



Netizens of Rhetorical Strategy in Responding to President Prabowo Subianto's Political Policy Campaign on Budget Cuts

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the forms and identify patterns of netizens' rhetorical strategies in the comments section in response to President Prabowo Subianto's political campaign policy regarding budget cuts. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative approach. The data analyzed consisted of public comments sourced from the KompasTV YouTube video titled "Prabowo Bluntly: Some Oppose Him Regarding Budget Cuts, Feeling Like a Little King!". Data collection techniques were carried out through reading techniques, documentation techniques, and purposive sampling techniques. The data analysis technique includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing and verification. The results of this study indicate that 55 netizens' rhetorical strategies were found, consisting of 2 Ethos (3.6%), 15 Pathos (27.3%), 8 Logos (14.5%), 24 Pathos + Logos combinations (43.6%), 2 Ethos + Pathos combinations (3.6%), and 4 Ethos + Pathos + Logos combinations (7.3%). These rhetorical strategies are demonstrated through the use of references to figures, personal experiences, emotional sentences, satire, rhetorical questions, and logical arguments. These findings indicate that netizens tend to combine emotional elements and logical reasoning when expressing their opinions regarding President Prabowo Subianto's budget cuts policy on digital media.

Keywords: netizens, rhetorical strategy, responding to president, budget cuts

Analisis Strategi Retorika Netizen dalam Merespon Kampanye Kebijakan Politik Presiden Prabowo Subianto tentang Pemotongan Anggaran

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk dan mengidentifikasi pola penggunaan strategi retorika netizen di kolom komentar dalam merespons kampanye kebijakan politik Presiden Prabowo Subianto terkait pemotongan anggaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Data yang dianalisis terdiri dari komentar publik yang bersumber dari video YouTube KompasTV berjudul *Prabowo Blak-blakan: Ada yang Melawannya soal Pemotongan Anggaran, Merasa Jadi Raja Kecil!*. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui teknik baca, teknik dokumentasi, dan teknik *purposive sampling*. Teknik analisis data mencakup tiga tahapan, yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan serta verifikasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ditemukan 55 data strategi retorika netizen yang terdiri atas 2 *Ethos* (3,6%), 15 data *Pathos* (27,3%), 8 data *Logos* (14,5%), 24 data kombinasi *Pathos + Logos* (43,6%), 2 data Kombinasi *Ethos + Pathos* (3,6%), serta 4 data kombinasi *Ethos + Pathos + Logos* (7,3%). Strategi retorika tersebut ditunjukkan melalui penggunaan rujukan tokoh, pengalaman pribadi, kalimat emosional, sindiran, pertanyaan retorik, dan argumen logis. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa netizen cenderung menggabungkan unsur emosional dan penalaran logis dalam menyampaikan pendapat terkait kebijakan pemotongan anggaran oleh Presiden Prabowo Subianto di media digital.

Kata kunci: strategi, retorika, netizen, kampanye kebijakan politik, presiden, pemotongan anggaran

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INTRODUCTION

In public interactions, netizens not only express their opinions but also construct arguments using various linguistic strategies. The process of conveying these opinions involves choosing words, formulating reasons, and creating appeal to ensure the message is accepted by others. This argumentation can be examined through a rhetorical perspective, as rhetoric is concerned with how messages are delivered persuasively.

Rhetoric is the art of speaking and arguing, requiring careful thought and the ability to craft persuasive messages. Aristotle (2018:18) argued that effective and convincing communication must be based on three main elements: Ethos (credibility), Pathos (the ability to evoke emotions), and Logos (logical argument).

The application of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos does not always appear in the same form. Each netizen may use one element prominently or combine it with several others in conveying an argument. Differences in the application of these rhetorical elements indicate the rhetorical strategies employed in the comments section, thus forming patterns of rhetorical strategy use in netizen comments.

The diversity of responses in digital interactions demonstrates the diverse ways netizens express their opinions on an issue. This is evident in the written comments used in response to video content. Written comments can be viewed as linguistic texts because they contain arguments put forward by netizens. Therefore, netizen comments are not merely spontaneous responses but also rhetorical practices that can be analyzed for their constituent elements.

This phenomenon is increasingly evident in digital media discussions, one example being on YouTube. According to Munthe et al. (2021:1), the YouTube comment section allows users to express their opinions, thus providing a space for users to express their responses to content. Netizen responses in the comment section demonstrate a diverse use of rhetorical strategies that are analyzed linguistically. With the comment section, YouTube

functions as a space for the written expression of opinions on video content.

The KompasTV YouTube channel is a news outlet that actively uploads content covering a wide range of topics, ranging from social and economic issues to politics. The video content uploaded by KompasTV has garnered attention from netizens, as demonstrated by the diverse responses in the comment section. One video content that received a significant response was content about President Prabowo Subianto's political campaign regarding budget cuts. The video conveyed information about the budget cuts, which then generated various comments from netizens. In this study, the video content served as the background for the data collection, while netizen comments were analyzed. The main highlight of the campaign content emerged from President Prabowo Subianto's statement alluding to those opposing government policy in a YouTube video titled "Prabowo Bluntly: Some Oppose Him on Budget Cuts, Feeling Like Little Kings!". This statement elicited numerous written responses from netizens in the KompasTV YouTube comment section. These responses demonstrate how netizens construct arguments through rhetorical elements. Therefore, the YouTube comment section can be used as linguistic data to identify the use of Aristotelian rhetorical elements. Differences in argument delivery indicate that each comment can emphasize Ethos, Pathos, or Logos in different ways. The use of these rhetorical elements in comments can be observed through the patterns of strategy employed by netizens.

This research focuses on identifying rhetorical elements, namely Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, in commentary. In addition to identifying the forms of rhetorical strategies used, this study also identifies patterns of their use. These patterns are observed from the interrelationships between the elements of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in commentary, used either singly or in combination to convey arguments.

This research is expected to benefit various parties. For researchers, this study can enhance



their experience and skills in analyzing rhetorical strategies in digital communication based on the elements of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. For readers, especially Indonesian language students, this study can provide insight into the use of rhetorical strategies in digital media commentary. Furthermore, for education, the results of this study can be used as a learning resource in debate texts, expositions, and digital literacy, to train critical thinking skills, construct logical arguments, and communicate ethically in digital media. In Indonesia, research on rhetoric has been conducted in various fields, ranging from formal political communication strategies in presidential debates studied by Isa (2024), rhetorical practices in stand-up comedy by Ramadani and Samatan (2021), to research by Lestari et al. (2024) who analyzed rhetorical studies using discourse structures through structured interviews in digital media. However, these previous studies mostly focused on the production of planned and one-way messages by professional actors or public figures. This leaves a research gap in the aspect of netizen responses in digital spaces that occur spontaneously and without moderators. This gap is filled by this study by examining netizen rhetorical strategies in YouTube comment sections.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to describe the forms and patterns of netizen rhetorical strategies in the KompasTV YouTube comment column regarding President Prabowo's budget cut policy. According to Sugiyono (2013:290), Abubakar (2021), Razak (2017:273), this qualitative research aims to gain a deep understanding of a social reality, including the relationships that occur within it. In this study, what is meant by reality is the use of persuasive language by netizens in their comments. The research data is in the form of netizen comment texts on the KompasTV YouTube video entitled "Prabowo Bluntly: Some Oppose Budget Cuts, Feeling Like Little Kings" which was uploaded on

February 10, 2025. Data collection techniques use reading, documentation, and purposive sampling techniques with data selection techniques based on criteria, such as comments that are relevant to the research topic, in full text, and not spam, by selecting around 40-60 representative comments. Data analysis techniques refer to the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data in this study used Lincoln and Guba's trustworthiness concept, which encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

RESULTS

Based on the data collection and analysis, this study identified various forms and patterns of netizens' rhetorical strategies in the KompasTV YouTube comment section related to President Prabowo's budget cut policy. Ethos, Pathos, and Logos are the three main elements of Aristotle that form the categories of rhetorical strategies used by netizens. The research findings are as follows.

1. Forms of Rhetorical Strategies in the KompasTV YouTube Comment Section

Based on the data classification results, seven forms of rhetorical strategies were identified in a total of 55 comment entries. The most dominant strategy was a combination of Pathos and Logos, representing 24 entries, or 43.64%. Meanwhile, Pathos was found in 15 data points (27.27%), Logos in 8 data points (14.55%), Ethos in 2 data points (3.6%), a combination of Ethos and Pathos in 2 data points (3.64%), and a combination of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in 2 data points (3.64%), and a combination of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in 4 data points (7.27%). The following research data is presented in the table below.

Table 1
Findings of Rhetorical Strategy Forms

Rhetorical Strategy Form	Frequency	Percent
Ethos	2	3,64
Pathos	15	27,27
Logos	8	14,55
Pathos+Logos	24	43,64
Ethos+Pathos	2	3,64
Ethos+Pathos+Logos	4	7,27
Ethos+ Logos	0	0,00
Total	55	100

Based on the table above, the combination of Pathos and Logos rhetorical strategies was the most

frequently used strategy by netizens, accounting for 43.64%. This finding indicates that netizens tend to combine emotional elements with logical reasoning when expressing their opinions. Meanwhile, the combination of Ethos and Logos was not found in the research data, indicating that emotional elements remain present in netizens' comments.

2. Patterns of Netizen Rhetorical Strategy Use

Based on the form of rhetorical strategies, there are patterns in netizens' rhetorical strategies in the comments section. The patterns are presented in the following table.

Table 4.2
Patterns of Netizen Rhetorical Strategy Use

No.	Rhetorical Patterns	Pattern Description	Research Findings
1	Pathos and Logos combination pattern	The combination of emotional expression with logical thinking such as concerning cause-effect relationships and comparisons.	Shows that in constructing arguments, emotions are often accompanied by rational reasoning.
2	A combination pattern of Pathos and Logos.	The combination of emotional expression with logical thinking such as concerning cause-effect relationships and comparisons.	Shows that in constructing arguments, emotions are often accompanied by rational reasoning.
3	A combination pattern of Pathos and Logos	The use of credibility through self-identity or character references, and combined with emotional expressions such as hope and belief.	Demonstrates that credibility is combined with an emotional approach.
4	Combination pattern of Ethos, Pathos and Logos	Combining three elements at once in one comment	Demonstrates various ways of conveying opinions using rhetoric.
5	Logos usage patterns	Use of logical reasoning, such as pro and con arguments, comparisons, and cause and effect	Shows that logical reasoning is used to construct arguments, although it does not always stand alone.
6	No combination pattern of Ethos and Logos was found	Credibility combined with emotionless logic is not used.	Shows that in constructing arguments, emotions are often accompanied by rational reasoning.



Based on Table 1.1, rhetorical strategy patterns indicate that netizens' rhetoric tends to be expressive and combinative. Pathos appears to be a key component in conveying opinions, both directly and in combination with other elements. Ethos and Pathos indicate that credibility is used in conjunction with emotional expression, while Pathos and Logos indicate that emotions are often accompanied by logical reasoning.

Furthermore, the use of all three elements simultaneously indicates variation in the construction of more complex arguments. However, the use of Logos is still frequent, but not always. No combination of Ethos and Logos without Pathos was found, indicating that emotions play a significant role in conveying netizens' opinions.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the data analysis, the rhetorical strategies used by netizens in the comments section consist of the form of rhetorical strategy and its usage patterns. These aspects are discussed theoretically, referring to Aristotle's theory of rhetoric, which indicates the presence of elements of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, either singly or in combination, in each comment. Each is described in more detail below.

Rhetorical Strategy Forms in KompasTV's YouTube Comment Column

The results of this study indicate that netizens' rhetorical strategies in KompasTV's YouTube comment column appear in both singular and combined forms, incorporating elements of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos. The use of these three elements demonstrates that netizens do not simply express opinions spontaneously but also employ rhetorical strategies to strengthen arguments in digital media. Netizens use the Ethos strategy to establish credibility through personal experiences, self-identity, and references to influential public figures. Mentioning specific figures and personal experiences demonstrates netizens' efforts to gain audience trust in their comments.

The Pathos strategy is the most dominant form in this study. Pathos in the comment column is demonstrated through emotional expressions such as exclamations, sympathy, hopes, prayers, sarcasm, complaints, and rhetorical questions. Netizens use emotional language to express support, criticism, and disappointment with the budget cut policy. These forms demonstrate that emotions are used as a means to attract attention and amplify emotional tension in the comments. The Logos strategy is demonstrated through logical reasoning, such as cause-and-effect relationships, comparative sentences, and pro-contra arguments. Netizens connected the policy to its social impacts, so their comments were not only emotional but also argumentative. These logically structured arguments demonstrate an effort to construct a more rational and structured opinion.

This study also found a combination of rhetorical strategies within a single comment. Pathos and logos were the most dominant, as netizens tended to combine emotion with logical reasoning. Emotions were used to strengthen responses to the policies discussed, while logical arguments were used to explain the reasoning behind those opinions.

The combination of Ethos and Pathos demonstrates that credibility is combined with an emotional approach in delivering comments. Netizens use references to figures, self-identity, and personal experiences to build trust, then reinforce it through expressions of hope, support, and confidence. This combination demonstrates that persuasion in digital communication is built not only through reputation but also through emotional closeness.

The combination of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos demonstrates a more complex argumentative structure. Netizens build credibility, convey emotion, and construct logical reasoning simultaneously within a single comment. The use of these three rhetorical elements demonstrates that digital comments can incorporate various persuasive strategies within a single language.

Patterns of Netizen Rhetorical Strategy Use

Data analysis shows that Ethos, Pathos, and Logos are used regularly in netizen comments. This regularity is evident not only in the types of strategies used but also in the way the three elements are arranged within a single comment. These patterns can be understood through the theoretical framework of rhetoric, which outlines the three main elements of persuasion: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, as proposed by Aristotle.

In the context of research data, these three elements do not always appear separately, but rather form certain patterns that indicate how netizens construct arguments in communication. These patterns are described as follows.

The pattern of use of Pathos is evident through the use of emotional words, exclamations, complaints, sarcasm, sympathy, and rhetorical questions. Comments in this pattern tend to be brief and directly express feelings without lengthy logical explanations. This pattern indicates that netizens prioritize conveying emotions in responding to the issues discussed.

The combination pattern of Pathos and Logos indicates that emotional expressions are often accompanied by logical reasoning. Comments typically begin with an expression of emotion, followed by an explanation in the form of a cause-and-effect relationship or comparison to support the opinion expressed. This pattern demonstrates that netizens not only express feelings but also strive to provide rational reasons.

The combination pattern of Ethos and Pathos demonstrates the relationship between credibility and emotion in a single comment. Netizens build trust through self-identity, personal experiences, or references to figures, then reinforce this with hope, prayer, support, and belief. This pattern indicates that emotions are used to strengthen the legitimacy of the opinions expressed.

The combination pattern of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos demonstrates a more complete form of argumentation. In this pattern, credibility, emotion, and logic appear simultaneously in a single comment, forming a more complex argumentative

structure. This type of comment structure demonstrates netizens' ability to combine various rhetorical elements within a single line of communication.

The use of Logos is evident in comments that focus on logical relationships between ideas. Netizens use cause-and-effect relationships, comparisons, and rational reasoning to explain a policy and its impact on society. Comments in this pattern tend to be argumentative and focus more on logical explanations than emotional expression.

This study did not find a combination pattern of Ethos and Logos without the presence of Pathos. These findings indicate that emotional elements are almost always present in netizen comments. Credibility and logic are not used separately from emotion, but rather are interconnected in constructing arguments in the digital space.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the rhetorical strategies used by netizens in the KompasTV YouTube comment section combine elements of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos, either singly or in combination. Pathos is dominated by emotional expressions such as exclamations, complaints, sympathy, and sarcasm, while Ethos builds credibility through self-identity and references to figures. This is evidenced by the fact that netizens tend to combine emotion and logic in conveying their opinions. Pathos and Logos are the most frequently used combination. Therefore, the KompasTV YouTube comment section has transformed into a space where netizens construct logical, emotional, and credible arguments.

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