



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/gijlss.v4i2>
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Evolution of the Grand Narrative of the Climate Crisis in the President's State of the Nation Address

Achmad Jais Mustafa

Universitas Indonesia, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, mustafaachmadjais@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: mustafaachmadjais@gmail.com

Abstract: The construction of the climate crisis narrative in the state addresses of the Presidents of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2001–2024 period uses the Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) approach within the Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) framework. This study aims to reveal how the state constructs meaning about climate change through dramatic elements such as scenes, characters, and plots in state addresses and how these narrative changes reflect the dynamics of environmental politics in Indonesia. The method used is qualitative interpretative with text analysis of approximately twenty state addresses from the eras of Megawati Soekarnoputri, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Joko Widodo. The results show a significant shift in the construction of the climate crisis narrative in each leadership period. In the Megawati era, environmental issues were positioned as ecological vulnerabilities in the context of national recovery. In the SBY era, the narrative evolved into climate leadership that positioned Indonesia as a global actor in environmental diplomacy. Meanwhile, in the Jokowi era, climate issues were integrated into the green pragmatism narrative oriented towards economic transformation and industrial downstreaming. This shift shows that the issue of climate change is not static, but rather is politically constructed according to development priorities and government legitimacy strategies. This study concludes that the state address serves not only as a medium for policy communication but also as an instrument for shaping rhetorical visions that influence how the public understands the climate crisis. Thus, Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) proves relevant for studying environmental political communication in developing countries, particularly in examining the relationship between narrative, power, and policy legitimacy.

Keywords: Climate Change, State address, Fantasy theme analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is a worldwide problem with implications for many aspects of human life. The increase of greenhouse gas emissions results in changes in weather events, which affect social, economic and environmental stability. Moreover, climate change further worsens the vulnerability of certain segments of societies therefore presenting many challenges to sustainable development efforts (Rockström et al., 2023). The impact of climate change is seen

in the increase in hydrological disasters such as floods, landslides, drought, and forest fires. This indicates that climate change is no longer an environmental issue but a development issue that calls for an effective policy response. The vulnerability is further compounded by the constraints of adaptation and mitigation capacity that developing countries, including Indonesia, still face (Gaborit, 2022). Climate change is also a problem of public communication. Various mitigation and adaptation policies require the support of society, so that their effectiveness is highly influenced by the government's communication of the risk, urgency, and solutions offered. Political communication is an important tool to create a collective understanding of climate change and to gain legitimacy for environmental policies of governments.

In the context of environmental political communication, state speeches are the state's main instrument in framing the social reality of climate change. Governments use the speech not just to convey information on policies to be implemented but also to deal with a range of strategic issues, such as the climate crisis. The importance of communicating climate crisis information is to increase public understanding of the environmental challenges we face. These speeches are used by the government to shape a public perception of the issues that are emerging in the surrounding environment, and to set priorities for collective action. The choice of political speeches as the object of research is due to their different position and function from other forms of political communication. Speeches are formally delivered by the President as the head of state and the head of government, so that they contain views, policy directions, and development priorities reflecting the official stance of the country on various strategic issues. Social media, press conferences, and statements by certain officials are usually situational and focus on a particular issue, whereas state speeches give a more complete and comprehensive picture of the government's goals. This makes the state of the state speech a relevant source for studying how the issues of climate change are positioned, understood, and communicated by the state to the public (Poerwaningtias, 2025).

Furthermore, climate communication in state speeches reflects power relations between the state, society and global actors. The state has dominance in constructing the official narrative, while society is mostly in the position of receiving the message. On the other hand, global pressure through the international climate regime also influences the way countries frame environmental policies. This condition shows that the climate change narrative is the result of a complex interaction between domestic interests and global demands. In addition, the development of climate communication shows a shift from an informative approach to a strategic and persuasive approach. The state speech not only functions as a medium for reporting performance, but also as an instrument for legitimizing development policies. Narratives such as the green economy, energy transition, and sustainable development are used to build an image of a government that is responsive to global crises. Therefore, state speeches are an important tool in shaping public perception while strengthening political legitimacy.

The rhetoric of national leaders determines how the population perceives the environmental concerns confronting them. Studies have demonstrated that framing information about climate change as a significant issue can improve public knowledge and support for various government response options. On the other side, the focus on economic development is often seen as justification for the need to balance development objectives with environmental preservation initiatives (Gjerstad & Fløttum, 2021).

Indonesia itself has a strategic position in the dynamics of global climate change. As an archipelagic country with extensive tropical forest cover, Indonesia plays an important role in global emissions mitigation efforts. On the other hand, Indonesia is also classified as a country that has a high level of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, such as floods, droughts, sea level rise and other hydrometeorological disasters (IPCC, 2023). This situation makes the climate issue not only an environmental issue, but also part of the national development agenda

and international diplomacy. The Indonesian government has demonstrated various commitments through emissions reduction policies, forest conservation, energy transition, and active involvement in global forums (Nailah Syakirah et al., 2025).

Consequently, the governance of climate change in Indonesia is directly related to the political communication strategies. The success of a policy depends not only on the technical implementation, but also on how environmental issues are framed and communicated to the public. Government narratives are crucial to the construction of public understanding and to the reinforcement of social support and participation in addressing the climate crisis. In this case, the annual state speech by the President of the Republic of Indonesia every 16th of August in a joint session of the MPR and DPR is the main form of official state communication. The speech is a formal statement from the state on policy direction, development achievements and national challenges. This speech is also a ground for the construction of political meaning that mirrors how the state interprets and communicates strategic issues like climate change.

Review of previous research reveals at least three gaps in research. First, studies related to political leadership, security and digital communication still dominate the use of fantasy theme analysis compared to the issue of climate change. Second, climate communication research has paid more attention to mass media, social media, or policy documents, whereas state speeches as official state communication are still rarely studied. Third, there has been no research that has analyzed the construction of the climate change narrative in the state speech of the President of the Republic of Indonesia across the period of leadership. The gap indicates the need for research connecting the study of political communication, climate communication and Fantasy Theme Analysis in a single integrated analytical framework (McKewon, 2012). However, studies that specifically highlight the construction of fantasy themes regarding the climate crisis in Indonesia's state speech are still very limited.

However, this commitment is not only realized in the form of formal policies, but also through political communications conveyed to the public. One of the main forms of communication is the state speech of the President of the Republic of Indonesia every August 16 in a joint session of the MPR and DPR. This speech has a strategic function as the official representation of the state in conveying policy directions, development achievements and national challenges. Thus, a state speech can be understood as a space for the construction of political meaning that also shapes the way the state interprets strategic issues, including climate change (Fairclough, 2013).

The issue of climate change in Indonesia has complex dimensions, including interrelated environmental, social, economic and political aspects. Challenges in handling it are still visible from low public awareness, limited community participation, and suboptimal policy implementation in various sectors. The government continues to strive to strengthen mitigation and adaptation policies to reduce the impacts of climate change. However, the success of this policy is not only determined by technical aspects, but also by the effectiveness of government communication in conveying environmental issues to the public. The policy narrative that is developed plays an important role in shaping public understanding, strengthening social support, and encouraging community involvement in facing the climate crisis (Gjerstad & Fløttum, 2021).

Research on the theme of fantasy in Indonesia's state speech is important because it allows identification of the narrative patterns developed by the government in interpreting the climate crisis. Through this approach, it can be seen how the country describes the environmental conditions it is facing, who is placed as the main actor in solving problems, and how the storyline is built to explain the relationship between development and environmental sustainability. In addition, this approach also allows researchers to see changes in the construction of climate narratives from one presidential period to another, thereby providing a

more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of environmental political communication in Indonesia (Fatkhullah et al., 2023).

This study employs Fantasy Theme Theory (FTT), created by Ernest G. Bormann, to analyze how climate change problems are produced in political communication. This theory holds that social meaning is not created individually, but is rather created via the process of sharing tales, experiences, and symbols that are collectively understood by members of a group. The method allows a group to arrive at a relatively shared understanding of a given event or topic (Khairul Syafuddin, 2025). Fantasy Theme Theory: Repeatedly told stories that take shared acceptance are called fantasy themes. These themes include symbolic interpretations of characters, activities and situations relating to an event. When a fantasy topic develops and is widely accepted, there is the formation of a rhetorical vision, a portrayal of reality which is a common reference for comprehending an issue. This paradigm is applied to the analysis of climate change in state speeches. The study focuses on the personalities involved, the story line, and the setting used to illustrate climate change challenges. This study allows us to understand how the state constructs and conveys meaning about climate change issues to the public

The application of Fantasy Theme Analysis in the study of political communication is increasingly developing in various contexts, ranging from presidential speeches, political campaigns, crisis communication, to digital communication on social media. Bishop (2023) shows that the speech of the President of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele, built a leadership narrative that positioned the government as the nation's savior in the midst of a national security crisis. Meanwhile, Fordjour (2022) found that Kamala Harris's political communication on social media utilized certain fantasy themes to build an image of leadership that was close to society and at the same time had strong political legitimacy. These findings show that fantasy themes not only function as a communication tool, but also as a mechanism for forming political identity and legitimizing power.

Previous research studies show that Fantasy Theme Analysis has been widely used to analyze the political communication of state figures in various contexts. Research conducted by Sarah C. Bishop (2023) examined President Nayib Bukele's speech using Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) and found that the narrative that was built focused on the image of a leader who was able to resolve the crisis, weaken the credibility of opposing parties, and shape public perception through the management of certain information. This research shows that elements of characters, scenes and storylines are used to build a rhetorical vision that supports leadership legitimacy. The similarity with this research lies in the use of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) and the clima in the form of a state speech. The difference lies in the focus of the issues analyzed, namely security and social violence in El Salvador, whereas this research focuses on the construction of the climate crisis in the Indonesian context across presidential periods.

Research by Nana Kwame Osei Fordjour (2022) examines Vice President Kamala Harris's political communication via social media using a Fantasy Theme Analysis approach. The results of this study show that fantasy themes are used to build an image of leadership, strengthen political legitimacy, and build closeness with the audience through symbols and visual representations. The similarity with this research lies in the use of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) to identify dramatic elements in the form of characters, plot and scenes in political communication. The difference lies in the medium used, namely social media, while this research focuses on state speeches as a form of formal state communication. These findings are in line with the view that political narratives have an important role in forming legitimacy and public perceptions of power (Bormann, 1985; Cragan & Shields, 1994).

Both studies show that Fantasy Theme Analysis is a relevant approach to understand the way political actors create and disseminate meaning through different communication narratives. This approach can be used to understand patterns of stories, symbols, and messages

used in shaping public understanding of an issue in a more profound way. But, there is still a lot of existing research that leads to the theme of leadership, security, and digital communication. Awareness of environmental issues, particularly climate change, is still quite limited. Similarly, the application of Fantasy Theme Analysis to study climate communication in a state of the union address has not yet been widely found. Meanwhile, the state speech is one of the official forms of communication of the state, which contains the direction of policy, development priorities and the government's views on several strategic issues. This condition indicates the presence of space for research to be elaborated in order to understand the way in which the state frames and communicates issues of climate change to the community through a state speech.

The research provides two different types of novelty that complement each other. The novelty of the concept is the selection of Indonesia as a Global South country that has a paradoxical and strategic position in global climate governance. On one hand, Indonesia is seen as one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, mainly caused by land-use changes and deforestation and as a major coal producer and exporter. On the other hand, Indonesia is also categorized as one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change such as sea level rise, intensification of hydrometeorological disasters such as floods and droughts, coastal erosion, and increased climate variability. This double condition makes Indonesia a significant case study in understanding how developing countries negotiate the tension between the need for economic development, energy dependency and international climate commitments. Indonesia here represents the larger dilemma of the Global South in climate governance with the need to balance mitigation obligations with adaptation needs within an uneven global political and economic structure.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its focus on a top-down analysis of official discourse, namely the annual state address delivered by the President of the Republic of Indonesia before the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and the House of Representatives (DPR) on August 16 each year. While most previous research on climate communication has tended to emphasize grassroots activism, civil society movements, social media discourse, media framing, or sector-specific policy implementation, this research shifts the focus to the highest level of formal political communication in the country. Presidential speeches on national platforms are crucial because they are the most authoritative expression of national priorities, policy directions, and state ideology, in a highly structured and ceremonial context. This type of discourse is strategically important but relatively underexplored in climate communication studies. By focusing on this institutionalized form of political discourse, this study seeks to uncover how climate change is symbolically constructed, framed, and legitimized within the official state narrative, and the ways in which this narrative contributes to shaping public perceptions, policy justifications, and Indonesia's position in global environmental diplomacy.

This study analyzes the construction of climate change through fantasy themes such as characters, scenes, and plot, and the rhetorical visions that are contained in environmental political communication, using the analysis of state speeches of the presidents from Megawati Soekarnoputri to Joko Widodo (2001-2024). This analysis is expected to unpack how climate change is framed as an ecological issue but also as part of a broader political communication strategy that shapes perceptions of the public, the legitimacy of policy, and Indonesia's role in global environmental governance.

METHOD

This research uses an interpretive paradigm that views reality as a construction of social meaning that is formed through language and interaction. Reality is understood to be plural and symbolically constructed. In this research, the climate crisis is seen as the result of discursive

construction in state speeches which also functions as political legitimacy. This research uses a qualitative approach with Fantasy Theme Analysis to reveal the construction of state discourse about climate change in political communication. The interpretive approach in this research places social reality as something that is not single, but is constructed through a process of meaning that takes place in language, symbols and social interactions. Thus, the climate crisis is not understood as an objective fact alone, but as the result of discursive production formed through political narratives in state speeches. In this context, state speeches function not only as a medium for conveying information, but also as an instrument of legitimacy that represents the interests and direction of state policy. Therefore, this research uses a qualitative approach with Fantasy Theme Analysis to reveal how the state constructs climate change discourse in political communication through a narrative structure consisting of characters, scenes and storylines.

This research uses a qualitative approach in an interpretive paradigm that focuses on the meaning of texts and symbols rather than statistical measurements. This approach allows researchers to understand how narratives are formed in political communication through contextual and in-depth descriptive data. Qualitative research is inductive naturalistic in nature and places the researcher as the main instrument in the data interpretation process. In this research the analysis does not focus on word frequency but on the construction of meaning in dramatic elements such as character scenes and plot. This approach is used to interpret state speeches as symbolic constructions that present communication strategies in framing the climate crisis. This research uses the Fantasy Theme Analysis method which is rooted in Ernest Bormann's Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA). This method is used to examine how social reality is constructed rhetorically through public communication in Borman 1972. The analysis focuses on elements of character scenes and plot to identify the formation of rhetorical vision in political speeches. This method was chosen because state speeches are dramatic and build social meaning and allow comparative analysis between presidential periods to see changes in political narratives.

The object of this research is the text of the state speech of the President of the Republic of Indonesia which is delivered every August 16 before the Joint Session of the DPR and MPR. This speech was chosen because it is formal political communication that has high institutional legitimacy and periodically reflects the direction of official state policies and narratives. In particular, the August 16 speech was used because it was the president's official forum for conveying accountability for performance as well as a vision for national development. This research covers three presidential periods, namely Megawati Soekarnoputri 2001 to 2004, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono 2004 to 2014 and Joko Widodo 2014 to 2024 with a total of around twenty speech texts. Each document is coded by year and presidential period to make it easier to systematically track changes in the narrative. This official, stable and homogeneous data source ensures the validity and academic validity of research findings. The data collection technique in this research is documentation using secondary data in the form of state speeches by the President of the Republic of Indonesia from 2001 to 2024 obtained from the State Secretariat and the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia. Data collection was carried out through the stages of identifying all documents, selecting to ensure completeness of the text, downloading, and converting files into text form. Next, the data was cleaned by removing non-narrative elements such as page numbers and footer headers so that pure speech text was obtained. The data was then coded based on year and presidential period and put into three era categories, namely Megawati SBY and Jokowi. The entire process was carried out manually to ensure the researcher's accuracy and depth of understanding of the data before it was carried out.

Data analysis in this research used Fantasy Theme Analysis which was carried out gradually and systematically. Starting with a thorough reading of all speech texts from each

presidential period to fully understand the context and narrative flow. Next, manual marking was carried out on parts of the text relating to environmental issues, energy, climate change and green policy as units of dramatic analysis, then analyzed based on three main elements, namely scene, character and plot. Scenes are used to see situational settings such as conditions in Indonesia or the world in the climate crisis narrative. Figures are used to identify the position of actors such as government, developed countries, or society. Flow is used to see a series of events from problem to solution. After that, fantasy themes were grouped inductively based on narrative patterns that recur in each period, then a rhetorical vision was formulated as a grand narrative that unites these themes in each era. Finally, a diachronic comparison was carried out between the Megawati, SBY and Jokowi eras to see shifts or continuity in narratives and to note the absence of issues as an important part of political communication analysis. The quality of findings in qualitative research is guaranteed through Lincoln and Guba's concept of trustworthiness which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Luthfiyani, P. W., & Murhayati, 2024). Credibility is achieved through prolonged engagement with repeated reading of speech texts as well as peer debriefing to minimize interpretation bias. Transferability is realized through thick descriptions that describe the socio-political context, government dynamics, and Indonesia's position in global climate politics in each period (Rahman Selfara, Basri, 2026), so that readers can assess the relevance of the findings in other contexts. Dependability is maintained through an audit trail that includes reflective notes, analytical memos, and documentation of the theme coding process that allows tracing back the entire process from data analysis to findings. Validity is strengthened through statements of reflexivity and the use of direct textual evidence from speeches so that findings remain data-based and can be processed independently, not the result of researcher bias.

This research has several limitations that need to be acknowledged at the outset, especially due to its qualitative and interpretive nature. The findings cannot be generalized statistically because Fantasy Theme Analysis focuses on contextual understanding, so its application to other countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, or the Philippines must be done with caution considering the differences in the political context, history, and communication systems of each country. In addition, this research only focuses on the text of official speeches so it cannot explain how people receive or interpret the fantasy themes that emerge, because aspects of perception and the impact of communication are not yet understood. The interpretive nature also opens up the possibility of differences in results if explained by researchers with different theoretical perspectives. However, these limitations are anticipated through repeated reading, recording the analysis process, and researcher reflexivity to maintain accuracy and consistency of interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Shifting Narrative of the Climate Crisis in the State of the Nation Address

The research results show that the construction of the climate crisis narrative in Indonesia's state speech experienced significant changes from the era of Megawati Soekarnoputri, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), to Joko Widodo. This shift not only reflects a change in policy orientation, but also shows a transformation in the way the country interprets the relationship between development, the environment, and Indonesia's position in global climate governance. Analysis using Fantasy Theme Analysis shows that the fantasy themes that emerge in each period produce different rhetorical visions, although they still have a common thread in the form of efforts to maintain the legitimacy of national development amidst increasing pressure on environmental issues.

In President Megawati Soekarnoputri's state address before the Indonesian House of Representatives Assembly on August 16, 2001, the main emphasis was on the nation's condition after the crisis and the importance of maintaining the sustainability of natural

resources as part of her responsibility for the future. One idea that emerged was the importance of improving natural resource management, particularly forestry, to prevent damage that would harm future generations.

“We must manage our natural resources wisely so that development today does not sacrifice the future of our children.”

(State Address of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Megawati Soekarnoputri, August 16, 2001, House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia).

In contrast, during the era of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), climate change issues were strengthened within the national policy framework and became part of Indonesia's international diplomacy.

"Global warming is our shared problem."

(Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, State Address, August 16, 2007, State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia). This commitment is reflected in several official statements in state speeches, particularly on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and Indonesia's involvement in the global climate change agenda. One of the affirmations in the state speech was Indonesia's commitment to playing an active role in emission reduction, which strengthens Indonesia's position in international forums related to the environment.

“Indonesia is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions...”

(State Address of the Republic of Indonesia, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, 2007–2014, State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia)”

The climate change issue was not only placed as a domestic environmental issue, but also as part of Indonesia's global diplomacy strategy. This approach shows a more systematic institutionalization of climate policy, as the country begins to position itself as an active actor in the international climate governance regime.

Meanwhile, in the Joko Widodo period, the environmental issue is no longer a stand-alone issue, but has been integrated into the national development narrative, especially through the economic transformation agenda, industrial down-streaming, and energy transition.

"Indonesia's development must be sustainable, must not damage the environment, and must guarantee the future of future generations."

(State Address of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, Annual Session of the People's Consultative Assembly/House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia)

This suggests that environmental issues are framed in terms of a broader development strategy, rather than as a simple sectoral priority. This focus was reflected in several state speeches where the direction of state policy on clean energy and sustainable development was highlighted as one of the national priorities.

Environmental narratives not only function as a medium for conveying information, but also as an instrument of political communication to shape public understanding of the relationship between economic development and environmental sustainability. When the issue of climate change is linked to energy security, economic growth and social welfare, the government tries to create a common meaning that can strengthen public support for the national development agenda. Thus, the climate crisis discourse in state speeches can be understood as a reflection of the interaction between domestic interests, global demands, and political communication strategies used by states in managing environmental issues in a sustainable manner. (Astari et al., 2024).

The Framework of Fantasy Theme Analysis helps to explain the changes in the way a country frames the issue of climate as a shift in the pattern of narrative reproduced via the speeches of statehood in each time of leadership. The narrative that emerges not only maps out policy direction but also constructs the meanings of the climate crisis through symbols, issue emphasis, and political lexical choices used by the country.

The President's speech reflects the dynamics of the country's position on environmental issues, moving from the focus on the direct responsibility of the country to a more open pattern to the participation of non-state actors, such as the private sector and international organizations. The changes indicate that climate issues no longer constitute a separate sectoral priority but have become part of a broader and collaborative policy configuration. The evolution of political communication in the country also reflects a transition from a normative discourse to a pragmatic one, in which environmental matters are increasingly framed in terms of efficiency, investment and economic competitiveness. This condition confirms that presidential speech is not only a medium for policy delivery, but also a space of meaning production that shapes the way the public interprets the reality of climate change in the context of national development.

Dominance of Ecological Vulnerability in the Megawati Era

The narrative that developed during the Megawati era shows that the environment was understood primarily as a national asset that was vulnerable to damage due to development pressures and multidimensional crises. The scene constructed in the state speech depicts Indonesia as a country rich in natural resources, but facing the threat of environmental degradation and ecological disaster. In this context, the government appears as a protective actor responsible for maintaining a balance between development and nature conservation. From the perspective of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA), the configuration of scene-character in this period constructs the image of Indonesia as post-crisis development country in which the ecological concern is embedded in the discourse of national recovery rather than in global environmental urgency. The state is positioned as the regulator and custodian of natural resources, which reflects the logic of centralized governance within the environmental framework.

These findings are in line with Bormann's (1972) view that fantasy themes develop through a process of forming shared meanings that suit the socio-political needs of the group. During Megawati's time, the country's main need was the restoration of national stability. Therefore, environmental issues are not framed as an urgent global crisis, but as part of an intergenerational moral responsibility. These characteristics indicate that Indonesian climate communication in the early 2000s was still at the normative stage and had not yet developed into a structured political agenda (Suryadi, 2010).

The presence of the international community in Megawati's speech was also symbolic. Global forums such as sustainable development are used to strengthen the moral legitimacy of states, not as arenas for international leadership. Thus, the rhetorical vision that is formed emphasizes responsible development rather than systemic transformation of environmental governance (Istiani & Mansyur, 2022).

In terms of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) components, the action element in this time is characterized by reactivity and preventiveness, with environmental action framed as protection, conservation and restoration rather than proactive mitigation or climate governance innovation. Further, the interaction of setting, character, and action in the Megawati era demonstrates a coherent but limited structure of fantasy themes. The background is defined by post-crisis national recovery, the character is the state as a protector of natural resources, and the action is conservation-oriented governance. Together, these elements articulate a rhetorical vision of "responsible development" where environmental protection is positioned as a moral imperative embedded in national development, rather than an independent policy realm. In the perspective of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA), this condition can be understood as the initial stage of the formation of a "rhetorical vision" which has not yet fully crystallized into collective

awareness regarding the climate crisis, because the dominance of the development narrative is still stronger than the ecological narrative.

Climate Leadership as National Identity in the SBY Era

In contrast to the previous period, the SBY era showed an increase in the intensity and complexity of climate narratives. The issue of climate change is no longer positioned as a development sub-theme, but has become part of Indonesia's political identity at the global level. Commitments to reduce emissions, holding COP 13 in Bali, as well as REDD+ cooperation with Norway are important foundations in forming the fantasy theme of climate leadership (Fløttum & Gjerstad, 2023).

The scene created in SBY's speech places Indonesia as the main actor in solving global climate problems. The protagonist is not only the Indonesian government, but also Indonesia as a developing country that is able to show moral and diplomatic leadership. Meanwhile, the main threats come from deforestation, land degradation and high carbon emissions. This structure produces a narrative arc that moves from recognition of the crisis to collective action and international recognition (Sunarya, 2024).

This finding supports research by Fløttum and Gjerstad (2023) which shows that political leaders tend to use leadership narratives to increase the legitimacy of climate policies. In the Indonesian context, this strategy has succeeded in building the country's image as a pioneer of climate action in the Global South region. However, this research also found a gap between rhetoric and implementation. Despite the strong climate leadership narrative, various indicators show that environmental challenges remain high. This condition shows the existence of a rhetorical gap as explained by Osama Ghoraba (2023) namely the difference between rhetorical vision and policy reality.

Green Pragmatism and Economic Transformation in the Jokowi Era

The Jokowi era presents a different narrative pattern compared to the previous two periods. If Megawati emphasizes moral responsibility and SBY emphasizes global leadership, Jokowi integrates environmental issues into the national economic transformation agenda. Downstreaming industry, technology investment and the development of new renewable energy are the main scenes that dominate the state speech. In this narrative, the government acts as a transition manager seeking to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability. Industry figures and investors gained more importance compared to the previous period. These changes indicate a paradigm shift from conservation towards ecological modernization or eco-modernism, namely the belief that technological progress can be a solution to environmental problems..

Jokowi's narrative flow is long-term and oriented towards the vision of a Golden Indonesia 2045. Climate change is recognized as a threat, but is more often positioned as a challenge that can be overcome through innovation, investment and green industrial development. This communication strategy shows the government's efforts to avoid the dichotomy between economic development and environmental protection. However, research findings also show that climate issues do not receive the same amount of space as economic issues. This indicates that environmental sustainability is still often understood as a supporting instrument for development, not the main goal of development itself (Ritonga et al., 2025).

The climate communication strategy in the Jokowi era also shows a tendency to strengthen the technocratic green development narrative where environmental issues are packaged as part of the planned modernization agenda. In various speeches and policy documents promoted during the Jokowi era, the energy transition and green economy were not only positioned as a response to the climate crisis, but this was an opportunity to increase national competitiveness at the global level. This approach reflects the logic of green growth

which emphasizes the compatibility between economic growth and environmental extinction, but at the same time leads to the ecosystem dimensions of an urgent ecological crisis (Erbaugh et al., 2024).

The eco-modernism approach in the climate change narrative of the Jokowi era also shows the tension between the idealism of sustainability and the political-economic reality of development. Although the government emphasizes the importance of the energy transition and green economy, its implementation still faces structural challenges such as dependence on fossil energy, large investment requirements, and short-term economic interests. This condition shows that the transformation towards low-carbon development does not only depend on technological innovation, but also on changes in policy governance and consistent political commitment in the long term. The dominance of technocratic narratives in climate change communication also has implications for limited space for public participation in the process of formulating environmental policies. Climate issues tend to be packaged in complex policy language and are oriented towards elite actors such as government, corporations and investors, so that civil society involvement is often indirect. This could potentially create a gap in understanding between policy makers and the public, which ultimately affects the effectiveness of implementing environmental policies in an inclusive and fair manner.

Comparison Between Periods and Dynamics of Rhetorical Vision

The construction of a rhetorical vision in the third era shows that climate change is never positioned neutrally, but is always attached to the dominant political and economic agenda in each period of government. This can be seen from the way the country articulates environmental issues as part of its national development strategy, whether in the form of conservation, climate diplomacy, or green economic transformation. Thus, environmental issues function as a flexible discursive space, where states can negotiate domestic interests while building an international image as an actor responsive to global crises.

This comparative pattern can be reduced to the following schematic form to make the dynamics across periods clearer:

Table 1. Comparison of Fantasy Themes and Rhetorical Vision Across Presidential Eras

Presidential Era	Dominant Fantasy Theme	Rhetorical Vision	Narrative Characteristic
Megawati Soekarnoputri	Ecological vulnerability & resource protection	Responsibility to safeguard ecological heritage	Environment framed as national asset within post crisis recovery
Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY)	Climate responsibility & international commitment	Climate leadership as national project	Strong orientation toward global climate diplomacy
Joko Widodo	Green growth & energy transition	Green transition linked to industrial development	Environment integrated into economic transformation agenda

The table shows that environmental discourse has evolved in response to the dynamics of political and economic priorities in each government period. Despite differing emphases across eras, environmental issues remain central to development strategies and broader efforts to strengthen state legitimacy. This finding supports the central idea of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) that social reality is shaped through the exchange of symbols and narratives, ultimately building collective consciousness. Through state addresses, the government not only conveys policies but also shapes how society understands environmental issues, distributes responsibilities, and shapes expectations about the nation's future direction.

Environmental discourse serves as a dynamic platform for the state to align domestic priorities with an international image of environmental responsibility. Rather than merely

receiving messages from the government, society actively engages in constructing collective meaning. However, the preeminence of state narratives in official discourse may limit diverse interpretations of the climate crisis, often aimed at justifying development agendas. To prevent state monopoly over climate discourse, it is crucial to foster inclusive public deliberation that reflects a wider range of social experiences and environmental challenges.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this research shows that Fantasy Theme Analysis is relevant for analyzing political communication related to climate change. This approach allows researchers to identify how scenes, characters, and storylines are used to construct rhetorical visions that influence public perception. The research results also expand the application of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) in environmental communication studies, especially in developing countries (Morris et al., 2019).

Practically, the research findings illustrate that the effectiveness of climate communication is not only determined by the quality of policy, but also by the government's ability to build a consistent and credible narrative. A narrative that is too normative risks not producing real action, while a narrative that is too oriented towards economic development can reduce the urgency of the climate crisis in the eyes of the public. Therefore, a balance is needed between conveying environmental commitments, evidence of policy implementation, and building community participation (Ghoraba, 2023).

Besides that, this study makes a significant contribution to the academic expansion of Fantasy Theme Analysis which is rooted in Ernest Bormann's Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA). While most operational applications of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) have historically gravitated toward small-scale group analysis, situational international speech, or instantaneous responses on social media, this study attests to the stability and usefulness of Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA) in dissecting the routine and legally institutionalized formal political rhetoric of statehood. A dramatic framework that includes the decomposition of scene components, characterization and the plot has proven to be reliable in reconstructing the dynamics of the development of the symbolic reality of the ecological crisis produced by the top executive authority. Furthermore, these findings expand the Communication Theory discourse in Craig (2019), especially in the rhetoric and sociopsychological traditions by showing how a national text in the Global South region does not simply transmit policy messages, but acts as a symbolic instrument that converges the public's collective consciousness. Through diachronic cross-sectional tracing from 2001 to 2024, this research enriches the treasures of environmental communication by offering a historical reading model of how a country negotiates structural tensions between ambitions for nature protection and demands for national economic growth.

Practically, the research findings illustrate that the effectiveness of climate communication is not only determined by the quality of policy, but also by the government's ability to build a consistent and credible narrative. A narrative that is too normative risks not producing real action, while a narrative that is too oriented towards economic development can reduce the urgency of the climate crisis in the eyes of the public. Therefore, a balance is needed between conveying environmental commitments, evidence of policy implementation, and building community participation (Ghoraba, 2023).

The significance of these findings provides an in-depth evaluation map for policy formulators, public communicators, and presidential narrative development teams in designing credible crisis communications. The existence of a rhetorical gap between the discursive vision built on the formal stage and the reality of policy implementation in the field is a reminder that the effectiveness of climate communication must not only rely on linguistic aesthetics or normative commitments alone. A narrative that is too caught up in the legal-morality aspect risks dulling public sensitivity to the urgency of real action, while updating the discourse that

is too oriented towards economic pragmatism and ecological modernization can obscure the essence of the climate crisis as an urgent existential threat. Therefore, government public relations practitioners are required to formulate a balanced narrative bridge, which integrates the accountability of scientific climate data with strategies for inclusive grassroots community participation. For the civil society community and environmental movement organizations, this rhetorical vision map across presidential periods can be used as an empirical data base for carrying out discourse-based advocacy (discursive advocacy) to demand state consistency and encourage the birth of just, transparent and sustainable climate governance policies (Fløttum & Gjerstad, 2023).

Thus, the evolution of climate narratives in Indonesian state speeches shows that political communication has an important role in shaping the direction of environmental governance. The shift from ecological vulnerability, global climate leadership, to green pragmatism shows that the meaning of the climate crisis continues to be negotiated according to national development needs and priorities.

CONCLUSION

The three eras of the Indonesian presidency demonstrate the consistent yet evolving reconfiguration of environmental discourse in the construction of the climate crisis narrative in the Indonesian State of the Union speech in line with the shift of political and economic priorities. Each period had its own rhetorical vision, from the Megawati period, which viewed environmental issues mainly as ecological vulnerabilities related to national recovery after the crisis and the protection of resources, to the SBY era, which raised climate change as a form of international climate leadership and diplomatic identity, and finally to the Jokowi era, which integrated environmental concerns into a broader agenda of economic transformation, industrialization and energy transition. Yet environmental discourse is intimately connected to the larger project of legitimizing development. These stories illustrate, from the perspective of Fantasy Theme Analysis, that the construction of meaning around climate change is achieved through symbolic interaction in state-of-the-union addresses which identify actors, action and context in line with current national agendas. Therefore, climate communication in presidential discourse does not simply transmit policy information but also constructs public understanding of environmental responsibilities, development trajectory, and Indonesia's role in global climate governance, and it exposes the complex tension between ecological concern and economic imperative.

REFERENCES

- Astari, D. W., Agustina, D. P., & Nurussa'adah, E. (2024). Symbolic Reality Construction of the K-Pop Community on Twitter. *Interaksi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 13(1), 152–168. <https://doi.org/10.14710/interaksi.13.1.152-168>
- Erbaugh, J. T., Chang, C. H., Masuda, Y. J., & Ribot, J. (2024). Communication and Deliberation for Environmental Governance. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 49(1), 367–393. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-112321-082450>
- Fatkhullah, M., Mulyani, I., Dewi, A. S., Habib, M. A. F., & Reihan, A. (2023). *Strategi komunikasi dalam mengatasi perubahan iklim melalui pelibatan masyarakat*. *Jurnal Komunikasi Pembangunan*, 21(1), 17–33. <https://doi.org/10.46937/21202341909>
- Gaborit, P. (2022). Climate adaptation to Multi-Hazard climate related risks in ten Indonesian Cities: Ambitions and challenges. *Climate Risk Management*, 37(August), 100453. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2022.100453>
- Gjerstad, Ø., & Fløttum, K. (2021). Climate change lifestyle narratives among Norwegian citizens: A linguistic analysis of survey discourse. *European Policy Analysis*, 7(S2), 386–404. <https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1122>
- Istiani, A. N., & Mansyur, M. (2022). Analysis Of Communication Media Assistance On The

- Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) In The Implementation Of Family Development Session (FDS)”. *Komunika*, 5(1), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.24042/komunika.v5i1.11303>
- Khairul Syafuddin. (2025). Dynamics of Environmental Issues in Indonesia: Critical Discourse Analysis of the #perubahaniklim Digital Campaign Through TikTok. *Mediakita*, 9(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.30762/mediakita.v9i1.2752>
- Luthfiyani, P. W., & Murhayati, S. (2024). Strategi Memastikan Keabsahan Data Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 8(3), 45315–45328. <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/21803>
- Megawati Soekarnoputri. (2001). *Pidato Kenegaraan Presiden Republik Indonesia dalam Sidang DPR RI 16 Agustus 2001*. Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia.
- Morris, B. S., Chrysochou, P., Christensen, J. D., Orquin, J. L., Barraza, J., Zak, P. J., & Mitkidis, P. (2019). Stories vs. facts: triggering emotion and action-taking on climate change. *Climatic Change*, 154(1–2), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-019-02425-6>
- Nailah Syakirah, Anwar, R. K. A., & Winoto, Y. W. (2025). Environmental Communication in Social Media: A Bibliometric Study of Climate Change Discourse and Public Engagement. *The Journal of Society and Media*, 9(1), 203–240. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jsm.v9n1.p203-240>
- Osama Ghoraba, M. (2023). Influential Spanish Politicians’ Discourse of Climate Change on Twitter: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study. In *Corpus Pragmatics* (Vol. 7, Issue 3). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41701-023-00140-3>
- Poerwaningtias, I. (2025). Prioritizing economic growth over environmental protection: A rhetorical situation of President Joko Widodo’s speeches. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 19(2), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.20885/komunikasi.vol19.iss2.art2>
- Rahman Selfara, Basri, L. J. (2026). STRATEGI GURU BAHASA ARAB DALAM MENGATASI KESULITAN BERBAHASA ARAB SANTRI KELAS 1 KMI PONDOK PESANTREN MODERN AL SYAIKHABDUL WAHID KOTA BAUBAU. *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 11(1), 54–72.
- Ritonga, A. D., Amin, M., & Situmorang, T. P. (2025). Indonesia’s policy responses to climate change in sustainable natural resource management: Jokowi’s tenure. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 1445(1), 0–10. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1445/1/012063>
- Rockström, J., Gupta, J., Qin, D., Lade, S. J., Abrams, J. F., Andersen, L. S., Armstrong McKay, D. I., Bai, X., Bala, G., Bunn, S. E., Ciobanu, D., DeClerck, F., Ebi, K., Gifford, L., Gordon, C., Hasan, S., Kanie, N., Lenton, T. M., Loriani, S., ... Zhang, X. (2023). Safe and just Earth system boundaries. *Nature*, 619(7968), 102–111. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06083-8>
- Shields, D. C., & Preston, C. T. (1985). Fantasy Theme Analysis in Competitive Rhetorical Criticism. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 58(2), 50–61.
- Sunarya, A. (2024). Climate and Environmental Policy in Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities. *Ganaya : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 7(1), 195–206. <https://doi.org/10.37329/ganaya.v7i1.3030>
- Suryadi, I. (2010). TEORI KONVERGENSI SIMBOLIK - Suryadi. *Academica*, 2(2), 426–437.
- Tillery, D., & Bloomfield, E. F. (2022). Hyperrationality and Rhetorical Constellations in Digital Climate Change Denial: A Multi-Methodological Analysis of the Discourse of Watts up with That. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 31(4), 356–373. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2021.2019317>