An Investigation of Interpersonal Metadiscourse Markers as Persuasive Strategies in Donald Trump's 2016 Campaign Speeches

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Abstract

Interpersonal metadiscourse is considered as a significant mean of smoothing communication between the speaker/writer and listener/reader. The present study intends to explore the concept and type of interpersonal metadiscourse markers employed by Donald Trump's campaign speeches as a persuasive strategy. Descriptive qualitative research design is used in the present study. Dafouz's (2008) classification of interpersonal metadiscourse markers was employed to analyze the gathered data. The results revealed that Trump made use of all categories of interpersonal metadiscourse markers namely hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries, in his campaign speeches. The frequency of attitude markers and commentaries was more than other types of metadiscourse markers in Trump's campaign speech, which demonstrates that he attempted to persuade the public to vote for him through making an emotional link.

1. Introduction

One of the most important events in every country is the Presidential elections. Political parties devote a lot of energy, cost, and time to present the best image of candidates. Language strategies are frequently used by candidates to show themselves and their political party. In fact, one of the most precious assets for a politician is his or her ability to use language to gain the support of voters. The political candidates usually deliver rhetorically, highly, and effective speeches during the presidential campaign. Indeed, campaign speech is one of the convincing tools utilized by politicians to gain political support. Through this media, they attempt to communicate their programs with their audience to reach

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a final objective: getting votes from their potential voters. For this reason, a campaign speech should be delivered in effective ways.

The candidates even hire language experts to help the candidate prepare their speeches in debates. They are very cautious in selecting the proper language with which their candidate will present themselves, and they will also comment on their rivals. Of course, politicians, in most cases, talk about themselves and their party in a positively way, but use rather negative and critical language to describe the other party. They try to justify their own behavior, or legitimize it, and to disapprove their opponents' behavior or delegitimize it. According to Reyes (2011), the act of legitimization is "the process by which speakers accredit or license a type of social behavior" (782). Also, Cap (2008) defines legitimization as "a principle discourse goal sought by political actors" (39). Therefore, legitimization requires particular emphasis in democratic debate because it is from this speech occurrence that government leaders defend their political objectives to preserve or change the trajectory of a country as a whole and, in the case of US leaders, the entire world.

According to van Dijk (1997), political discourse is "a prominent way of doing politics" (18). Furthermore, Reyes (2011) believes that political discourse is a genre in which political actors speak publicly, and aim to promote political agendas" (783). Rojo and van Dijk (1997) state that the political actors have been given authority and power to influence the audience into accepting their standing points concerning different social issues by justifying their actions and attacking the ones of their opponents" (530). Accordingly, political discourse can be considered as an instance of persuasive speech, organized to legitimize political goals (Cap 2008). The language used by presidential candidates is generally known as *campaign speech*.

Sukma (2017) believes that campaign speech is a kind of persuasive strategy used by politicians to get political support. Through this type of speech, the politicians try to communicate their programs with their audience to obtain their goal that is getting votes from their voters. Accordingly, a campaign speech should be conveyed in effective ways. Sukma (2017) believes that one way to reach effective communication and to be able to persuade the audience for a successful interaction is using a special kind of linguistic resource called metadiscourse. According to Hyland (2005), metadiscourse markers are linguistic elements which indicate that the interlocutors are present in the text by referring to the organization of the text, or by remarking on the text in other ways. The definition implies a significant role of metadiscourse while the use of this linguistic expression will determine the success of a communication.

A linguistic tool named metadiscourse may be implemented to achieve the efficient negotiation and persuasion that results in a successful interaction. In fact, the term metadiscourse is characterized as the relationship between the addresser and the addressee (Amiryousefi and Rasekh, 2010; Dehkordi and Allami, 2012; Namaziandost and Shafiee, 2018). The concept represents a considerable function of metadiscourse, since utilizing this linguistic form can identify the effectiveness of a communication. According to Hyland (2005), metadiscourse deals with the relationship between writers of the texts and their texts as well as texts' authors and their readers. Hyland (2005) has proposed a model to explain the interaction between writers and readers. According to this model, the interaction mainly involves two major elements: (a) stance, and (b) engagement. Elements to stance are: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions. On the other hand, elements to engagement are: reader pronouns, personal asides, appeals to shared knowledge, directives, and questions. Hedges and boosters are elements using which the writer can express uncertainty or certainty about an issue, refuse, or strengthen commitment to a position, open or close dialogue with the reader, and attenuate or boost illocutionary force. The skillful manipulation of hedges and boosters in academic texts not only signals a writer's epistemic stance towards propositional content and intended readers, but also marks himself or herself as a competent member of the discourse community (Hyland, 2005; Sepehri, Hajijalili, and Namaziandost, 2019). Attitude markers express writer's attitude to proposition and self-mentions explicit reference to authors.

Interpersonal metadiscourse is a type of metadiscourse, which deals with the relationship between speaker and listener. This type of metadiscourse is more important than textual metadiscourse in discourses like campaign speech because using this type of metadiscourse markers, the speakers create their desirable interaction with the listeners. The success of communication in campaign speech, establishes better relationship with the speaker. Interpersonal metadiscourse is derived from interpersonal meaning of language metafunctions proposed by Halliday. Hyland (2005) defines the interpersonal meaning as "the use of language to encode interaction, allowing us to engage with others, to take on roles, and to express and understand evaluations and feelings" (26). In addition, Lyons (2005, as cited in Hyland, 2005) claims that interpersonal metadiscourse "can help us express our personalities and our reactions to the propositional content of our texts, and characterize the interaction we would like to have with our readers about that content" (26). Thus, from both definitions it can be concluded that interpersonal metadiscourse deals more with the interaction and relationship between addresser and addressee.

Metadiscourse in speech was investigated by Yipei and Lingling (2013), Sari (2014), and Esmer (2015). In their research article, Yipei and Lingling (2013) investigated metadiscourse in Steve Job's Stanford speech using Hyland's theory (2005) categorizing metadiscourse intointeractive and interactional. Using the same theory, Sari (2014) also analyzed metadiscourse markers but in different object, that is Michelle Obama's Speech. Meanwhile, Esmer (2015) compared interpersonal metadiscourse markers expressed in Turkish Election Rally Speeches by two Turkish political Leaders using Dafouz's (2008) classification of interpersonal metadiscourse markers. Dunald Trump's campaign speeches were chosen as the object of this study since Trump's oratorial skill is an interesting phenomenon to investigate. This fact was supported by Richard Green (2011), a renowned communication strategist, who said that Trump is America's third greatest presidential orator in modern era (https://theconversation.com/five-reasons-donald-trump-is-a-more-effective-orator-than-you-think-64637).

To sum up, the differences of this present study from the previous ones lie on the theory and the object of research since this one answers:

a. What categories of metadiscourse markers were mostly used by Trump in his campaign speeches?

b. What persuasive strategies did Trump try to attain by using the categories in his campaign speeches?

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have been conducted on the type and function of metadiscourse resources in different genres and contexts, including, textbooks (Hyland, 2005a), research papers (Dahl, 2004; Hyland, 2005b, 2008; McGrath and Kuteeva, 2012; Abdollahzadeh, 2011), book reviews (Tse and Hyland, 2006), and MA theses (Blagojevic, 2004). Furthermore, to find out some cross-cultural differences, several studies (e.g., Yang, 2013; Namaziandost and Shafiee, 2018) have investigated the use of metadiscourse markers by members of different language or cultural communities.

In a recent descriptive qualitative study, Sukma (2017) investigated interpersonal metadiscourse markers applied in Barack Obama's campaign speeches related to his persuasive strategy. Dafouz's (2008) theory of interpersonal metadiscourse markers categorization was used to analyze the gathered data. The results showed that Barack Obama had used in all interpersonal metadiscourse markers categories, namely hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries. High frequency of attitude markers and commentaries showed that Obama in his campaign speeches had tried to build emotional bond with his audience as his persuasive strategy. The distinction between the present study and the study by Sukma

(2017) was that the present study focused on Trump's speech. Esmer (2015) compared interpersonal metadiscourse markers expressed in Turkish Election Rally Speeches by two Turkish political leaders using Dafouz's (2008) classification of interpersonal metadiscourse markers. Similarly, Sari (2014) analyzed metadiscourse markers, but in different object, that is Michelle Obama's speech. Furthermore, their research article, Yipeiand Lingling (2013) investigated metadiscoursein Steve Job's Stanford speech using Hyland's theory (2005) categorizing metadiscourse into (a) interactive, and (b) interactional.

In a comparative study, Hu and Cao (2011) investigated the use of hedges and boosters in 649 academic article abstracts collected from eight journals of applied linguistics. This study aimed to see if hedging and boosting strategies differed between applied linguists publishing in Chinese and English medium journals, and between authors of empirical and non-empirical academic articles. The analyses indicated that hedges were more in abstracts published in English-medium journals than those published in Chinese-medium, and boosters were more in the abstracts of empirical research articles than those of non-empirical academic articles.

Similarly, Estaji, and Vafaeimehr's (2015) contrastive study of metadiscourse markers in 90 discussion sections of applied linguistics research articles in English and Persian showed that conscious awareness of L2 language conventions of rhetorical functions is an influential factor in the use of metadiscourse. Also, the results indicated that interactive metadiscourse markers were used more frequently than interactional metadiscourse markers by both groups. Sugiyono (2010) examined the use of metadiscourse markers in MA theses in Linguistics. In order to find out what factors can affect the use of metadiscourse markers, he studied 70 L2 and L1 English theses. A comparison of the frequencies of text-connectors, which made up about 31 percent of the total use of metadiscourse markers in theses showed that text-connectors were overused by L2 students.

In summary, Metadiscourse markers are an important device for structuring the text. As metadiscourse markers play important role in understanding the relationship between what writers aim to assert and their discourse communities, this study obviously raises students' understanding about how they structure their writings. In addition, this study increases our understanding of political speeches, strategies, and vocabulary knowledge. Keeping these in mind and since no study, to the best author's knowledge, has so far investigated the metadiscourse markers in Donald Trump's campaign speeches, the present study aimed to investigate the metadiscourse markers which were mostly used

by Trump in his campaign speeches. In addition, this study aimed to investigate the persuasive strategies which were used by Trump in his campaign speeches.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Data Collection Procedures

The present study employed a qualitative method. The corpus of the study included eight Trump's campaign speeches in his 2016 rallies. The speech transcripts were downloaded from *www.presidency.ucsb.edu*. Then, the transcripts were analyzed in order to investigate the interpersonal metadiscourse markers used in the speeches. The categorization of interpersonal metadiscourse markers proposed by Dafouz (2008) was employed to categorize the gathered data. Finally, the frequency and percentage of each category which had occurred in the speeches was calculated.

3.2. Data Categorization Model

The categorization of the interpersonal metadiscourse markers was based on Dafouz (2008). Based on this model, the interpersonal metadiscourse holds more persuasive functions than the textual one. The interpersonal metadiscourse is realized by some categories and subcategories. Dafouz (2008) divides it in to five categories: (a) hedges, (b) certainty markers, (c) attributors, (d) attitudemarkers, and (e) commentaries. Table 1 presents the interpersonal metadiscourse markers presented by Dafouz (2008).

Table 1. *Interpersonal Metadiscourse Markers*

Macro-Category	Subcategory	Examples
Hedges: Express Partial Commitment to the Truth-Value of the Texts	Epistemic Verbs	May / Might / It Must Be Two O'clock
	Probability Adverbs	Probably / Perhaps / Maybe
	Epistemic Expressions	It Is Likely
Certainty Markers: Express Total Commitment to the Truth Value of the Text		Undoubtedly / Clearly / Certainly
Attributors: Refer to the Source of Information		'X' Claims That.../ As the Prime Minister Remarked
Attitude Markers: Express Writers' Affective Values Towards Text And Readers	Deontic Verbs	Have to / We Must Understand / Needs to
	Attitudinal Adverbs	Unfortunately, / Remarkably / Pathetically
	Attitudinal Adjectives	It Is Absurd / It Is Surprising
	Cognitive Verbs	I Feel / I Think / I Believe
Commentaries: Help To Establish Reader-Writer Rapport Through The Text	Rhetorical Questions	What Is the Future of Europe, Integration or Disintegration?
	Direct Address To Reader	You Must Understand, Dear Reader
	Inclusive Expressions	We All Believe / Let Us Summarize
	Personalization	What The Polls Are Telling Me / I Do Not Want
	Asides	Diana (Ironically For A Spencer) Was Not Of The Establishment

Table Taken From Dafouz (99)

Based on the model presented by Dafouz (2008) and Sukma (2017) in Table 1, categories can be divided into two types regarding their orientations: (a) proposition-oriented, and (b) relationship-oriented. Hedges, certainty markers, and attributors are considered proposition-oriented due to their focus on the "truth-value" and "the source of information" while attitude markers and commentaries can be regarded as relationship-oriented because of dealing with the relationship between speaker or writer and reader or audience.

4. Results and Discussion

The needed data were gathered, and the results revealed a number of 116 interpersonal metadiscourse markers in Trump's campaign speeches. Table 2 and Figure 2 present the frequency of occurrence of each category in speeches.

Table 2. *Frequency of Interpersonal Metadiscourse Categories in Trump's Campaign Speeches*

Metadiscourse marker	Frequency	Percentage
Hedges	15	12.93%
Certainty Markers	7	6.07%
Attributors	13	11.20%
Attitude markers	46	39.65%
Commentaries	35	30.17%
Total	116	100%

Metadiscourse markers

■ Hedges ■ Certainty markers ■ Attributors ■ Attitude markers ■ Commentaries
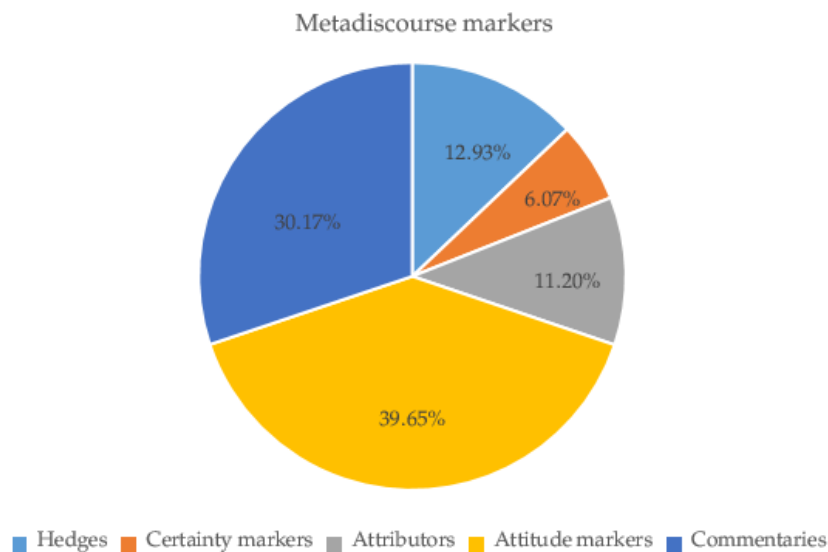
Figure 1. Frequency of Interpersonal Metadiscourse Categories Occurrence in Trump's Campaign Speeches

According to the results presented in Table 2 and Figure 1, attitude markers were found to be the most frequently used category among the metadiscourse markers with a percentage of 39.65% of all the used markers. This shows that

Donald Trump tried to express affective values towards the audience. This is in line with Sukma (2013) who also found that Barak Obama made use of attitude markers more than other types of metadiscourse markers. Attitude markers are used to express surprise, importance, agreement, obligation, and frustration, and these seem to be important tools in the hand of politicians through which to express their feelings and emotions.

The following two excerpts were taken from two of Trumps' campaign speeches delivered in 2016:

> **Excerpt 1:** Everywhere I look; *I see* the possibilities of what our country *could be*. But we can't solve any of these problems by relying on the politicians who created them. We will never be able to fix a rigged system by counting on the same people who rigged it in the first place.
> **Excerpt 2:** The insiders wrote the rules of the game to keep themselves in power and in the money. That's why we're asking Bernie Sanders' voters to join our movement. So, together we can fix the system for ALL Americans. *Importantly*, this includes fixing all of our many disastrous trade deals.

In excerpt 1, Trump uses the cognitive verb *see*, and the deontic verb *could be* that are instances of attitude markers. In addition, in excerpt 2, the adverb *importantly* which is a type of attitudinal adverb is used by Trump in his campaign speech. The second highly frequent category used by Trump in his speech was *commentaries* with a percentage of 30.17% of the total number of metadiscourse markers. Hyland (2005) believes that commentaries help to establish interlocutors' rapport. This may be the reason for the rather high percentage of using this type of metadiscourse marker. Trump made use of this class of metadiscourse marker to make emotional relationship with his audience. This is in line with Dafouz (2008) who claims that commentaries help make and keep relationship between the speaker writer and his/her listener/reader.

> **Excerpt 3:** *We* can't hand over *our* government to someone whose deepest, darkest secrets may be in the hands of our enemies.
> **Excerpt 4:** Here is some more of what we learned from the book *Clinton Cash*:

A foreign telecom giant faced possible State Department sanctions for providing technology to Iran, and other oppressive regimes. So, what did this company do? In excerpt 3, Trump, by using the pronouns *We* and *Our*, tries to link the distance between him and his audience, and thus attribute himself to the whole population. Also, excerpt 4 is an instance of rhetorical question used by Trump. Rhetorical question is an example of commentary as mentioned by Dafouz (2008). Rhetorical questions, inclusive expressions, and direct address to readers were among the types of commentaries used by Trump in his campaign speeches to persuade the audience to vote to him. This finding lends support to the study by Sukma (2013), in which he found that Obama made use of

commentaries frequently in his campaign speeches to attract the public's attention to vote to him.

The next category of discourse markers employed by Trump in his campaign speeches was found to behedges. Here are two instances of hedge used by Trump in his campaign speeches:

> **Excerpt 5:** I look very much forward to being your president, and hopefully at the end of two years or three years or four years, or *may be* even eight years … (APPLAUSE) … you will say, so many of you worked so hard for us, but you will say that – you will say that that was something that you really were very proud to do and I can …
> **Excerpt 6:** Maybe her motivation lies among the more than 1000 foreign donations Hillary failed to disclose while at the State Department. Hillary Clinton *may be* the most corrupt person ever to seek the presidency.

In excerpt 5, Trump is using the epistemic verb *may* to persuade the audience to believe that not only he will win the election, but also, he will be the president for two courses. By using this verb, he also attempts to give his audience a choice to believe or not to believe his statement.

Hedges are moderating words such as *probably*. They are used to reduce the force of an utterance, and to save a speaker's face. According to Holtgraves and Lasky (1999), "a speaker who uses powerless language will be perceived as less assertive [or] competent . . . than a speaker who uses powerful language" (196). Hedges are used by Trump to express his idea with less certainty. This finding is in line with Hyland (2005), who proposed that hedge "helps speaker/writer recognize alternative voices and viewpoints, and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition" (52). In addition, according to Takimoto (2015), hedges are used to show that the speaker is subjective and interpretive. Trump made use of hedges less than 20% of his speech, this may mean that he did not want to be more subjective and interpretive; however, one of the characteristics of the social and humanities subject is its subjectivity (Takimoto, 2015).

Attributors (11.20%) were found to be the next class of metadiscourse markers used by Trump in his speeches to persuade the public to vote to him. Here are two examples of attributors used by Trump:

> **Excerpt 7:** Hillary Clinton who, *as most people know*, is a world class liar – just look at her pathetic email and server statements, or her phony landing in Bosnia where she said she was under attack, but the attack turned out to be young girls handing her flowers, a total self-serving lie.
> **Excerpt 8:** Hillary Clinton wants to be President. But she doesn't have the temperament, or, as Bernie Sanders said, the judgment, to be president.

Attributors refer to the source of information given in a text. By using the phrase *as most people know,* Trump tries to attribute his opinion to most American people, and this way he makes use of an attributor. According to Dafouz (2008),

attributors explicitly tell the audience about the source of information given in the text, and also perform persuasive goal by mentioning the references. Moreover, they help the speaker hold support and justification for his or her arguments (Noorian and Biria, 2010). Attributors are used by Trump to support these arguments as exemplified in the above examples. In this regard, the findings are in line with the study by Sukma (2013). In excerpt 8 Trump attributes his comment about Hillary Clinton to another politician namely, as Bernie Sander, and states that Hillary Clinton wants to be President, but according to Bernie Sanders, she doesn't have the temperament and the judgement, to be president.

Another class of metadiscourse markers which is the opposite of hedge is certainty markers. This subcategory of metadiscourse markers was employed as the markers with the least percentage (only 6.07%). The following two examples were taken from Trump's speeches:

> **Excerpt 9:** Together, she (Hillary Clinton) and Bill made $153 million giving speeches to lobbyists, CEOs, and foreign governments in the years since 2001.They *totally* own her, and that will never change.
> **Excerpt 10:** We *must* reclaim our country's destiny and dream big and bold and daring.

According to Dafouz (2008) certainty markers express speaker/writer's full commitment to the statements presented, and enable the audience to find out the speaker/ writer's view or opinion. The modal verb must in excerpt 10 is an example of certainty marker. This finding is comparable with the study by Sukma (2013) in which it was found that Obama did not make use of this category of metadiscourse markers very much.

5. Conclusion

Metadiscourse markers are an essential instrument for formulating the text. Although interactive metadiscourse markers lead to textual unity, interactional metadiscourse markers form the writer-reader relationship. Because of the dialogic nature of the discussion forum, participants in this research utilized numerous interactional metadiscourse markers. The result demonstrated the utilization of all types of metadiscourse markers, indicating that metadiscourse markers are a strongly dialogic kind of genre inherent in the online discussion. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate Donald Trump's use of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in his 2016 campaign speeches by using Dafouz's (2008) classification of interpersonal metadiscourse markers. Data was selected through eight Trump's campaign speeches in his 2016 rallies. The speech transcripts were downloaded from *www.presidency.ucsb.edu*. The results revealed that Trump made use of all subcategories of metadiscourse markers

including hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries. Attitude markers and commentaries were found to be the predominant classes of markers followed by hedges, attributes and certainty markersThese results are in line with the study by Sukma (2013); however, they are different from the study by Esmer (2017) in which commentaries and certainty markers are mostly used in Turkish politicians' campaign speeches. Also, Trump used these types of markers to build a link with the potential voters, and to persuade them to vote to him. Interestingly, certainty markers were found to be the least category used by Trump in his speeches. This can be due to the fact that Trump was moderate in convincing his audience. The findings obtained in the study disclosed that with the help of the interpersonal metadiscourse markers, Trump tried to reproduce his audiences' national identities. This way he tried to evoke a sense of patriotism and restore the national values.

Comprehension of using metadiscourse markers in speaking is a significant issue for EFL learners, especially at the higher levels where they are needed to speak as much as they can. According to the results of this study, it is suggested that for a better comprehension of the One's speech, EFL learners need not only to master metadiscourse markers, but also to recognize their meanings and functions as well. The findings of this study encourage students to use more metadiscourse markers during their speeches. Without them, learners cannot understand perceive One's speech successfully. In addition, unveiling the metadiscourse instruments preferred by the prominent leaders, the results of the present study provided valuable consequences for orators involved in appealing to a global audience or making a speech on an international conflict. Moreover, the results of the study may profit the orators to replicate the rhetoric of the president' discourse. To fully understand the use of metadiscourse in political rhetoric, however, there is a desperate need to explore a wide variety of speeches delivered by politicians of the same culture. Future research may further investigate the topic by restricting the focus of the present research to address the relationship between personal traits and the use of interpersonal metadiscourse markers while accounting for contextual variations.

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