POWER AND PERSUASION: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TRUMP AND KAMALA'S SPEECHES

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Abstract

This research paper talks about the significance of minorities in American politics by talking about Donald Trump, who is the 47th president and Kamala Harris, who is the first woman of color to become a vice president. The paper applies the three-dimensional framework by Norman Fairclough to identify how Trump and Kamala produce persuasion and power relationship based on the enticing support of the population. Donald J. Trump, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 23, 2025, and Vice President Kamala Harris, "Fight for the Future, DNC Winter Meeting", 16 Dec 2025. The official text and video recording of the speech were used as the source of data gathering and examined with the help of qualitative descriptive research methodologies. The information also reveals that the arguments of Donald Trump are largely established on facts, figures, and strong assertions, which suggests that male politicians are rational. Kamala Harris, on the contrary, provides individual accounts and emotional examples, proving that women politicians are more sensitive and emotional. The study established that the two politicians resorted to persuasive techniques to attract their listeners.

`**Keywords**: *kamala Harris, Donald Trump, Minority Representation, Persuasion, Power and Critical Discourse Analysis*

Introduction:

The history of African-American and minority participation in US politics demonstrates tenacity in the face of structural discrimination. Minorities have sought to reclaim their place in American democracy since the nineteenth century's abolitionist campaigns and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Legislative achievements such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 increased political enfranchisement, but institutional obstacles such as voter suppression, subconscious prejudice, and underrepresentation in leadership positions continue to exist today. These challenges highlight the ongoing struggle for equity and representation in the political environment. Zellig Harris, a sentence linguist, first introduced the term 'discourse analysis' in his 1952 essay titled 'Discourse Analysis'. He defines discourse analysis as a method for analyzing connected speech or writing in order to extend descriptive linguistics beyond the limit of a single sentence at a time (Harris 1952). Gee (1999) provides six tools for analyzing discourse: situated meanings, social languages, figured world, intertextuality, discourses, and conversations. These tools ask questions about seven building tasks: significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections, and sign system and knowledge. Discourse Analysis evolves into Critical Discourse Analysis, influenced by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Albert Bandura, and Tuen Van Dijk, who emphasize the critical evaluation of language. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) posits that language is more than just a means of communication; it can also be utilized for power and oppression.

CDA is concerned with how power is controlled by language. CDA focuses on public utterances, such as political speeches, advertisements, publications, and official papers. CDA aims to explore the relationship between ideology, power, and language. The study examines

how linguistic dominance is used and appraised in texts. (Mekt et al., 2024). Van Dijk (2008) refers to Critical Discourse Analysis as 'Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)' since he views it to include not just critical analysis but also critical theory and application. He believes that Critical Discourse Studies is more than a method; it is also a critical perspective, position, and attitude within the large area of discourse studies. He defines CDS in three ways: examining social problems, evaluating abusive language practices through international human rights, and lobbying for marginalized people against discursive oppression (2008). Similarly, Norman Fairclough (2010) describes three characteristics of CDS: relational (focusing on social relations), dialectical (the dynamic, contradictory, and struggle-based nature of social life and language), and Trans disciplinary (incorporating insights from various disciplines to understand the complex relationships between language, power, and society).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) emphasizes the importance of language in human communication (Aeni, 2024). "Power in Language" investigates a range of empirical investigations, theoretical viewpoints, techniques, and substantive issues with the use of language to generate power and control. This comprehensive review of research and theory on verbal communication and social influence progresses from the 'simplest' situation, monological speech and power, to the increasingly complicated and delicate cases of conversational control and linguistic depoliticization. Topics such as linguistic indications of power, language as a resource for building power, and social sources of verbal power are studied in contexts ranging from casual chats to newspaper headlines.

French and Raven (1959) identify four categories of power. 1) Legitimate power is shaped by factors such as social rank, age, rules, and aptitude differences. 2) Referent power comes from an individual's ability to persuade others to like them. 3) Expert power stems from a person's talent, skills, experience, knowledge, and intelligence. 4) Reward power comes from an individual's capacity to make others like them. 5) Coercive power is a sort of authority that employs force or threats to make individuals do things they don't want to do.

Using modal verbs (can, must), personal pronouns (you), and contextual cues to make particular worldviews seem natural or desirable, Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals that persuasion is a social practice where language, embedded with ideology, constructs power relations, shapes perceptions, and influences behavior.

The American success narrative is embodied by Donald J. Trump. He has consistently raised the bar for commercial and entrepreneurial achievement throughout his life, particularly in the real estate, sports, and entertainment industries. When Mr. Trump entered politics and public service, he expanded on his achievements in private life. In his first attempt at any political office, he astonishingly won the presidency. Mr. Trump is a skilled writer as well. He is the author of almost fourteen best-selling books. The Art of the Deal, his debut book, is regarded as a classic in the business world. On June 16, 2015, Mr. Trump declared his intention to run for president. After defeating seventeen other candidates in the Republican primary, he then accepted the Republican nomination for president of the United States in July of 2016.

Kamala Harris became the first South Asian American, the first Black American, and the first woman to be elected as the 49th Vice President of the United States on January 20, 2021. In her capacity as vice president, she united people to promote opportunity, provide for families, and defend basic liberties. She spearheaded the struggle for women's autonomy over their bodies, freedom from gun violence, the right to vote, and the right to breathe clean air and drink clean water. She focused especially on creating jobs by investing in community banks and small businesses around the country. She represented the country overseas, traveling to 21 countries, visiting 36 states, and engaging with over 150 world leaders to

fortify vital international ties. From her groundbreaking tenure as California's attorney general and San Francisco's district attorney to her proud tenure as a US senator and vice president, Kamala D. Harris has always stood up for the people. Political speech is comparatively independent discourse delivered orally by a politician in front of an audience, with the main goal being persuasion rather than knowledge or amusement.

In a conventional perspective, the speaker addresses a contentious topic in a pro-con discussion that is resolved right away while speaking in front of the audience. Such a speech aims to persuade the audience to make a decision in accordance with the orator's proposal, or at the very least, to convince the audience that the orator's beliefs are correct and that his or her choice or counsel is reasonable.

Statement of purpose:

The present paper has explored the areas of power and persuasion in the speeches of Kamala Harris and Donald Trump speeches 2025 and discussed the ways language is employed to demonstrate power and convince the listener. Furthermore, the paper has examine how the United Nations are criticized by the trump and how kamala openly criticizes the trump in her address. In the end, this study is aimed at proving that the process of political persuasion is not only overtly based but also carried out by means of the covert languages, metaphors, silences, and positioning of institutions that contribute to the ways the audiences are able to interpret leadership and democracy and the national identity in the increasingly changing global environment. This study seeks to demonstrate that political persuasion works both explicitly and subtly through the choice of language, metaphors, omissions, and institutional backgrounds that create perceptions about leadership, democracy and national identity in a rapidly changing world system.

Objectives:

1. To conduct a critical discourse analysis of certain statements.
2. To compare the persuasive and power strategies used by Kamala Harris and Donald Trump in their speeches.

Research Questions:

1. Which linguistics element do they use to generate power and persuade their audience?
2. What is the rhetorical application of language by Kamala Harris and Donald Trump in their speeches in 2025?

Significance of the study

The significance of the present study is in the ability to have a thorough understanding of how language is used in modern history of politics as a tool of persuasion and power. It determines the impact of language preferences on political ideology and its opinion. It examines how talk in modern politics is a reenactment of power relations as well as a consideration of them. It is also significant as it increases the level of knowledge about the audience about the rhetorical devices employed by political leaders, such as Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, in order to show their power and influence on the population. This research contributes to the understanding of the processes of political leaders constructing and transferring legitimacy, influencing the population's opinion, and demarcating social boundaries with the help of language as the analytical approach (Fairclough, 2003).

Delimitations of the Study:

The limited scope of the current study has been limited to Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis which is confined to discursive strategies, especially those that influence people opinions, of the wider spectrum of discourse analysis. This study does not involve non-linguistic elements such as body language, voice control, feelings of the audience and visual

media. Moreover, the research lacks quantitative or corpus-based research methodology and is rather limited to a comparative qualitative investigation. Moreover, it is confined to two political speeches of Trumph and Kamala.

Literature review:

Because it allows us to discuss language as practice, discourse is a fundamental idea in critical discourse analysis. Foucault (1972) defined discourse as a broad term that encompasses everything that might communicate meaning in the context of conversation. According to Foucault, discourse is a "assemblage of sequences of signs insofar as they are statements, sometimes the field of all statements, a series of statements and sometimes practice operating at the level of statements" (Foucault, 1972p, 80). This comprehension of discourse is crucial for studying political speeches because it shows how language is employed in relation to politics, policy, and power dynamics (Aunphattanasilp, 2019).

Similarly, some scholars, like Kress and van Leeuwen (2020), have acknowledged the visual component of media discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). "Discourse is a recontextualized social practice." According to Kress and Bezemer (2023), this implies that discourse is spoken and conveyed through things like colors, and as a result, how the message is given and understood. In his work, Bakhtin (2014) views verbal communication as a social activity and expands on the idea of the social component of language use. Political actors concur that language matters and is constantly used as a chip, according to Chilton (2004). The paper explains how and why ideology and power function in political discourse as well as certain language management strategies, including framing and persuasion, delegitimization, legitimization, mitigation, and other approaches mentioned in the literature (Chilton 2004). Norman Fairclough's work, which introduced the use of ideology in terms of the loading of specific ways of using language and the relationship of the power regime or power relations, is likely the most influential work within CDA (Fairclough & Wodak 1997, p. 225).The three interconnected processes of description, interpretation, and explanation in the study of discourse, particularly political speech, are represented by Fairclough's CDA 3D model (2023). Furthermore, it is particularly useful for evaluating political speeches since it suggests a fairly consistent dissection of the text with direct reference to the aim in view of the text, which is the policies, the manifesto, or the hidden agendas. One of the most visually stimulating rhetorical techniques used by political speakers is the use of metaphors in speeches. Lakoff and Johnson's (2008, 1999) work on cognitive semantics demonstrates how metaphors give various linguistic elements new meanings and cognitions by mapping abstract concepts with concrete entities. Since metaphors are used to define national values, politics, and emotions, their primary function is crucial for studying political discourse. The CDA of Trump's speech announcing his plan to run for president was utilized in a recent study by Umaraj and Hassan (2020) to demonstrate how rhetorical appeals, such as hyperbole, figures, personal guarantees, baseless assertions, and implicit beliefs, played to the gallery. In a similar vein, AlAfnan (2021) contrasted Trump and Biden's inauguration speeches using SFL and Fairclough's CDA to highlight the differences between the two leaders' use of spoken language rhetoric and political philosophies. Other studies, like Tekaya (2014), Zheni (2020), and Mohammadi et al. (2020), have used CDA to analyze the topoi of political speeches in terms of self-representation, polarization, and exaggeration. He noted that these studies provide important insights into how language is used to establish and maintain power dynamics in political discourse. Imran Khan, the former prime minister of Pakistan, gave a speech on September 27, 2019, which Awais, Alia, and Mehwish (2021) analyzed critically. Using the Fairclough 3D model, that study sought to identify Imran Khan's covert agenda. Many philosophies are used by politicians in their speeches. Critical discourse analysis facilitates the rapid and precise understanding of hidden messages. The main topics of

Imran's speech that researchers examined were Islamophobia, money laundering, climate change, and the Kashmir conflict. Dian, Heriyanto, and Ypsi Soeria (2018) examined Donald Trump's historic speech using Fairclough's 3D turn. Through the use of vocabulary, voice, tone, and transitivity, the speaker was able to convey multiple meanings that are implicitly encrypted in the speech, such as persuasion, criticism, contrastive participation, power, authority, allusion, and claim.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework:

The primary analytical method used in this study is Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. CDA provides a logical and comprehensive approach to studying language's function in persuasion and influence, particularly in political discourse. This methodology's three interrelated components are text analysis, discursive behavior, and sociocultural practices. Transcripts of speeches made by Trump and Kamala served as the primary data source, and a qualitative approach was used for analysis. Beginning with text analysis, this study looks at the politics' use of language, terminology, and rhetorical devices like metaphor and repetition. The analysis shows how these components generate meaning, persuade, and transmit power. The second half covers discursive techniques, including how audiences understand, disseminate, and produce speeches. Last but not least, elements of sociocultural practices direct the discussion to larger social contexts like cultural polarization and national identity, which are utilized to show how Trump's comment affects public opinion.

The data used in this study comes from the official transcript of *Donald John Trump's speech addresses U.N. General Assembly, 23 September 2025* and *Kamala Harris's speech on the Fight For the Future at the 2025 DNC Winter Meeting, 16 Dec 2025*. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meaning that individuals or groups give to a social or human problem. This study presents data in narrative and descriptive text rather than numerical data. Data analysis was conducted in four steps: identification, classification, description, and explanation. To reach conclusions, this method utilizes data interpretation based on the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the underlying theories. Furthermore, the researcher employed Fairclough's three dimensional approach: textual analysis, discursive practices, and social practices. To get accurate data, a methodical strategy to data collecting was necessary. The first step in gathering data for this study was downloading the entire video from C-SPAN's television official YouTube channel, a well-known American media organization, and carefully going over the entire argument several times. The accuracy of the transcript was then confirmed by cross-referencing it with the same source. This study used a non-participant approach using the observational method as suggested by Maxwell (1992, 293).

Data Analysis:
 Power:
   1) Legitimate Power:
Trump regularly issues directives and makes judgments using his presidential authority: **"Under my leadership, energy costs are down, gasoline prices are down, grocery prices are down, mortgage rates are down, and inflation has been defeated".** This discussion demonstrates true strength by explicitly linking national success to his presidential leadership. The phrase "under my leadership" highlights institutional authority and presents the accomplishment of governance as a direct result of this rule.

From the outset of speech, Harris raises the audience and establishes herself as an institutional leader. In her statement, **"When they thank me they are thanking you for standing up for our democracy, for the rule of law, for values and principles, for**

community, for the breath bre and depth of who we are with all of our beautiful differences as a nation.”

Harris deliberately uses her rightful position as vice president to give party members and citizens symbolic authority. This activity strengthens her leadership by projecting an inclusive image and linking institutional power to collective democratic action rather than individual rule.

2) Expert Power:

Trump frequently portrays himself as incredibly smart and capable, saying comments like**: “I'm really good at this stuff. Your countries are going to hell.”** This statement establishes expert power by asserting competence. The absence of evidence is replaced by confidence, which implies that his view is sufficient authority in and of itself. **“No president or prime minister and for that matter, no other country has ever done anything close to that, and I did it in just 7 months.”** By distinguishing himself from all other international leaders, Trump strengthens his power and maintains a hierarchy in which he is the only one at the top. Harris's professional strength is evident when she points out systematic problem that are detrimental to democracy and the economy. Rather than blaming herself, she portrays herself as capable of structural analysis in the dialogue, **“The rise of MAGA movement, I believe, are a symptom of a failed system that is the results of the years”.** Harris adopts an analytical and technical tone when discussing processes such as **“Outsourcing and Offshoring, financial deregulation, and growing income inequality,”** which strengthens her reputation as a knowledgeable leader who understands complex systems.

3) Coercive Power:

The most obvious manifestations of power are threats of violence and punishment: **“If you come illegally into the United States, you are going to jail, or you are going back to where you came from.”** This exchange explicitly uses coercive power through the use of conditional threat. When punishment is predetermined, there is no space for debate or humanitarian framing. **“To every terrorist thug smuggling poisonous drug into the United States of America, please be warned that we will blow you out of existence.”** This is one of the speech's most effective use of coercive power. The violent metaphor normalizes and portrays state approved destruction as ethically acceptable.

4) Reward Power:

Additionally, Trump abuses his position of authority by promising prosperity, safety, and peace: **“This is indeed the golden age of America”.** This claims state that if you follow his directions, you will receive a group prize. The metaphor of “golden age” suggests that obedience leads to prosperity and plenty.

“We saved millions and millions of lives with the seven wars.” In this exchange, Trump is presented as a benefactor, implying that life itself is the ultimate reward for his decisions. Thus, reward power is both ethical and material.
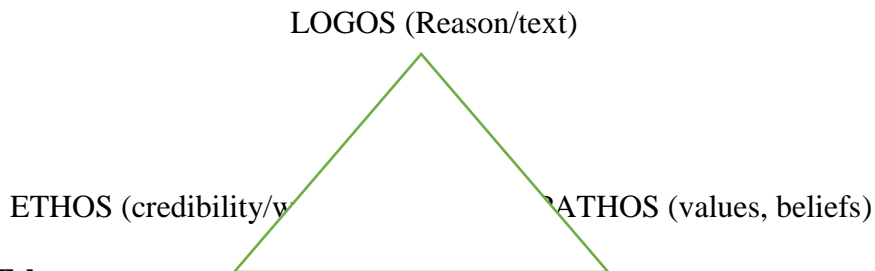
5) Referent Power:

Trump uses communal identity and shared ancestry to foster loyalty. **“We have reasserted that America belongs to American people,”** This dialogue strengthens referent power and promotes emotional identification, which strengthens the bond between the people and the leader. **“Our ancestors climbed to mountains, conquered oceans, crossed deserts, and trekked over wide open plains.”** By referencing a shared historical struggle, Trump connects himself to national mythology, strengthens his credibility and emotional bond outside of formal authority.

Kamala Harris constantly ties herself with *“the people”* demonstrating a clear usage of referent power. The phrase: **“Throughout my career, I have invoked a consistent mantra, the power is with the people”** plainly redefines political authority as bottom-up rather than

top-down. This discourse paradoxically promotes Harris' leadership by portraying her as a dependable voice of popular will, despite the fact that it appears to decentralized power. Using identification rather than command, this discursive method normalizes female power.

Persuasion:

LOGOS (Reason/text)

ETHOS (credibility/w   ?ATHOS (values, beliefs)

a) Ethos:

Trump fosters a strong ethos by showing himself as a steadfast, experienced and effective leader. His frequent statement, such as **"In just 7 months, I have ended seven unendable wars,"** portray him as a remarkable political figure whose authority exceeds that of traditional international organizations. Trump undermines the United Nations, portraying it as ineffective and weak, while simultaneously increasing his credibility by emphasizing his own achievements and casting himself as the primary agent for peace. The distinction confirms his perspective by emphasizing that actual power and competence stem from his personal leadership, mot international diplomacy. Kamala Harris begins her **"Fight for the Future"** speech by establishing ethos through collective credibility rather than individual supremacy. When she states, **"When people thank me they are thanking you for the work that you do that are about upholding basic principles that are at the foundation of the Declaration of Independence and the constitution of the united nations ,"** Harris sees herself as a leader who prioritizes moral legitimacy and democratic service. Harris' legitimacy is based on shared responsibility, democratic principles, and alignment with civic actors, as opposed to Trump's self- centered approach. By portraying leadership as cooperative rather than autocratic, this dialogic strategy builds trust and maintains her status as a reputable and moral political figure.

b. Pathos:

Trump routinely portrays immigration as an existential threat, arguing that "**Your countries are being ruined."** And that immigrants **"repaid kindness with crime."** Such emotionally charged language encourages an "us versus them" mentally by categorizing the world into two opposing groups: law abiding citizens and dangerous outsiders. When Trump brings up children's suffering, claiming that hundreds of thousands were lost, mistreated, or trafficked under previous administrations, the emotional appeal is stronger. He produces strong emotional responses that favor stringent border control while undermining other humanitarian ideas by stressing images of innocent victims. Harris used pathos as a significant persuasive tool throughout her speech, particularly when acknowledging the audience's irritation and emotional tiredness.

Her assertion that **"for so many, the American dream has become more of a myth than a reality"** speaks directly to feelings of loss, insecurity, and despair. Harris emotionally validates the real-life sufferings of ordinary people by listing "**the cost of food, energy, healthcare, transportation, or housing."** This emotional awareness reinforces viewers' emotional identification was her message by making them feel seen and understood. She

positions herself as emotionally aware of societal reality by employing pathos based on empathy rather than fear.

c. Logos:

Trump routinely employs numerical statistics and cause and effect logic to justify policy implementation, which is a clear example of logos in his discourse. When he states:

"In 4 years of President Biden, we had less than $1 trillion of new investment into the United States. In just 8 months since I took office, we have secured commitments and money already paid for $17 trillion". Trump uses quantitative comparisons to make a compelling case for his administration's superior economic performance. When combined with actual monetary figures the difference between "four years" and "eight months" creates the sense of objective, logical evidence. This style of logos persuades the audience by stating that economic performance is objectively quantifiable and directly related to presidential action.

Kamala Harris's statement, **"We cannot afford to be nostalgic for what was in fact a flawed status quo,"** reinforces her notion that significant change requires institutional reform rather than nostalgia for the past. This sort of logos encourages rational thought by presenting a logical explanation of political dysfunction as well as a well-reasoned defense of change.

1. Textual Analysis (Lexical Choices, Grammar, Rhetoric)

Pronoun	Donald Trumph	Percentage	Kamala Harris	Percentage
I	144	30.50 %	14	20.89 %
WE	245	51.90 %	35	52.23 %
OUR	83	17.58 %	18	26.86 %
Total	472	100 %	67	100 %

The subjective first-person singular and plural pronouns **"I"** and **"We",** as well as the possessive form **"Our",** were explored in this study. The transcript reveals Trump and Kamala using the personal pronouns **"We"** (245, 35) and **"Our"** (83, 18) several times. The usage of possessive and first-person plural forms is inclusive, fostering a sense of unity among the country's citizens and politicians. The use of the personal pronoun **"I"** (144, 14) emphasizes their status as influential leaders with personal power.

Modal verbs	Donald Trumph	Percentage %	kamala Harris	Percentage
WILL	24	36.36 %	3	13.63 %
MUST	9	13.63 %	11	50 %
SHOULD	8	12.12 %	3	13.63 %
CAN	25	37.87 %	5	22.72 %
Total	66	100 %	22	100 %

The study looked at the modal verbs used in Trump and Kamala's political speeches to investigate their level of certainty and intentions, as well as their projections, expectations, and choices for the future of country. Modal verbs such as **"Will"** and **"Must"** emphasize the possibility and certainty of both parties attempt to revive and handle America's challenges. **"Will"** was the most frequently used modal verb in both Trump's and Kamala's speeches, with 24 and 3 instances, respectively. According to Palmer (2001), depending on the speaker's attitude, the modal word **"Will"** implies not only futurity but also volition, determination and prediction.

Metaphor:

The term **"golden age"** in Trump's speech refers to his presidency as a period of wealth and historical greatness, implying superiority and rebirth. The phrase **"the guns of war have shattered the speech"** militarizes language by claiming that global politics are determined by force rather than discussion. Trump fosters nationalist pride by referring to the United States as **"the hottest country",** a metaphor of the **"double-tailed monster"** dehumanizes perceived threats and transforms tough political situations into scary animals that must be defeated in order to justify aggressive action. Kamala Harris's metaphor **"the American dream has become more of a myth than a reality"** serves a distinct purpose by contrasting an idealized national promise with real life social experiences, highlighting unfairness and disillusionment.

Discursive Practices:

Donald Trump, who started his speech at the UN General Assembly with a broken teleprompter and a complaint about UN infrastructure, said that Melania Trump nearly fell when an escalator briefly stopped. **"These are the two things I got from the United Nations: a bad escalator and a bad teleprompter."** This allegation exemplifies how Trump transforms a formal, diplomatic setting into a populist performance platform. He intentionally deviates from the typical seriousness and decorum of UN discussions, making jokes about a "bad escalator" and a "bad teleprompter" As discursive tools, humor and contempt are used to distance oneself from the organization and question its validity. Trump may depict himself as an outsider who speaks the "plain truth" rather than institutional rhetoric since such casual, snarky remarks come from campaign debates rather than international diplomacy.

 To establish a narrative in which the United States is Exceptional and he, as President, is the decisive leader, Trump constantly emphasizes action, power, and urgency. For example, he states, **"Under my leadership, energy costs are down, gasoline prices are down, grocery prices are down, mortgage rates are down, and inflation has been defeated. The only thing that's up is the stock market, which just hit a high record."** Here the repeating structure appeals to logic (the economy is better under his administration) while reinforcing his authority and control , In a similar vein, he states with respect to global security: **" Today many of Iran's former military commanders in fact, I can say almost all of them are no longer with us. They're dead."** He positions himself as a formidable performer on the international arena by employing dramatic language, repetition, and declarative tone to establish authority in both rhetorical style and topic. His personal, conversational tone is characterized by numerous self-reference (I did it, my administration) and informal interjections, which provide immediacy and sincerity to his global assertions.

Harris uses of speech to foster community responsibility, empathy, and civic engagement. She says, **"Whether it's the cost of food, energy, health care, transportation, or housing, America is facing an affordability crisis. A crisis that we are witnessing is fueling cynicism, fear, frustration, and lack of confidence in our systems."** By listing concrete issues and relating them to emotional consequences, she creates cohesiveness by expressing her audience's concern as legitimate and shared. Harris's speech complies with recognized norms for party leadership and civic discourse. Her language draws intertextually from democratic thought and civil rights rhetoric, especially when she narrates**," The power is with people,"** which recalls core democratic ideals. Harris portrays her speech as part of an ongoing democratic dialogue rather than as a singular event. The speech is intended to provoke thought and encourage the audience to see themselves as active participants in democratic regeneration rather than passive recipients of power.

Social Practices:

At the level of social practice, Trump's language embodies and upholds an ideology of populist authoritarianism and national exclusion. His portrayal of immigrants as dangerous outsiders, **"they repaid kindness with crime",** legitimize strict state control and perpetuates social divide. **"No other country on Earth could have done what we did. No other country has the equipment to do what we did. We have the greatest weapons on Earth,"** Trump says, portraying the US as superior to all other nations while also showcasing his own authority and skill as president. By emphasizing that "no other country could have done what we did" and highlighting the nation's superior military capabilities, he defends both his personal authority and America's primacy in the world. Trump stated: **"It's time to end the failed experiment of open borders. You have to end it now. It's I can tell you, I'm really good at this stuff. Your counties are going to hell."** He emphasizes the negative consequences of current immigration rules, appealing to fear and worry. As a result, his audience feels powerful emotions as they realize how the bad the situation is. By claiming, "I'm really good at this stuff", he establishes his authority to make decisions and solve these problems. His tone suggests that he wants to demonstrate that he has the experience, power, and decisive leadership to confront what he sees as a global failure, making himself indispensable while leaving other countries vulnerable or underperforming in his absence. Kamala's speech is part of a larger cultural movement aimed at institutional reform and democratic rebuilding. By stating, **"Let us make a new commitment to the common good. A commitment that declares that the power of this country does not belong to any King or set of oligarchs. It belongs to US, we the people."** Harris argues for a redistribution of agency and rejects elite authority. Her speech illustrates a societal framework that values participation, dignity and communal responsibility over fear based on control, economic uncertainty, technological disruption, and a lack of trust.

Kamala Harris claims**: "So, in comes Donald Trump, casting himself as the change agent, but with empty promises to the American people. Under his leadership we all know prices are up, inflation is up, unemployment is up, health care costs for millions of Americans are about to double"**. Here she openly criticizing a current president on a national or worldwide scale indicates both her formal legitimacy as Vice President and her social power. It underlines that, unlike a normal citizen or non-elite person who may face repression, censorship, or even threats, the speaker's social station allows her to utter such critiques without fear. **"We fight for the future. We fight for the people. And we love our country."** Exemplifies Kamala Harris's use of institutional power as vice president to establish a shared identity and convey political and moral legitimacy. She portrays herself and her supporters as socially conscious actors who promotes solidarity and a common objective by framing her political action as a struggle for the people and linking it to a love of country.

Trump's claim: **"by pioneering an AI verification system that everyone can trust. Hopefully, the UN. Can play a constructive role, and it will also go be one of the early projects under AI."** And Kamala Harris's statement: **"At the same time, AI has started to displace jobs, reshape the future of work and cause Americans across the country to fear being left behind".** By talking about AI at all, both Trump and Kamala Harris situate themselves inside a global political framework dictated by modernization, risk governance and technological acceleration. Trump's reliance on AI for international validation reflects his liberal technocratic mindset, which relies on scientific means to address global concerns. Harris's focus on how AI would impact labor is a sign of a progressive or social democratic perspective that cares about protecting modern citizens. Despite the philosophical differences,

both discourses are consistent with modern forms of governance rather than traditional politics.

Findings and Discussion:

This study critically investigated the discursive methods utilized by Kamala Harris and Donald Trump in their talks on September 23 and December 16, 2025, respectively. In addition to developing in-group credibility, Trump Kamala Harris used rhetorical methods that eroded out-group legitimacy. According to the research Trump and kamala used persuasive approaches to change public opinion in their favor. Both politicians use modal verbs and pronouns to establish communal identities. Metaphors, according to critical discourse analysis, are not simply ornamental literary devices but also powerful cognitive tools that influence how individuals view, comprehend, and interact with the world.

They play a crucial role in the formation of language and mind, reflecting and maintaining cultural norms, power structures, and ideologies. To persuade audiences of their authority, Trump and kamala employ metaphors to demystify and emotionally link complex political and social issues. The data shows that neither of the political speeches just recounts the facts. It deliberately constructs two contradictory paradigms of governance: one centered on authority, control, and national hegemony, and the other on participation, reform, and democratic continuity. As a result, it is clear that in both speeches, the people or the leader exercise authority.

Conclusion: This study has shown how language is used as a tool of power and and persuasion in the speeches of Donald Trump and Kamala Harris using Norman Fairclough's three dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis paradigm. Discourse analysis can be done in three dimensions by relating textual elements to broader social and cultural setting, according to Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, which was introduced in his 1995 study. To support their positions at the textual level, Trump and Harris employed a range of linguistic techniques. By employing inclusive pronouns like **"We"** and **"Must"** rather than **"Maybe"** or **"Might"** to indicate future actions that are very certain and required. Additionally, in order to create a positive version for their leadership, Trump and Kamala place a strong emphasis on metaphors to symbolic performances such as **"Pouring in from all parts of the world"** and **"The golden age of America"**. Kamala emphasized the use of repetition and parallelism in the concluding statement, **"We will",** as a concepts of safety and solidarity in order to persuade the audience both intellectuality and emotionally. At the discursive practice level, the address was not merely the personal voices of Trump and Kamala, but rather a manufactured political text produced with the assistance of speechwriters, consultants, and political strategies. It evokes intertextuality by incorporating references to earlier speeches and popular catchphrases like **"America First".** Additionally the remarks by Kamala Harris and Donald Trump have become heavily mediated due to live broadcasts on radio, television, and digital platforms. On the level of social practice, Trump's tone shoes that he wants to demonstrate that he has knowledge, strength, and decisive leadership to address what he regards as a global weakness, making himself indispensable white leaving other nations insecure or poorly managed without his guidance. By framing her political action as a struggle for the people and connecting it to patriotism, she portrays herself and her supporters as socially conscious actors, encouraging camaraderie and a shared goal. For example, both speeches establish a big us vs. them gap by depicting Trump and Kamala as saviors who oppose a corrupt system.

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