



Rhetorical Devices in Editorials of The Jakarta Post

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Abstract. Editorials represent one of the most persuasive forms of journalistic writing, as they convey the institutional stance of a newspaper and aim to influence public opinion on social, political, and economic issues. This study investigates the rhetorical devices employed in the editorials of *The Jakarta Post*, the leading English-language newspaper in Indonesia. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the types of rhetorical devices used, examine their frequency, and analyze their persuasive functions. Using a qualitative content analysis approach, fifteen editorials published between January and June 2024 were purposively selected as the data source. The editorials were analyzed to identify rhetorical devices such as metaphor, rhetorical question, repetition, parallelism, hyperbole, irony, and antithesis. Each occurrence was categorized, quantified, and interpreted in light of rhetorical theory, particularly Aristotle's appeals of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. The findings reveal that metaphor and rhetorical question were the most dominant devices, followed by repetition and parallelism, while hyperbole, irony, and antithesis appeared less frequently. These devices functioned not only as stylistic elements but also as persuasive strategies to simplify complex issues, engage readers, and reinforce the newspaper's arguments. The study concludes that rhetorical devices play a vital role in enhancing the persuasive power of *The Jakarta Post*'s editorials. The results contribute to the understanding of persuasive language in Indonesian media and suggest directions for further research on rhetorical practices in journalistic discourse.

Keywords: Editorials; Indonesia; Persuasive Strategies; Rhetorical Devices; *The Jakarta Post*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language has always played a crucial role in human communication, and in the context of journalism, it becomes an essential tool for shaping public perspectives, framing narratives, and constructing ideologies. Editorials, in particular, are powerful because they represent the institutional voice of a newspaper, distinct from neutral news reports. These texts are explicitly argumentative and persuasive, aiming to guide readers toward a particular interpretation or course of action. According to Berk (2025), media framing has a significant influence on how complex information is perceived by the audience, with rhetorical devices playing a key role in shaping these perceptions. Additionally, Sharma (2024) highlights that newspaper editorials are a prime example of rhetorical artifacts, designed to employ various rhetorical strategies to influence public opinion. Furthermore, Raffini et al. (2025) explore how language models, despite their advanced ability to construct coherent arguments, still struggle with the persuasiveness of editorial content, especially on ethical topics. These studies underscore the importance of linguistic and rhetorical analysis in understanding the persuasive power of editorials in shaping societal views.

Rhetoric, understood since Aristotle as “the art of persuasion,” is a discipline that examines how language can be used to convince, influence, and inspire audiences. In rhetorical theory, persuasion operates through three key appeals: *ethos* (credibility of the speaker or

writer), *pathos* (emotional engagement with the audience), and *logos* (logical reasoning and evidence). These appeals are often realized through a variety of rhetorical devices such as metaphor, repetition, rhetorical questions, antithesis, and parallelism. For instance, metaphors allow abstract issues like politics or economy to be understood through familiar concepts; repetition reinforces key points and ensures memorability; while rhetorical questions invite readers to think critically and implicitly guide them toward the writer's intended conclusion. In this sense, rhetorical devices are not ornamental but functional: they serve as strategies to enhance clarity, emphasize arguments, and strengthen persuasion.

The use of rhetorical devices in media texts has received considerable scholarly attention worldwide. Numerous studies have explored how political discourse in newspapers employs rhetoric to construct ideologies, justify policies, or mobilize support (Fairclough, 2015; Chilton, 2019). Other research has focused on rhetorical strategies in opinion columns and editorials to reveal the ways newspapers position themselves in relation to contested social or political issues (van Dijk, 2018). These studies consistently show that rhetorical devices are integral to the persuasive nature of editorials and that their systematic analysis can uncover how media outlets shape public discourse.

Despite this growing body of research, there remains a noticeable gap when it comes to English-language media in Indonesia. *The Jakarta Post*, founded in 1983, is widely recognized as the leading English daily newspaper in the country. It serves as a crucial platform not only for domestic readers who use English but also for the international community seeking to understand Indonesian affairs. Its editorials are particularly influential because they articulate the newspaper's official stance on pressing issues ranging from politics and governance to environmental concerns and global diplomacy. Given its dual audience—domestic and international—*The Jakarta Post* employs rhetorical strategies that must be effective across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Yet, scholarly investigation into how the newspaper's editorials achieve persuasion through rhetorical devices remains limited.

This study aims to address this gap by performing a thorough examination of rhetorical strategies in the editorials of *The Jakarta Post*. The research has three main objectives: (1) to identify the types of rhetorical devices used in selected editorials; (2) to determine their frequency and distribution; and (3) to analyze their persuasive functions in constructing the newspaper's stance and influencing readers' opinions. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to contribute to the field of media linguistics and rhetorical studies, particularly in the Indonesian context. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of rhetorical analysis in

understanding how editorial discourse not only informs but also persuades, thereby shaping public opinion and democratic dialogue.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rhetoric has long been associated with the art of persuasion since Aristotle defined it as the ability to identify the available means of persuasion in any situation (Kennedy, 2007). The classical framework highlights three persuasive appeals: *ethos* (credibility), *pathos* (emotions), and *logos* (logic). These appeals remain relevant in contemporary discourse analysis, especially when examining how persuasive texts such as editorials construct their arguments. According to Gill and Whedbee (2019), rhetorical strategies in media discourse often combine logical reasoning with emotional appeals to maximize their impact on diverse audiences.

Rhetorical devices are linguistic techniques designed to persuade, emphasize, and influence readers or listeners (Charteris-Black, 2016). Common devices include metaphor, simile, repetition, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, parallelism, irony, and antithesis. Each device serves a particular function: metaphors conceptualize abstract issues through concrete imagery, repetition strengthens key arguments, while rhetorical questions engage readers and guide them toward implied answers. In journalistic discourse, these devices are not mere stylistic ornaments but functional strategies for framing issues and positioning arguments (Al-Momani, 2020).

Editorials are a distinct genre in journalism because they embody the institutional stance of a newspaper (van Dijk, 2018). Unlike news reports, which emphasize objectivity, editorials explicitly evaluate and comment on issues, often urging readers to adopt certain viewpoints. Research shows that editorials rely heavily on persuasive language, making them a productive site for rhetorical analysis (Ansary & Babaii, 2021). The editorial genre typically incorporates argumentative structures, logical reasoning, and rhetorical strategies to influence readers' perceptions of political, social, or cultural matters.

Several studies have investigated rhetorical devices in media discourse. For example, Ab Rashid et al. (2017) analyzed rhetorical devices in Malaysian newspapers and found that metaphors and rhetorical questions were most frequently used to build persuasive arguments. Similarly, Al-Momani (2020) examined Jordanian English-language editorials and reported that repetition and parallelism served to emphasize key ideological points. A study by Trosborg (2018) on rhetorical strategies in international newspapers highlighted that editorials often balance rational arguments with emotional appeals to strengthen their persuasive power.

In Indonesia, however, research on rhetorical devices in English-language media remains scarce. Studies on *The Jakarta Post* have focused more on discourse analysis (Setyono, 2018) or ideological framing (Nurlaily, 2021), but very few have specifically explored rhetorical devices. This indicates a significant gap in scholarship, as the newspaper plays a crucial role in communicating Indonesian issues to both national and global audiences.

Based on the review above, it is clear that while rhetorical devices in media have been widely studied internationally, research focusing on Indonesian English-language newspapers, particularly *The Jakarta Post*, is still limited. Given the importance of editorials as persuasive discourse, there is a need for systematic analysis of the rhetorical devices used in this context. This study contributes by filling that gap, offering insights into how *The Jakarta Post* employs rhetorical strategies to construct arguments, shape public opinion, and fulfill its dual role as a national and international news outlet.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative content analysis approach to examine rhetorical devices in editorial articles. A qualitative design was chosen because the purpose of the research is not only to identify linguistic features but also to interpret their persuasive functions within the socio-political context of the newspaper. According to Schreier (2014), qualitative content analysis is suitable for methodically elucidating the significance of qualitative data and for classifying textual attributes such as rhetorical devices.

The data of this study were taken from editorial articles published in *The Jakarta Post*. Editorials were selected because they represent the institutional stance of the newspaper and explicitly aim to persuade readers. A total of 15 editorial articles published between January and June 2024 were purposively selected. The chosen period represents a politically dynamic time in Indonesia, especially with issues related to governance, economy, and international relations, which are often discussed in editorials. The selection criteria were: (1) Articles must be classified as *editorials*, not opinion columns or news reports, (2) Articles must contain arguments or evaluations on socio-political or economic issues, (3) Articles must be published in English. The editorials were retrieved directly from *The Jakarta Post*'s official website (www.thejakartapost.com). Each article was saved in digital form and then organized in a corpus for analysis. Articles were coded with reference numbers (e.g., Editorial 1, Editorial 2, etc.) to facilitate systematic data analysis. The analysis followed several steps:

- a. Identification: All rhetorical devices in the selected editorials were identified manually, based on definitions from rhetorical theory (Charteris-Black, 2016; Gill & Whedbee,

2019). The devices considered include metaphor, simile, repetition, rhetorical question, parallelism, hyperbole, irony, and antithesis.

- b. Classification: Each instance of rhetorical device was classified into categories according to its type.
- c. Quantification: The frequency of each rhetorical device was calculated to determine which types appeared most frequently.
- d. Interpretation: The persuasive functions of the devices were analyzed within the context of the editorial's argument. The analysis was guided by Aristotle's rhetorical appeals (*ethos*, *pathos*, *logos*) to explain how devices contributed to persuasion.
- e. Validation: To ensure reliability, the identification and classification process was reviewed by a second coder with expertise in linguistics. Inter-coder agreement was calculated to strengthen the validity of the analysis.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Types and Frequency of Rhetorical Devices

The analysis of 15 editorials from *The Jakarta Post* (January–June 2024) revealed the use of a wide range of rhetorical devices. The most frequent devices identified were metaphor, rhetorical question, repetition, and parallelism, followed by less frequent instances of hyperbole, irony, and antithesis.

Table 1. summarizes the frequency of occurrences.

Rhetorical Device	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Metaphor	42	28%
Rhetorical Question	30	20%
Repetition	26	17%
Parallelism	22	15%
Hyperbole	14	9%
Irony	10	7%
Antithesis	8	4%
Total	152	100%

The findings indicate that metaphors and rhetorical questions are dominant, showing that *The Jakarta Post* often relies on vivid imagery and interrogative forms to engage and persuade readers.

Metaphor as Conceptual Framing

Metaphors were frequently used to frame abstract political or economic issues in more concrete terms. For example, in an editorial about government policy, the phrase “*Indonesia is standing at a crossroads*” metaphorically framed the nation's situation as a decisive moment

of choice. Such metaphors help simplify complex issues and emotionally engage readers by appealing to shared experiences. This aligns with Charteris-Black (2016), who argues that metaphors in media discourse function as tools of persuasion by shaping conceptual understanding.

Rhetorical Questions as Engagement Strategy

Rhetorical questions appeared frequently in editorials addressing political accountability. For instance, one editorial stated: *“If leaders cannot uphold the law, then who can?”* Such questions do not seek direct answers but instead provoke critical reflection and guide readers toward the editorial’s intended conclusion. This strategy enhances *pathos* by involving readers emotionally while simultaneously strengthening *logos* through logical implication.

Repetition and Parallelism for Emphasis

Repetition and parallelism were often used to emphasize the urgency of issues. In one editorial about corruption, the sentence *“It weakens our institutions, it weakens our democracy, it weakens our future”* demonstrated both repetition and parallelism. This stylistic choice reinforces the central argument, making it more memorable and impactful. The result supports Al-Momani’s (2020) claim that repetition in editorials functions to intensify persuasion by reinforcing key themes.

Less Frequent Devices: Hyperbole, Irony, Antithesis

Although less frequent, devices such as hyperbole and irony added rhetorical strength in certain contexts. Hyperbole, for example, was found in phrases like *“a crisis of unimaginable scale”*, exaggerating the gravity of events to provoke urgency. Irony was evident in expressions such as *“transparent leadership, hidden behind closed doors”*, which criticized inconsistencies in political behavior. Antithesis was used to contrast opposing ideas, e.g., *“promises of reform versus the reality of stagnation”*, highlighting contradictions in governance.

The dominance of metaphors and rhetorical questions suggests that *The Jakarta Post* seeks to both frame issues conceptually and directly engage readers. These strategies are consistent with the newspaper’s role as both a national and international outlet, aiming to make Indonesian issues accessible to a broad audience. Moreover, the use of repetition and parallelism reflects a deliberate attempt to reinforce key arguments and highlight urgency.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that rhetorical devices in *The Jakarta Post* editorials serve a dual function: (1) they make complex political and economic issues more comprehensible, and (2) they enhance the persuasive power of the newspaper’s institutional

stance. These results are in line with previous research on rhetorical strategies in media (Ab Rashid et al., 2017; Al-Momani, 2020) but also extend the discussion to the Indonesian English-language press, which has been underexplored in rhetorical studies.

5. CONCLUSION

This study set out to analyze the rhetorical devices employed in the editorials of *The Jakarta Post* and to interpret their persuasive functions. By examining 15 editorials published between January and June 2024, the research identified a wide range of rhetorical devices, with metaphor, rhetorical question, repetition, and parallelism being the most dominant. Less frequent but significant uses of hyperbole, irony, and antithesis were also observed. The findings demonstrate that rhetorical devices are integral to the persuasive function of editorials. Metaphors helped frame abstract and complex socio-political issues in more accessible ways, while rhetorical questions engaged readers and directed them toward implicit conclusions. Repetition and parallelism emphasized key arguments and reinforced the urgency of issues, whereas hyperbole, irony, and antithesis contributed stylistic sharpness and critical nuance. Together, these devices strengthened the editorials' appeals to *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, fulfilling the newspaper's dual role of informing and persuading both domestic and international audiences.

This research confirms the essential role of rhetorical strategies in shaping public opinion through editorials. The results align with previous studies conducted in other contexts but also highlight the unique contribution of *The Jakarta Post* as the leading English-language newspaper in Indonesia. Importantly, the study fills a gap in scholarship on Indonesian media discourse by providing a systematic analysis of rhetorical devices in editorials. Subsequent research could enhance this study by incorporating a more extensive corpus of editorials over an extended timeframe or by performing comparative analyses with other English-language or Indonesian-language newspapers. Furthermore, employing computational linguistic tools for corpus-based rhetorical analysis could complement qualitative findings and provide deeper insights into rhetorical patterns.

In conclusion, rhetorical devices are not mere stylistic embellishments but powerful strategies that enable *The Jakarta Post* to articulate its institutional stance, construct persuasive arguments, and influence the way readers perceive and evaluate social realities.

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