

**PRESIDENT PRABOWO’S POLITICAL AUTHORITY AT SPIEF 2025:
AN INTERPERSONAL MEANING AND SOCIAL EMBODIMENT
ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

Political authority is constructed not only through what leaders say but also through how interpersonal meanings are realized in discourse. While previous studies have widely examined political speeches through Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), no study has investigated how authority is enacted across different discourse contexts within the same international forum, particularly by non-Western leaders. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study investigates the enactment of authority in President Prabowo Subianto’s discourse at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2025. Drawing on the interpersonal metafunction of SFL, it analyzes Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity in a speech and a panel session. Social embodiment is employed as a supporting perspective to explain how embodied resources contribute to the realization of interpersonal meanings. The findings indicate that authority in both datasets is realized primarily through Declarative–No Modality–Positive Polarity (D–Ø–Ø–P) constructions, which present political propositions as factual, legitimate, and undeniable. Obligation, negative Polarity, and limited imperative patterns further reinforce authority through commitment, rejection, and persuasive direction. The findings also reveal contextual variation: authority in the speech is more assertive and policy-oriented, whereas authority in the panel session is more negotiated and diplomatically moderated. Embodied resources support these meanings by reinforcing certainty and commitment or by softening directive force. The study concludes that political authority is dynamically constructed through the interaction of interpersonal grammatical resources and embodied support in contemporary political discourse.

Keywords: Political Authority; Interpersonal Meaning; Systemic Functional Linguistics; Social Embodiment; Political Discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Political leaders are often evaluated not only through the policies they propose but also through how they communicate those policies in public. In political discourse, authority is rarely established through formal position alone. Rather, it is enacted through linguistic choices that enable speakers to present political claims as factual, credible, and politically legitimate (Butt et al., 2025; Fanani et al., 2019; Hanh & Lam, 2021; Huo & Zhang, 2023; Jegede, 2018; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024; Tahira et al., 2025). By presenting propositions as established realities rather than personal opinions, political leaders can guide audience interpretation, strengthen leadership legitimacy, and reduce opportunities for challenge or negotiation (Butt et al., 2025; Fanani et al., 2019; Hadi & Guo, 2020; Panggabean et al., 2023; Zhao, 2021). This capacity becomes particularly important in international political forums, where leaders must communicate before audiences with diverse political, cultural, and geopolitical interests.

Within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), authority can be examined through the interpersonal metafunction, which explains how speakers position themselves, negotiate

relationships, and influence audiences through language (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Among the interpersonal resources available to speakers, Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity are particularly important because they shape how political claims are presented and interpreted. Through these systems, political leaders can present claims as factual or negotiable, express varying degrees of certainty and obligation, and affirm or reject particular viewpoints (Governor et al., 2021; Mafruchatunnisa & Agustien, 2016).

Research has consistently shown that authority is closely associated with these interpersonal resources. Declarative Mood enables political claims to be presented as factual and authoritative (Butt et al., 2025; Fanani et al., 2019; Hadi & Guo, 2020; Herman et al., 2022; Huo & Zhang, 2023; Okafor & Issife, 2017; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024; Samsudin, 2019; Zhao, 2021), Modality allows speakers to regulate certainty and commitment (Al-badri & Al-janabi, 2022; Atta-Asamoah & Asare, 2025; Hadi & Guo, 2020; Jegede, 2018; Niez et al., 2025; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024), and Polarity contributes to affirmation, criticism, rejection, and ideological positioning (Fanani et al., 2019; Hadi &

Guo, 2020; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024). Additionally, research on various political figures, including Barack Obama, Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Imran Khan, Muhammadu Buhari, and Joko Widodo, similarly confirms the usefulness of these resources for understanding how political leaders construct authority (Fanani et al., 2019; Hadi & Guo, 2020; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024; Tahira et al., 2025).

Despite these contributions, two important gaps remain. First, most interpersonal studies focus primarily on linguistic resources. While such analyses explain how authority is realized through grammatical choices, political communication also relies on gestures, gaze, facial expressions, pauses, and bodily movements that shape audience interpretation. As a result, language-centered analyses may overlook important dimensions of how authority is perceived during interaction. Although multimodal studies have integrated SFL with visual approaches such as Visual Grammar (Elsanhoury et al., 2020), they typically examine visual semiotic features, including gaze, framing, and social distance. Comparatively less attention has been given to embodied behaviors as resources that support the interpretation of interpersonal meanings. Social

embodiment research suggests that bodily actions play an important role in shaping social meaning during interaction (Barsalou et al., 2003; Lakens, 2014; Martikainen & Sakki, 2023), yet these insights remain underutilized in political discourse analysis.

Second, previous studies have predominantly examined highly scripted political genres such as inauguration (Huo & Zhang, 2023; Okafor & Issife, 2017), victory (Darong et al., 2022; Herman et al., 2022; Jegede, 2018; Panggabean et al., 2023), and campaign speeches (Allagbé et al., 2025; Brilliantia & Setiarini, 2022; Elsanhoury et al., 2020). Contemporary political communication, however, often requires leaders to move between prepared speeches and spontaneous interactions that involve questioning, negotiation, and audience engagement. Under such conditions, authority may be realized differently, yet relatively little research has examined how authority is constructed across multiple interactional formats within the same political event.

This limitation is particularly relevant in international political forums, where leaders are expected not only to deliver institutional messages but also to respond directly to questions, challenges, and competing viewpoints. Examining

authority across different communicative contexts, therefore, offers a more dynamic understanding of authority as an interactionally achieved phenomenon rather than a fixed attribute associated solely with institutional position.

The present study addresses these gaps through an analysis of Prabowo Subianto's participation at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum 2025. SPIEF is a major international forum that brings together political and economic leaders to discuss issues related to economic cooperation, geopolitical realignment, and global development. More importantly, SPIEF 2025 provided a unique communicative setting in which President Prabowo participated in two interactional formats within the same event: a prepared speech and a panel discussion. This context enables a systematic examination of authority across contrasting communicative conditions

while maintaining the same political actor and institutional environment.

Drawing on the interpersonal metafunction of SFL, this study investigates how authority is constructed through Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity in President Prabowo Subianto's SPIEF 2025 discourse. To enrich the interpretation of interpersonal meanings, the study also incorporates a social embodiment perspective that considers how gestures and bodily movements may support or reinforce authority enacted through linguistic resources. By examining both a prepared speech and a panel discussion within the same international forum, the study extends previous research beyond single-genre political discourse and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how authority is linguistically constructed and interactionally reinforced in contemporary political communication.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Political authority is generally understood as the ability of political actors to present positions, decisions, and interpretations as legitimate and acceptable to audiences. In political discourse, authority is not constructed solely through institutional position but also through

communication practices that enable speakers to regulate interpretation, establish credibility, and reinforce leadership legitimacy. According to van Dijk (1997), political discourse is inseparable from the institutional roles of political actors and the communicative

purposes they pursue within specific political contexts.

Previous studies consistently show that political authority is closely associated with the linguistic presentation of propositions as factual, necessary, and difficult to challenge. Declarative constructions frequently enable political leaders to present claims as established facts, thereby reducing opportunities for negotiation and strengthening perceived legitimacy (Al-badri & Al-janabi, 2022; Allagbé et al., 2025; Amalia et al., 2018; Amoussou & Imorou, 2021; Butt et al., 2025; Darong et al., 2022; Elsanhoury et al., 2020; Fanani et al., 2019; Hadi & Guo, 2020; Hanh & Lam, 2021; Jegede, 2018; Mafruchatunnisa & Agustien, 2016; Niez et al., 2025; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024; Saleem et al., 2023; Samsudin, 2019; Shikaa, 2024; Zhao, 2021). Imperative constructions encourage audience alignment with political goals rather than as direct coercive commands (Hadi & Guo, 2020; Jegede, 2018; Niez et al., 2025; Zhao, 2021). Authority is further reinforced through Modality, particularly high-value obligation, which conveys determination, commitment, and necessity (Al-badri & Al-janabi, 2022; Amalia et al., 2018; Amoussou & Imorou, 2021; Hadi &

Guo, 2020; Panggabean et al., 2023; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024). Polarity likewise contributes to authority by enabling speakers to affirm preferred positions and reject competing interpretations (Fanani et al., 2019; Hadi & Guo, 2020; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024). Together, these studies suggest that political authority is commonly realized through factualization, obligation, affirmation, rejection, and strategic audience mobilization.

The present study adopts the interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as its primary analytical framework. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) describe the interpersonal metafunction as the dimension of language through which speakers enact social relationships, negotiate roles, and express attitudes toward propositions and audiences. Similarly, Matthiessen and Teruya (2024) define it as a system of linguistic resources that enables interlocutors to establish relationships, negotiate values, and calibrate interpersonal positions in interaction. Through these resources, speakers can express authority, commitment, confidence, evaluation, and solidarity in interaction.

Within the interpersonal metafunction, Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity are key grammatical systems for constructing interpersonal meaning. Mood Types concerns the grammatical organization of interaction through declarative, interrogative, and imperative clauses. Modality refers to linguistic resources for expressing probability, usuality, obligation, and inclination, whereas Polarity concerns the basic choice between affirmation (positive) and negation (negative) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Collaboratively, these systems provide the analytical framework for examining how authority is enacted in political discourse.

While the present study primarily focuses on linguistic constructions of authority, it also incorporates social embodiment as a supporting interpretive perspective. Social embodiment proposes that meaning is grounded not only in cognitive processes but also in bodily experiences, perceptual simulations, and social interaction (Barsalou et al., 2003). Based on this perspective, social understanding relies partly on simulations of perceptual, motor, and affective simulations activated during interaction,

suggesting that bodily actions contribute to how social meanings are interpreted and experienced.

The relevance of embodiment for discourse studies has been emphasized by Lakens (2014), who argues that bodily cues influence social judgments when they are contextually salient, and by Martikainen and Sakki (2023), who conceptualize embodiment as a constitutive element of social meaning. These perspectives suggest that gestures, bodily movements, and other visible actions may shape the perception of interpersonal meanings during interaction. Although studies of multimodal political discourse have acknowledged the role of nonverbal resources, for example, Elsanhoury et al. (2020), who primarily focus on visual semiotic features such as gaze, perspective, distance, and framing, less attention has been paid to embodied behaviors as resources for interpreting interpersonal meanings. Therefore, social embodiment is employed in the present study not as a primary analytical framework but as a complementary perspective for explaining how visible actions may reinforce, soften, or modulate the authority enacted through Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to investigate how authority is linguistically constructed in President Prabowo Subianto's discourse at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2025. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study focused on interpreting interpersonal meanings rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The analysis was grounded in the interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), particularly the systems of Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity. Social embodiment was incorporated as a complementary interpretive perspective to explain how authority-related meanings may be reinforced or moderated through observable embodied behaviors.

The data consisted of two texts produced by President Prabowo Subianto during SPIEF 2025: (1) his speech and (2) his participation in the panel session. The primary data were obtained from official transcripts published on the website of the President of the Republic of Indonesia and cross-checked against the corresponding

video recordings to ensure accuracy and completeness of interaction. The transcripts served as the primary textual data, while the videos were used to verify spoken delivery and document visible embodied behaviors. The corpus was segmented into clauses, which served as the basic unit of analysis in SFL. Observable embodied actions were documented and recorded descriptively in double parentheses, following Du Bois's (1991) transcription convention for researcher comments. Examples include ((open palm)), ((chopping gesture)), and ((microphone touch)). These annotations were used solely to document visible behaviors without assigning interpretive meanings during the transcription stage.

Data analysis followed five interconnected stages adapted from Creswell and Creswell (2018) and integrated with the interpersonal framework of SFL. First, the transcripts were organized, verified, and segmented into clauses coded as CS (speech) and CP (panel). Second, the corpus was repeatedly reviewed to establish familiarity with the discourse. Third, each clause was coded for Mood Types (Declarative, Interrogative,

Imperative, Exclamative), Modality (Probability, Usuality, Obligation, and Inclination; with high, median, and low values), and Polarity (positive or negative). Fourth, recurring Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity configurations associated with authority were identified. Following previous SFL-based studies of political discourse, authority was identified through declarative, obligation, and imperative that establish legitimacy, express necessity, or regulate audience interpretation (Fanani et al., 2019; Hadi & Guo, 2020; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024; Tahira et al., 2025). Clauses functioning primarily as vocatives, politeness markers, procedural information, fragments, embedded clauses, or affective expressions were excluded

from the pattern-based recapitulation but retained for contextual interpretation. Finally, the identified authority patterns were interpreted qualitatively in relation to their communicative functions within the speech and panel contexts. At this stage, social embodiment functioned as a complementary explanatory lens rather than as an analytical framework. In line with Barsalou et al. (2003), Lakens (2014), and Martikainen and Sakki (2023), visible actions such as gestures and bodily movements were used to enrich explanations of how authority is enacted through Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity might be reinforced, softened, or modulated across the two communicative settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Distribution of Authority Patterns

Table 1. Distribution of Authority-Enacting Patterns

| Pattern | Speech (CS) | Panel (CP) | Total |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| D-Ø-Ø-P | 86 | 58 | 144 |
| D-Ø-Ø-N | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| D-Obl-H-P | 7 | 6 | 13 |
| D-Obl-M-P | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| D-Obl-M-N | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| I-Ø-Ø-N | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| I-Usu-H-P | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 103 | 72 | 175 |

The findings indicate that authority is the dominant interpersonal orientation in both datasets. Of the 136 analyzable clauses in the speech text, 103 clauses (75.7%) were identified as authority-enacting patterns. Similarly, 72 of the 97 analyzable clauses (74.2%) in the panel text were categorized as authority constructions. Among all identified patterns, D-Ø-Ø-P overwhelmingly dominates the corpus with 144 occurrences, representing more than four-fifths of all authority clauses. Obligation-based patterns occur considerably less frequently, while imperative constructions appear only three times. This distribution indicates that authority at SPIEF 2025 is enacted primarily through factualized assertions rather than direct commands.

Authority through Factualized Declaratives

The most prominent realization of authority is Declarative–No Modality–Positive Polarity (D-Ø-Ø-P), which presents propositions as factual realities rather than personal opinions, thereby reducing interpersonal negotiability and strengthening the speaker’s authoritative stance.

In the speech text, factualized authority is particularly visible in geopolitical positioning. For example, the clause “The world of unipolar centrality is past” (CS97) and “This is the trend of history” ((vertical beat gesture)) (CS98) present geopolitical transformation and multipolarity as established realities. The absence of Modality removes indications of uncertainty, while the vertical beat gesture reinforces certainty and authoritative commitment (Figure 1).



Figure 1

A similar pattern appears in policy and ideological discourse. “But we need government intervention to overcome poverty and overcome hunger and to protect the weak” ((clenched fist)) ((vertical beat gesture)) ((microphone touch)) (CS54) presents state intervention as self-evidently necessary, while “Therefore, I have chosen the path of compromise, the path of the best of socialism and the best of capitalism”

((self-pointing)) ((side-to-side contrast)) (CS46) constructs ideological positioning as a deliberate and legitimate political choice. The accompanying gestures reinforce commitment, personal ownership, and ideological balance.

The panel data demonstrates a similar tendency. For example, “for Indonesia, we are very clear” ((chopping gesture)) (CP27b) and “That is my position” ((microphone touch)) (CP41) present a clear, non-negotiable geopolitical position. While chopping gestures strengthen decisiveness, microphone touches slightly moderate the force of stance closure (Figure 2).



Figure 2

These examples demonstrate that authority is realized predominantly through factualized declaratives. Rather than instructing audiences directly, the speaker establishes authority by presenting political positions, geopolitical interpretations, and policy directions as objective realities.

Moreover, authority through declarative factualization is also reinforced by negative Polarity. The clauses “We do not ask for assistance” (CS118) and “We do not ask for handouts” (CS119), both realized through D-Ø-Ø-N, establish political boundaries by rejecting interpretations of Indonesia as dependent on external support.

Authority through Obligation-Based Constructions

The second major realization of authority appears through Declarative–Obligation–High–Positive (D–Obl–H–P). Unlike factualized declaratives, these constructions explicitly present propositions as necessary courses of action.

In CS44c, “each country must follow its own economic philosophy” ((open palm)), and in CS61, “Our government must work to bring the greatest good to the greatest many” ((clenched fist)), authority is constructed through high-value obligation. The modal auxiliary must reduce negotiability by framing economic independence and governmental responsibility as necessities rather than preferences. Embodied actions either soften the directive force (open

palm) or reinforce commitment (clenched fist; Figure 3).



Figure 3

A similar pattern occurs in geopolitical discourse through “that this world must develop into a multipolar world” (CS96b), where multiPolarity is presented as a necessary historical direction. In the panel interaction, obligation is realized more diplomatically through clauses such as “that we have to maintain this path of non-alignment” ((open palm)) (CP6b) and “that every country must give its national interest to another country’s national interest” (CP39b).

Supporting obligation patterns occur only occasionally. For instance, “We cannot afford rivalry” (CP5a), realized through D–Obl–M–N, frames rivalry as strategically undesirable rather than absolutely prohibited. Likewise, “better to talk than to kill each other” ((chopping gesture)) (CP23), realized through D–Obl–M–P, promotes

negotiation while maintaining diplomatic moderation. These patterns indicate that obligation in the panel interaction is frequently softened to preserve interpersonal flexibility.

Authority through Directive Constructions

Directive authority appears only marginally in the corpus, with three occurrences in total. This limited frequency suggests that authority at SPIEF 2025 is rarely enacted through direct commands.

The clearest example appears in CS81, “please do not read too much into the event” ((palm-out)), realized through I–Ø–Ø–N. Although the clause regulates audience interpretation, the politeness marker 'please' and the palm-out gesture reduce its coercive force and reposition it as reassurance rather than a prohibition (Figure 4).



Figure 4

A similar pattern occurs in the panel interaction through “always talk” and “always negotiate” ((open palm)) ((two-handed open gesture)) ((slight smile)) (CP24b–c), both realized through I–Usu–H–P. Although grammatically imperative, these clauses function less as commands than as diplomatic recommendations. The accompanying gestures soften the imperatives and transform them into collaborative invitations.

The rarity of imperative constructions indicates that authority at SPIEF 2025 is not primarily enacted through coercive direction. Instead, authority is constructed predominantly through factualized assertions and obligation-based positioning.

Authority across Speech and Panel Contexts

Although authority dominates both datasets, its realization varies across communicative contexts. In the speech text, authority is primarily enacted through factualized declaratives that present geopolitical developments, ideological positions, and policy commitments as established realities. Embodied resources frequently reinforce this authority through emphatic gestures

such as clenched fists, vertical beat gestures, and contrastive movements.

By contrast, authority in the panel interaction is more dialogic and interactionally negotiated. While declarative factualization remains prominent, obligation patterns are more frequently accompanied by open-palm gestures, two-handed open gestures, slight smiles, and microphone touches that soften interpersonal force and facilitate diplomatic alignment.

In short, authority at SPIEF 2025 is primarily realized through declarative factualization and, to a lesser extent, through obligation-based constructions. While the speech projects a more assertive, policy-oriented authority, the panel interaction reflects a more dialogic, diplomatically moderated authority. Embodied behaviors contribute to these differences by reinforcing, softening, or modulating the interpersonal force of authority-related grammatical constructions.

DISCUSSION

Factualized Authority through Declarative Constructions

The findings show that authority at SPIEF 2025 is realized primarily through factualized declaratives rather than direct

commands. This supports previous studies showing that declarative clauses dominate political discourse because they allow leaders to provide information while simultaneously projecting authority (Butt et al., 2025; Hanh & Lam, 2021; Zhao, 2021). By presenting propositions as established facts, declaratives reduce opportunities for negotiation and strengthen the legitimacy of political positions (Fanani et al., 2019; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024).

The dominance of D-Ø-Ø-P patterns suggests that President Prabowo constructs authority through certainty and informational control. Geopolitical developments, economic policies, and national positions are presented as objective realities rather than personal preferences. In this way, authority emerges not from coercion but from the ability to frame political interpretations as rational, legitimate, and historically grounded (Butt et al., 2025; Fanani et al., 2019; Hanh & Lam, 2021; Huo & Zhang, 2023; Jegede, 2018; Rajabi & Farshadi, 2024; Tahira et al., 2025; Zhao, 2021).

This tendency is particularly understandable in the context of the SPIEF. As an international forum involving discussions on multiPolarity, economic cooperation, and geopolitical

realignment, SPIEF requires leaders to project certainty while maintaining diplomatic legitimacy. Declarative factualization serves this purpose effectively by enabling political claims to appear descriptive rather than ideological, thereby strengthening authority without creating unnecessary confrontation. Similar claims were made by Samsudin (2019), who argues that declarative constructions contribute to the establishment of authority, status, and institutional legitimacy in political discourse.

The findings also suggest that embodied behaviors support rather than create authority. Emphatic gestures, such as vertical beat gestures, frequently accompany factualized declaratives, reinforcing the certainty already encoded in the grammatical structure. This observation supports Elsanhoury et al.'s (2020) argument that verbal and non-verbal resources interact intersemiotically in political communication and aligns with Barsalou et al. (2003), who argue that social meaning is partly grounded in embodied experience.

Authority through Obligation, Boundary-Setting, and Directive Regulation

Although factualized declaratives are dominant, authority is also realized through obligation constructions. It is consistent with previous research, such as Hadi and Guo (2020), who argue that the modal “must” represents the highest degree of modal commitment, while Rajabi and Farshadi (2024) similarly observe that high-value Modality frequently reflects political certainty and determination. Jegede (2018) and Niez et al. (2025) likewise note that obligation Modality enables political actors to present actions and policies as necessary rather than optional. Through this strategy, authority is constructed by defining what should be done rather than merely describing what is.

However, the relatively limited occurrence of obligation patterns compared with factualized declaratives suggests that authority at SPIEF 2025 relies more on presenting realities than prescribing actions. This finding is consistent with studies showing that declaratives remain the preferred interpersonal resource in political discourse (Darong et al., 2022; Okafor & Issife, 2017). Within an international forum characterized by diverse political interests, factualized assertions are more adaptable than overt obligations, as they

maintain authority while preserving diplomatic flexibility.

Authority is further reinforced through negative Polarity. Rather than simply rejecting alternatives, negative constructions help define political boundaries and regulate audience interpretation. In the SPIEF data, rejection is used to construct Indonesia as politically autonomous and economically self-reliant. This finding supports observations by Fanani et al. (2019) that negative Polarity frequently contributes to criticism, rejection, and ideological positioning in political discourse. Rajabi and Farshadi (2024) also note that negative linguistic choices may function to express distrust and an oppositional stance in political communication. In the SPIEF data, these negative declaratives help construct Indonesia’s image as politically autonomous and economically self-reliant. Rather than merely rejecting assistance, the clauses regulate how Indonesia’s geopolitical position should be interpreted by international audiences.

Imperative constructions occur only marginally, suggesting that authority is rarely enacted through direct regulation. Instead, the few imperatives identified function more as guidance and diplomatic recommendations than as commands. This

pattern supports previous findings that political imperatives often operate as persuasive guidance rather than authoritarian commands (Hadi & Guo, 2020; Jegede, 2018; Niez et al., 2025; Zhao, 2021).

Social embodiment again contributes to the interpretation of authority. Open-palm gestures, two-handed open gestures, and slight smiles frequently accompany obligation and imperative constructions. Rather than intensifying authority, these embodied resources often soften directive force and facilitate interpersonal alignment. This finding supports Martikainen and Sakki's (2023) argument that bodily practices contribute to social meaning-making by shaping how discourse is interactionally experienced. It also aligns with Barsalou et al. (2003), who emphasize that embodied processes influence the interpretation of social communication. In the SPIEF context, embodiment enables authority to remain firm while simultaneously appearing cooperative and diplomatically appropriate.

Authority Across Speech and Panel Interaction

Although authority dominates both datasets, its realization varies across

communicative contexts. The speech constructs authority primarily through assertive factualization and policy commitment, whereas the panel discussion reflects a more negotiated and interactionally responsive form of authority.

The greater reliance on factualized declaratives in the speech is consistent with the communicative purpose of political speeches, which typically aim to inform audiences and project institutional positions (Hanh & Lam, 2021). From this perspective, authority is achieved by presenting political and geopolitical claims as established realities. Embodied behaviors largely reinforce this orientation through gestures that project certainty, commitment, and leadership.

The panel interaction, by contrast, requires responsiveness to questions and evolving exchanges. As a result, authority remains present but is expressed in a more dialogic manner through explanation, clarification, and negotiated positioning. This claim supports Huo and Zhang's (2023) view that interpersonal meaning is highly sensitive to interactional context.

Embodiment also functions differently across contexts. In the speech, gestures primarily reinforce authority, whereas in the panel discussion, they more

often moderate interpersonal force and facilitate diplomatic alignment. This finding extends previous multimodal political discourse research by showing

CONCLUSIONS

The findings demonstrate that authority in President Prabowo Subianto's SPIEF 2025 discourse is constructed primarily through declarative factualization and, to a lesser extent, through obligation-based configurations. Across both the speech and panel texts, authority is realized not through direct command but through the presentation of political propositions as legitimate, credible, and minimally negotiable. These findings reinforce previous political discourse research showing that declarative constructions are central to the enactment of leadership legitimacy and political authority.

The study also shows that authority is context-sensitive. In the prepared speech, authority is enacted through stronger factualization, policy commitment, and geopolitical positioning, whereas the panel discussion reflects a more negotiated and interactionally responsive form of authority. This suggests that political authority is not a fixed attribute of leadership but a dynamic interpersonal

that embodied behaviors do not contribute to authority in a uniform way; rather, their function varies according to communicative demands.

accomplishment that adapts to communicative demands and diplomatic contexts.

A further contribution of the study lies in incorporating social embodiment as a complementary interpretive perspective. While authority is primarily constructed through Mood Types, Modality, and Polarity, embodied behaviors help shape how that authority is perceived and interpreted. Rather than creating authority independently, gestures and bodily movements reinforce, soften, or modulate interpersonal meanings already encoded in grammatical structures.

By examining both a prepared speech and a panel session produced by the same political leader within the same international forum, the study extends SFL-based political discourse research beyond single-genre analysis. Overall, the findings suggest that authority in contemporary international political discourse is achieved through a balance between certainty and diplomatic adaptability, supported by the interaction

of interpersonal grammatical resources and context-sensitive embodied behaviors.

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