An Analysis of Discourse Markers in Donald Trump's 2025 Rally Victory Speech

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Abstract. This study is focused on the use of discourse markers in Donald Trmpu's rally victory speech. The purposes of this study are to find out the types of discourse markers used during the speech and the functions by using Fraser's theory (2009) to examine the types of discourse markers and Schiffrin's theory (1987) to analyze their functions. In this study, the data used are words and phrases from the utterances uttered by Donald Trimp which included to discourse markers. Therefore, the researcher used qualitative research method to analyze this topic. The reearcher also used data analysis technique from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). In conclusion, the researcher found all types of discourse markers used by Donald Trump on his rally victory speech. There are 227 data included in the discourse markers. Among them are 54 contrastive discourse marker, 148 elaborative discourse markers, 20 inferential discourse markers, and 5 temporal discourse markers. Elaborative Discourse Markers are dominant used by Donald Trump. Based on the functions, the writer found that from 5 functions of discourse markers. There are Marker of Response, Marker of Connectives, Marker of Cause and Effect, and Marker of Information and Partiipation.

Keywords: Discourse Markers; Discourse; Functions; Types; Victory Speech.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a central role in human communication, functioning not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a means of expressing ideas, attitudes, and ideological positions (Nasution & Tambunan, 2022; Tseng, 2018). As a result, the study of language has attracted attention across various disciplines, particularly within linguistics, which examines language structures and their use in social contexts (Yule, 2010). One branch of linguistics that focuses on language in use is discourse analysis, which investigates how meaning is constructed, organized, and interpreted in spoken and written discourse (Brown & Yule, 1983; McCarthy, 1991). In political contexts, discourse analysis is especially significant because political language is often strategically designed to influence public perception and shape collective understanding (Chilton, 2004). Within discourse analysis, discourse markers constitute an essential linguistic feature that contributes to coherence, interactional flow, and speaker–listener engagement. Discourse markers such as and, but, so, well, you know, and I mean do not primarily add propositional meaning but instead organize discourse, signal relationships between ideas, and reflect the speaker's stance (Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1999). Previous studies have examined discourse markers in various contexts, including political speeches (Rashid, 2020; Nasution et al., 2020), news articles (Yulianto, 2021), and academic writing (Hidayat et al., 2021). However, despite the growing body of research, limited attention

has been given to newly emerging political speeches delivered in highly significant post-election contexts. The urgency of examining discourse markers in political speeches lies in their persuasive and ideological functions. Presidential speeches, in particular, reach large audiences and have the potential to influence public opinion, legitimize power, and shape national discourse (Chilton, 2004).

Effective use of discourse markers enables speakers to maintain coherence, manage transitions, emphasize key points, and build interpersonal connections with audiences (Schiffrin, 1987). Conversely, inappropriate use of discourse markers may lead to fragmented discourse and misinterpretation. Therefore, analyzing discourse markers in political speeches is crucial both academically, for understanding language use in context, and practically, for improving political communication literacy. This study focuses on Donald Trump's rally victory speech delivered after his victory in the 2024 United States presidential election. Following his official declaration as president-elect, Trump delivered a rally victory speech that showcased his distinctive communicative style, characterized by repetition, emotional appeal, and frequent use of discourse markers (Associated Press News, 2024). This speech represents a critical political moment marked by national attention and heightened audience engagement, making it a relevant and timely object of linguistic analysis. The study aims to identify the types of discourse markers used in the speech based on Fraser's (1999) classification and to analyze their functions using Schiffrin's (1987) framework.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Discourse analysis is broadly understood as the study of language in use and its relationship with context. Brown and Yule (1983) define discourse analysis as the analysis of language beyond the sentence level, emphasizing how meaning is constructed through interaction. Similarly, McCarthy (1991) highlights that discourse analysis examines the relationship between language and its social context in both spoken and written forms. Paltridge (2012) further explains that discourse analysis helps clarify how speakers mean what they say in particular contexts, while Leech (2016) situates discourse analysis within pragmatic perspectives that focus on the conditions governing language use. These perspectives position discourse analysis as a comprehensive framework for examining how linguistic elements function in real communication.

One important linguistic feature within discourse analysis is discourse markers. Discourse markers are words or phrases that function to organize discourse and guide interpretation, particularly in spoken language. Fung and Carter (2007) describe discourse

markers as linguistic elements that structure communication at interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive levels. Fraser (1999) further classifies discourse markers into contrastive, elaborative, inferential, and temporal types, emphasizing their pragmatic role in signaling relationships between discourse segments. Together, these theories form the conceptual foundation for analyzing both the types and functions of discourse markers in political speech. Besides, Schiffrin (1987) conceptualizes discourse markers as discourse units that contribute to coherence through their interactional, structural, and cohesive functions. It leads Schiffrin (1987) is likely more focus on the functions. Schiffrin (1987) describes the functions of Discourse Markers are marker of information management, marker of response, marker of connectives, marker of cause and effect, marker of temporal adverb, and marker of information and participation.

A number of previous studies have examined discourse markers across various genres and contexts. Rashid (2020) analyzed discourse markers in selected political speeches by Donald Trump using a mixed-method approach and Hyland and Tse's (2005) classification. The findings revealed Trump's frequent use of interpersonal and additive discourse markers to persuade and build rapport with audiences. Yulianto (2021) investigated discourse markers in *The Jakarta Post* news articles using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework through descriptive qualitative methods, finding that additive, adversative, causal, and continuative markers enhanced textual coherence. Hidayat et al. (2021) analyzed discourse markers in student-written articles on *Hamlet* using Fraser's (1999) theory and found that elaborative discourse markers were most dominant, though misuse patterns were also identified. Nasution et al. (2020) examined discourse markers in Joko Widodo's APEC speeches using qualitative analysis and identified cognitive discourse markers as the most frequent category, reflecting situational and contextual influences on marker usage.

Although these studies contribute valuable insights into discourse marker usage, several gaps remain. Most previous research has focused on written texts, classroom discourse, or political speeches delivered in routine or formal settings. Limited attention has been given to victory rally speeches, which are characterized by high emotional intensity, mass audience engagement, and significant political symbolism. Also, theoretically, previous studies have employed diverse frameworks such as Halliday and Hasan (1976) or Hyland and Tse (2005), resulting in varied classifications that make comparison difficult. So that, this article addresses these gaps by analyzing discourse markers in Donald Trump's rally victory speech using Fraser's (1999) classification of discourse marker types and Schiffrin's (1987) functional

model. By focusing on a recent and politically significant speech that has not been widely examined, this study contributes updated empirical evidence to discourse marker research.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach to analyze discourse markers used in political speech. A qualitative method was chosen because the research focuses on interpreting linguistic features and their functions within a specific context rather than measuring numerical data. Qualitative discourse analysis enables an in-depth examination of how language is used to construct meaning, coherence, and interaction in spoken discourse (Brown & Yule, 1983; McCarthy, 1991). This approach is particularly suitable for analyzing political speeches, which involve complex pragmatic and contextual dimensions. The primary data source of this study was Donald Trump's rally victory speech delivered after the 2024 United States presidential election. The speech transcript was obtained from an official and reliable source to ensure data accuracy. The unit of analysis consisted of clauses and utterances containing discourse markers. The research instrument was the researcher herself, supported by theoretical frameworks proposed by Fraser (1999) for identifying types of discourse markers and Schiffrin (1987) for analyzing their functions. These frameworks served as analytical guidelines to ensure theoretical validity and consistency in categorizing and interpreting discourse markers. Data were collected through documentation techniques. The procedure began with obtaining the speech transcript, followed by careful reading and repeated listening to the speech video to ensure alignment between the spoken and written forms. Relevant utterances containing discourse markers were identified, highlighted, and compiled into index. This step allowed the researcher to systematically organize the data before analysis and to minimize misinterpretation of contextual meaning. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative descriptive analysis. The identified discourse markers were first classified according to Fraser's (1999) typology, including contrastive, elaborative, inferential, and temporal markers. Subsequently, the functions of each discourse marker were analyzed based on Schiffrin's (1987) framework, focusing on their role in maintaining coherence, managing interaction, and organizing discourse. The analysis followed an iterative process of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing to ensure analytical rigor and clarity. No statistical software was used, as the analysis relied on interpretative linguistic frameworks.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion of discourse markers identified in Donald Trump's rally victory speech. The analysis is organized based on discourse marker types proposed by Fraser (1999), namely elaborative, contrastive, inferential, and temporal discourse markers. Within each type, selected data excerpts are discussed in relation to their functions based on Schiffrin's (1987) functional framework. The total data found in Donald Trump's rally victory speech is 227 data as on the table below.

Table 1. The Types of Discourse Markers in Donald Trump's Rally Victory Speech.

Functions of Discourse Markers	Frequency
Contrastive Discourse Markers	54
Elaborative Discourse Markers	148
Inferential Discourse Markers	20
Temporal Discourse Markers	5
Total	**227**

Table 2. The Functions of Discourse Markers in Donald Trump's Rally Victory Speech.

Functions of Discourse Markers	Frequency
Marker of Response	1
Marker of Connectives	199
Marker of Cause and Effect	20
Marker of Temporal Adverb	5
Marker of Information and Participation	2
Total	**227**

Contrastive Discourse Markers

Contrastive discourse markers represents that the following statement contrasts with the previous statement (Fraser, 1999). Contrastive discourse markers were identified as one of the prominent types used in the speech. A total of 54 contrastive discourse markers were found, with only marker but used in this category. One example of the use of the contrastive discourse marker but is shown below: "They win a lot of votes, but they never won the youth vote" (1) Based on Fraser's (1999) classification, but functions as a contrastive discourse marker that signals opposition between two statements. In this context, the speaker contrasts a positive achievement of winning a lot of votes.

The statement shows that even though they won in the votes, there is still a group of voters that did not vote them, the youths, which the vote of them is won by Donald Trump. Functionally, according to Schiffrin (1987), but serves as a marker of connectives, connecting that there is a contrast or different achievement; a positive achievement and something that has not achieved yet. Another example of contrastive marker but, as illustrated in the following statement: "In the election of 2024, which will be the most consequential election in American history. We not only won a mandate, but we built a new American majority that will lead our

country to unparallel success for generations to come. That's what we want to do." (2) In this example, but also functions to introduce a contrast within the discourse. From a functional perspective, it serves as a marker of connectives, linking two opposing ideas while maintaining coherence. In this case, the speaker not only states that they have won a mandate, but also emphasizes another important achievement which is building a new majority. The use of such contrastive discourse markers allows the speaker to control the narrative structure and reinforce persuasive impact.

Elaborative Discourse Markers

Elaborative discourse markers are the type of discourse markers that connects two ideas that relate each other. This type of markers is used when the speaker wants to add information, clarification, specification, and further detail from the previous sentence (Fraser, 1999). A total of 148 elaborative discourse markers were found, with and as the most used markers in this category. Other elaborative markers such as I mean and well were found less frequently. "We will make America wealthy again, we will make America healthy again, we will make America strong again, we will make America proud again, we will make America safe again, and we will make America great again" (3) In this data, and functions as an elaborative discourse marker that introduces the final clause in a series of national goals. The marker connects earlier commitments (wealthy, healthy, strong, proud, and safe) with the culminating promise "we will make America great again." In line with Schiffrin (1987), and here serves as a marker of connectives, linking multiple propositions into a cohesive rhetorical unit. Its use unifies the message so that the final statement does not stand independently but expands and encapsulates the patriotic vision articulated throughout the sequence. Another example of elaborative and can be observed in the following excerpt: "We swept all seven swing states by big numbers. We won Pennsylvania. We won Georgia. We won North Carolina. We won Michigan. We won Wisconsin. We won Arizona. We won Nevada. We won them all by historic margins. And we won the great state of Florida by 13 points nobody's done that ever." (4) In this context, and functions to add further information that completes the narrative of electoral success.

After listing several states in which victory was achieved, Trump introduces Florida as an additional and final component of the overall claim. According to Schiffrin (1987), and operates as a marker of connectives, linking the final achievement with the previous victories. This usage reinforces coherence and emphasizes Florida as an integral part of the broader electoral triumph, rather than as an isolated success. "You know, I mean, that deal should have not." (5) In this data, I mean functions as an elaborative discourse marker used to clarify the speaker's intention regarding the statement being made. As proposed by Fraser (1999),

elaborative discourse markers such as I mean are employed when the speaker seeks to add clarification or specification to a previously expressed idea. In this context, I mean signals that the speaker is refining or emphasizing his stance toward "that deal," which has been referred to earlier in the discourse. From Schiffrin's (1987) functional perspective, I mean operates as a marker of information and participation, as it invites the listener to align with the speaker's intended meaning and ensures shared understanding within the interaction. Another elaborative discourse marker identified is well, as illustrated below: "Well, thank you very much." (6) In this example, well functions as an elaborative discourse marker that frames the speaker's response.

According to Fraser (1999), well is used to organize discourse by signaling a transition or the initiation of a new move in conversation. In this context, Trump employs well to smoothly respond to and acknowledge the master of ceremony during the rally. Based on Schiffrin's (1987) framework, well functions as a marker of response, indicating the speaker's reaction and managing the turn-taking process. This usage helps maintain interactional coherence and makes the transition between speakers sound natural and socially appropriate.

Inferential Discourse Markers

As stated by Fraser (2009), inferential discourse markers are the result or implication of the previous statement because the markers are in the form of closing words or phrases such as therefore, thus, so, and so on. It signals that the next statement is the conclusion of the first statement. Inferential discourse markers were also identified in the speech, with 20 instances recorded. The most commonly used inferential marker was so, which indicates cause-and-effect relationships. The examples are presented below: "And you know, I, I got Mel Gibson, Sylvester alone, and John Voit to become ambassadors to Hollywood California to put it on track. So, they're all ambassadors." (7) Here, so introduces a conclusion that directly follows from the preceding statement.

After identifying individuals appointed to support the revitalization of Hollywood, Trump employs so to assert their collective status as ambassadors. In accordance with Fraser's (1999) framework, so marks the inferential link between the prior explanation and the resulting declaration. From Schiffrin's (1987) functional perspective, so operates as a marker of cause and effect, indicating that the act of appointment leads directly to the stated outcome. This usage contributes to a persuasive representation of leadership by framing decisions as logical and immediately actionable, reinforcing Trump's authority as president-elect. A similar inferential pattern is evident in the following utterance: "And now, we won. So, I'm going to be your president for the Olympics and for the World Cup." (8) In this sequence, so establishes

a causal relationship between electoral victory and future presidential responsibility. The clause "And now, we won" functions as the cause, while the subsequent statement presents the effect Trump's leadership during major international events. Within Schiffrin's (1987) framework, so again functions as a marker of cause and effect, guiding the audience to interpret global representation as a natural consequence of democratic success. Rhetorically, this construction legitimizes Trump's forthcoming authority by positioning his role as both inevitable and institutionally grounded.

Temporal Discourse Markers

According to Fraser (1999), temporal discourse markers are used to organize the flow of information sequentially. These markers also signal a time in the form of an adverb of time conjunction. In this rally victory speech, temporal discourse markers occurred less frequently than other types, with 5 instances identified in the data. One commonly used temporal marker is now, which signals a shift in temporal focus. "And you're focusing on character, competence, and qualifications in all hiring decisions. Now, you're allowed to go by competence and ability, and genius" (9) The marker now functions as a temporal discourse marker that signals a shift from a prior state to the present condition. The first clause refers to an earlier or established hiring standard, while the subsequent clause introduces a revised rule that applies at the present moment. From Schiffrin's (1987) perspective, now operates as a marker of temporal adverb, indicating a transition in time and framing the second statement as a new phase or updated policy. This usage helps the speaker reorient the audience's attention from past practices to present authority, reinforcing the idea of change under current leadership. Another temporal marker identified in the speech is then, as shown below: "They're incredible people and they love our country. Thank you very much. Then, up here I see we have front row Joe's all over the place, Uncle Sam, Mr. wall." (10) In this sequence, then functions to maintain discourse continuity by signaling the progression from one segment of the speech to the next.

After expressing appreciation to one group, Trump uses then to shift attention to another audience segment. Within Schiffrin's (1987) framework, then serves as a marker of temporal adverb, organizing the sequence of events and guiding listeners through the evolving focus of the speech. This marker contributes to discourse coherence by structuring the speech as a continuous and orderly narrative rather than a collection of disconnected remarks. Overall, the findings demonstrate that discourse markers in Donald Trump's rally victory speech function strategically to organize discourse, manage interaction, and guide audience interpretation. Elaborative discourse markers primarily serve textual and interactional functions, contrastive markers function ideationally to manage opposition, inferential markers support cognitive

processing, and temporal markers structure narrative flow. These results confirm Schiffrin's (1987) view that discourse markers operate across multiple functional levels and support Fraser's (1999) classification in contemporary political discourse.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of discourse markers in Donald Trump's rally victory speech by applying Fraser's (1999) classification of discourse marker types and Schiffrin's (1987) functional framework. The findings reveal that discourse markers play a crucial role in organizing discourse, managing interaction, and reinforcing persuasive strategies in political speech. Among the four identified types elaborative, contrastive, inferential, and temporal. Elaborative discourse markers were the most dominant, indicating the speaker's tendency to accumulate ideas and maintain discourse continuity. The dominance of elaborative discourse markers suggests that Donald Trump constructs his speech through additive and repetitive patterns that strengthen message emphasis and audience engagement. Contrastive discourse markers functioned to reposition arguments and frame challenges against success narratives, while inferential discourse markers guided listeners toward intended conclusions and enhanced the perceived logic of arguments. Temporal discourse markers, although less frequent, contributed to narrative organization by situating political events within a chronological framework.

These findings confirm that discourse markers are not merely linguistic fillers but strategic devices that shape coherence, ideology, and persuasion in political discourse. From a theoretical perspective, this study reinforces the applicability of Fraser's (1999) and Schiffrin's (1987) frameworks in analyzing contemporary political speeches. The integration of discourse marker types and functions provides a comprehensive understanding of how linguistic elements operate at structural, interactional, and cognitive levels. This research extends previous discourse marker studies by focusing on a victory rally speech, a genre that has received limited scholarly attention despite its political and communicative significance. Practically, the findings offer insights for students, educators, and researchers in linguistics and political communication. Understanding how discourse markers function in political speeches can enhance critical language awareness and help audiences interpret political messages more critically. For educators, this study can serve as a reference for teaching discourse analysis and spoken discourse in academic settings. Future research is encouraged to explore discourse markers in other political contexts, such as debates, interviews, or policy speeches, using comparative or corpusbased approaches. Further studies may also examine cross-cultural

political discourse to identify similarities and differences in discourse marker usage across political systems and languages. Such research would contribute to a broader understanding of discourse markers and their role in shaping political communication.

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