz, 1996).

Ganjar Pranowo exhibits a hybrid pattern, combining:

- a) Technocratic-developmental jargon
- b) Bureaucratic-digital terminology
- c) Ideological and moral expressions

His discourse reflects a modern–populist orientation, blending administrative rationality with inclusive and aspirational narratives. From the perspective of Bourdieu, such language functions as symbolic capital, reinforcing authority through controlled access to specialized vocabulary (Bourdieu, 1991).

At the same time, the use of ideological and technocratic expressions also resonates with the role of discourse in shaping collective perception, where language actively constructs social reality and guides audience interpretation (Zhikhareva, N. A., & Yakovleva, 2021).

4.1.3 Distinct Communicative Patterns Based on Jargon Usage

The communicative patterns discussed in this section are abstractions derived from the recurring tendencies observed in the empirical data of Sections 3.1–3.3. The analysis reveals three distinct communicative patterns shaped by each candidate’s rhetorical deployment of jargon:

Anies employs jargon across multiple policy domains, constructing a discourse of expertise and reform. His strategy emphasizes procedural legitimacy and institutional reasoning. However, consistent with Fairclough’s perspective, this may also obscure complexity by presenting policy issues in overly technical terms, limiting public accessibility.

Prabowo’s rhetoric relies on repetition of bureaucratic and legal terminology, creating an image of authority and decisiveness. This pattern functions as a rhetorical shield, simplifying complex issues into institutional narratives. Ganjar combines technocratic language with moral and inclusive rhetoric, projecting a progressive and relatable image. However, this hybrid style often frames complex socio-political issues in generalized terms, postponing concrete accountability. This pattern is consistent with contemporary findings that ambiguity and indirect language strategies can enhance perceived credibility while simultaneously reducing evaluability and transparency (Koniak, P., & Cwalina, 2022).

Table 4. Comparative Rhetorical Use of Political Jargon

Aspect	Anies Baswedan	Prabowo Subianto	Ganjar Pranowo
Number of Jargon Instances	16 (41.03%)	10 (25.64%)	13 (33.33%)
Dominant Types of Jargon	Legal–juridical; technocratic; ideological	Bureaucratic; institutional; security; sloganistic	Technocratic; developmental; bureaucratic; ideological
Distinctive Features	Cross-sectoral, data-oriented, procedurally formal	Repetitive, symbolic, authority-centered	Hybrid: modern technocratic + populist moral framing
Main Rhetorical Function	Construct expertise and reformist credibility	Project control, stability, and legitimacy	Build progressive, inclusive, and professional image
Doublespeak Strategy	Procedural legitimization and technocratic abstraction	Symbolic authority and issue simplification	Technocratic framing and deferred accountability

The theoretical interpretations presented here are grounded in the empirical patterns identified earlier, where jargon repeatedly functions as classification, abstraction, and symbolic framing. The findings reinforce William Lutz’s (1996) argument that jargon, when detached from clear contextual grounding, contributes to the corruption of clarity, transforming language into a tool of obfuscation rather than communication.

At the same time, the interaction between jargon and euphemism demonstrates a layered form of doublespeak. Empirical findings show that euphemistic strategies are often used to soften criticism and obscure ideological intent (Rosyidah, I., & Firdausi, 2025). In this context:

- a) Jargon constructs an image of expertise and objectivity
- b) Euphemism mitigates conflict and conceals evaluative meaning

Furthermore, contemporary discourse analysis suggests that doublespeak does not merely obscure meaning but actively sustains power structures by limiting critical interpretation and reinforcing institutional dominance (Smith, 2021).

From a broader socio-discursive perspective, language also plays a crucial role in shaping mass consciousness. Political expressions—especially those framed in technical or ideological jargon—guide how audiences interpret reality and normalize particular viewpoints (Zhikhareva, N. A., & Yakovleva, 2021).

From a framing perspective, Entman (1993) and Lakoff (2004) explain that such language does not merely describe reality but actively structures it. By framing issues in technical or administrative terms, candidates shift public interpretation from moral or social concerns to managerial problem-solving.

Meanwhile, according to Speech Act Theory (Searle, 1969) The use of jargon can be viewed as an illocutionary act—asserting authority and expertise beyond its propositional content. It not only communicates ideas but also performs identity.

Finally, contextual evidence suggests that when political discourse is dominated by technical and ambiguous language, it may reduce accessibility and fail to effectively inform the public, reinforcing perceptions of low substantive quality in political debates (Hutabarat, 2024).

Overall, the use of jargon in the 2024 presidential debate reflects a broader transformation of political language into a symbolic arena of power. Across all candidates, jargon functions not simply as a communicative device but as a strategic resource for:

- a) constructing authority
- b) managing interpretation
- c) shaping political legitimacy

In this context, doublespeak emerges not as an exception but as a normalized feature of contemporary political discourse—where clarity is often negotiated, and meaning is strategically controlled rather than transparently conveyed.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the use of jargon in the first 2024 Indonesian presidential debate functions not only as a communicative device but also as a discursive strategy that can frame political reality. The findings show that jargon has the potential to operate as doublespeak when it reduces clarity, abstracts policy substance, and limits public accessibility. Based on 39 identified instances, the distribution reflects variation in rhetorical orientation rather than mere frequency: Anies Baswedan (41.03%) emphasizes technocratic–legal framing, Prabowo Subianto (25.64%) relies on symbolic–institutional abstraction, and Ganjar Pranowo (33.33%) combines technocratic and populist formulations.

These patterns indicate that jargon is strategically used to construct authority and manage political meaning.

Theoretically, this study extends Lutz's framework by positioning jargon along a continuum between necessary policy complexity and strategic ambiguity within contemporary political discourse. However, the study is limited to a single debate context and focuses on verbal data, which may constrain generalizability. Future research should incorporate broader datasets and multimodal analysis. Practically, the findings highlight the need for stronger political literacy and critical media awareness, as the increasing use of technical language may widen the gap between elite discourse and public understanding, raising concerns about transparency and democratic accountability.

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