

## A STUDY OF POLITICAL LANGUAGE ON THE FISCAL POLICY DISCOURSE OF INDONESIA'S MINISTER OF FINANCE IN 2025

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### ABSTRACT

Fiscal communication plays a crucial role in shaping public trust, promoting transparency, and reinforcing the legitimacy of government actions. Despite its significance, existing studies often emphasize macroeconomic performance rather than the rhetorical strategies that build credibility and empathy between policymakers and the public. This study investigates the rhetorical and linguistic strategies employed by Indonesian Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa during the crucial transitional period following his appointment in 2025, amid growing fiscal legitimacy challenges and public skepticism. The research focuses on how Minister Purbaya strategically constructed and communicated Indonesia's fiscal narrative to regain public trust, stabilize perceptions of economic governance, and reinforce the credibility of fiscal policy after the leadership change. Using a qualitative descriptive method with a rhetorical and linguistic discourse analysis approach, the research examines selected public speeches and media statements delivered from his inauguration to October 2025. The analysis reveals that Purbaya's fiscal communication emphasized clarity, empathy, and accountability, supported by rhetorical devices such as ethos, pathos, logos, metaphorical framing, and pronoun choice. These elements collectively simplified complex fiscal issues, humanized economic discourse, and fostered a sense of shared responsibility between the government and citizens. The findings indicate that effective fiscal communication requires not only technical expertise and data accuracy but also emotional resonance and ethical awareness. The study concludes that rhetorical competence is a vital aspect of fiscal governance, turning policy communication into a bridge of trust that strengthens both public confidence and the legitimacy of fiscal policy.

**Keywords:** Political Discourse, Rhetorical Devices, Linguistic Strategy, Persuasive Communication, Public Trust

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's financial situation in 2025 showed growing tension between the government's goal to control spending and the public's need for social protection. The government decided to increase the Value Added Tax (VAT) from eleven to twelve percent at the beginning of 2025. This decision was explained as an effort to raise national income and maintain financial stability. However, many people were doubtful about this policy, especially those from lower- and middle-income groups, who felt it was unfair and added to their financial burden. Earlier studies found that even though the VAT increase was small in terms of the national economy, it still caused public concern and lowered people's confidence to spend, as reported by Zein, Andini, and Sinka (2023).

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Likewise, Silalahi and Kurnia (2025) highlighted that fairness and clear communication in tax policies are essential for building public trust and ensuring policy effectiveness.

As the year progressed, the Indonesian economy experienced a rise in the prices of staple goods such as rice, cooking oil, and chili, which further intensified public dissatisfaction according to data from the Central Statistics Agency and national media reports in 2025. Slow absorption of government spending limited liquidity in local economies and strengthened the perception that fiscal policy had become detached from everyday realities, as reported by Antara News in 2025. Public frustration was also heightened by the delayed implementation of relief programs designed to cushion the effects of inflation and tax increases, as noted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Reuters in 2025. Together, these factors contributed to a legitimacy crisis in fiscal governance, in which the government's technocratic approach appeared increasingly inconsistent with social needs, as analyzed by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in 2025.

By late August 2025, large scale demonstrations took place in major Indonesian cities demanding fiscal justice and accountability. Protesters criticized what they perceived as elitism and rigidity within the Ministry of Finance led by Sri Mulyani Indrawati, accusing the institution of prioritizing macroeconomic discipline over social welfare and inclusion as reported by The Guardian and Reuters in 2025. Analysts pointed out that public dissatisfaction was not solely driven by economic hardship but also by the way fiscal policies were communicated. The reliance on technical and data heavy explanations alienated citizens instead of fostering empathy and engagement, as observed by Saifullah and Muskin in 2025. Consequently, on the eighth of September 2025, President Prabowo Subianto announced a cabinet reshuffle, appointing Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa as the new Minister of Finance in an effort to restore public trust and reshape the government's fiscal narrative as covered by Financial Times in 2025.

The change in leadership represented more than an administrative adjustment. It marked a strategic transformation in fiscal communication. In his early press conferences, Minister Purbaya adopted a noticeably different tone that emphasized empathy, unity, and collective recovery. By using inclusive pronouns, moral appeals, and metaphors comparing the economy to a ship navigating through a storm, he sought to humanize fiscal policy and rebuild government credibility as documented by Antara News in 2025. This rhetorical reframing illustrates a broader shift in public communication from purely technocratic justification toward emotional resonance and linguistic inclusivity, aligning with the perspective of Susena in 2025 who highlighted the growing importance of rhetorical strategy in political communication.

The fiscal legitimacy crisis that unfolded in Indonesia during 2025 illustrates that economic management cannot be separated from communication. Fiscal policy, although designed as a technical instrument of governance, ultimately operates within a public sphere where perception, trust, and linguistic framing determine its acceptance. Public

dissatisfaction escalated after the increase of the Value Added Tax and the delay of several social relief programs. The tension revealed a fundamental communication gap between government technocrats and the broader public, as fiscal messages failed to resonate with citizens' lived experiences. According to Dylia, Nurmandi, and Younus (2025), effective crisis communication requires more than factual accuracy; it must also demonstrate empathy, credibility, and emotional resonance to sustain legitimacy in times of policy turbulence.

Scholars worldwide have emphasized that public communication is not a peripheral element of governance but an essential determinant of policy legitimacy. The critical discourse analysis tradition views political communication as a space where language both reflects and constructs power relations. Hariati and Purwarno (2025) demonstrated how rhetorical devices such as ethos, pathos, and logos serve ideological functions in legitimizing leadership narratives. Similarly, Atmawijaya (2025) showed that metaphors function as strategic tools in political crisis communication, allowing complex fiscal or policy challenges to be reframed into emotionally accessible imagery. These studies support the argument that linguistic strategies are vital in shaping how fiscal or economic messages are understood and accepted by citizens.

In the Indonesian context, research has consistently shown that the personalization and emotionalization of policy discourse play an important role in rebuilding public trust after a period of crisis. Pramiyanti (2020), for example, found that government transparency and empathetic communication during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced citizens' perceptions of institutional credibility. Likewise, Umam (2025) observed that linguistic strategies such as repetition, modality, and populist framing strengthen persuasive power and create a sense of shared identity between leaders and their audiences. These findings provide an analytical lens for understanding how fiscal authorities might use rhetorical strategies to reconnect with a skeptical public following economic unrest.

In this regard, the transition from Sri Mulyani's technocratic fiscal rhetoric to Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's inclusive discourse represents more than an administrative change. It signifies a communicative shift from data-driven argumentation toward empathy-driven engagement. This shift echoes broader patterns in political language where leaders employ inclusive pronouns, moral narratives, and metaphorical imagery to humanize state policies and rebuild legitimacy. Studies such as those by the Jurnal SiELE research group (2024) on national leaders' discursal strategies show that rhetorical inclusivity and moral positioning are crucial to maintaining legitimacy under conditions of social tension. Therefore, analyzing Minister Purbaya's rhetorical and linguistic strategies provides a timely case for exploring how language, communication, and power intersect in Indonesia's fiscal policymaking during a legitimacy crisis.

While the preceding discussion outlines the socio-political and communicative dynamics shaping Indonesia's fiscal crisis, there remains a crucial need to situate these

developments within a broader scholarly context that emphasizes the role of language in legitimizing power and constructing political identity. The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand how political language functions as an instrument for constructing image and legitimizing power in Indonesia, particularly in the context of political transitions following the presidential inauguration. Amid growing public attention to leaders' communication styles and rhetorical choices, analyzing discourse strategies in political speeches becomes crucial to uncover the underlying ideologies, values, and persuasive tactics employed to build social support. As explained by Kristina, Setiarini, and Thoyibi (2024), national leaders strategically employ textual and discursive techniques to shape their political image in the global arena. This indicates that every linguistic element in a political speech is not merely a verbal expression but part of a systematic communication strategy.

Furthermore, previous studies on political communication in Indonesia have tended to focus primarily on message content and media effects, rather than on the linguistic and ideological dimensions embedded in political discourse. Umam (2025) emphasized that critical discourse analysis can reveal the power relations and political interests underlying a leader's lexical choices and rhetorical structures. Therefore, this research is significant in addressing that gap by critically analyzing Prabowo's political discourse through the lens of critical discourse analysis and ideological rhetoric. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Indonesian political linguistics and enhance public understanding of how language shapes perceptions of power and legitimacy in modern governmental communication.

Building upon this urgency to explore the linguistic and ideological dimensions of political discourse, it becomes necessary to situate the present study within existing research. Despite the growing body of research on political and economic communication in Indonesia, specific studies examining fiscal discourse and rhetorical transformation during legitimacy crises remain limited. Previous works have primarily focused on general political communication, pandemic response, or populist narratives in electoral contexts rather than on the linguistic construction of fiscal authority. For instance, studies by Pramiyanti (2020) and Umam (2025) centered on crisis communication and populist language during health or political turbulence, yet offered little insight into how fiscal leaders reconstruct legitimacy through rhetorical means. This indicates a conceptual and empirical gap in understanding how fiscal messages are linguistically reframed to regain public trust after policy-induced unrest.

Addressing this gap is crucial both academically and practically. From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the intersection of critical discourse analysis (CDA), rhetorical studies, and public policy communication, offering a nuanced understanding of how linguistic strategies operate within fiscal governance. Practically, it provides insights for policymakers and communication strategists on how empathetic and inclusive narratives can strengthen public legitimacy in times of economic uncertainty. Given Indonesia's recurring challenges in balancing fiscal discipline with

social responsiveness, examining rhetorical framing becomes essential to ensure that communication supports, rather than undermines, policy implementation.

Accordingly, this research is guided by the following central questions:

1. How did Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa employ rhetorical and linguistic strategies to reshape Indonesia's fiscal narrative after the 2025 legitimacy crisis?
2. What rhetorical devices such as ethos, pathos, logos, metaphors, and pronoun choices were used to humanize fiscal discourse and foster empathy?
3. How did these communicative strategies contribute to restoring public trust and reinforcing the legitimacy of fiscal governance?

The study therefore aims to identify, analyze, and interpret rhetorical and linguistic strategies used in the fiscal communication of Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa in 2025. The findings are expected to enrich theoretical discussions on political rhetoric and discourse analysis while offering practical recommendations for developing transparent, empathetic, and inclusive fiscal communication in Indonesia. Through this analysis, the research underscores that legitimacy in fiscal policy is not merely an outcome of economic soundness but also a function of how policy is communicated, narrated, and emotionally framed within the public sphere.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Critical Discourse Analysis in Media and Political Contexts**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach that seeks to uncover the relationship between language, power, and ideology within social practices. According to Fairclough (1995), discourse should not be viewed merely as a linguistic exchange, but as a social practice that both reflects and shapes power relations. CDA assumes that language functions ideologically which it constructs social realities through lexical choices, sentence structures, and institutional contexts in which discourse is produced and interpreted. Fairclough's three-dimensional model namely text analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, emphasizes how textual forms relate to broader sociopolitical contexts. Meanwhile, Teun A. van Dijk highlights the role of social cognition, referring to the mental models that connect discourse structures to shared ideological frameworks. Through these lenses, CDA allows researchers to examine how linguistic patterns reinforce or challenge dominance and legitimacy in public communication.

In Indonesia, CDA has been widely applied to analyze how media and political discourse shape public perception. For instance, Ikhsan (2022) employed Fairclough's model in his study "*Pembingkajian Citra Polisi pada Tagar #PercumaLaporPolisi*" to investigate how digital discourse on social media delegitimized the police institution. His analysis revealed several linguistic strategies such as delegitimization, public frustration, and comparative framing, showing how online communities construct counter-discourses that challenge institutional authority (Ikhsan, 2022). Similarly, Arifin and Basuki (2018)

examined local media coverage of the *New Yogyakarta International Airport (NYIA)* construction through a CDA framework. Their study demonstrated that media discourse not only informed but also legitimized state-driven development agendas by emphasizing themes of progress and national interest while marginalizing local resistance. This aligns with the view that media act as ideological apparatuses that sustain hegemonic relations between state and society (Arifin & Basuki, 2018).

Using Van Dijk's model, Setiaji and Fajriani (2022) analyzed how Indonesian media represented the Rohingya conflict. Their findings highlighted both macro-structural (thematic organization) and micro-structural (lexical and syntactic) features that reveal ideological positioning and selective representation of social actors. The study underscored that news discourse often mirrors the ideological alignment of institutions toward global humanitarian issues (Setiaji & Fajriani, 2022).

Moreover, Dewi, Nurjaya, and Budi Utama (2024) conducted a CDA of President Prabowo Subianto's inaugural speech using Van Dijk's tri-level framework which are textual, cognitive, and social analysis. Their research found that rhetorical construction in speech aimed to establish a new political identity emphasizing nationalism and transformative leadership. The interaction between textual form, speaker cognition, and sociopolitical context illustrated how political discourse strategically constructs legitimacy and public trust (Dewi et al., 2024).

Collectively, these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of CDA in unpacking political communication practices in Indonesia, especially how discourse operates as a tool of persuasion, legitimization, and ideological negotiation. In relation to the present study, CDA serves as a suitable analytical framework for examining how Minister of Finance Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa employs rhetorical and linguistic strategies to reconstruct fiscal narratives and rebuild public trust after the 2025 legitimacy crisis. Through CDA, the research can reveal how fiscal policy discourse functions not merely as technical communication but as a strategic form of political rhetoric that mediates between governance and public perception.

### **Rhetorical and Linguistic Strategies in Government Communication**

Rhetoric plays a central role in how government actors communicate policy, frame legitimacy, and persuade public audiences. Common rhetorical devices include ethos, pathos, logos, metaphors, modality, and narrative structuring. The strategic use of these elements helps leaders project authority, connect with publics emotionally, and justify policy decisions not only on rational grounds but also through moral or symbolic appeals. One concrete example is the study by Anwar and 'Aini (2025) in *Analisis Retorika Politik dalam Pidato Presiden Prabowo Subianto pada Sidang Umum PBB ke-80 Tahun 2025*. This article analyzes President Prabowo's speech at the 80th UN General Assembly using Aristotelian rhetorical appeals. They found that ethos is constructed through references to Indonesia's diplomatic commitments, pathos emerges via appeals to shared global humanitarian values, and logos through logical argumentation about

international cooperation and Indonesia's role in the world. Similarly, Fahrudin, Bajuri, and Billah (2022) in *Analisis Retorika Pidato Presiden Jokowi di Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN) pada Kanal Youtube Official iNews* applied Aristotle's rhetorical triangle (ethos, pathos, logos) along with the five canons of rhetoric (inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio). Their findings revealed that Jokowi's speech about the IKN emphasized deliberative rhetoric oriented toward future policy, using credibility (ethos), emotional engagement (pathos), and logical evidence (logos) to strengthen public trust in national development. Furthermore, Shafira Zulkarnaini, Mardiningsih, and Sugianti (2024) in *Teknik Retorika dalam Penggunaan Pathos, Logos, Ethos dalam Video Pidato Joko Widodo di YouTube* examined how President Jokowi employed rhetorical techniques in his YouTube speeches. They found that ethos, pathos, and logos were all present and often interwoven, as emotional narratives of social solidarity were placed alongside logical argumentation about policy outcomes.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that government communication relies heavily on rhetorical strategies to construct credibility, evoke emotion, and justify decisions. Ethos appeals to speaker credibility and national values, pathos engages audience emotion through storytelling, and logos presents rational, data-driven arguments. The use of the five canons of rhetoric further enhances message organization and delivery, while modality and future-oriented language position policies as urgent and necessary. In relation to the current study of Minister of Finance Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's press conferences, these insights are relevant to understanding how he constructs ethos to build fiscal credibility, employs pathos to connect with the public during crisis recovery, and utilizes logos and modality to rationalize fiscal policy. Such rhetorical and linguistic strategies are essential tools in rebuilding legitimacy and restoring public trust after a period of economic and political uncertainty.

### **Rhetorical and Linguistic Strategies in Political Discourse**

Rhetorical and linguistic strategies play a central role in shaping the persuasive power of political communication. Through strategic use of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, political actors construct authority, evoke emotion, and rationalize policy decisions to maintain legitimacy and influence public opinion. Several Indonesian studies have explored how these rhetorical devices manifest in presidential and ministerial speeches, particularly in contexts of national development, diplomacy, and crisis communication.

Anwar and 'Aini (2025) examined Prabowo Subianto's address at the 80th United Nations General Assembly, highlighting how rhetorical appeals were employed to construct Indonesia's international image as a peace-oriented and self-reliant nation. Their findings indicated that the balance of *ethos* (credibility) and *logos* (rational justification) was crucial in framing Indonesia's foreign policy narrative. Similarly, Fahrudin, Bajuri, and Billah (2022) analyzed President Joko Widodo's speech on the new capital city (IKN), identifying that repetition, emotional appeal (*pathos*), and visionary language were used to mobilize public optimism and justify large-scale national projects.

Zulkarnaini, Mardiningsih, and Sugianti (2024) expanded this analysis by focusing on Jokowi's rhetorical performance on YouTube, revealing how digital media amplified emotional persuasion through tone, gesture, and audiovisual framing. Meanwhile, Rahmawati and Susanto (2023) explored how Jokowi's speeches intertwined political rhetoric with development communication, showing that linguistic framing not only legitimized policy agendas but also constructed the image of a responsive and inclusive government. Lestari and Pranoto (2024) reinforced these findings through a critical review of Indonesian presidential discourse, concluding that rhetorical coherence across *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* determines both domestic trust and international credibility.

Together, these studies underscore that political rhetoric in Indonesia functions not merely as performance, but as a deliberate linguistic strategy to shape public understanding of governance and fiscal policy. Such findings provide valuable theoretical grounding for examining Minister Purbaya's fiscal policy discourse, where rhetorical choices and linguistic framing serve as instruments of persuasion, control, and legitimacy within the broader context of economic communication.

### **Application of CDA and Rhetorical Analysis in Fiscal Policy Discourse**

The study of fiscal policy discourse through the lenses of both Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and rhetorical analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how language constructs economic legitimacy and political authority. CDA allows researchers to uncover underlying power relations, ideological framing, and institutional discourse practices within fiscal communication, while rhetorical analysis focuses on how persuasive strategies, narrative structures, and linguistic choices shape public perception of government action.

Scholars such as Ikhsan (2022) and Arifin and Basuki (2018) have demonstrated that Indonesian political and administrative communication often embeds ideological messages in linguistic form, revealing how power and institutional identity are reproduced through discourse. Similarly, Setiaji and Fajriani (2022) highlight that news coverage and public statements use selective representation and evaluative language to legitimize perspectives on governance. In the fiscal context, these mechanisms manifest through lexical selection (e.g., "stabilization," "recovery," "trust"), modality ("must," "will," "should"), and framing devices that emphasize economic responsibility or moral obligation.

Dewi, Nurjaya, and Utama (2024) provide an example of how presidential speeches employ Van Dijk's discourse structures namely macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure, to manage thematic coherence and ideological stance. Applying this to fiscal communication, a ministerial statement can be seen as a discursive event where rhetorical form and institutional discourse interact. The macrostructure (overall theme) may emphasize "economic stability" or "reform continuity," while the microstructure (word choice, modality, metaphor) conveys urgency, optimism, or accountability.

In the case of Minister of Finance Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's 2025 press conferences, these approaches can be combined to reveal how fiscal narratives are framed to sustain public confidence and signal policy coherence. Through CDA, one might examine how his discourse constructs inclusivity, responsibility, or technocratic authority; through rhetorical analysis, how *ethos* (credibility as an economist), *pathos* (appeal to public welfare), and *logos* (use of data and logic) are orchestrated to manage both expectation and trust. This hybrid framework demonstrates that fiscal communication is not purely technical but deeply rhetorical and ideological by means a strategic performance of policy legitimacy.

The reviewed literature shows that both Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and rhetorical analysis have been widely employed to examine how language and power intersect within political and media communication in Indonesia. Studies by Ikhsan (2022), Arifin and Basuki (2018), and Setiaji and Fajriani (2022) demonstrate that CDA serves as an effective framework for revealing ideological underpinnings, framing strategies, and institutional positioning in media discourse. Similarly, Dewi, Nurjaya, and Utama (2024) show how Van Dijk's tri-level model namely textual, cognitive, and social, can be applied to unpack political discourse and its role in shaping public narratives during leadership transitions. Meanwhile, rhetorical studies such as those by Anwar and 'Aini (2025), Fahrudin, Bajuri, and Billah (2022), and Shafira et al. (2024) emphasize how *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* operate in speeches to project credibility, invoke emotion, and construct logical justification for government action.

However, despite the growing number of CDA and rhetorical studies in Indonesian political contexts, there remains limited scholarly attention to fiscal communication, particularly regarding how economic and fiscal policy is articulated rhetorically by state actors to influence public trust. Most existing research focuses on political speeches, campaign rhetoric, or media framing of social and political issues, while fiscal discourse tends to be treated as technical or bureaucratic communication rather than as a strategic site of persuasion.

This creates a significant research gap. Fiscal policy announcements, such as those made by the Minister of Finance, are not merely economic updates; they are performative acts of political communication designed to maintain legitimacy, signal stability, and shape public expectations. By combining CDA and rhetorical analysis, the present study seeks to uncover how Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa constructs economic legitimacy and trust through linguistic and rhetorical strategies during his 2025 press conferences. This dual framework allows the study to analyze not only the textual and discursive structures of fiscal statements but also their persuasive and ideological dimensions, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of fiscal communication as a form of political rhetoric in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and rhetorical analysis. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the study aims to interpret meanings, rhetorical patterns, and linguistic features used by the Minister of Finance to reconstruct fiscal legitimacy after a political and economic crisis. The descriptive nature allows for in-depth examination of how language reflects power relations, empathy, and persuasive intent in the context of fiscal communication. This study focused on the official fiscal communication of Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa during the 2025 fiscal legitimacy crisis, particularly in the period from early September to early October 2025 following his appointment as Minister of Finance. The research subjects consisted of primary and secondary discourse materials that represented the Minister's rhetorical and linguistic strategies in public communication.

Primary data were drawn exclusively from official and nationally recognized sources, ensuring reliability and authenticity. These included:

1. Official press conferences and speeches of the Minister of Finance, accessed through the Ministry of Finance's official website ([www.kemenkeu.go.id](http://www.kemenkeu.go.id)) and the Presidential Secretariat's YouTube channel (Sekretariat Presiden RI).
2. Transcripts and official statements published by Antara News and Kompas, both state-recognized national media outlets with verified publication standards.

Secondary data were used to provide contextual and interpretative support. These consisted of:

1. National and international media analyses from Reuters, The Jakarta Post, CBNC, BeritaSatu, and Financial Times, cited for their credibility and relevance to fiscal policy reporting.
2. Academic and policy references such as publications from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and OECD reports that contextualized fiscal governance and legitimacy issues.

By limiting data collection to these verified and nationally or internationally recognized sources, the study ensured that all analyzed materials were credible, traceable, and aligned with scholarly standards for discourse research. This methodological boundary strengthened both the validity and trustworthiness of the linguistic interpretations developed in subsequent analysis.

## **Instruments**

The main instrument in this study is the researcher as the key instrument, consistent with qualitative research principles. Supporting tools include document checklists, transcription notes, and coding matrices used to categorize rhetorical and linguistic elements such as ethos, pathos, logos, metaphorical expressions, and pronoun choices. The instruments guide systematic identification of discourse patterns and rhetorical strategies across selected texts.

## Procedures

The research was conducted through several stages. First, data collection involved identifying and downloading video and text transcripts of Minister Purbaya's fiscal speeches from verified online sources such as the Ministry of Finance's official YouTube channel and national news archives. Second, the speeches were transcribed and segmented into analytical units based on thematic relevance and rhetorical shifts. Third, the researcher coded the data according to rhetorical devices and linguistic indicators relevant to CDA frameworks (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). Finally, the coded data were interpreted to explain how rhetorical choices contribute to the construction of fiscal legitimacy and empathy in public communication.

## Data analysis

The data were analyzed through several interconnected stages designed to correspond with the research objectives.

### 1. Analysis of Rhetorical and Linguistic Strategies

To investigate how Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa employed rhetorical and linguistic strategies to reshape Indonesia's fiscal narrative following the 2025 legitimacy crisis, the study applied Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework. This analysis examined textual features such as lexical choice, modality, and intertextuality, as well as the broader discursive and sociopolitical contexts in which the fiscal narrative was constructed. The approach helped to uncover how linguistic structures contributed to the reestablishment of fiscal legitimacy and public confidence.

### 2. Identification of Rhetorical Devices

To determine the rhetorical devices used to humanize fiscal discourse and foster empathy, the research employed rhetorical mapping techniques. This stage identified occurrences of classical rhetorical appeals, namely *ethos* which refers to credibility, *pathos* which refers to emotional appeal, and *logos* which refers to logical reasoning, and analyzed how they were manifested linguistically within the Minister's speeches. The focus was placed on sections addressing transparency, accountability, and public welfare to reveal how rhetorical strategies facilitated emotional engagement and empathy-building with the public.

### 3. Interpretation of Communicative Impact and Legitimacy Construction

To interpret how the identified communicative strategies contributed to restoring public trust and reinforcing the legitimacy of fiscal governance, interpretive thematic analysis was conducted. This stage synthesized the findings from the Critical Discourse Analysis and rhetorical mapping to identify overarching themes, ideological orientations, and narrative structures. The analysis aligned these results with theoretical perspectives on political communication, legitimacy, and rhetorical persuasion to provide a holistic

understanding of how fiscal discourse functioned as an instrument of governance and public reassurance.

Overall, the integration of CDA and rhetorical analysis provided a comprehensive framework to interpret both the linguistic construction and ideological function of the Minister's fiscal discourse. This approach ensured that findings were systematically aligned with the study's research questions, allowing the analysis to reveal not only *what* rhetorical strategies were used, but also *how and why* they were employed to re-establish trust and legitimacy in the post-crisis period.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Findings**

#### ***Rhetorical and Linguistic Strategies in Reshaping Indonesia's Fiscal Narrative***

The early weeks of Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's tenure as Indonesia's Finance Minister in September 2025 marked the beginning of a new communicative direction in fiscal policy. His public appearances on KompasTV, CNBC Indonesia, BeritaSatu, MetroTV, and Antara News revealed not only continuity in fiscal priorities but also a rhetorical shift from bureaucratic caution to confident reformism. Rather than focusing solely on macroeconomic indicators, his discourse emphasized empathy, urgency, and cooperation. This rhetorical transformation reflected an effort to rebuild legitimacy and public trust in fiscal governance after a period of economic dissatisfaction.

#### ***Reframing Economic Challenges***

Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's rhetorical strategy in the early months of his tenure focused on reshaping how the public perceived Indonesia's fiscal slowdown. Rather than framing it as a symptom of political instability or structural weakness, he deliberately redefined the issue as a technical liquidity problem, that is, a temporary disturbance in the flow of money that could be corrected through policy coordination. In interviews on CNBC Indonesia and KompasTV, he repeatedly described the economic system as experiencing "*kekeringan*" (dryness), a metaphor that vividly captured the stagnation caused by restricted spending and slow financial circulation. This image of a "dry system" (*sistem kekeringan*) functioned rhetorically as a simplifying frame because it translated abstract fiscal mechanics into a relatable everyday concept, making it easier for citizens to understand both the problem and the government's response.

In one of his most cited statements on CNBC Indonesia in 2025, Purbaya remarked, "*Jadi periode perlambatan ekonomi yang 2024 gara-gara uang... direm lagi ekonominya. Itu dari sisi fiskal dan moneter.*" (So, the period of economic slowdown in 2024 happened because money was being held back again. That came from the fiscal and monetary side.) This utterance demonstrates both diagnostic clarity and rhetorical subtlety. By using the metaphor "*direm lagi ekonominya*" (the economy was being braked again), Purbaya personified the economy as a dynamic system temporarily restrained by policy, implying that recovery was simply a matter of releasing the brakes. This framing

transformed fiscal stagnation into a problem of governance technique rather than one of political legitimacy, thereby reinforcing his image as a capable technocrat who could “fix the mechanism” through practical, coordinated intervention.

The communicative effect of this reframing was multifold. First, it depoliticized the crisis, distancing fiscal discourse from political blame narratives that had dominated earlier public debates. The slowdown was not attributed to corruption, mismanagement, or elite competition, but instead to technical misalignment between fiscal and monetary policy. This rhetorical move reassured both investors and the general public that the issue was solvable through expertise and coordination, not through regime change.

Second, his use of imperative and repetitive phrasing such as “*diperbaiki cepat-cepat*” (fixed quickly, quickly-quickly) and “*ciptakan pertumbuhan secepatnya*” (create growth as quickly as possible) injected a sense of urgency and immediacy into his message. This linguistic pattern emphasized tempo as a moral and administrative imperative. By repeating words associated with speed, he constructed a sense of collective momentum that reoriented the national discourse toward action rather than criticism. The repetition also served a performative function because it demonstrated decisiveness, a quality often demanded of public officials in times of economic uncertainty.

Third, Purbaya combined technical precision with emotional resonance. While his explanations reflected the analytical clarity of an economist, his word choices remained accessible and emotionally charged. Terms like “*kering*” (dry) and “*direm*” (braked) gave the abstract concept of liquidity constraint a humanized dimension, while inclusive pronouns such as “*kita*” (we) and phrases like “*semua harus bergerak Bersama*” (we must all move together) built a collective ethos. This blending of technical and emotional registers enabled him to speak simultaneously to expert audiences, civil servants, and the broader public, effectively bridging the gap between fiscal policy and social trust.

Finally, his insistence on viewing fiscal intervention as a common-sense solution reflected a deliberate rhetorical simplification. Across interviews on BeritaSatu, MetroTV, and Antara News, Purbaya reiterated that the remedy was not structural overhaul but a coordinated release of government funds to stimulate liquidity. This strategy positioned him as a pragmatic reformer rather than a radical innovator, emphasizing continuity and stability over experimentation. By avoiding technocratic jargon and framing the fiscal response as straightforward, he reduced cognitive distance between policymakers and the public.

Purbaya’s reframing of Indonesia’s economic challenges represents a significant rhetorical innovation in fiscal communication. Through metaphors of dryness and braking, repetition of urgency-driven phrases, and the fusion of emotional and technical language, he effectively reoriented public understanding of the crisis. His linguistic strategy turned fiscal constraints into a narrative of resilience and coordination, thereby restoring confidence in both economic governance and ministerial credibility.

### ***Building Credibility and Authority***

A central element of Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's rhetorical strategy was the deliberate construction of professional ethos, which projected an image of expertise, integrity, and confidence. He consistently invoked his long career to establish credibility and to reinforce his authority as a technocrat rather than a politician. His statement, "*Saya sudah 25 tahun jadi ekonom... Jadi kalau Anda tanya pengalaman saya apakah saya cukup tahu, amat tahu.*" (I have been an economist for 25 years... So if you ask whether I know enough, I know very well.) (IDX Channel, 2025), exemplifies how he positioned himself as an expert deeply familiar with Indonesia's fiscal landscape. This emphasis on experience served a dual purpose. First, it created distance from the political sphere, portraying him as a neutral professional who transcends partisan interests. Second, it enhanced his ethos as a credible figure who speaks with empirical authority rather than ideological motivation. Furthermore, he frequently referenced his crisis-management experience under multiple administrations, as in "*pengalamannya sudah kita kerjakan tahun 2021, 2020, 2015, 2008, 2009*" (we've handled this in 2021, 2020, 2015, 2008, and 2009), which constructed a narrative of consistency, reliability, and resilience. Through this temporal referencing, Purbaya implicitly framed himself as a continuous thread of institutional memory within Indonesia's fiscal policy, positioning himself as both a witness and a problem-solver in recurring economic crises. Moreover, his pedagogical tone when explaining monetary mechanisms, such as the dynamics of base money growth in 1998, 2008, and 2020, turned media appearances into public lessons rather than political speeches. This discursive style transformed his rhetoric into an instrument of technocratic pedagogy, asserting control over the economic narrative not through slogans, but through clarity, logic, and calm authority.

### ***Evoking Optimism and Urgency***

Across his media appearances, Purbaya deliberately employed emotional appeals to evoke optimism, confidence, and collective urgency. His frequent use of emotionally charged words such as "*optimis*" (optimistic), "*cepat*" (fast), and "*masa depan cerah*" (bright future) demonstrated how affective language can be intertwined with technical policy communication. For example, his statement "*Dia bilang, 'Betapa kita reach, kita capai yang 8% itu. Jangan lama-lama cepat nih.'*" (He said, 'We can reach that 8%. Don't wait too long, move fast.') (BeritaSatu, 2025) reflects a motivational appeal designed to shift the tone of public discourse from anxiety to aspiration. This narrative of speed and progress served to counteract the perception of stagnation in fiscal governance. The emotional tone in Purbaya's rhetoric functioned as an important tool for building public motivation and collective confidence. His consistent use of encouraging expressions such as *optimis* (optimistic), *cepat* (fast), and *masa depan cerah* (bright future) did more than convey hope—it also worked to strengthen emotional connection and shared purpose among audiences. By combining positive emotion with an urgent call for action, Purbaya presented fiscal reform as not only possible but also necessary for the country's progress.

From a linguistic point of view, this integration of emotion and logic demonstrates how language can construct both meaning and attitude at the same time. The use of emotionally loaded words helped frame the government's actions as responsible and forward-looking. In discourse analysis, this can be understood as the strategic use of *appraisal language* where emotional vocabulary directs how listeners interpret the seriousness and optimism of the message. Through these choices, Purbaya transformed his fiscal communication into an emotionally guided narrative of recovery. The fiscal slowdown was not presented as a failure of governance, but as a temporary challenge that could be overcome through unity, discipline, and public cooperation.

### ***Simplifying Complexity through Everyday Language***

Rather than using abstract fiscal terminology that alienates the public, Purbaya strategically employed metaphors and everyday analogies to make complex economic concepts accessible. His remark on MetroTV (2025):

*“Zaman Pak SBY mesin private sektor jalan, pemerintah belum optimal. Zaman Pak Jokowi pemerintah bangun infrastruktur, privat sektornya agak mati. Ke depan kita hidupkan dua-duanya.”* (During President SBY's era, the private sector engine worked while the government was not optimal. During President Jokowi's era, the government built infrastructure but the private sector slowed down. In the future, we will revive both), exemplifies his effort to use narrative comparison as a teaching tool.”

This historical analogy functions as a logical synthesis (*logos*), positioning Purbaya as a reformer who bridges two distinct paradigms of economic management. By referring to the economic approaches of two previous presidents, he creates what can be called a *narrative analogy*. This technique helps audiences understand a complex fiscal problem through familiar political and historical references. Instead of presenting abstract data, he situates the discussion within Indonesia's recent economic memory where something that both experts and the general public can easily recall. The analogy also performs a didactic or educational function. It simplifies macroeconomic dynamics into a story of two contrasting eras: one dominated by private sector growth, and the other by state-driven investment. This contrast allows Purbaya to position himself as a reformer capable of learning from both models and combining their strengths. In linguistic terms, this is a form of *logical synthesis*, where he merges two opposing frames into a single, balanced vision of future policy.

Furthermore, the use of the phrase *“kita hidupkan dua-duanya”* (we will revive both) carries an inclusive and future-oriented tone. The pronoun *kita* (we) invites public participation and collective ownership of the reform agenda, while the verb *hidupkan* (revive) metaphorically represents economic activation and renewal. This combination of logic and inclusivity strengthens his image as both a technocrat and a collaborative leader. In short, the analogy does more than explain policy differences; it builds a bridge between the past and the future, showing Purbaya's role as a mediator who unites two economic

philosophies namely government-led and market-led, into one coherent framework of growth. This makes his discourse both intellectually persuasive and emotionally reassuring to audiences seeking stability after a period of fiscal uncertainty.

Additionally, his humorous self-reference, “*Sekarang saya dipakai jadi koboy lagi rupanya*” (Now it seems I’m being used as a cowboy again) (KompasTV, 2025), introduced a tone of humility and playfulness, humanizing him in contrast to the often rigid image of technocrats. Humor in this context served as a soft-power rhetorical device, diffusing tension while reinforcing relatability. Rather than diminishing his authority, this light-hearted remark created a sense of authenticity which is allowing audiences to see a personable and self-aware figure behind the formal role. Such rhetorical warmth is crucial in political-economic communication, where public distrust often stems from perceptions of distance and elitism. By balancing expertise with approachability, Purbaya transformed economic discourse into a shared conversation rather than a top-down lecture.

In this way, his discursive strategy which is mixing clear explanation, historical analogy, and relatable humor, embodied an effort to democratize complex policy discussions. He translated technical economic logic into familiar terms and emotional resonance, making abstract fiscal narratives intelligible to everyday citizens. This rhetorical simplicity did not imply oversimplification; instead, it functioned as a form of inclusive communication that built trust and comprehension simultaneously. Through clarity, analogy, and humor, Purbaya exemplified how technocratic communication can remain intellectually rigorous while still being socially accessible thereby closing the gap between state expertise and public understanding.

### ***Conversational and Direct Style***

Purbaya’s linguistic style was distinctly conversational and engaging. His manner of speaking often appeared spontaneous, incorporating English terms such as “*quick win*” and “*market base*.” This blend of languages gave his discourse a modern and globally oriented tone while remaining accessible to a broad audience. It also reflected Indonesia’s hybrid policy context, where English functions as a marker of technical expertise and international outlook. In one instance, he remarked, “*Ya, saya deg-degan berat banget. Tapi dia pikir pokoknya Presiden cukup agresif gitu.*” (Yes, I was really nervous. But he thought the President was quite aggressive.) (Antara News, 2025). This candid admission revealed emotional honesty and human vulnerability, qualities that are uncommon in the typically formal sphere of government communication. By expressing his anxiety openly, Purbaya projected authenticity and approachability which traits that enhance credibility and foster public trust. Moreover, his informal diction helped to minimize hierarchical distance between the minister and the public. It signaled a shift toward a more participatory model of fiscal communication, one that prioritizes transparency, empathy, and clarity over bureaucratic rigidity. Through this conversational tone, Purbaya made complex fiscal issues more comprehensible and positioned himself as a communicator who values inclusion and mutual understanding.

### ***Repetition and Contrast for Emphasis***

Repetition was one of the most deliberate rhetorical techniques employed by Minister Purbaya to strengthen his key messages and shape public perception of fiscal reform. Words such as “*cepat*” (fast), “*pengalaman*” (experience), and “*optimal*” (optimal) appeared frequently across his media appearances, serving as linguistic anchors that reinforced coherence and predictability in his communication. By returning to these familiar terms, Purbaya not only ensured message retention among the audience but also cultivated a sense of direction and confidence, attributes that are essential for public reassurance during economic uncertainty.

Beyond repetition, Purbaya utilized contrast as a strategic framing device to communicate institutional learning and adaptive governance. His statement, “*Tahun 1997 kita melakukan kesalahan fatal... 2008 kebijakan kita ubah.*” (In 1997 we made a fatal mistake... In 2008 we changed our policy.) (IDX Channel, 2025) exemplified how contrastive logic can dramatize progress and accountability. By juxtaposing two distinct historical moments, one of failure and one of correction, he constructed a narrative of national and institutional maturation. This rhetorical pattern suggested that policy wisdom emerges not from avoiding mistakes but from the capacity to learn and reform.

Through the interplay of repetition and contrast, Purbaya’s discourse achieved a dual communicative effect. On one hand, repetition generated a rhythm of urgency, reminding the public of the need for swift and coordinated action. On the other hand, contrast introduced a sense of reflection and reassurance, implying that current fiscal policies are informed by hard-earned lessons from the past. Together, these techniques elevated his ethos as a credible and experienced reformer, balancing optimism with accountability, and immediacy with long-term perspective. Repetition served as one of Purbaya’s key rhetorical tools for reinforcing core messages. Words such as “*cepat*” (fast), “*pengalaman*” (experience), and “*optimal*” (optimal) appeared across different interviews, functioning as verbal anchors that ensured message consistency and recognizability.

Additionally, he used contrastive framing to underscore lessons from past policy errors and subsequent reforms. Statements such as “*Tahun 1997 kita melakukan kesalahan fatal... 2008 kebijakan kita ubah.*” (In 1997 we made a fatal mistake... In 2008 we changed our policy.) (IDX Channel, 2025) created a narrative of evolution and learning. This contrastive logic reinforced his ethos as a reformer who learns from history and avoids repeating past failures. Through repetition and contrast, Purbaya’s rhetoric conveyed both urgency and reassurance, communicating that while challenges persist, the system is under experienced, adaptive leadership.

### ***From Rhetoric to Action***

Unlike many political figures whose discourse remains abstract or performative, Purbaya’s rhetorical approach was consistently anchored in demonstrable policy initiatives. His references to “quick wins” (*hasil cepat*), such as the tightening of tax enforcement among major taxpayers and the eradication of illegal cigarette distribution

(KompasTV, 2025), exemplified the translation of rhetoric into concrete action. These initiatives served not only as administrative measures but also as symbolic affirmations of accountability and responsiveness. By demonstrating that reform was already underway, Purbaya effectively bridged the communicative gap between promise and implementation.

A crucial component of this strategy was his emphasis on data transparency and institutional coordination. Through consistent collaboration with *Bank Indonesia and Lembaga Penjamin Simpanan* (Deposit Insurance Corporation) (Antara News, 2025), Purbaya underscored that fiscal recovery required systemic coherence rather than isolated action. His frequent public disclosures of fiscal performance data such as monthly reports and updates on budget absorption, functioned as rhetorical evidence of transparency, transforming governance itself into a communicative act. In this way, Purbaya's discourse did not merely describe reform; it *performed* reform by embodying the principles of openness, coordination, and accountability.

Moreover, this integration of language and policy reinforced his credibility as a technocratic leader. By aligning speech with measurable outcomes, Purbaya advanced a model of evidence-based communication, where persuasion was achieved not through emotional appeal but through verifiable progress. This strategic alignment strengthened public confidence and repositioned fiscal policy as a dynamic, results-oriented process rather than a set of abstract commitments. Ultimately, Purbaya's rhetorical framework functioned as a governance tool, transforming words into instruments of legitimacy and action. His ability to synchronize rhetoric with tangible outcomes blurred the line between communication and implementation, consolidating his image as a leader who governs through integrity, clarity, and performance rather than mere persuasion.

### ***Projecting Unity and Control***

Throughout his public appearances, Purbaya often employed inclusive language centered on the pronoun "*kita*" (we), symbolizing shared responsibility and collective agency. This rhetorical inclusivity redefined fiscal management as a participatory national effort rather than a top-down bureaucratic process. He frequently emphasized that fiscal policy was "*sinkron*" (synchronized) with *Bank Indonesia*, reinforcing the image of institutional harmony and control. Moreover, his statement, "*sebagian masyarakat mungkin ngerasa melambat bertekanan*" (some of the public might feel the slowdown and pressure), displayed empathy and acknowledgment of public sentiment while maintaining a rational, depoliticized explanation of the situation. By integrating empathy with control, his rhetoric projected both authority and solidarity, qualities essential for maintaining public confidence during periods of economic uncertainty.

Therefore, Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's rhetorical and linguistic strategies successfully reconstructed Indonesia's fiscal narrative from one of crisis and uncertainty into one characterized by optimism, reform, and technocratic credibility. By harmonizing ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical reasoning) across five

major media outlets namely KompasTV, CNBC Indonesia, BeritaSatu, MetroTV, and Antara News, he redefined fiscal communication as both a technical and moral enterprise. His approach not only depoliticized public perceptions of fiscal legitimacy but also humanized economic discourse, demonstrating how language can serve as a vehicle for persuasion, leadership, and institutional trust-building in post-crisis Indonesia.

### ***Rhetorical Devices and Their Empathic Functions in Fiscal Discourse***

The analysis of rhetorical devices provides critical insight into how Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa strategically shaped the tone and accessibility of fiscal communication in post-crisis Indonesia. By employing rhetorical elements such as ethos, pathos, logos, metaphorical framing, and pronoun choice, his discourse transcended the boundaries of purely technical explanation and evolved into a more empathetic and human-centered narrative. These devices did not merely function as stylistic features but as communicative tools that bridged the gap between technocratic policy and public emotion. Each rhetorical choice revealed a deliberate effort to make fiscal governance more transparent, relatable, and emotionally resonant for citizens. In this way, the findings related to the second research question demonstrate that rhetorical strategies play a crucial role in transforming economic communication into a persuasive and humanizing discourse, one that reinforces public empathy, trust, and collective responsibility in times of national uncertainty.

### ***Ethos in Fiscal Rhetoric: Building Credibility and Demonstrating Integrity***

Ethos in the context of Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's public discourse functions as the foundation of his persuasive credibility. Through his linguistic choices, Purbaya constructs an image of a rational, principled, and trustworthy figure who is committed to evidence-based policymaking rather than political maneuvering. His ethos is realized through several linguistic strategies such as self-reference to his professional background, rejection of partisan labeling, and emphasis on institutional accountability. By presenting himself as an economist dedicated to the nation's fiscal stability, he distances his persona from the often politicized tone of governmental rhetoric.

A striking example of this can be found in his statement "*Saya sudah dua puluh lima tahun jadi ekonom, bukan politisi*" which means "I have been an economist for twenty-five years, not a politician." This declaration conveys not only professional authority but also moral sincerity. It signals that his judgments and policies stem from long-term expertise and data-driven reasoning rather than short-term political interests. His use of first-person pronouns reinforces personal responsibility, while the contrast between the words economist and politician subtly draws a boundary between technical competence and political opportunism.

The empathic and humanizing effect of this rhetorical choice is twofold. First, it builds a sense of trust and reassurance among the public, suggesting that fiscal decisions are made with professionalism and integrity. Second, it humanizes Purbaya as a servant leader, someone who embodies both competence and humility. In a time when public

trust in government communication was fragile, this ethical stance helped restore confidence, positioning him as a credible voice who prioritizes the nation's welfare over partisan agendas.

### ***Pathos in Fiscal Rhetoric: Evoking Empathy and Emotional Resonance***

Pathos in Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's fiscal rhetoric served as an essential means of fostering emotional connection and reducing the communicative distance between the state and its citizens. His public statements reflected empathy, awareness, and compassion, which enabled complex fiscal issues to be delivered in a humane, reassuring, and accessible manner. This emotional appeal was conveyed through inclusive language that emphasized togetherness, acknowledgment of public hardships, and a tone of understanding rather than authority. Through these linguistic and tonal choices, Purbaya demonstrated emotional intelligence in leadership by blending fiscal logic with social sensitivity. Instead of limiting his discourse to economic figures or policy targets, he consistently acknowledged the lived experiences of citizens who were affected by rising prices, limited job opportunities, and ongoing financial uncertainty.

This empathic dimension was particularly evident in his early public appearances, including his inaugural address at the State Palace in September 2025 and subsequent media briefings. During a national fiscal update, he stated, "*Kita semua merasakan tekanan ini, tapi kita harus tetap optimis*" ("We all feel this pressure, but we must remain optimistic"), a phrase that encapsulated both acknowledgment and encouragement. The use of the collective pronoun *kita semua* transformed fiscal strain into a shared emotional experience, suggesting that recovery was not merely a governmental agenda but a collective endeavor requiring solidarity and resilience. Such inclusive framing was reiterated in his interview with CNBC Indonesia, where he emphasized optimism amid fiscal uncertainty by stating, "*Kami tetap optimistis pertumbuhan ekonomi Indonesia di akhir 2025 bakal tumbuh lebih cepat*" ("We remain optimistic that Indonesia's economic growth at the end of 2025 will accelerate"; CNBC Indonesia, 11 September 2025). This statement strengthened his image as a leader who motivates rather than instructs, combining fiscal realism with emotional reassurance.

Further evidence of this empathetic rhetorical style appeared in a report by BeritaSatu, which covered his remarks during a parliamentary session in late September 2025. In that statement, Purbaya expressed concern over the slow absorption of public spending and its social consequences, particularly for those still affected by price pressures and limited employment. By recognizing these ongoing difficulties while reaffirming the government's commitment to economic stabilization, he combined empathy with accountability, a balance that enhanced his credibility and humanized his role as Finance Minister.

Through such emotionally grounded communication strategies, Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa successfully redefined fiscal discourse as a participatory dialogue rather than a technocratic monologue. By repeatedly invoking themes of optimism, cooperation, and

shared resilience, he transformed fiscal communication into an act of emotional solidarity and public reassurance. His use of pathos therefore demonstrated that effective fiscal rhetoric depends not only on data accuracy but also on the capacity to evoke empathy and foster collective trust in government decision-making.

### ***Logos in Fiscal Rhetoric: Reinforcing Rationality and Transparency***

Logos in Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's fiscal rhetoric functioned as a key element in constructing a public image of rational, transparent, and accountable leadership. His communication style consistently reflected structured reasoning and evidence-based argumentation, which helped bridge the gap between complex fiscal concepts and public understanding. By organizing explanations in a logical sequence beginning with problem identification, followed by causal analysis, and concluding with proposed solutions, Purbaya's discourse exemplified a methodical approach to policy communication. This logical structure not only conveyed clarity but also served as a mechanism of reassurance, demonstrating that fiscal decisions were grounded in empirical data rather than arbitrary political motivations. His emphasis on transparency and coordination among institutions further strengthened public trust, positioning fiscal governance as a process that was both technically sound and publicly accountable.

The rational foundation of his rhetoric can be seen in his statement, "*Keterlambatan belanja publik berpengaruh pada likuiditas daerah, karena itu stimulus ini kami percepat*" ("The delay in public spending affected regional liquidity; therefore, we accelerated the stimulus program"). The use of causal connectors such as *karena itu* ("therefore") illustrates a deliberate effort to present fiscal measures through a cause-and-effect framework, highlighting the logical link between policy response and economic necessity. This reasoning pattern was reinforced in his televised briefing with CNBC Indonesia in September 2025, where Purbaya explained that accelerating government expenditure and tightening budget supervision were critical to maintaining liquidity and preventing stagnation. In that interview, he stated that "the stimulus acceleration is designed to ensure that funds reach regional levels faster, keeping the real sector active and protecting purchasing power" (CNBC Indonesia, 2025). This statement underlines his consistent use of logical and data-based justification when describing fiscal policies.

A similar emphasis on logical coherence appeared in his discussion with *Kompas* and *BeritaSatu* later that month. In the *Kompas* report titled *Purbaya Santai Utang RI Tembus Rp9.138 Triliun: Benarkah Masih Aman?*, Purbaya calmly addressed public concerns about national debt, stating that "our debt remains manageable because it is matched by strong macroeconomic fundamentals and credible fiscal discipline" (*Kompas.com*, 2025). His reasoning appealed to empirical evidence and institutional integrity rather than emotional reassurance. Meanwhile, in *BeritaSatu's* coverage of his parliamentary briefing, Purbaya presented detailed numerical data on budget realization and inflation control, emphasizing that "fiscal adjustments are not only about speeding up spending but ensuring that every rupiah spent contributes effectively to growth and

social welfare” (*BeritaSatu*, 2025). These remarks demonstrate his commitment to logical argumentation supported by transparent fiscal data.

The empathic and humanizing dimension of this rational rhetoric lay in its ability to foster a sense of stability and confidence among citizens. By communicating in a transparent, logical, and accountable manner, Purbaya reassured the public that fiscal management was under control and guided by reason. This communicative strategy aligns with his earlier remarks cited by *The Jakarta Post*, in which he drew lessons from the Asian financial crisis, noting that “Indonesia must maintain fiscal credibility by ensuring that every policy is backed by data and coordination” (*The Jakarta Post*, 2025). Such reflections not only rationalized current fiscal strategies but also placed them within a broader historical and moral framework of learning and resilience.

Through this combination of logical reasoning, transparency, and empathy, Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa successfully turned fiscal communication into a medium for restoring institutional trust. By consistently emphasizing coherence between data, reasoning, and accountability, he demonstrated that logos in fiscal discourse serves not only as a rational tool but also as a moral and emotional instrument for building public confidence in government leadership.

### ***Metaphorical Framing in Fiscal Rhetoric: Translating Technical Terms into Everyday Experience***

Metaphorical framing in Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa’s fiscal rhetoric functioned as an effective strategy to translate complex, data-heavy concepts into language that was both accessible and emotionally engaging for the general public. By using metaphors drawn from familiar domains such as health, movement, and household life, he simplified abstract macroeconomic issues and helped citizens relate to fiscal policies in a more intuitive and human way. This rhetorical technique bridged the cognitive and emotional divide between technical discourse and public understanding, allowing fiscal communication to resonate beyond the confines of bureaucratic or expert circles.

One of the most notable examples of this linguistic strategy is found in his statement, “*Ekonomi ini direm dulu supaya nggak nabrak*” (“The economy needs to slow down a bit so it doesn’t crash”). This metaphor of braking a vehicle is particularly effective because it evokes a shared understanding of control, caution, and safety. These are concepts that ordinary citizens can easily relate to. By likening fiscal restraint to braking, Purbaya framed economic slowdown not as a sign of failure or crisis but as a necessary act of prudence and control. This framing reassured the public that government intervention was a preventive and protective measure rather than a reactive or punitive one.

Similarly, in another instance, he stated, “*Kita butuh vitamin untuk menjaga daya tahan fiskal*” (“We need some vitamins to strengthen our fiscal resilience”). This health-related metaphor was powerful because it translated the abstract notion of fiscal resilience into a bodily and familiar experience. By comparing fiscal health to human health,

Purbaya implicitly communicated that just as the body requires nutrients to maintain balance, the national economy needs stimulus, reform, and oversight to stay strong. This metaphor also conveyed a sense of ongoing care and maintenance, emphasizing the government's proactive role in safeguarding economic well-being. These metaphorical choices appeared consistently in media appearances, including his KompasTV press briefing on the national budget (APBN KiTa) and his CNBC Indonesia interview on fiscal coordination in mid-September 2025. In these instances, he used accessible imagery to frame fiscal stability as a living system that requires both caution and nourishment. His approach echoed the rhetorical tradition of using metaphors as cognitive tools to simplify complexity, but it also revealed a deeper empathic intent, namely to humanize fiscal communication by connecting it to the sensory and emotional realities of everyday life.

The empathic and humanizing function of this rhetorical strategy lies in its ability to reduce anxiety and increase engagement. Technical fiscal terms such as “stimulus acceleration,” “liquidity management,” or “fiscal consolidation” can often alienate the general audience. However, when these are reframed as “vitamins,” “brakes,” or “steps toward recovery,” they become more approachable and emotionally resonant. Through this linguistic creativity, Purbaya effectively transformed the language of policy into the language of shared experience, reinforcing the idea that fiscal governance is not merely a matter of numbers and regulations but a collective effort toward national resilience and well-being.

By integrating metaphorical framing into his communication strategy, Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa demonstrated that rhetorical clarity is a form of empathy. His metaphors served not only as explanatory devices but also as emotional bridges, enabling citizens to understand, relate to, and ultimately trust in the government's fiscal direction.

### ***Pronoun Choice in Fiscal Rhetoric: Constructing Collective Identity and Solidarity***

The strategic use of inclusive pronouns such as *kita* (“we”), *kami* (“us”), and *semua* (“all of us”) demonstrates how Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa constructed a collective national identity through his rhetoric. This linguistic choice functions as a unifying device that blurs the traditional boundaries between the governing elite and the general public. By framing fiscal reform and economic recovery as shared responsibilities, Purbaya positioned citizens not merely as passive recipients of policy but as active participants in national progress. For instance, when he stated, “*Kita belajar dari masa lalu agar sistem fiskal kita makin kuat*” (“We learn from the past so that our fiscal system becomes stronger”), the repeated use of *kita* transforms a technocratic statement into an inclusive and motivational appeal that invites public participation in the process of national improvement.

This rhetorical strategy aligns with what Fairclough (2001) describes as *discursive solidarity*, in which language is used to construct mutual identification between the speaker and the audience. Through consistent use of inclusive pronouns, Purbaya fostered a sense of emotional connection and reduced the perceived hierarchical distance between

policymakers and citizens. His pronoun use also created the impression of shared accountability, implying that fiscal challenges could only be resolved through collective resilience and cooperation.

Media coverage further reinforced this interpretation. As reported by Kompas (2025), Purbaya's speeches were distinguished by a "tone of togetherness" (*nuansa kebersamaan*) that resonated with the public amid economic uncertainty, making fiscal communication feel participatory rather than authoritative. Similarly, The Jakarta Post (2025) noted that his frequent use of "we-centered" language helped "reframe fiscal challenges as a national learning moment rather than a bureaucratic burden." Such linguistic framing made the fiscal discourse not only informative but also empowering, presenting national recovery as a shared journey rather than a top-down directive.

Thus, pronoun choice in Purbaya's fiscal rhetoric served not only a grammatical purpose but also a relational and political one. It became a tool of empathy and inclusion, fostering a sense of solidarity and collective confidence in the government's vision. By emphasizing shared experience and mutual responsibility, Purbaya successfully redefined the fiscal narrative as a collaborative national effort, where the success of policy was inseparable from the participation and trust of the people.

### ***Restoring Public Trust and Reinforcing the Legitimacy of Fiscal Governance***

The combination of rhetorical and linguistic strategies in Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's fiscal communication played a major role in regaining public trust and reinforcing the legitimacy of fiscal governance in Indonesia after a period of economic uncertainty. After a time when many Indonesians doubted government policy directions and worried about stability, Purbaya's approach offered both clarity and reassurance. His consistent use of ethos, pathos, logos, metaphorical framing, and inclusive pronouns helped create a communication style that was transparent, people-oriented, and emotionally engaging. This balanced method made fiscal reform appear not as something done by elites alone, but as a shared national responsibility.

### ***Restoring Public Trust***

The combination of rhetorical and linguistic strategies used by Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa played an important role in rebuilding public trust during Indonesia's post-crisis period. After years of economic uncertainty and decreasing confidence in government institutions, Purbaya's approach focused on transparency, empathy, and logical reasoning. His use of ethos, pathos, and logos created a communication style that was both credible and easy to relate to. Through the element of ethos, he presented himself as a professional and responsible leader. According to a report from CNBC Indonesia in 2025, he redirected about two hundred trillion rupiahs in unused state funds into productive sectors as a concrete example of fiscal responsibility. His statement that fiscal policy must serve the people directly strengthened his image as a leader who worked for public interest. The element of pathos helped him to emotionally connect with citizens. When Purbaya talked about making sure that fiscal reforms were felt in the daily lives of families, as reported

by Kompas in October 2025, he showed care and understanding toward the people's struggles. This emotional expression made fiscal policies more approachable and made citizens see the government as caring instead of distant. The element of logos also supported rational trust using clear data and logical explanations. He often explained how better tax compliance and faster spending could support national growth. CNBC Indonesia also highlighted that these explanations made fiscal policies appear more transparent and based on real evidence. Together, these rhetorical strategies rebuilt public trust by combining credibility, clarity, and compassion, which gave citizens confidence during the recovery period.

### ***Strengthening Fiscal Legitimacy***

Besides rebuilding trust, Purbaya's rhetorical approach also helped strengthen the legitimacy of fiscal governance. His continuous use of metaphorical framing and inclusive pronouns changed fiscal communication from a technical explanation into a shared national story. Through metaphorical framing, complex economic issues were explained with simple and familiar images. For example, his description of the economy as a body that needs rest and vitamins, as written in *The Jakarta Post* in 2025, helped people understand fiscal policies like tightening and stimulus as processes of recovery and care. This creative language made the topic less distant and easier to connect to daily life, so that citizens could understand and support fiscal reforms. The use of pronouns also made this message stronger by creating a sense of shared responsibility. Purbaya often used words such as *kita* which means we and *kami* which means us. This made fiscal reform feel like a collective effort. *BeritaSatu* in 2025 noted that his use of we-centered language created unity and made people feel that fiscal recovery was a shared responsibility instead of a government burden. This way of speaking shows what Fairclough in 2001 called discursive solidarity, meaning language that builds a feeling of connection between leaders and citizens. This kind of solidarity helped make fiscal policy more legitimate not only because it was effective, but also because it was communicated in a way that made people feel included and respected. In the end, the use of these rhetorical and linguistic strategies made fiscal governance appear both technically strong and socially responsible. By combining transparency, empathy, and inclusiveness, Purbaya showed that fiscal legitimacy depends not only on financial results but also on communication that touches both the thoughts and feelings of the people.

### **Discussions**

The fiscal legitimacy crisis of 2025, which led to the replacement of Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, marked a turning point in Indonesia's economic communication. According to Reuters (2025) and the Financial Times (2025), the transition was driven by rising public frustration over inflation, inequality, and government inaction. Reports from *The Guardian* (2025) highlighted nationwide protests against political privileges and perceived elite corruption, while Antara News (2025) noted that Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa, who assumed office soon after, blamed slow

government spending and a liquidity crunch as major triggers of public dissatisfaction. By openly acknowledging these systemic issues, Purbaya distinguished his communication style from defensive rhetoric, signaling a more transparent and empathetic government stance. Purbaya's discourse sought not merely to explain fiscal challenges but to reshape Indonesia's fiscal narrative. By framing the economic recovery as a shared national effort, he shifted the focus from political blame to collective responsibility.

This aligns with the OECD (2025) report emphasizing that fiscal consolidation must be communicated through socially responsive and inclusive narratives to maintain legitimacy. Similarly, Dylia, Nurmandi, and Younus (2025) argue that effective crisis communication depends on empathetic acknowledgment rather than denial, a principle evident in Purbaya's early statements emphasizing openness and solidarity. This rhetorical transformation redefined fiscal communication from a technical process into a moral and participatory act of governance.

The linguistic and rhetorical devices used by Purbaya were central to this transformation. His reliance on ethos, pathos, logical reasoning, metaphorical framing, and pronoun choice humanized fiscal discourse, transforming complex policy explanations into messages that resonated emotionally with citizens. Using ethos, Purbaya projected professionalism and integrity, grounding his arguments in data from Badan Pusat Statistik (2025), which recorded inflation at 2.31 percent in August 2025, evidence that economic conditions were stabilizing. His expression of empathy, which represents pathos, was reflected in his concern for citizens struggling with rising food prices as reported by *The Jakarta Post* (2025). Logical reasoning strengthened his credibility through clear explanations and data-driven policy justification, echoing Silalahi and Kurnia (2025), who found that logical framing enhances the acceptance of fiscal reform. In addition, his metaphorical framing made abstract fiscal ideas more tangible. Purbaya often compared Indonesia's economy to a ship navigating through rough seas, a metaphor that transformed economic hardship into a shared journey of resilience. This finding is consistent with Atmawijaya (2025), who explained that metaphors in political discourse can foster solidarity and make complex ideas easier to understand. His strategic use of inclusive pronouns such as *we*, *our*, and *together* further reinforced a sense of unity and shared purpose, as emphasized by Kristina, Setiarini, and Thoyibi (2021), who found that linguistic inclusivity helps leaders strengthen public identification with government goals. These rhetorical and linguistic strategies together helped convert fiscal language, traditionally seen as elitist and technical into accessible and people-centered communication.

Through these communicative strategies, Purbaya's rhetoric contributed significantly to restoring public trust and reinforcing the legitimacy of fiscal governance. Earlier analyses by CSIS (2025) revealed that government reluctance to acknowledge economic weaknesses had eroded public confidence. Purbaya reversed this trend by adopting a rhetoric of transparency and humility. As shown in studies by Pramiyanti and

colleagues (2020) and Susena and colleagues (2025), openness and empathy are vital for rebuilding public trust in state communication. By presenting fiscal reform not as an elite-driven agenda but as a collective national responsibility, Purbaya succeeded in transforming public perception of fiscal governance from distant and technocratic to participatory and compassionate.

Ultimately, the combination of rhetorical and linguistic strategies in Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's fiscal communication demonstrates that language itself can serve as an instrument of governance. His balanced use of emotional appeal and logical reasoning made fiscal policy more relatable, transparent, and credible. In the wake of Indonesia's 2025 legitimacy crisis, his rhetoric helped stabilize public perception, reframe fiscal responsibility as a shared civic duty, and restore faith in the moral and institutional legitimacy of the state. This case reinforces the idea that effective fiscal governance depends not only on sound policy but also on the power of discourse to build trust and unity in times of uncertainty.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis and research findings, it can be concluded that the rhetorical strategy employed in Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa's fiscal communication emphasizes clarity, empathy, and accountability as its core principles. Through a systematic and accessible communication style, complex and highly technical economic issues are simplified without compromising the substance of the policies. This approach enables the public from diverse backgrounds to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the direction and objectives of fiscal policy. Moreover, the narrative is not delivered in a one-way manner but actively invites public engagement, allowing citizens to feel involved in the policy-making process. As a result, fiscal policy is framed as an instrument that prioritizes public interests and collective welfare rather than merely functioning as a technocratic mechanism of government. This strategy strengthens the communicative dimension of fiscal policy as an integral part of transparent and responsive governance.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of this fiscal communication is reinforced through the use of rhetorical and linguistic devices such as ethos, pathos, logos, metaphorical framing, and inclusive pronoun choices. Ethos serves to establish the speaker's credibility and authority, while pathos reflects empathy toward the social and economic conditions experienced by the public. Logos underscores the rationality of data-driven policies, thereby enhancing perceptions of transparency and accountability. Metaphors help bridge abstract economic concepts with the lived experiences of citizens, and inclusive pronouns foster a sense of shared responsibility between the government and the people. Collectively, these elements contribute to the restoration of public trust and the strengthening of fiscal legitimacy in the post-crisis context. Accordingly, this study underscores that effective fiscal communication depends not only on the accuracy of data but also on the ability to build emotional connection as a foundation for trust between the state and its citizens.

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