
Relational Authority and Gendered Style Shifting in Indonesian Women Leaders' Public Communication

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Abstract

Research on language and gender has often treated relationality and directness as contrasting styles, which can obscure how women leaders coordinate them within the same institutional encounter. This study examines three Indonesian women in executive office in comparable Metro TV interviews hosted by the same interviewer. The corpus comprises approximately 191 minutes of broadcast material. A theory-informed comparative qualitative discourse analysis treats gender associations as historical sensitizing meanings rather than properties of linguistic forms. A documented screening process reduced 477 timestamped blocks to 172 provisional segments, 74 contextually adequate candidate utterances, and 37 focal utterances for close analysis. The analysis separates observable linguistic evidence, sequential pragmatic inference, and institutional interpretation. Across the three cases, relational, mitigating, evidential, direct, and controlling resources are coordinated as calibrated expertise, bounded solidarity, and relational resolve. These are case configurations rather than domain effects or general traits of women leaders. The discussion proposes context-indexed gendered hybridity as a provisional analytic construct only when contrasting historically gender-indexed resources are sequentially linked to the same institutional task. The study contributes a transparent, context-sensitive account of gendered style shifting in Indonesian public leadership communication.

Keywords: gendered discourse; women leaders; relational authority; style shifting; Indonesia

A. INTRODUCTION

Women in political and administrative leadership face a communicative double bind that makes public authority unusually difficult to perform. They must sound decisive enough to satisfy conventional leadership expectations while remaining relational enough to meet expectations of warmth, care, and social accessibility. A forceful style may be read as competent yet cold, whereas qualification or empathy may be misrecognized as uncertainty. Role congruity theory explains this tension as a perceived mismatch between feminine expectations and leader prototypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Recent organizational evidence confirms that women leaders use dominant language extensively, but audience responses remain conditioned by gendered and racialized stereotypes (Dupree, 2024). The analytical

problem is therefore not whether women speak relationally or authoritatively, but how those resources are combined to make authority acceptable and effective in a particular encounter.

Early language and gender scholarship made the political effects of linguistic stereotypes visible by identifying recurrent forms associated with women's speech. Lakoff (1975) foregrounded hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, specialized adjectives, and heightened politeness as signs of women's subordinate social position. O'Barr and Atkins (1980) subsequently showed that many such forms were better explained by institutional status and experience than by sex alone. Coates (2016) likewise emphasizes that questions, hedges, directives, taboo terms, politeness, and supportive responses acquire meaning through conversational context and social relations. Cameron (2005) warns that binary accounts exaggerate difference and conceal substantial within-group and within-speaker variation. In the present study, labels such as relational, mitigating, direct, or controlling are therefore descriptive of interactional resources, while any association with femininity or masculinity is treated only as a historically documented indexical meaning in earlier scholarship, not as an intrinsic property of a form or a prediction about women and men. This distinction prevents the coding scheme from reproducing the gender binary it is intended to examine.

A practice-based approach explains why the same form may perform contrasting actions across situations. A hedge may express uncertainty, protect another person's face, mark scientific caution, or prepare a strong recommendation, while an imperative may dominate an interlocutor, enforce a lawful procedure, mobilize a collective, or protect a vulnerable citizen. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) locate identity in relational positioning, and Eckert (2008) similarly treats linguistic variables as capable of carrying fields of social meanings rather than fixed category labels. Style-shifting scholarship further shows that speakers reorganize linguistic resources in relation to audience, topic, stance, and local identity work (Bell, 1984; Coupland, 2007). Political discourse research also demonstrates that style choices can be strategic rather than merely responsive to formality (Hernández-Campoy & Cutillas-Espinosa, 2010). The present study therefore distinguishes observable linguistic form, sequential pragmatic function, and institutional interpretation before considering whether a resource carries a gendered history.

This functional distinction matters because relationality and authority need not operate as opposites in women's leadership discourse. Baxter (2010) shows that women leaders combine relational and transactional strategies to accomplish professional and interpersonal goals, while Morikawa (2019) demonstrates systematic intra-speaker style shifting among women in feminist discourse rather than a stable women's style. Pullen and Vachhani (2021) similarly argue that feminist leadership should not be defined merely as a softer alternative to a masculine norm of command. Political speech research indicates that women leaders can foreground welfare, lived experience, and social responsibility while still advancing national and institutional claims (Dada et al., 2021). These studies establish that mixed or shifting resources are not novel by themselves. The unresolved analytical problem is narrower: under what conditions do resources with contrasting historical gender indexicalities become functionally interdependent within one local institutional task? This question provides the conceptual boundary for the construct developed later in the article.

The need for situated analysis is especially strong in Indonesia and the wider Global South, where leadership is shaped by distinct political, religious, organizational, and cultural histories. Nartey (2024a) calls for research that centers locally meaningful forms of voice, agency, solidarity, and empowerment rather than universalizing Western gender models. Studies from Barbados, Ghana, and Nigeria show that women political leaders construct agency and collective belonging through culturally specific combinations of decisive and affiliative discourse (Igwebuike & Chimunya, 2024; Nartey, 2024b; Sarfo-Kantankah et al., 2024). Indonesian studies reveal competing constructions of femininity and leadership, including pressures to maintain virtue, social acceptance, and professional authority at the same time

(Oktaviani et al., 2021; Oktaviani, 2024). Research on Indonesian academic leaders also identify an organizational double bind between authority and culturally acceptable femininity (Arquisola et al., 2020). What remains underexplored is the turn by turn linguistic work through which Indonesian women officials manage these pressures during extended public questioning.

Extended television interviews provide a productive site for addressing this gap because they expose leadership talk to questioning, clarification, disagreement, and narrative development. Unlike short speeches or isolated social media posts, the format shows how a leader revises a stance, protects a turn, responds to pressure, and connects personal experience with institutional responsibility. A shared host and program format also permit comparison without assuming that every contrast originates in gender. At the same time, differences in topic make visible how communicative resources are reorganized when the central task changes from explaining evidence to defending procedure or protecting citizens. The comparison can therefore identify recurring relations among mitigation, relationality, directness, and authority while preserving the local sequence that gives each relation meaning. This approach addresses both an empirical gap in Indonesian leadership discourse and a methodological gap in research that classifies features before establishing what speakers accomplish with them.

This study compares interviews with Stella Christie, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, and Retno Marsudi across science and education, public finance, and diplomacy. The interviews belong to the same television franchise and use the same host, which stabilizes genre while preserving meaningful variation in issue, accountability pressure, and interactional task. The comparison is case-configurational: because each speaker is nested within one institutional domain, differences are not treated as evidence that a domain causes a particular style, nor are the cases used to generalize to women leaders as a population. The study provisionally uses the term context-indexed gendered hybridity for sequences in which resources carrying contrasting historical gender associations are functionally coordinated toward the same institutional task. The construct is deliberately narrower than general style shifting or discourse hybridity and is evaluated against explicit necessary conditions and negative cases. Empirically, the article contributes detailed Indonesian evidence; methodologically, it replaces feature counting with layered interpretation of form, sequence, and institutional context. The research asks how the three leaders coordinate relational, mitigating, direct, and controlling resources, what pragmatic work those combinations perform, and how the resulting case configurations make public authority intelligible in the selected encounters.

B. METHOD

The study adopts a theory-informed comparative qualitative discourse design with a constructionist view of gender. Gendered meanings are treated as socially available interpretations that speakers may reproduce, modify, or resist rather than as direct expressions of biological sex. Coates's interactional categories guide initial attention, but function-based coding permits patterns that do not fit a fixed binary inventory. Consistent with Cameron (2005), Bucholtz and Hall (2005), and Eckert (2008), the analysis treats historical gender associations as sensitizing indexical meanings, not as coding outcomes. Cases are first interpreted within their own interactional sequences and only then compared across interviews. Because each focal speaker represents a different policy domain, the design cannot identify a causal domain effect; terms such as science communication, financial accountability, and diplomacy are contextual descriptors of the three cases. Since every focal speaker is a woman, the study also makes no statistical or causal claim about sex differences.

The corpus consists of three publicly available Indonesian television interviews from the Metro TV Kick Andy franchise, all hosted by Andy F. Noya. Purposive case selection holds the program format and interviewer relatively constant while maximizing variation in institutional problem and accountability pressure. The Stella Christie episode addresses

artificial intelligence, learning, and national research capacity; the Sri Mulyani Indrawati episode addresses misconduct, trust, evidence, and ministerial accountability; and the Retno Marsudi episode addresses diplomacy, Palestine, citizen protection, sovereignty, and women in diplomatic work. The official episodes and the supplied timestamped transcripts indicate approximate full-episode durations of 68, 59, and 64 minutes, respectively, for a corpus of about 191 minutes. Duration is reported only to delimit the corpus and is not used as a denominator for speaker comparisons.

Table 1. Data sources and analytical context

Speaker and public role	Broadcast source and duration	Policy context	Analytical pressure
Stella Christie, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology	Metro TV, Kick Andy, Prof Stella: Otak vs AI, 5 January 2025, about 68 minutes	Artificial intelligence, learning, and research	Translate expertise, calibrate certainty, and correct causal simplification
Sri Mulyani Indrawati, Minister of Finance	Metro TV, Kick Andy Double Check, Tangan Besi Sri Mulyani, 5 March 2023, about 59 minutes	Misconduct, integrity, evidence, and public trust	Answer adversarial questions while defending lawful institutional process
Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Metro TV, Kick Andy Goes to Campus, Penjaga Citra Bangsa, 21 April 2024, about 64 minutes	Diplomacy, Palestine, citizen protection, and sovereignty	Maintain relational access while marking urgent and principled commitments

The supplied working transcripts retained audiovisual timestamps, and Indonesian wording remained the primary analytical text. Obvious recognition errors, filler clusters, and punctuation were lightly normalized only when the intended wording was recoverable from context; ambiguous strings were excluded. The invalid rollover timestamp 23:60 in the Marsudi transcript was normalized to 24:00 for indexing while preserving the underlying sequence. The contextual unit was a complete speaking turn, while the coding unit was a clause or short utterance with a recoverable pragmatic action. To make criterion selection auditable, the full corpus was re-screened during revision. The screening log began with 477 timestamped blocks within the focal-speaker interview windows. A first contextual pass retained 172 provisional segments in which the focal leader produced an interpretable combination of codebook-relevant resources. After removal of repetitions or reformulations, unclear speaker overlap, segments without sufficient adjacent talk, and technical/evidential material that did not bear on the research question, 74 candidate utterances remained. A final maximum-variation reduction selected 37 focal utterances (12 Christie, 13 Indrawati, 12 Marsudi) so that no recurring formulation was overrepresented and each case retained examples of mitigation/relationality, directness/control, evidence, and boundary or obligation work. These counts document the selection process; they are not prevalence estimates.

Table 2. Audit trail for focal-utterance selection

Stage	N	Decision rule	Exclusion / purpose
Corpus screening	477	All blocks in focal-speaker interview windows were reviewed in sequence.	Establishes the complete screening universe; not a frequency measure.
Provisional segments	172	Retain blocks with focal-speaker talk, recoverable pragmatic action, and an interpretable combination of codebook-relevant resources.	Removes host/co-guest-only material, advertisements, incomplete fragments, and non-analytic transitions.
Candidate utterances	74	Retain unique clauses/short utterances with sufficient adjacent talk to establish function.	Removes repetitions/reformulations, unclear overlap, insufficient context, and

Focal utterances	37	Maximum-variation purposive selection across speakers and functions: Christie 12; Indrawati 13; Marsudi 12.	technical material unrelated to the research question. Avoids repeated examples and preserves within-case functional range plus cross-case comparability.
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Table 3. Function-based coding framework

Observable resource	Historical sensitizing association (not a speaker-sex label)	Functional question	Operational interpretation
Hedges and stance markers	Historical association in early literature; not treated as intrinsically feminine	Does the form reduce certainty, calibrate evidence, protect face, or prepare a claim?	Epistemic calibration or interactional mitigation
Politeness and address terms	Historical association with feminine/deferential styles; not treated as sex-specific	Does politeness affiliate, secure access, manage disagreement, or intensify an appeal?	Facework, alignment, or polite directive force
Inclusive pronouns and listening	Relational/communal association in some gender literature; not sex-specific	Who is included, and what responsibility or knowledge does inclusion create?	Relational alignment, collective duty, or relational knowledge
Questions, tags, and particles	Historically variable; function determined from sequence	Does the form invite participation, seek ratification, challenge a premise, or control a turn?	Facilitation, ratification, or frame control
Imperatives, obligation, and direct negation	Historical association with masculine/dominant styles in older inventories; not intrinsically male	Does directness dominate, correct error, enforce procedure, mobilize action, or mark principle?	Directive force, correction, boundary enforcement, or moral obligation
Evidence, quantification, and technical register	No intrinsic gender association	How does knowledge support or limit authority in the local domain?	Evidential and procedural authority
Affect, repetition, and intensification	Gender association varies by inventory; function determined locally	Does intensity express vulnerability, certainty, urgency, or moral scale?	Affective moral stance or rhetorical intensification

Analysis proceeded through four recursive passes informed by reflexive qualitative principles (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The first pass situated each candidate within the preceding question, surrounding turn, topic, and institutional problem. The second identified observable forms and any documented historical gender association without treating that association as the form's present meaning. The third recoded each form by sequential pragmatic function, including epistemic calibration, facework, relational alignment, turn control, evidential authority, directive force, affective moral stance, and boundary enforcement. The fourth compared recurrent configurations across cases and actively sought negative cases, including polite forms that intensified pressure, direct forms that protected collective welfare, and isolated resources that did not form a hybrid configuration. Claims were written at three evidential levels: linguistic evidence reports what is observable in wording; pragmatic inference states what the sequence plausibly accomplishes; institutional interpretation identifies the authority relation that the sequence may support. The final level is therefore framed as interpretation rather than demonstrated institutional consequence.

Credibility was strengthened through repeated transcript reading, timestamped evidence, an explicit codebook, the selection audit trail in Table 2, separation of linguistic form from sequential pragmatic function, and negative-case analysis. Following the primary coding, the second and third authors independently audited the coding framework and the coded focal

utterances. The audit examined whether each coded excerpt showed a recoverable linguistic marker, whether the proposed function was supported by the surrounding turn, and whether the institutional interpretation remained proportionate to the linguistic evidence. The second and third authors reviewed the coding decisions independently before comparison with the first author's analysis. Divergent or ambiguous classifications were then discussed among all three authors and resolved through consensus; items that could not be supported by the surrounding discourse were recoded or excluded. All quotations retained in the reported analysis were also checked against their timestamped source recordings during the final audit, and wording or timestamp discrepancies were corrected against the audiovisual source. This procedure is reported as an independent coding audit and peer debrief rather than as a quantitative intercoder-reliability test.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results show coexistence rather than a speaker-level division between a women's style and a men's style. In the selected utterances, each leader uses relational or mitigating resources alongside direct, evidential, or controlling resources, sometimes within the same turn. The analytically relevant contrast concerns how those resources are sequenced and what local problem they address in each interview. Christie's case is described as calibrated expertise, Indrawati's as bounded solidarity, and Marsudi's as relational resolve. These labels summarize configurations in the selected interviews; they are neither personality traits nor evidence that science, finance, or diplomacy causes a particular linguistic style. Each interpretation below moves explicitly from observable wording to pragmatic inference and then, with appropriate epistemic caution, to an institutional reading of authority.

Stella Christie: Calibrated Expertise

Christie's first recurrent pattern is a calibrated movement from personal stance to public necessity. At 06:25 she says, "Saya rasa ini perlu, Bang Andi" [I think this is necessary, Bang Andi]. The phrase *saya rasa* marks the proposition as an accountable evaluation rather than an unquestionable command, while *perlu* encodes necessity. The address *Bang Andi* maintains interpersonal alignment with the host. Linguistically, mitigation and firmness therefore co-occur within one clause. Pragmatically, the softened opening plausibly reduces interpersonal imposition while keeping the recommendation consequential. At the institutional level, the sequence can be read as presenting scientific authority as calibrated judgment rather than categorical self-certainty.

A related sequence appears when Christie turns a personal proposal into a recommendation for media practice. At 15:10 she states, "Kalau saya boleh usul, Bang Andi, perlu juga di media" [If I may suggest, Bang Andi, the media also need to act]. The conditional *kalau saya boleh usul* frames the intervention as permission seeking, a form historically associated with deference in early gender inventories, while *perlu* marks the proposed action as necessary. The combination challenges prevailing coverage without construing the host as an adversary. Pragmatically, the relational preface appears to secure uptake for a substantive agenda change. The episode therefore supports an interpretation of mitigation as conversational access rather than evidence of weak commitment.

Christie's authority becomes explicitly evidential when she corrects simplified claims about digital technology. At 08:20 she emphasizes that "penelitiannya sangat jelas" and that "angka angkanya sangat jelas" [the research is very clear and the figures are very clear]. Repetition of *sangat jelas* intensifies certainty, while research and figures externalize the warrant. At 08:33 she narrows the inference with "Bukan gadgetnya sendiri, bukan digitalnya sendiri itu jelek" [It is not the gadget itself, nor digital technology itself, that is bad]. Repeated *bukan* performs direct correction, a resource older gender inventories often placed on the

dominant or masculine side of a binary. In sequence, however, the correction follows evidential explanation and targets a causal inference rather than the interlocutor. This pattern is consistent with pedagogic authority grounded in an obligation to clarify evidence.

The inclusive pronoun *kita* links Christie's epistemic authority to shared civic responsibility. At 02:57 she says, "Kalau kita pintar pintar menggunakan alat itu, kita tidak akan kalah" [If we use the tool wisely, we will not lose]. *Kita* affiliates speaker, host, and public, but the conditional structure also makes a favorable outcome dependent on collective competence. At 17:25 she warns that available data are biased and concludes, "kita harus waspada" [we must remain alert]. The particle *kan* invites recognition of a shared premise, whereas *harus* converts recognition into obligation. Her later statement that society must use technology and must also analyze it repeats this affiliative yet deontic pattern at 19:50. Calibrated expertise thus emerges from a sequence in which relational inclusion distributes responsibility, evidence warrants correction, and obligation turns knowledge into public action.

Sri Mulyani Indrawati: Bounded Solidarity

Indrawati's interview places authority under adversarial accountability pressure, making control of sequence a central communicative task. She opens with "Terima kasih undangannya, ya" [Thank you for inviting me] at 03:11, acknowledging the host before difficult questioning. At 23:22, however, she suspends the trajectory with "Tunggu dulu, jadi boleh saya bicara, ya, agak lengkap, ya?" [Wait, may I speak and explain this more fully?]. *Tunggu dulu* directly interrupts the turn, while *boleh saya bicara* recasts control as a permission request and repeated *ya* seeks ratification. The observable evidence therefore combines direct floor management with politeness. Pragmatically, the combination secures space to contest the framing while maintaining interactional accountability. Institutionally, it can be read as a form of answerability rather than as unrestricted dominance.

Once the floor is secured, Indrawati locates decision making in law and evidence rather than personal discretion. At 07:10 she states, "Kita diatur dengan Undang Undang ASN" and rejects arbitrary dismissal with "kan enggak bisa begitu" [we are governed by the State Civil Apparatus Law, so it cannot work that way]. The inclusive *kita* positions the minister inside the constraints applied to the institution, which reduces the appearance of unilateral power. The direct negative *enggak bisa* marks a firm boundary, while *kan* presents the legal premise as shared and reasonable. At 17:34 she makes the epistemic threshold explicit through "data dan bukti itu harus ada" [the data and evidence must be present]. Here *harus* does not simply intensify personal certainty, because it defines the procedural conditions under which guilt can be determined. Her authority is therefore bounded by an evidential order that simultaneously authorizes and limits ministerial action.

Indrawati also constructs command authority through directives that preserve collective identification. At 14:08 she instructs staff, "Tidak boleh merasa bersalah, tidak boleh merasa defensif; kerjakan sesuai mandat undang undang" [Do not feel guilty, do not become defensive; work according to the legal mandate]. The repeated *tidak boleh* prohibits unproductive affect, and the imperative *kerjakan* redirects attention toward lawful performance. At 15:05 she states, "Kalau ada bagian dari kita yang mencederai, kita potong" [If any part of us causes harm, we cut it off]. The cutting metaphor communicates severe sanction, yet *bagian dari kita* places misconduct inside a collective body to which the speaker also belongs. This pairing of inclusion and exclusion creates bounded solidarity, because membership receives protection only while it remains compatible with public trust. Directives associated historically with masculine command are thus reorganized as institutional self discipline rather than personal domination.

Affect in Indrawati's discourse is neither absent nor allowed to displace procedure. At 26:21 she names "rasa kecewa yang mendalam" and "sedikit kemarahan" [profound disappointment and some anger]. The phrase *sedikit kemarahan* acknowledges moral injury

while calibrating anger so that it remains governable. At 39:04 the invitation “Ayo kita bekerja sama untuk mengembalikan kepercayaan ini” [Let us work together to restore this trust] converts affect into collective repair. The hortative *ayo* and inclusive *kita* widen responsibility beyond the minister without dissolving her leadership role. Emotion supplies the moral reason for action, while procedural language supplies its legitimate route. Bounded solidarity therefore links controlled vulnerability, collective mobilization, and enforceable institutional standards.

Indrawati’s metacommunication further makes the gendered evaluative environment relevant inside the interview itself. Around 41:04 and 45:10 she explains that she is not angry although her voice is high, then asks whether she should lower it. The transcript alone cannot establish pitch acoustically, but the speaker explicitly treats vocal force as an object of public interpretation. At 43:18 she challenges the premise with “What is exactly what you try to ask?” followed by an Indonesian reformulation. The counter-question demands precision and resists the interviewer’s framing. Rather than proving that women’s force is universally judged differently, the sequence documents one speaker’s orientation to that possibility in this encounter. It therefore provides case-level evidence of managing an anticipated evaluative double bind.

Retno Marsudi: Relational Resolve

Marsudi’s dominant relational resource is listening, which she presents as an instrument of diplomatic knowledge rather than passive accommodation. At 06:39 she explains, “Dengan mendengarkan kita tahu posisinya, kemudian kita bangun jembatan” [By listening, we understand their position, then we build a bridge]. The initial phrase establishes listening as a condition for knowing another party’s position, and kemudian links that knowledge to bridge building. The inclusive *kita* presents the practice as institutional rather than merely personal. Pragmatically, relational attention is represented as producing information and negotiated access. Institutionally, the sequence supports an interpretation of relationality as professional capacity, while the analysis does not claim that diplomacy itself causes this style.

Marsudi explicitly negotiates a culturally available gender explanation when the host asks whether being a woman shapes her diplomacy. At 05:57 she responds, “Kebetulan saya wanita, apa ya, hal yang mungkin lebih luwes” [I happen to be a woman, how should I put it, perhaps more flexible]. The fillers *apa ya* and the modal *mungkin* delay commitment to a categorical statement about women. This self repair is epistemic and ideological, because it permits recognition of gendered expectations while limiting their universal scope. The utterance neither rejects gender as irrelevant nor treats flexibility as a natural female property. Instead, Marsudi positions femininity as one possible interpretive resource within a larger professional account of listening and negotiation. Her hesitation therefore protects analytical precision and identity autonomy rather than displaying powerless speech.

The limits of flexibility become visible when Marsudi discusses Palestine and national commitment. At 03:54 she says, “Saya mungkin perlu ulang” [I may need to repeat this], a mitigated metadiscursive preface that acknowledges the difficulty of the issue. The sequence then culminates in “tidak, kita tidak akan mundur untuk membela bangsa Palestina” [no, we will not retreat from defending the Palestinian people]. *Mungkin* reduces the imposition of repetition, but the repeated *tidak* closes negotiation over the principled position. The collective *kita* transforms personal conviction into a national moral commitment. Relational management and categorical refusal are consequently not alternating identities but coordinated stages of one diplomatic act. Marsudi’s authority rests on knowing when bridge building should facilitate engagement and when a boundary must remain explicit.

Citizen protection allows Marsudi to connect embodied empathy with a strong account of state obligation. At 19:36 she states, “Mesin perlindungan negara harus lebih besar untuk orang orang kecil” [The machinery of state protection must be greater for people with fewer

resources]. The metaphor enlarges the state's protective capacity, and *harus* makes that expansion a moral requirement. At 20:08 she grounds the requirement in autobiography through “Saya tahu apa rasanya lapar” [I know what hunger feels like] and an account of wanting what she could not buy. Repetition of *saya tahu* claims experiential knowledge without presenting personal suffering as sufficient evidence for every policy conclusion. Instead, lived experience identifies whose vulnerability should remain visible when institutional resources are allocated. Empathy thus supplies the moral object of authority, while obligation translates that object into a duty of the state.

The evacuation account demonstrates that politeness can intensify rather than weaken directive force. At the normalized 24:00–24:18 sequence Marsudi recalls pleading, “Please, please, please, tolong bukakan pintu untuk warga negaraku” [Please, please, please, open the gate for my citizens]. Please and *tolong* are conventional politeness markers, but repetition indexes urgency and accompanies the imperative bukakan. At 24:39 she adds, “Saya tidak pernah lupa untuk merajut pertemanan” [I never forget to weave friendships], presenting prior relational work as a resource for access. On sovereignty at 55:03, repeated *pasti* in “kita pasti akan berdiri” and “kita pasti akan bertahan” [we will certainly stand and endure] marks categorical commitment. Taken together, these sequences support the case label relational resolve: relational access and direct commitment are functionally linked without implying that all diplomatic discourse takes this form.

Cross Case Configuration

Across cases, the same visible feature changes meaning when its sequential environment changes. A hedge calibrates evidence for Christie, manages interactional imposition for Indrawati, and limits a gender generalization for Marsudi. Inclusive kita distributes technological responsibility, places a minister inside institutional discipline, and constructs national solidarity in foreign-policy talk. Direct negation corrects causal misunderstanding, rejects an unlawful shortcut, or marks a non-negotiable moral position. Politeness may preserve affiliation, secure an extended turn, or carry an urgent demand. These contrasts show why feature labels alone cannot establish gendered meaning. A defensible interpretation must specify the observable form, the adjacent action it performs, the participants it aligns or challenges, and the institutional problem to which the action is relevant.

Table 4. Cross-case evidence, pragmatic inference, and institutional interpretation

Speaker	Observable linguistic evidence	Sequential pragmatic inference	Case configuration	Institutional interpretation
Stella Christie	Stance/permission framing, address terms, inclusive kita, correction, evidence, obligation	Mitigation secures uptake; evidence licenses correction; inclusion turns diagnosis into shared duty	Calibrated expertise	Authority is presented as accountable to evidence and public accessibility.
Sri Mulyani Indrawati	Gratitude, permission requests, turn control, legal boundaries, evidence thresholds, calibrated affect	Facework enables extended response; procedure limits discretion; collective language accompanies discipline	Bounded solidarity	Authority is presented as strong but constrained by law, evidence, and institutional membership.
Retno Marsudi	Listening, bridge metaphors, empathy, polite appeal, categorical refusal, obligation, repeated commitment	Relational access supplies knowledge and access; directness marks urgent or principled limits	Relational resolve	Authority is presented as relationally enabled yet capable of non-negotiable protection and commitment.

Table 4 summarizes case configurations rather than domain effects. In Christie's interview, evidence calibration is locally relevant because the interaction repeatedly asks her to translate technical claims and correct causal simplifications. In Indrawati's interview, legal and evidential boundaries become salient while she responds to questions about institutional misconduct and public trust. In Marsudi's interview, listening, friendship, protection, and principled refusal become salient in accounts of diplomatic access and citizen protection. These contextual relations help explain why different resources are foregrounded, but the design cannot disentangle speaker, biography, topic, and institutional domain because one speaker represents each case. Accordingly, the analysis uses formulations such as "in this interview" and "in this case" rather than claiming that science, finance, or diplomacy produces the observed style. The configurations are propositions for subsequent matched-corpus testing, not causal findings.

The central empirical result is a hierarchy of interpretation rather than a new binary taxonomy. At the first level, forms such as *mungkin*, *ya*, *harus*, *tidak*, *kita*, repetition, and direct questions are identified without assuming their social meaning. At the second level, adjacent talk supports pragmatic inferences such as calibration, ratification, correction, turn control, obligation, solidarity, and moral intensification. At the third level, recurrent actions support case-specific institutional interpretations of authority. Historical gender associations are considered only after these levels have been established, preventing circular reasoning in which a form is coded as feminine or masculine and then rediscovered as evidence of femininity or masculinity. In the selected sequences, relationality often creates conditions for direct or evidential action, while directness can protect a purpose established through relationship. This patterned interdependence, rather than simple co-occurrence, is the empirical basis for the provisional construct developed below.

Discussion

The integrated research question is answered at the level of the three selected cases: the leaders coordinate resources that carry contrasting historical gender associations in context-sensitive ways. No case can be described adequately by an inventory of women's language or men's language because mitigation and command can support the same local action. This result is consistent with Coates's (2016) argument that conversational forms must be interpreted through topic, relationship, and power, and with O'Barr and Atkins's (1980) demonstration that supposedly female forms may index institutional position rather than sex. Lakoff's (1975) inventory remains historically important for tracing how particular forms acquired gendered interpretations, but it is not used here as a direct coding key for contemporary women officials. Cameron's (2005) critique of binary language myths is supported by variation within each interview, while Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) relational account explains why gender becomes analytically relevant through locally produced positioning. The study therefore distinguishes historical association from observed function at every stage of coding.

The findings can also be located more precisely within style-shifting theory. Bell's (1984) audience design explains stylistic variation as responsive and sometimes initiative adjustment to audience and situation, while Coupland (2007) treats style as locally meaningful identity work. Hernández-Campoy and Cutillas-Espinosa (2010) show that political speakers may deploy styles strategically rather than simply mirror external formality, and Morikawa (2019) documents systematic intra-speaker shifting among women in feminist discourse. The present cases are compatible with these accounts, but the proposed construct does not name style shifting in general. A shift or mixture qualifies as context-indexed gendered hybridity only when resources with contrasting historical gender indexicalities are sequentially linked and functionally interdependent within one institutional project. Thus, Christie's caution and correction, Indrawati's facework and boundary enforcement, and Marsudi's relational access

and categorical commitment are interpreted as coordinated local sequences, not as movement between stable feminine and masculine personas.

This distinction also sharpens the study's relation to Baxter (2010). Baxter demonstrates that women leaders can combine relational and transactional strategies, an important antecedent to the present analysis. Context-indexed gendered hybridity adds a narrower test: coexistence across an interview is insufficient unless the resources can be shown, from adjacent talk, to contribute to the same pragmatic project. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and Cameron (2005) provide broader accounts of contextualized identity and the instability of gender categories; the present construct is not an alternative theory of gender identity but a meso-level analytic device for tracing how historically gender-indexed resources are coordinated under a specific institutional demand. Eckert's (2008) indexical-field perspective further supports treating gender associations as one possible layer of social meaning rather than a fixed value. The contribution is therefore not the claim that leaders "mix styles," but an operational rule for deciding when such mixing is analytically consequential.

The data also illuminate an evaluative double bind, but the evidential claim must remain proportionate to the corpus. Indrawati's own metacommunication about a high voice shows that she treats vocal force and anger as potentially confusable in this encounter. Christie's permission-framed proposals and Marsudi's mitigated repetition likewise show attention to the interpersonal reception of direct interventions. These sequences are compatible with role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) and with Dupree's (2024) evidence that dominant language used by women leaders can receive stereotype-conditioned evaluations. Recent evidence from online political debate also indicates that gender can shape evaluations of politicians (Zawadzka-Palucktau, 2026). The present study does not measure audience response and therefore cannot demonstrate that a particular utterance caused trust, legitimacy, or stereotype reduction. It identifies production-side linguistic strategies that appear oriented to those evaluative risks and treats audience effects as a question for future research.

The Indonesian evidence adds a micro linguistic layer to scholarship on women leaders in the Global South. Oktaviani et al. (2021) identify competing femininities in Indonesian media, and Oktaviani (2024) shows how women leaders adopt, modify, or reject hegemonic expectations. Arquisola et al. (2020) locate a comparable double bind in Indonesian academic leadership. The present analysis shows how that negotiation occurs through small choices such as pronouns, modality, address terms, repetition, correction, and obligation within extended public talk. Comparable studies in Barbados, Ghana, and Nigeria reveal locally organized combinations of agency, solidarity, and self-presentation (Igwebuike & Chimuanya, 2024; Nartey, 2024a, 2024b; Sarfo-Kantankah et al., 2024). The Indonesian cases extend this literature by connecting those broad political identities to sequential pragmatic work in science, financial accountability, and diplomacy. The comparison therefore supports Global South theorizing without treating diverse national contexts as interchangeable examples of one universal women's style.

Context-indexed gendered hybridity is proposed here as a provisional analytic construct, not as a replacement for established theories of style or gender performance. Four necessary conditions must all be met. First, the sequence must contain at least two resources with contrasting historical gender indexicalities documented in prior literature; an isolated hedge or imperative is insufficient. Second, the function of each resource must be established from adjacent talk rather than inferred from its formal label. Third, the resources must contribute to the same pragmatic project, such as calibrating and then correcting a claim, securing the floor and then enforcing a procedural boundary, or building relational access and then issuing an urgent directive. Fourth, the configuration must be interpretable in relation to a specific institutional demand visible in the encounter. Negative cases include unrelated hedges and imperatives occurring far apart, technical register without a relevant gendered history, and

simple alternation across topics with no functional interdependence. The construct's explanatory value is therefore conditional: it links micro-linguistic form to local institutional pressure and historically available gender meanings only when the four conditions are satisfied.

Table 5. Boundary conditions and negative cases for context-indexed gendered hybridity

Necessary condition	Inclusion test	Negative case
Contrasting historical indexicalities	At least two resources have different documented gender associations in prior literature.	One isolated hedge, directive, intensifier, or politeness marker.
Sequentially established function	Adjacent talk shows what each resource is doing pragmatically.	Function assigned from a checklist or dictionary label alone.
Common pragmatic project	Resources cooperate within the same local action or argumentative sequence.	Resources occur in unrelated topics or distant turns without functional linkage.
Institutional anchoring	The sequence responds to a visible accountability, knowledge, protection, or boundary-setting demand.	A general "mixed style" with no identifiable institutional task.

The analysis also has methodological implications for language and gender research. Coding should preserve the surrounding turn because a tag, hedge, or imperative can reverse apparent meaning when removed from sequence. Researchers should record historical association separately from observed pragmatic function so that stereotypes do not become self-confirming results. Frequency analysis can add value in a larger corpus only after comparable functional units have been established. Negative cases are especially important: polite forms may exert pressure, direct forms may protect collective welfare, and many mixed sequences will fail the four conditions in Table 5. This procedure accords with reflexive quality principles that prioritize transparency, contextual coherence, and theoretically informative complexity over mechanical agreement alone (Braun & Clarke, 2021). A future multimodal design should also examine pitch, interruption, gaze, gesture, and host response because transcript-based evidence cannot establish those resources adequately.

The practical implication is not that women should learn a prescribed hybrid style, because such advice would reproduce the burden the analysis seeks to expose. Leadership communication training can instead develop transferable capacities such as epistemic calibration, evidence-based correction, collective responsibility, principled boundary setting, and relational listening. Media analysis should also resist labels that isolate force or warmth while ignoring the sequence through which each becomes meaningful. The study remains limited by three women speakers, one principal interview per person, a criterion-selected evidence set, and the confounding of speaker with policy domain. Its transcript-centered design also does not support systematic measurement of prosody, overlap, gaze, or gesture, and it does not test audience reception. These boundaries restrict generalization beyond the three cases, but they are compatible with the article's case-based aim of showing how linguistic resources acquire meaning through sequential and institutional context.

D. CONCLUSION

The public communication examined in the interviews with Stella Christie, Sri Mulyani Indrawati, and Retno Marsudi cannot be explained adequately by assigning each speaker to a fixed women's or men's language category. In the selected sequences, relational, mitigating, direct, evidential, affective, and controlling resources are coordinated differently across the three cases. The case labels calibrated expertise, bounded solidarity, and relational resolve summarize those local configurations rather than stable speaker traits or causal effects of science, finance, and diplomacy. The evidence further shows why analysis should proceed from wording to sequential pragmatic function and only then to a cautiously framed institutional interpretation. Context-indexed gendered hybridity is therefore offered as a provisional analytic

construct for the narrower situation in which resources with contrasting historical gender indexicalities are functionally interdependent within one institutional task. It should not be used as a synonym for any mixed style, nor as evidence that linguistic forms inherently belong to women or men.

The study redirects attention from prescribing a feminine or masculine voice toward explaining communicative purpose and evidential limits. Public leaders may require different combinations of calibration, evidence, inclusion, boundary setting, and relational access as interactional demands change, but this three-case design cannot establish how common those combinations are or what causes them. The completed independent coding audit by the second and third authors strengthened interpretive transparency by testing the fit among linguistic form, local pragmatic function, and the proposed institutional interpretation, while consensus discussion was used to resolve ambiguous cases. Future research should compare matched speakers across genders and domains, preserve a complete inclusion-exclusion log, extend independent double-coding to larger corpora with quantitative agreement measures where appropriate, incorporate audiovisual features directly, and examine audience reception. Such work can test whether the four necessary conditions proposed here travel beyond these cases. The present contribution is therefore a transparent case-based account of how gendered histories of linguistic resources can become relevant through situated institutional action without being reified as fixed traits.

Ethics Statement

This study analyzes publicly available television interviews in which public officials speak in their public roles. No participants were recruited, contacted, or subjected to any intervention, and no private correspondence, confidential records, or non-public personal data were accessed. The analysis was restricted to discourse already available in the public broadcast record and to material relevant to the stated research questions. Informed consent was therefore not applicable to the use of these publicly available broadcast materials. Ethical handling was maintained by avoiding claims about private characteristics and by interpreting the speakers only in relation to their publicly performed institutional roles.

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