

Acclaim Strategies in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate

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Abstract

This study examines the use of policy-based and character-based acclaims in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate from the standpoint of Benoit's Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse. The objective of the research is to examine the distribution of past deeds and future plans within policy-based acclaims, as well as personal qualities and ideals within character-based acclaims. Utilizing data obtained from two official mayoral debate sessions conducted during the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election, a quantitative content analysis methodology was implemented. The candidate utterances were coded according to the categories of policy-based and character-based acclaims, forming the unit of analysis. Krippendorff's Alpha was employed to evaluate intercoder reliability, which was found to be satisfactory to high. The result indicated that policy-based acclaims utilized future plans significantly more frequently than past deeds. In character-based acclaims, personal qualities were more frequently cited than ideals. During the debate, candidates primarily rely on future-oriented policy proposals and demonstrations of competence and leadership ability to construct positive self-representations and obtain voter support, according to these findings. This investigation enhances comprehension of political communication strategies utilized during regional election debates in Indonesia.

Keywords: Functional Theory, Political Debate, Acclaims

INTRODUCTION

Democracy is the exercise of popular power. General elections are one way that Indonesian democracy is expressed (*Pemilu*). According to (Wiwid, 2024) political party policies that align with voter traits are critical to the success of political campaigns when they enter the voter market phase. Undoubtedly, each contender has a successful communication plan to engage and win over voters. Success in debates is one method to demonstrate this. In reality, public debates are persuasive in nature, aiming to sway voters' attitudes and beliefs. (RODERICK P.1997) assert that discussions minimize too partisan remarks, enhance campaign discourse, and act as a model for public conversation. Debates draw the audience's attention to a topic and encourage discussion (Benoit, 1999). Political debates have existed in Indonesia since the reform era. Since the 2004 presidential election, they have been an official component of elections, and they have since been modified for regional elections (Ketut Rahma Pratiwi Shanti et al., n.d.). As stated by (Oluwateniola Oluwabukola Ajilore, 2014), voters watch debates for 3 reasons: to learn about the candidate's priorities, to compare their personalities, and to get information for making decisions.

In Indonesia, regional head elections are conducted every 5 years, as mandated under law No. 10 of 2016 regarding the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors. During elections, citizens exercise their democratic rights by voting for the political candidates or parties of their choice. An essential part of the voting process is debate. Candidates can formally present their vision, mission, policy agendas, and professional credentials during these discussions. Moreover, they give candidates a chance to show off their leadership skills and convince voters of their ability to lead successfully (Rosyida & Kurniawan, 2023). In debates, candidates are required to respond spontaneously while answering with a consistent strategy. Positive self-representation is crucial in this context. In order to create a positive impression among voters, politicians frequently emphasize their own accomplishments, talents, and policy capabilities rather than depending on combative rhetoric (William L. Benoit, 1999). In addition, prior research on political debate discourse in Indonesia has shown that candidates frequently employ positive communication methods to enhance their political image and secure voter confidence. The research underscores that policy-oriented declarations and self-representations significantly influence public perception in electoral discussions (Welda Yulia, 2021). Functional Theory has been extensively utilised to analyse political campaign speech, with prior research predominantly concentrating on the three primary campaign functions: acclaims, attacks, and defences (Benoit, 1999). Additional research has investigated policy-based and character-based speech in presidential election discussions (Benoit et al., 2010) and affirmative political communication in Indonesian regional election debates (Welda Yulia, 2021; Shanti et al., 2025). Nonetheless, research investigating the allocation of specific subcategories of acclaims, namely past deed, future plans, personal qualities, and ideals in Indonesian regional election discussions is scarce, especially at the municipal tier. The 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate exemplifies this divide, with five competing candidate pairs and concentrating on policy matters like education, public infrastructure, and community welfare. These traits provide a significant framework for analysing how candidates strategically utilised policy-oriented and character-oriented arguments during a local election discussion. This study utilises quantitative text analysis to investigate the prevalence of policy-based and character-based acclaims in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate, aiming to discern the predominant kinds of positive self-presentation employed by candidates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content Analysis

Content analysis for a long time has been recognized as a methodical and trustworthy approach to studying political communication, including television debates and campaign ads (Krippendorff, 2004). B Devi Prasad cites Berelson's definition of content analysis, is "An objective, systematic, and quantitative description of visible content". 3 fundamental concepts are emphasized in this definitions : objectivity, systematization, and quantification. Campaign communications can be categorized, their frequency can be measured, and prevailing communicative patterns can be found using content analysis in political research. (Pieniążek-Niemczuk, 2024) argue that content analysis is particularly advantageous in political debate research as it enables scholars to objectively and methodically investigate reoccurring themes, communication tactics, and policy-related messages in political fields.

Additionally, content analysis enables researchers to break down debates or communicating campaigns into quantifiable parts such as words, propositions, or thematic subjects. This enables the systematics comparison of the frequency with which candidates discuss policies, accomplishments, or personal attributes, as well as the

identification of trends in messaging strategies used during debates. In Indonesia, content analysis has been used in regional debates to examine how candidates prioritize different policy areas. For instance, (Mulantara et al., 2025) showed that candidates regularly emphasized policy accomplishments to build credibility, illustrating the usefulness of systematic content coding for comprehending campaign strategy.

Researchers are able to systematically identify recurring communication patterns and classify them into meaningful analytical categories through content analysis, which is particularly well-suited for the study of political debates. In political debates, a significant number of utterances are present that reflect the strategies of candidates for persuading voters, presenting policy agendas, and constructing public images. In order to ascertain the most frequently employed communication strategies, researchers can conduct an objective and quantitative examination of these utterances through content analysis. In addition, the method enables the identification of dominant patterns of political discourse within a debate setting by allowing for comparisons between categories and candidates (Krippendorff, 2004).

Another benefit of content analysis is its capacity to convert qualitative communication into quantifiable data. Statistical analysis can be conducted on statements made during political debates by coding them according to predefined categories. This procedure enables researchers to transcend subjective interpretations and generate empirical findings concerning the distribution of particular communication strategies. In media and political communication research, content analysis is particularly beneficial because it allows scholars to systematically analyse large volumes of communication while maintaining methodological rigour, as per (Macnamara, n.d.). As a result, content analysis has become one of the most frequently employed methodologies for the examination of electoral debates, political advertising, and campaign messages.

Moreover, content analysis enhances the transparency and dependability of political communication research. Researchers can enhance the consistency of their findings and reduce subjectivity by implementing intercoder reliability procedures and classifying categories that are clearly defined. This feature is particularly significant in the context of political discourse research, as it may lead to varying interpretations of the intent and significance of candidate statements. Researchers can compare findings and replicate analyses across various political contexts and electoral settings by employing standardised classification procedures.

Functional Theory

Political campaign communication has been extensively studied through the lens of Functional Theory constructed by William L. Benoit. According to Functional Theory, acclaim, attack, and defence are the 3 primary strategic purposes of campaign discourse (William L. Benoit, 2000). Positive remarks that emphasize a candidate's accomplishments, strengths, or proposed policies are referred to as acclaims. Defences are reactions to counter critiques, while attacks involve criticisms aimed at opponents. This theory holds that campaign messages are tactical tools intended to gain voter preference rather than haphazard rhetorical statements.

According to (Benoit, 2000), acclaims are more frequently used by candidates than attacks or defences since they highlight their favourable qualities. Candidates will be viewed poorly by the public when they disparage other candidates. The audience may get disenchanted with the candidates as a result. On the other hand, candidates will appear more favourable when they compliments themselves. The most common strategy, according to numerous television studies, is acclaims. For instance, Benoit and Harthcock (1999) discovered that in order to appear favourable to the audience during the 1960 U.S.

presidential debates, candidates frequently talked about their advantages. In a similar vein, Wei-Chun Wen & Tzu-hsiang Yu (2007) discovered that acclaims were used more frequently than attacks and defences in the 2004 Taiwanese political debate. This finding further demonstrates the significance of positive self-representation in political debates. Similarly, Yun Son Choi & William L. Benoit (2013) demonstrated that Functional Theory was also applicable in the 2007 and 2012 French Presidential Debates, suggesting that candidates in various political systems heavily relied on positive self-presentation strategies.

The strategic significance of positive self-representation in campaign discourse is illustrated by the prevalence of acclaims in various political contexts. Functional Theory implies that candidates are generally more inclined to emphasize their own advantages and qualifications than to engage in attacks or defences, as positive messages are less likely to provoke negative reactions from voters (Benoit, 2000). Acclaims facilitate the communication of candidates' leadership qualities, policy priorities, and competence, while concurrently establishing a positive public image. Consequently, political debates frequently become characterised by positive self-representation, particularly when candidates are attempting to gain the trust and credibility of undecided voters. The consistent dominance of acclaims in presidential and regional election debates indicates that candidates regard positive campaign discourse as a successful method of influencing voter perceptions and increasing electoral support (Wei-Chun Wen & Tzu-hsiang Yu, 2007).

Functional theory makes it easier to comprehend what candidates are discussing during Indonesian elections. In contrast to the presidential debates in the United States, local elections in Indonesia more often focus on schools, roads, and community assistance. Mulantara et al., 2025, shows that in order to gain voters' trust and competence, candidates usually rely on policy-based acclaims. In a similar vein, examining the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate enables an unbiased evaluation of the candidates' employment of policy-oriented acclaims, exposing the subjects that are prioritized and the frequency with which self-presentation strategies are used.

Policy-Based Acclaim and Character-Based Acclaim

Acclaims may concentrate on either policy or character within Functional Theory. Positive statements regarding public programmes, governmental actions, and policy proposals are referred to as policy-based acclaims. Policy-based acclaims are frequently classified into two categories : past deeds and future plans, as stated in (Benoit, 2000). Past deeds are statements that highlights a candidate's prior accomplishments, successes, or actions. Candidates endeavour to establish credibility, effectiveness, and competence by referencing their prior achievements. On the other hand, future plans are statements that delineate the policies, programmes, or actions that candidates intend to implement if they are elected . Candidates attempt to convince electors that they have a clear vision for future development and practical solutions to public issues by presenting future plans.

Character-based acclaims emphasize the personal qualities and principles of political candidates. Benoit (2000) divides character-based acclaims into personal qualities and ideals. Personal qualities are statements that emphasize leadership capabilities, experience, competence, integrity, or other positive individual attributes. These statements are employed to strengthen public confidence in a candidate's ability to effectively govern. Ideals are statements that articulate the values, principles, beliefs, or commitments that inform a candidate's political vision and decision-making. Candidates endeavour to establish credibility among electors and cultivate a positive political image by employing personal qualities and ideals (Benoit & Benoit Wayne, 2017).

Therefore, this study focuses on policy and character-based acclaims in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election debate, because they give candidates to highlight their achievements, demonstrate competence, and communicate policy priorities to voters in a positive and strategic manner.

The following research questions are developed to direct the analysis of the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate based on the study's focus, which examines how candidates present themselves positively through their policy and character ideas :

RQ1 : how are policy-based acclaims employed through past deeds and future plans by candidates in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate?

RQ2 : how are character-based acclaims employed through personal qualities and ideals by candidates in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate?

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative content analysis methodology to investigate the strategic use of policy-based and character-based acclaims during the 2024 Bengkulu Mayoral Debates. This method is used as it enables the researcher to systematically detect, categorize, and quantify patterns of political speech in debate communication. Content analysis effectively organizes textual material into significant categories and reveals repeating communication patterns, rendering it especially appropriate for the analysis of political debate speech (Hsiu-Fang Hsieh, 2005).

The data comprises all vocal utterances made by the 5 candidate pairs included in the official 2024 Bengkulu Mayoral Debates. This research examines 2 debate sessions conducted by the Bengkulu City Election Commission (KPU Kota Bengkulu). The first dataset was obtained from a debate broadcast through the official KPU Kota Bengkulu YouTube channel on 8 November 2024, while the second dataset was obtained from a debate broadcast through RRI NET Bengkulu's YouTube channel on 16 November 2024. The unit of analysis in this study is the utterances, defined as a full sentence or statement that has a distinct communication aim. Every statement is analysed according to its discourse function and policy related substance. This study primarily examines policy-based acclaims and character-based acclaims, adhering to William L. Benoit's Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse (William L. Benoit, 1999). A total of 1,012 utterances were identified and coded from two debate sessions. These utterances served as the dataset for the analysis of the distribution of character-based and policy-based acclaims during the debates.

Table 1. Operational Indicators for Coding Categories

Category	Operational Definition	Example of Utterance
Past Deeds	The utterance refers to completed actions, previous achievements, or implemented policies	"Kami telah membangun infrastruktur di berbagai wilayah Kota Bengkulu."
Future Plans	The utterance contains future-oriented commitments, promise, or proposed programs to be implemented if elected	"Kami akan fokus menurunkan angka kemiskinan dan menciptakan lapangan pekerjaan baru."

Personal Qualities	The utterance emphasizes the candidate's competence, expertise, experience, leadership ability, or credibility	<i>"Dengan pengalaman saya menjadi distributor produk UKM Bengkulu di Eropa, saya memahami besar peluang yang dapat kita optimalkan untuk memajukan ekonomi Bengkulu."</i>
Ideals	The utterance expresses values, principles, commitments, vision, or moral beliefs rather than concrete policy proposals	<i>"Kami menjamin bahwa setiap warga Kota Bengkulu akan dapat menjalankan ibadahnya sesuai dengan kepercayaan masing-masing dengan saling toleransi dan menjaga kerukunan umat beragama."</i>

The operational indicators listed in Table 1 served as the classification guidelines for the duration of the content analysis process. Only one category was assigned to each utterances, which was determined by its predominant communicative function. In order to guarantee consistency, objectivity, and replicability among analysts during the coding process, the coding categories were modified from Benoit's Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse.

In order to guarantee consistency in coding, we classified each utterance using predetermined operational indicators that were derived from Benoit's functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse. Character-based acclaims were classified into Personal Qualities and Ideals, while policy-based acclaims were categorised into Past Deeds and Future Plans. To ensure that each utterance was objectively assigned to only one category based on its dominant communicative function, the coding procedure adhered to explicit operational definitions.

To guide the coding procedure, this study utilizes a theoretical framework to categorize discourse according to its communicative purpose. This study focuses on acclaims, which are favourable remarks made by candidates to highlight achievement, competences, policy suggestions, and governance tactics. The study examines how policy-based acclaims employ previous actions and future intentions, whereas character-based acclaims use personal traits and values. In order to comprehend how candidates create good self-presentations throughout the debate, the results are then analysed.

Three coders worked together to ensure uniformity and decrease subjectivity during the coding process. Intercoder reliability was determined using Klaus Krippendorff's Alpha, which is suited for nominal data and numerous coders (Klaus Krippendorff, 2007). An Alpha value of 0.80 or greater implies good dependability, whereas values over 0.667 are deemed acceptable. The reliability test findings showed that all variables had alpha values higher than permissible threshold, ranging from 0.725 to 0.892. This implies that the coding procedure had a good to high level of consistency across coders, implying that the coding system was clear and dependable enough for future investigation.

Subsequently, the coded data were inserted into the JASP statistical software for analysis. In order to investigate the distribution of character-based and policy-based acclaims, descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were initially generated. In addition, multinomial tests were implemented to determine whether the observed distribution of categories deviated markedly from the anticipated distribution. The researcher was able to identify patterns in the positive self-presentation strategies of candidates during the debates as a result of the systematic analysis and presentation of the coded data facilitated by the use of JASP.

This methodology begins by analysing the frequency of past-deeds and future-plans within policy-based acclaims. Then study analysed the occurrence of personal qualities as well as ideals within the character-based acclaims. The results are interpreted to understand how candidates employ positive self-presentation strategies during the debate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Frequency of Past Deeds and Future-Plans in Policy-Based Acclaims

Policy	Observed	Expected: Multinomial
Future Plans	326	181.0
Past Deeds	36	181.0

Table 1 presents the distribution of policy-based acclaims employed by candidates during the 2024 Bengkulu regional Election Debate. The result suggest that future plans were implemented significantly more frequently than past deeds. Out of the 362 policy-based utterances that were identified, 326 statements (90.05%) were classified as future plans, while only 36 statements (9.95%) were classified as past deeds. A multinomial test was conducted to examine the distribution of policy-based acclaims. The findings showed a statistically significant difference $\chi^2(1) = 232.30$, $p < .001$. During the debate candidates tended to emphasize future policy proposals and scheduled programmes rather than previous governmental achievements, as indicated by this discovery.

Candidates' reliance on prospective policy commitments and development agendas as a persuasive strategy during the debate is indicated by the predominance of future plans. Candidates frequently discussed programmes, initiatives, and solutions that they intended to implement if elected, rather than emphasizing their accomplishments that has already been achieved. This pattern suggests that the candidates endeavoured to present themselves as forward-thinking leaders who were capable of addressing public concerns and enhancing the welfare of Bengkulu Citizens through future actions. Future-oriented discourse may be particularly effective in the context of local elections, as voters frequently anticipate that candidates will provide concrete solutions to established social, economic, and infrastructural issues.

This tendency is also evident in numerous debate statements. Candidates frequently employed future-oriented statements by proposing programmes and policy initiatives that would be implemented if they were elected. For instance, Candidate 2 said. "*Kami akan fokus menurunkan angka kemiskinan dan menciptakan lapangan pekerjaan baru*" and "*Kami akan fokus Pembangunan dimulai dari RT guna pemerataan Pembangunan.*". These statements demonstrate that Candidate 2 prioritized future actions and policy commitments over previous governmental outcomes. In the same vein, other candidates frequently used phrases such as "*Akan membangun*", and "*Akan meningkatkan*", and "*Kami akan*" when discussing public services, infrastructure, and community welfare

programmes. Candidates' attempts to persuade electors by presenting solutions and development plans for Bengkulu City are illustrated by these utterances, which constitute a future-oriented communication strategy.

The nature of regional election campaigns in Indonesia, where voters frequently anticipate that candidates will present practical and forward-thinking solutions to local issues, may also contribute to the predominance of future plans. Economic development, employment opportunities, public services, and infrastructure enhancement are frequently the primary concerns during local elections. As a result, candidates may find future-oriented policy proposals to be more persuasive than references to past accomplishments. Candidates can convey a sense of preparedness and responsiveness to public requirements by presenting detailed programmes and development agendas. This approach enables candidates to exhibit their dedication to resolving the obstacles encountered by local communities, in addition to their policy vision. Functional Theory contends that candidates are afforded opportunities to communicate solutions and exhibit their capacity to resolve public concerns through future plans.

A potential rationale for the prevalence of future ambitions is rooted in the subject emphasis of the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate. The discourse mostly focused on education, public infrastructure, and community welfare, necessitating candidates to present specific policies and pragmatic answers to local challenges. As a result, candidates were more inclined to utilise future-oriented remarks to articulate their policy agendas and exhibit their preparedness to meet the objectives of Bengkulu City. This discovery aligns with Benoit's Functional Theory, which designates future plans as a policy-oriented acclaim tactic wherein candidates advocate for suggested initiatives and portray themselves as adept at addressing public issues. The prevalence of future plans may indicate not just politicians' persuasive tactics but also the policy-driven structure and thematic emphasis of the discussion.

In contrast, the debate featured a significantly lower frequency of past deeds. This result indicates that candidates were less inclined to rely on their prior accomplishments as a means of presenting a positive self-image. Rather, candidates seemed to prioritize future-oriented policy discourse by emphasizing proposed programmes, development agendas, and solutions to public concerns. Candidates may have been able to more directly address voter expectations and communicate their vision for Bengkulu City by emphasizing future plans. As a result, the primary form of policy-based acclaim during the debate was future-oriented policy proposals. This finding is consistent with Benoit & Benoit Wayne, which suggest that future plans are commonly used by candidates to communicate solutions and demonstrate their ability to address public concerns.

Table 3. Frequency of Personal Qualities and ideals in Character-Based Acclaims

Character	Observed	Expected: Multinomial
Ideals	50	69.50
Personal Qualities & Leadership Ability	89	69.50

The distribution of character-based acclaims employed by candidates during the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate is illustrated in Table 2. The result suggest that personal qualities and leadership ability were used more frequently than ideals. Of the 139 character-based utterances identified, 89 statements (64.03%) were classified as personal qualities and leadership ability, while 50 statements (35.97%) were classified as ideals. Additionally, a multinomial test was implemented to investigate the distribution of character-based acclaims. The result indicated a statistically significant difference

between the two character categories, with a $\chi^2(1) = 10.94$, $p < .001$, it was more common to employ personal qualities.

The majority of personal qualities and leadership ability indicates that the candidates regarded individual competence and leadership capability as significant persuasive resources during the debate. Candidates frequently emphasized qualities that could bolster their credibility and illustrate their capacity to govern, rather than exclusively emphasizing abstract values or ideological commitments. This pattern is evident in numerous debate statements. For example, Candidate 3 declared, “*Kebetulan Mbak Agi ini seorang arsitek. Tentunya terkait infrastuktur, beliauah ahlinya*” emphasizing the potential for cooperation in the field of infrastructure. In the same vein, Candidate 5 emphasized his role in the development of local culture by asserting that he was one of the pioneers of *Kebek palak*, a cultural symbol of Bengkulu. This statement presents Candidate 5 as an accomplished and dedicated leader by highlighting his personal engagement and commitment to local cultural development. Candidates sought to establish trustworthiness and reinforce their image as competent and experienced leaders by emphasizing their professional qualification, expertise, and personal involvement in community and cultural initiatives. These statements suggest an attempt to persuade electors by showcasing leadership experience and competence, rather than relying solely on appeals to values and principles.

The significance of candidate-centered politics in regional elections may be indicated by the emphasize on personal qualities and leadership ability. In addition to evaluating policy proposals, electors frequently evaluate the competence, experience, and leadership skills of candidates to determine their ability to govern effectively. Therefore, candidates may perceive it as advantageous to emphasize their professional credentials, accomplishments, and personal contributions to society. By presenting themselves as effective individuals who are prepared to assume leadership responsibilities, such statements enable candidates to establish credibility and cultivate trust among voters. This discovery implies that character-based appeals in local election debates are not merely symbolic, rather they are crucial tools for enhancing public perceptions of the competence and reliability of candidates.

This discovery is in accordance with Ketut Rahma Pratiwi Shanti et al. (2025), who discovered that candidates in the South Kalimantan Regional Election Debate attributes, such as leadership skills and knowledge, to influence voters’ opinions and establish positive impressions. the similarity between the two studies indicates that candidates in Indonesian regional election debates frequently rely on competence-based character appeals to enhance public confidence in their leadership capabilities and strengthen credibility.

CONCLUSION

This study employed Benoit’s Functional Theory of Political Campaign Discourse to investigate the utilization of policy-based and character-based acclaims in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate. The research revealed that future plans were utilized significantly more frequently (326 utterances) than past deeds in policy-based acclaims. This indicates that candidates tended to emphasize proposed programmes, development, agendas, and future solutions rather than relying on previous achievements when constructing positive self-image during the debate.

Personal qualities and leadership ability were employed significantly more frequently (89 utterances) than ideals in character-based acclaims. This discovery suggests that candidates were more likely to emphasize their competence, expertise, experience, and leadership capabilities than their broader values and principles in order to establish credibility and secure voter support.

In general, the findings indicate that the most effective strategies employed by candidates in the 2024 Bengkulu Regional Election Debate were future-oriented policy proposals and demonstration of leadership ability. These results contribute to expanding corpus of research on political campaign discourse by offering empirical evidence from and Indonesian regional election context, notably in relation to the internal categories of policy-based and character-based acclaims.

The result of this study also offer theoretical support for Functional Theory by illustrating that candidates primarily employed positive self-representation strategies during the debate. Candidates were more inclined to emphasize future policy commitments and leadership-related attributes, rather than emphasizing previous accomplishments or abstract values. These patterns indicate that persuasive communication during regional election campaigns is significantly influenced by both leadership credibility and policy vision. In addition, the study contributes to the expanding corpus of political communication research in Indonesia by offering empirical evidence on the utilization of policy-based and character-based acclaims in the context of local electoral debates.

In order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of political communication strategies in Indonesian electoral debates, future studies may expand the scope of analysis by comparing the use of acclaim strategies across different regional election debates, examining variations between incumbents and challengers, or incorporating attacks and defence messages.

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