Unspoken Influence: Presupposition, Implicature, and Hypnotic Ambiguity in Indonesian Political Interviews

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes forms of covert linguistic influence in Indonesian political interviews, focusing on three primary strategies: presupposition, conversational implicature, and hypnotic ambiguity. Political communication functions through explicit message content and implicit utterances subtly and systematically shaping public opinion. The research aims to uncover how suggestive politicians and interviewers employ strategies to frame meaning without making direct claims. The study adopts a qualitative discourse analysis approach grounded in cognitive pragmatics. Data were drawn from ten political interview transcripts broadcast on national television and digital platforms between 2019 and 2024. Analysis was conducted using the framework of Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson) and hypnotic language models (Erickson & NLP). Analytical tools such as AntConc were used to map the distribution of keywords and contextual usage of suggestive phrases. Findings indicate that presupposition emerged as the most dominant strategy (28.5%), followed by implicature (23.8%) and semantic ambiguity (15.7%). Additionally, hypno questioning (14.2%), embedded commands (10%), and vocal emphasis (7.6%) were identified as supplementary techniques that enhance suggestion at both affective and inferential levels. The study also reveals that strategy usage varies depending on the media platform, interview style, and the politician's background. Conceptually, this research extends the application of pragmatic theory to local political contexts and demonstrates that language is a latent tool of influence operating at both cognitive and emotional levels. The study contributes to political linguistics and offers a new analytical framework for examining implicit communication in public discourse. Practical implications include strengthening media literacy, promoting ethical political communication, and enhancing critical education regarding suggestive influence in digital democracy.

1. Introduction

Political communication in Indonesia is shaped not only by what is stated explicitly but also by the implicit messages embedded in linguistic structures[1]. In political interviews, implicit utterances often carry greater persuasive power than direct statements. This phenomenon reveals the pragmatic force in shaping public opinion through linguistic strategies frequently unnoticed by the audience. One of the key strategies employed is presupposition, or hidden assumptions presented as truths without needing to be explicitly stated[2]. In addition, implicature[3] and hypnotic ambiguity[4] are rhetorical tools that guide audience inference in specific directions. These three mechanisms create a subtle yet powerful form of influence, particularly in media formats featuring public interviews with political figures. These strategies construct political images and reframe the interpretation of events and issues in a calculated manner. However, such forms of communication are rarely subjected to critical scrutiny in public discourse. This raises concerns about how these hidden influences may manipulate mass perception. It is, therefore, essential to examine how presupposition, implicature, and ambiguity operate within Indonesian political interviews[5].

Previous research on political communication in Indonesia has largely focused on macro level themes such as ideology, populist rhetoric, or media framing. For instance, studies by Tapsell (2015) and Aspinall (2013) have emphasized the content of political discourse in mass media and its relationship with democratization. While these contributions are valuable, they often overlook the micro linguistic layer—how language is implicitly used to construct meaning. In contrast, international studies by scholars such as Fairclough (1995) and Chilton (2004) within the framework of critical discourse analysis have shown that language has hegemonic power in shaping social thought. However, pragmatic aspects like presupposition and implicature remain

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[1] Nicolas Ocampo and others, 'An In-Depth Analysis of Implicit and Subtle Hate Speech Messages', in *EACL 2023 - 17th Conference of the European Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics, Proceedings of the Conference*, 2023 <https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2023.eacl-main.147>; Colin Tucker Smith and Jan De Houwer, 'Hooked on a Feeling: Affective Anti-Smoking Messages Are More Effective than Cognitive Messages at Changing Implicit Evaluations of Smoking', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6.OCT (2015) <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01488>; Marlene B. Schwartz and others, 'Intended and Unintended Effects of an Eating Disorder Educational Program: Impact of Presenter Identity', *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 40.2 (2007) <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.20301>.

[2] Athulya Aravind, Danny Fox, and Martin Hackl, 'Principles of Presupposition in Development', *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 46.2 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-022-09364-z>; Andrei Moldovan, 'Persuasive Presuppositions', *Journal of Pragmatics*, 211 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2023.04.004>.

[3] Sri Yulianti and others, 'Conversational Implicatures on Saturday Night Live Talk Show', *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 13.1 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.17507/JLTR.1301.22>; Liliia Bezugla and others, 'Conventional Implicatures in Ukrainian Discourse', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13.5 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1305.20>; Paul Marty and others, 'Implicature Priming, Salience, and Context Adaptation', *Cognition*, 244 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2023.105667>; Rabab Elsheikh Idris Musa and Bahia K. Mohammed, 'The Role of Conversational Implicature in Daily Conversations – What Matters, Content or Context?', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12.5 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1205.08>.

[4] Enrico Facco, 'Hypnosis and Hypnotic Ability between Old Beliefs and New Evidences: An Epistemological Reflection', *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, 64.1 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.1080/00029157.2020.1863181>.

[5] Marcia Macaulay, 'The Question of Politeness in Political Interviews', *Pragmatics*, 27.4 (2017) <https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.27.4.03mac>; Carles Roca-Cuberes, 'Political Interviews in Public Television and Commercial Broadcasters: A Comparison', *Discourse and Communication*, 8.2 (2014) <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481313507154>.

underexplored in political interviews, especially within Southeast Asian communication cultures that favor indirectness. Classical pragmatics, as established by Grice (1975) and Sperber & Wilson (1995), has explained inference principles in communication, but their application to Indonesian political discourse is still limited. Most local linguistic studies continue to focus on sentence structure and stylistics rather than on mechanisms of implicit meaning making. However, this implicit dimension is most effective in shaping political perception. This study seeks to fill that gap by unpacking the hidden linguistic mechanisms of influence within political interviews. Such a focus is especially relevant to developing a more critical and context sensitive linguistic and political literacy.

Presupposition in political interviews has exceptional persuasive power[6] because it embeds assumptions without inviting direct challenge. For example, a question like "How will you fix that failed policy?" implies that it has indeed failed without openly stating it. Such utterances often escape audience scrutiny because they are delivered in an informative, dialogic format. Similarly, implicature allows the speaker to convey concealed meanings[7] through context or lexical choices. When a politician states, "Our people know who is doing the work," no subject is named explicitly, but the statement subtly shapes public opinion against political opponents. These are forms of suggestive strategies that operate on an inferential level. In many Indonesian political interviews, such patterns recur and guide the audience's thought process. This technique is frequently combined with hypnotic ambiguity—intentionally vague language[8] left open for interpretation. As a result, audiences complete the meaning themselves based on their social and ideological contexts. Combining these three elements constitutes a powerful yet indirect influence that systematically shapes understanding.

These linguistic influence mechanisms align with the central tenet of Relevance Theory[9], which posits that communication is most effective when it delivers maximum cognitive effects with minimal processing effort. When political interviews are constructed using strategies like presupposition and implicature, audiences are guided to infer meanings implicitly without perceiving the message as overt persuasion. This structure enhances the suggestive effect by avoiding cognitive resistance in argumentative or confrontational discourse. Moreover, political interviews are often presented as "neutral" narratives while embedded with implicit messages in media contexts. This highlights the importance of a cognitive pragmatic approach to examining how linguistic forms function as tools of political framing. Political literacy[10] should go beyond recognizing message content and instead consider how language is used to construct those

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[6] Xiao Liu and Xiaoyong Zheng, 'The Persuasive Power of Social Media Influencers in Brand Credibility and Purchase Intention', *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11.1 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02512-1>; Emaad Manzoor and others, 'Influence via Ethos: On the Persuasive Power of Reputation in Deliberation Online', *Management Science*, 70.3 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2023.4762>.

[7] Asjad Ahmed Saeed Balla, 'Discourse Analysis of Female Political Speeches: A Study of Linguistic Techniques and Devices', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13.12 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1312.18>.

[8] Mariusz Flasiński, Janusz Jurek, and Tomasz Peszek, 'On the Learning of Vague Languages for Syntactic Pattern Recognition', *Pattern Analysis and Applications*, 26.2 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10044-022-01120-0>.

[9] Steve Oswald, 'Pragmatics of Uncooperative and Manipulative Communication', June, 2010 <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.31590.55369>; Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, 'Précis of Relevance: Communication and Cognition', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 10.04 (1987), 697 <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x00055345>.

[10] Bakhtiar Rosadi, Cecep Darmawan, and Leni Anggraeni, 'The Influence of Political Message on Social Media for Increasing the Political Literacy of Millenial Generation.', *Jurnal Civicus*, 20.1 (2020).

messages. Implicit influence often escapes resistance not because it is agreed upon but because it goes unrecognized. Understanding how these inferential processes occur is critical for evaluating the quality of democracy and political communication. This study aims to unpack such techniques through a pragmatic discourse analysis of political interviews in Indonesia.

A unique feature of this study is its focus on political interviews as the primary object of linguistic analysis—an area that remains underexplored in Indonesian linguistics. Interviews are an especially rich communication medium because they lie at the intersection of the informative and the persuasive. In political interviews, the power dynamic between interviewer and respondent influences how utterances are delivered and interpreted. When interviewers use loaded questions[11] or questions containing hidden assumptions, the interview space is no longer neutral. Instead, it becomes a site for linguistically controlled meaning reproduction. Similarly, politicians often deploy ambiguity to avoid making explicit commitments or taking responsibility for certain claims. Such strategies reinforce an informational imbalance between political elites and the public when left unexamined. This study, therefore, focuses on the implicit utterances embedded in interview structures and their impact on collective perception. Such a focus enables a more precise analysis of discursive practices in contemporary political communication.

This research adopts a cognitive pragmatic approach[12] combined with qualitative discourse analysis to identify and interpret instances of presupposition, implicature, and suggestive ambiguity in political interviews. Data are drawn from transcripts of television and digital media interviews featuring Indonesian politicians during the 2019–2024 election period. This approach allows methodological flexibility in uncovering implicit meanings within dynamic sociopolitical contexts. Coding was conducted based on speech units that indicate implicit meaning structures, supported by tools like AntConc to identify keyword frequencies and contextual usage. The study identifies consistent linguistic patterns used to convey hidden influence by combining manual qualitative analysis with corpus based techniques. The analytical scheme was designed to trace how seemingly neutral utterances are saturated with suggestive meaning.

An inferential theoretical framework assessed how audiences automatically construct meaning based on context. This allows for a more focused and layered reading of political discourse beyond surface level semantics. The analysis also considers the roles of interviewers and interviewees within the interactional structure, reflecting power dynamics inherent in political communication.

This study offers a significant scholarly contribution by expanding the understanding of how covert influence operates within political discourse, particularly through interviews as a primary communicative medium. By focusing on implicit forms such as presupposition, implicature, and ambiguity, this research introduces a new perspective for analyzing political communication strategies often perceived as neutral. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of cognitive pragmatics with the Indonesian political communication context—an area that remains underexplored within this theoretical framework. Furthermore, the article enriches the political linguistics literature by demonstrating how linguistic structures facilitate

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[11] Macaulay; Chisato Koike, 'Affect-Loaded Questions in Japanese Storytelling: An Analysis of Grammar, Prosody, and Body Movements of Story Recipients' Questions', *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 05.05 (2015) <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2015.55043>.

[12] Lulu Cheng, Haoran Mao, and Ting Zhang, 'Cognitive-Pragmatic Functions of Mitigation in Therapeutic Conversations Emphasizing Rapport Management', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1114146>; A. S. Dorofeeva, 'Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach in Professional Linguistic Education', *Vestnik of Minin University*, 11.4 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.26795/2307-1281-2023-11-4-4>.

meaning manipulation[13] without breaching discourse norms. These findings also offer practical guidance for media professionals, educators, and the general public in developing critical literacy toward implicit messaging in public communication.

This research responds to the growing complexity of political communication in the digital era, where influence no longer relies solely on factual arguments but increasingly on subtle and indirect meaning construction. Through systematic data analysis, the study reveals how language reinforces narrative authority via unconscious inferential mechanisms. Accordingly, this research makes theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to advancing political pragmatics in Indonesia.

The urgency of this study is grounded in the increasing use of impression driven rather than substantive communication in political media, especially in interview formats widely consumed by the public. In an evolving democracy, the ability of the public to detect hidden influence is essential to maintaining political transparency. Thus, the primary objective of this research is to analyze how presupposition, implicature, and suggestive ambiguity[14] function in Indonesian political interviews as forms of unspoken linguistic influence. Additionally, the study seeks to map the patterns of implicit strategies politicians use to guide meaning without making direct assertions. Two key questions guide the research: (1) How do forms and functions of presupposition, implicature, and suggestive ambiguity appear in Indonesian political interviews? (2) How do these implicit strategies shape public perception through inferential mechanisms within the framework of cognitive pragmatics?

2. Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive interpretive design[15] grounded in pragmatic discourse analysis[16]. The primary focus of this approach is to understand how hidden meanings—in the form of presupposition, implicature, and ambiguity—are constructed and conveyed through political interviews. This approach was selected for its capacity to uncover meaning making processes that are not easily accessed through surfacelevel linguistic analysis. The study aims not to generalize findings but to explore how utterance structures frame audience perception. The interpretive design also enables the researcher to examine the relationship between linguistic form and its cognitive effects. Moreover, this design facilitates the analysis of the social, ideological, and psychological contexts that underlie political communication practices.

Rather than employing an experimental model, this research analyzes empirical data from real world communication events, specifically Indonesian political interviews in media. The

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[13] Muhammad Masqotul Imam Romadlani, 'A Manipulation of Semantic Meanings as a Humor Construction Strategy', *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, 15.2 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.15294/lc.v15i2.28637>; Chu Hsuan Kuo and Chantel S. Prat, 'Computer Programmers Show Distinct, Expertise-Dependent Brain Responses to Violations in Form and Meaning When Reading Code', *Scientific Reports*, 14.1 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-56090-6>.

[14] Manal Jasim Muhammad, 'A Pragma-Linguistic Study of Suggestive Ambiguity in Selected Political Texts', *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17.4 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.52462/jlls.156>.

[15] Robert Elliott and Ladislav Timulak, 'Descriptive and Interpretive Approaches to Qualitative Research', *A Handbook of Research Methods for Clinical and Health Psychology*, 2005.

[16] Mattia Retta, 'A Pragmatic and Discourse Analysis of Hate Words on Social Media', *Internet Pragmatics*, 6.2 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.1075/ip.00096.ret>; Rajaa Hamid SALIH, 'A DISCOURSE-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ILLOCUTIONARY SPEECH ACTS IN DICKENS ' HARD TIMES'', *International Journal of Humanities and Educational Research*, 4.2 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.47832/2757-5403.13.10>.

methodology is designed to capture the complexity of suggestive linguistic strategies that function implicitly. The study describes linguistic forms and traces their impact on meaning construction[17] and image formation[18] within political discourse. Its ultimate goal is understanding how political communication operates through unspoken forms of influence.

2.1. Data source

The primary data source for this study consists of transcripts of political interviews aired on national television and official digital platforms such as YouTube and online news portals. The selected interviews involve national level politicians, particularly those active in the political arena leading up to the 2024 general election. Data were selected purposively based on the following criteria: the interviews featured ideologically reflective and representatively structured question and answer dynamics. At least ten interviews, ranging from 15 to 30 minutes, were analyzed to ensure sufficient variation in linguistic strategies.

Secondary data sources include news articles, media analysis, and academic literature on political linguistics, pragmatics, and suggestive communication theories. All primary data were transcribed verbatim to maintain the integrity of sentence structure and utterance context. Data were digitally archived and categorized by political figure, interview topic, and media channel. Additionally, the data were coded according to an initial thematic classification, referencing suggestive strategies: presupposition, implicature, and ambiguity. These categories served not only as a classification framework but also as a foundation for further analytical exploration. Secondary data provided contextual support and strengthened the interpretive validity of the primary data.

2.2. Coding scheme

In pragmatic linguistic analysis—particularly in political communication—coding is a crucial step in determining the validity of data interpretation. Coding is not merely a technical procedure but a representation of the theoretical framework applied systematically to real world utterances. This study's coding scheme was explicitly developed based on integrating Relevance Theory and hypnotic language patterns. These approaches were selected for their ability to explain how meaning is constructed through inferential and suggestive mechanisms[19].

The coding scheme not only categorizes types of linguistic strategies but also identifies the hidden communicative functions behind the surface structures of utterances. In political interviews, politicians often embed messages that guide public opinion indirectly, using language that appears neutral but is laden with agenda. The coding scheme was designed to distinguish sharply between explicit and implicit messages to capture this nuance. The framework

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[17] Vyvyan Evans, 'Lexical Concepts, Cognitive Models and Meaning-Construction', *Cognitive Linguistics*, 17.4 (2006) <https://doi.org/10.1515/COG.2006.016>; Long Deyin, 'Meaning Construction of Personification in Discourse Based on Conceptual Integration Theory', *Canadian Academy of Oriental and Occidental Culture*, 17.1 (2018).

[18] Xuhui Zhang and others, 'Hierarchical Fusion Process of Destination Image Formation: Targeting on Urban Tourism Destination', *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13.21 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132111805>.

[19] Jorge Andrés Morales Delgado, 'Inheritance of Properties as an Inferential Mechanism in the Context of Non-Monotonic Reasoning', *Revista Iberoamericana de Argumentacion*, 2023.26 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.15366/ria2023.26.001>; Justin Sulik, 'Cognitive Mechanisms for Inferring the Meaning of Novel Signals during Symbolisation', *PLoS ONE*, 13.1 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0189540>; Veronika Katermina and Tatyana Safronova, 'Suggestive Mechanisms in Legal Discourse', *Vestnik Volgogradskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta. Serija 2. Jazykoznanije*, 16.3 (2017) <https://doi.org/10.15688/jvolsu2.2017.3.14>.

accommodates strategic forms such as presupposition, implicature, and ambiguity, which often escape detection in conventional discourse analysis. Through this classification, the researcher can trace systematic patterns in political speech that operate latently to shape public perception. This scheme thus supports a deeper examination of political discourse practices, revealing the hidden architectures of influence embedded in ordinary language.

Each category in the coding scheme was formulated based on clear linguistic indicators identifiable within the context of Indonesian political communication. Presupposition, implicature, and ambiguity were distinguished by their structural forms and analyzed in terms of their cognitive and emotional effects on audiences. Additional strategies such as hypno questioning, embedded commands, and vocal emphasis were included to capture more subtle but effective dimensions of suggestive influence.

This approach differs from conventional discourse analysis, which often becomes confined to ideological themes without unpacking the linguistic structures as tools of influence. The codes were developed by considering the context of utterances, the relation between utterances, and their pragmatic function within public communication. Each unit of analysis— whether a sentence, phrase, or prosodic structure—was evaluated based on its ability to shape interpretation implicitly. Thus, the scheme serves not only as a tool for classifying data but also as a conceptual instrument for uncovering suggestive political communication strategies.

The accuracy of this classification underpins a rigorous and impactful analysis. Within the scope of this research, the coding scheme also acts as a bridge between theory and empirical data, ensuring that the analysis is consistent, focused, and aligned with the study's objectives. Its development was guided by reflective validation and conceptual coherence, making the findings academically accountable.

Table 1. Coding Scheme for Suggestive Linguistic Strategies

No.	Strategy Classification	Operational Description
1.	**Presupposition**	Utterances that assume certain truths as common knowledge without requiring explicit mention. Example: "How will you fix this failed policy?" presupposes that the policy has indeed failed.
2.	**Conversational Implicature**	Meanings derived not from the sentence itself, but from context, norms, or conversational conventions. Example: "I think the people already know who is truly deserving," implying the speaker believes they are more worthy without directly saying so.
3.	**Semantic Ambiguity**	Multi-interpretable words or phrases allowing diverse interpretations depending on audience background. Often used to obscure political stance. Example: "We must choose a leader who truly loves the people."
4.	**Hypno Questioning**	Suggestive questions that guide audience thought or emotion without delivering explicit arguments. Example: "Are we going to keep letting this nation be hurt by empty promises?"
5.	**Embedded Command**	Indirect commands or calls to action, usually embedded in questions or general statements. Example: "If you want change, you know what to do."
6.	**Analogical Framing**	Use of metaphors, analogies, or symbolic imagery to frame perception emotionally. Example: "The people are like a ship in need of a strong captain."
7.	**Vocal Emphasis (Analog Marking)**	Emphasis through intonation, pauses, or repetition to highlight certain words/phrases and guide cognitive focus. Common in audiovisual data. Example: repeated emphasis on "serve" or "change" in political speeches.

2.3. Data collection

Data were gathered using non-participatory observation and digital documentation, allowing the researcher to access and select interview materials based on predefined criteria. The process included recording metadata such as airdate, names of interviewer and interviewee, interview duration, and broadcasting platform. Each interview was analyzed with attention to

paralinguistic elements such as intonation, pauses, and vocal emphasis—crucial for analyzing hypnotic language. A notetaking system was employed to record initial impressions of potentially suggestive or ambiguous utterances. To ensure data reliability, two researchers with backgrounds in pragmatics and political linguistics double coded. Coding consistency was tested using Cohen's Kappa[20], with a minimum interrater reliability threshold of 0.75. This procedure ensured that findings were not based solely on individual intuition but on cross reader validation. All data were analyzed systematically using an inferential pragmatic approach, where each utterance was assessed for its form and activated interpretive processes within specific political contexts.

2.4. Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted by integrating two primary models: Relevance Theory and the hypnotic language model from Erickson, adapted within NLP[21]. The analysis consisted of three stages: (1) Identification of Suggestive Linguistic Forms: Isolating phrases or sentences containing indications of presupposition, implicature, or semantic ambiguity, (2) Pragmatic Contextual Analysis: Tracing how these forms were influenced by the social and political context surrounding the interviews, (3) Inferential Effect Interpretation: Analyzing how the utterances guided public perception of political figures or issues.

AntConc 3.2.4 was used to map the frequency and distribution of suggestive phrases to support this process. The Concordancer tool identified contextual patterns relevant to implicit meaning formation. Meanwhile, the Word and Keyword List features helped detect dominant lexical items associated with specific framing. Prosodic and visual elements were also considered, particularly when data came from audiovisual sources such as video interviews. Integrating qualitative techniques with corpus based tools enhanced the precision and reliability of interpretation.

2.5. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework serves as a conceptual foundation for understanding how hidden meaning is formed in political communication. Relevance Theory explains how audiences interpret messages with minimal cognitive effort for maximum cognitive effect, particularly in response to implicit content. This principle is especially relevant in political interviews, where time is limited, yet utterances are dense with meaning.

Meanwhile, hypnotic language theory provides tools for identifying linguistic techniques that lower resistance and enhance message acceptance through indirect language structures. The combination of these two theories enables analysis that focuses on linguistic form and the cognitive and affective processes involved in interpreting messages. This approach also supports reading political communication strategies as a form of indirect yet effective persuasion. It offers analytical power to expose hidden influences through word choice, sentence structure, and conversational context. Moreover, the framework helps explain why certain messages are readily accepted even when never explicitly stated. In this study, the theoretical framework also

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[20] Nahathai Wongpakaran and others, 'A Comparison of Cohen's Kappa and Gwet's AC1 When Calculating Inter-Rater Reliability Coefficients: A Study Conducted with Personality Disorder Samples', *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 13.1 (2013) <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-13-61>.

[21] John Weakland, 'Bandler, Richard & Grinder, John. Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson, M.D. Volume I. Cupertino, Ca.: Meta Publications, 1975', *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*, 19.2 (1976) <https://doi.org/10.1080/00029157.1976.10403856>; Richard Bandler and John Grinder, *Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques*, *The Structure of Magic Volume 1*, 1989, I; Richard Bandler and John Grinder, 'Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H', *Erickson, Md*, 1 (1975).

functions as a tool for classifying the discursive strategies identified in the data corpus—providing a strong theoretical grounding for the entire analytical process.

2.6. Research procedure

The research procedure was implemented systematically to ensure traceability of every stage. The process began with formulating selection criteria and identifying political interview sources from credible media platforms. After collecting and transcribing the data, coding was conducted based on thematic schemes derived from theory. This step was performed twice—once by the lead researcher and once by an assistant—to ensure coding validity.

Following coding, analysis was conducted based on the established categories, tracing the relationships between linguistic features and sociopolitical contexts. The researcher then integrated qualitative analysis results with frequency findings from AntConc to obtain a comprehensive picture. Findings were validated through triangulation across data sources and expert consultations with two pragmatics scholars.

The entire documentation and analysis process, including the reporting of results, was carried out transparently to ensure academic credibility. This procedure was designed to yield data driven, contextually relevant, and sharply focused interpretations. As such, the entire research process enables an in-depth exploration of the forms and effects of hidden influence in Indonesian political interviews.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Findings

The analysis of ten political interview transcripts revealed that the most dominant suggestive linguistic strategy was presupposition, appearing 74 times out of 260 coded utterances (28.5%). Both politicians and interviewers used this strategy to insert assumptions without explicitly stating them. Sentences such as "What is your strategy to fix the previous failure?" appeared repeatedly in various interview formats, indicating that presupposition frames a reality as already agreed upon.

Conversational implicature ranked second with 62 occurrences (23.8%), typically in indirect remarks prompting the audience to infer a particular meaning. Semantic ambiguity was found 41 times (15.7%), usually in phrases such as "a worthy leader" or "the true people," which allow for varied interpretations. Hypno-questioning appeared 37 times (14.2%), often as emotionally charged rhetorical questions designed to shape opinion. Embedded commands were found 26 times (10%), typically disguised as advice or general statements implying a call to action. Vocal emphasis, or prosodic marking, was found 20 times (7.6%) in audiovisual data, which had a high intensity impact on directing audience focus. The data show that most strategies operate implicitly and are evenly distributed throughout the interview sessions.

The distribution of suggestive strategies also revealed variations based on media type and interviewer style. On national television platforms such as MetroTV and TV One, the use of presupposition and implicature was notably higher than in interviews conducted on independent YouTube channels. This discrepancy may be linked to more standardized interview structures and stricter scripting in mainstream media. Interviewers from major outlets tended to employ suggestive constructions, especially when addressing sensitive issues such as corruption, religion, and female leadership.

Conversely, interviews on digital platforms more frequently featured semantic ambiguity and emotional analogies, reflecting a looser, impression driven communication style. Furthermore, it was found that politicians with backgrounds in law and communications

employed embedded commands and vocal emphasis more frequently than those with military or technocratic backgrounds. Frequency analysis using AntConc 3.2.4 revealed that words such as "change," "serve," "we," and "must" appeared as statistically significant keywords ($p < 0.05$) in suggestive utterances. These results suggest that suggestive forms are strategically used to shape audience perception based on the medium, topic, and speaker profile. Additionally, the frequency of these strategies increased notably during politically charged periods, such as October to December 2023, indicating a consistent pattern of using suggestive linguistic strategies as tools for implicit campaigning in Indonesian political contexts.

Table 2. Distribution of Suggestive Linguistic Strategies in Indonesian Political Interviews

No.	Strategy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Example Utterance	Dominant Medium	Contextual Notes
1	Presupposition	74	28.5%	"How will you fix this failure?"	National TV (e.g., MetroTV)	Used to frame assumptions as facts without explicit statements
2	Conversational Implicature	62	23.8%	"The people already know who is deserving."	National TV & YouTube	Relies on shared knowledge and audience inference
3	Semantic Ambiguity	41	15.7%	"A leader who truly loves the people."	Independent YouTube	Allows broad interpretation, builds emotional connection
4	Hypno Questioning	37	14.2%	"Are we going to keep getting hurt by empty promises?"	National TV	Emotional rhetorical questions, steering opinion subtly
5	Embedded Command	26	10.0%	"If you want change, you know what to do."	Speakers with communication background	Indirect directives, framed as neutral advice
6	Vocal Emphasis (Analog Marking)	20	7.6%	Emphasis on "serve" in repeated phrases	Audiovisual (TV/YouTube)	Found in tone/pauses/repetition, guides listener focus
–	**Total**	**260**	**100%**	–	–	Represents total suggestive utterances coded

Table 3. Dominant Keyword Frequency (AntConc Keyword & Word List Output)

Keyword	Frequency (n)	Common Collocates	Rhetorical Function
Change	143	toward, rise, direction	Ideological framing, social transformation
Serve	89	present, sincere, people	Reinforces empathetic, action-oriented leadership image
People	121	prioritized, defended, with	Builds closeness, activates collective empathy
We	78	together, must, cannot be silent	Collective inclusion, rhetorical solidarity
Must	66	we must, the people must know	Covert persuasion, soft imperative

The dominance of presupposition in Indonesian political interviews illustrates its role as the most frequently used rhetorical tool to frame reality without explicit claims. With 74 instances (28.5%), this form emerged as a highly effective linguistic strategy in establishing taken for granted truths in public discourse. Presupposition allows politicians and interviewers to embed evaluative content covertly, creating the impression that the audience has already agreed with the

information. This strategy aligns directly with Relevance Theory, wherein the most efficient meanings require no overt justification but are assumed within a shared context.

Presupposition often appears as questions rather than statements, heightening its manipulative effect by denying the audience the space to reject underlying assumptions during interviews. A sentence like "How did you handle the failure of your previous program?" contains the assumption that the program was indeed a failure, bypassing the need for empirical proof. This establishes a cognitive frame within the audience's inferential process. Such usage indicates that political interviews are not merely spaces for inquiry but instruments for implanting public opinion. In electoral contexts, where public sentiment is shaped not only by what is said but also by what is assumed, presupposition must be recognized as a systematic framing device in sociopolitical discourse.

The relatively high use of conversational implicature (62 occurrences, 23.8%) further confirms that political meaning does not always reside on the surface of utterances. Implicature enables politicians to avoid direct accountability while guiding audience opinion through contextual cues. Utterances like "I think the people already know who is honest" omit names but leave enough room for the audience to draw conclusions that align with the speaker's intent. Here, implicature is effective in preserving ambiguity, allowing for interpretive flexibility.

These findings align with Levinson's observations[22] and support Relevance Theory, which explains how audiences seek to derive maximally relevant meanings with minimal effort. The strategy is especially prevalent in sensitive topics—such as religion, personal integrity, and corruption—where direct statements might provoke resistance. In such cases, implicature provides a safe space for veiled critique, insinuation, or defense without explicit confrontation. Its frequent use in mainstream media is likely influenced by editorial constraints or broadcast ethics, revealing how institutional norms shape rhetorical form in political interviews. Implicature also highlights the interviewer's role as a discursive actor, not a neutral facilitator, actively steering discourse through context laden questions.

Semantic ambiguity[23], ranking third with 41 occurrences (15.7%), plays a distinct but equally powerful rhetorical role. In phrases such as "a leader who loves the people," the meaning of "loves" is deliberately left open for interpretation. Such ambiguity enables politicians to construct a positive image without offering substantive details. This reflects a core principle of suggestive communication: allowing the audience to complete the message based on their expectations or preferences.

Pragmatically, this strategy is highly effective for capturing attention across diverse audiences, especially in a multicultural society like Indonesia. Within the Relevance Theory framework, semantic ambiguity facilitates the pursuit of personalized relevance, allowing for varied interpretations that enhance persuasive impact. These occurrences were particularly prominent in interviews on digital platforms like YouTube, where communication styles tend to

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[22] I Dewa Ayu Gita Wardaning Putri Dewa Ayu Gita, Putu Nur Ayomi, and Putu Devi Maharani, 'Person Deixis Used By James Corden in The Late Late Show', *ELYSIAN JOURNAL : English Literature, Linguistics and Translation Studies*, 2.3 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.36733/elysian.v2i3.3592>; Vijayaletchumy Subramaniam and others, 'Reading Errors in the Malay Language by Dyslexic Students from the Perspective of Levinson Theory', *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 30.2 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.30.2.17>; Winda Mayori, Nyoman Adi Jaya Putra, and I Wayan Suarnajaya, 'A Comparative Study of Deixis Used by Foreign and Local English Teachers in Vocational High School', *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 4.3 (2020), 240 <https://doi.org/10.23887/jere.v4i3.26277>.

[23] Ya Ning Chang and Chia Ying Lee, 'Semantic Ambiguity Effects on Traditional Chinese Character Naming: A Corpus-Based Approach', *Behavior Research Methods*, 50.6 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-017-0993-4>.

be more relaxed and informal. These platforms allow politicians to tailor their rhetorical tone to specific support bases without being constrained by formal media regulations. Ambiguity also grants flexibility in addressing evolving issues without committing to a fixed political stance. Thus, it becomes a crucial tool for building emotional connection while maintaining strategic maneuverability in public positioning.

Hypno-questioning appeared 37 times (14.2%) and was frequently employed as rhetorical questions that were both suggestive and emotionally charged. Questions such as, "Are we going to remain silent while this injustice continues?" convey a message and compel the audience to take a moral stance. This strategy proves highly effective as it frames the question as an internal ethical challenge, engaging emotional and ethical dimensions. According to Relevance Theory, such questions produce strong cognitive effects[24] with minimal processing effort, guiding the audience toward the most plausible inference. From the perspective of hypnotic language, these questions trigger affective reflection, accelerating attitude formation. This explains their frequent use in addressing controversial issues such as human rights, economic justice, and religion. Interviewers often exploit this technique to steer the direction of a guest's response. Thus, hypno-questioning functions as a persuasive tool and a discursive mechanism within interactive formats. Although it occurs less frequently than presupposition or implicature, its suggestive power is notably high. This indicates that political interviews possess a more complex rhetorical structure than what is overtly visible.

Identifying 26 instances (10%) of embedded commands illustrates how directives are subtly inserted into statements or suggestions. An example such as, "If you want change, you know what you need to do," contains an implicit directive that guides audience behavior without overt force. This technique is predominantly used by politicians with communication backgrounds or those experienced in indirect persuasion. Embedded commands operate on the principle of indirect suggestion—delivering instructions in a way that avoids explicit resistance. For audiences, these often appear as rational calls to action, framed as options or personal reflection. This technique is known for its efficacy in influencing behavior through linguistic structures within NLP frameworks. In interviews, it is often used to impose a particular narrative or shape attitudes without seeming coercive and typically appears toward the end of interviews as a closing message. While audiences may not consciously register the command, it can significantly influence electoral decisions. Hence, understanding this technique is essential in analyzing persuasive discourse within political interviews.

Vocal emphasis[25], was identified 20 times (7.6%). Despite being the least frequent strategy, it substantially impacted the audience's cognitive focus. In audiovisual interviews, politicians often emphasized words such as "serve," "change," and "people" through repetition or intonation shifts. Such emphasis highlighted key elements and generated emotional resonance, strengthening the audience's attachment to the message. According to hypnotic language theory, vocal stress is a subconscious cue that activates specific associations in the listener's mind. This is particularly effective when combined with gestures or visual cues. From a Relevance Theory standpoint, vocal emphasis enhances cognitive effect by minimizing ambiguity around the speaker's main point. Data showed that this technique was more frequently used by politicians with backgrounds in media or communication, likely due to their heightened awareness of

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[24] Elizabeth K. Stranks and Simon F. Crowe, 'The Cognitive Effects of Obstructive Sleep Apnea: An Updated Meta-Analysis', *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology*, 2015 <https://doi.org/10.1093/arclin/acv087>.

[25] Starkey Duncan and Robert Rosenthal, 'Vocal Emphasis in Experimenters' Instruction Reading as Unintended Determinant of Subjects' Responses', *Language and Speech*, 11.1 (1968) <https://doi.org/10.1177/002383096801100103>.

performativity in speech. It was especially prominent in emotionally charged contexts, such as discussions of public suffering[26] or hope for reform. While quantitatively minor, this strategy plays a pivotal role in amplifying the suggestive quality of political messaging.

Media based analysis revealed that suggestive strategies varied by platform and interview style. National TV interviews predominantly featured presupposition and implicature, likely due to stricter editorial controls and the need for formal neutrality. In contrast, YouTube and independent digital platforms showcased more semantic ambiguity and hypno questioning, reflecting a looser, more impression driven communication style. This suggests that rhetorical forms are shaped by the politician and the media ecosystem in which the discourse occurs. Mainstream interviewers tended to frame questions with evaluative assumptions, heightening suggestive effects. Conversely, independent media allowed guests more freedom to construct personal narratives, fostering ambiguity and subjective engagement. These differences highlight that political discourse is never entirely neutral but always mediated by institutional and technological contexts—adding a crucial layer to contemporary pragmatic analysis of Indonesian political discourse.

Statistical findings from AntConc confirmed the thematic trends. The word "change" appeared 143 times, often linked to movement metaphors such as "toward," "rise," and "step forward." This suggests that "change" is framed as content and an emotive and ideological symbol. The term "serve" appeared 89 times, commonly associated with empathetic narratives that project humility and dedication. Vocal emphasis on this term aimed to establish it as a core leadership value. The word "people" appeared frequently in collocations such as "prioritized," "fought for," and "taken care of," strategically fostering emotional connection and moral legitimacy. The frequency of these five keywords indicates that political image construction relies more on affective appeal[27] [28]than policy logic[29]. Lexical choices are mobilized neutrally as semiotic tools for shaping a desired social reality. Thus, frequency analysis becomes essential in understanding the systematic construction of political narratives through language.

The findings also reveal strong correlations between politicians' backgrounds and preferred suggestive strategies. Those with legal or communication training used embedded commands and vocal emphasis more often than those from military or technocratic backgrounds—likely due to greater familiarity with narrative persuasion and message control. Hypno questioning was more prevalent in interviews with younger politicians or social media savvy figures who favor emotional, direct communication. In contrast, senior or bureaucratic politicians relied more on implicature and presupposition to maintain caution in expressing political positions. This suggests that linguistic strategy reflects rhetorical needs, personal identity, and long term image building. These patterns align with the concept of discourse identity, where language choice contributes to social and political persona construction. Political

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[26] Jan Mendes, 'Disciplining the Disobedient Black Maternal Subject: The Assimilatory Pedagogies of Public Suffering and Punishment', *Feminist Theory*, 2024 <https://doi.org/10.1177/14647001231223099>.

[27] Jennifer Corns and Robert Cowan, 'Moral Motivation and the Affective Appeal', *Philosophical Studies*, 178.1 (2021) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-020-01421-2>.

[28] Lingjiang Lora Tu, Jae Hwan Kwon, and Huachao Gao, 'Heart or Mind? The Impact of Power Distance Belief on the Persuasiveness of Cognitive Versus Affective Appeals in Education Marketing Messages', *Journal of Marketing Research*, 59.1 (2022) <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222437211002196>.

[29] Carolyn Page and Russell Ayres, 'Policy Logic: Creating Policy and Evaluation Capital in Your Organisation', *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 18.1 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X17753960>; Yuzhuo Cai and others, 'Economic Specialization and Diversification at the Country and Regional Level: Introducing a Conceptual Framework to Study Innovation Policy Logics', *European Planning Studies*, 26.12 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2018.1529142>.

interviews thus emerge not merely as informative exchanges but as performative arenas where language shapes perceptions tied to public figures.

Finally, the temporal distribution of strategies revealed a significant increase in suggestive language use approaching the political year, particularly in the last quarter of 2023. This trend indicates a heightened use of implicit persuasion in anticipation of rising electoral tensions. In polarized environments, presupposition and semantic ambiguity are strategic solutions to maintain message effectiveness while avoiding open conflict. Their deployment during key moments like campaign interviews and public debates demonstrates that language reflects ideas and regulates emotion, decision making, and public trust. These findings reinforce the view that rhetorical power lies not in what is said but in how it is delivered and interpreted. Political language thus operates on two levels: literal and inferential, with the latter exerting greater influence on perception. Consequently, the pre-election period is a key site for examining unspoken influence strategies, revealing linguistic manipulation as a deliberate, systematic, discursive practice.

4. Conclusion

This study confirms that political communication in Indonesian media interviews is replete with hidden influences conveyed through suggestive linguistic forms. Strategies such as presupposition, implicature, and semantic ambiguity are shown to be dominantly employed to shape public perception implicitly. Through an integrative approach combining Relevance Theory and hypnotic language patterns, this research reveals how meaning is constructed not through what is explicitly stated but through how information is framed and assumed. The findings demonstrate that audiences' inferential processes are not neutral but are guided by linguistic structures strategically designed to direct interpretation. What appears to be informative speech often embeds directional cues toward specific opinions without eliciting logical resistance from the audience. Thus, political interviews function not merely as platforms for information exchange but as arenas of discursive power production and negotiation. This analysis broadens our understanding that language in politics is not just a communication tool but also a cognitive control mechanism. The study enriches the landscape of Indonesian political pragmatics with a psycho pragmatic approach that has been largely underutilized. This focus is especially relevant in the context of digital democracy, where attention spans are increasingly short, and indirect influence becomes more potent. Understanding forms of unspoken influence is critical amid the intensifying political rhetoric leading up to elections.

Statistical analysis shows that presupposition is the most frequently used strategy, followed by conversational implicature and semantic ambiguity. These findings indicate that covert forms of expression have become a primary means for conveying political messages without explicitly revealing positions. These strategies enhance rhetorical effectiveness by avoiding direct accountability for the intended meaning. While strategies like hypno questioning, embedded command, and vocal emphasis appeared less frequently, they demonstrated powerful affective and cognitive suggestive effects. The distribution of strategies also varied by media type, confirming that the format and broadcasting ecosystem shape the forms of influence used. Mainstream television emphasized formal structure and content control, while digital media offered more room for expressive and emotionally driven communication styles. These findings suggest that political interviews must be understood as rhetorically calculated discursive spaces, not merely neutral public information forums. The strategies identified do not simply communicate programs but actively shape the audience's social and psychological realities. Hence, a critical reading of linguistic structures is increasingly essential for analyzing the

dynamics of political communication. This study offers both a practical and theoretical framework for examining political discourse more complex and nuancedly.

Theoretically, this research expands the scope of Relevance Theory into local political communication practices, showing that inferential strategies occur in interpersonal communication and mass media settings. Applying this theory in the Indonesian political context illustrates how audiences are subconsciously guided toward specific conclusions through carefully designed suggestive expressions. The study also reinforces the relevance of hypnotic language theory—traditionally applied in therapeutic and marketing contexts—by demonstrating its utility in political communication. The article lays a foundation for interdisciplinary pragmatics that bridges linguistics, psychology, and political communication by integrating these two approaches. The findings contribute a new understanding that suggestive communication is no longer confined to private domains but has become a key instrument in public discourse. Politicians can issue instructions and frame narratives indirectly yet effectively through techniques such as embedded commands and vocal emphasis. This shows that political communication in the digital era is becoming subtler and more sophisticated, necessitating multidimensional analysis. The approach also opens new possibilities for studying political interviews as therapeutic mobilizing communication. Therefore, psych pragmatics should receive greater attention in contemporary linguistic and communication studies. The theoretical framework developed here can also be adapted to analyze other forms of discourse, such as debates, social media campaigns, and parliamentary discussions.

The findings have important implications for improving media literacy and public education. Recognizing presuppositions, implicatures, and other suggestive forms is key to preventing the public from being cognitively steered without critical awareness. Broadcasters, journalists, and public debate facilitators must be more conscious of the impact of question structure and framing in interviews. Similarly, as media consumers, the public must be equipped with tools to interpret messages critically, distinguishing between information and manipulation. Educational institutions could integrate this material into media literacy and political communication curricula. On another front, electoral commissions and political communication watchdogs can use the findings to inform ethical guidelines for campaign messaging. Understanding the mechanisms of unspoken influence can help society resist rhetoric driven polarization and make more rational political decisions. These insights also assist political communication consultants in designing persuasive strategies that are ethical and responsible. In an increasingly complex democratic landscape, enhancing the public's capacity to understand linguistic structures is vital to citizenship education. Thus, this study is highly relevant for shaping adaptive communication literacy policies in the digital political era.

For future research, this study opens numerous avenues for further exploration, both methodologically and substantively. One direction involves employing experimental approaches to measure the psychological impact of individual linguistic strategies on audience perception and decision-making. Quantitative studies using eye tracking or neurolinguistics could deepen our understanding of how specific sentence structures elicit suggestive effects. Comparative studies across countries or political ideologies could determine whether the strategies used are universal or context dependent. The research can also be extended into interactive digital spaces such as TikTok, Twitter Spaces, or Instagram Live, now widely used by younger politicians. At the methodological level, developing automated NLP based coding systems would be valuable to largescale discourse analysis. Investigating how audiences from diverse social backgrounds interpret the same suggestive messages differently is also crucial. Participatory approaches involving audience groups as study subjects would offer a fuller picture of message reception dynamics. This study thus opens opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration among

linguistics, psychology, political science, and information technology to address the evolving challenges of public communication. In this way, the research contributes conceptually and lays a foundation for developing relevant cross disciplinary studies for the contemporary era.

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