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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Constructing Threat, Sovereignty, and Populist Authority: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's 2025 UN Address

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Abstract: Political speeches, particularly at international platforms, play a very significant role in shaping public opinion. They influence the understanding of problems and their solutions. Donald Trump's address to the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on 23rd September, 2025, draws global attention. It attracts critical focus due to Trump's assertive tone, his warnings against immigration, his emphasis on national sovereignty, and his criticism on multilateral institutions. This research paper aims to conduct a critical discourse analysis of this speech. Explicitly, the study focuses on Trump's use of four impression markers: "pronouns", "modal verbs", "repetition", and "parallelism". These impression markers facilitate Trump in building his narrative on the three major ideological themes: immigration, sovereignty, and global order. To study the link between the small impression markers and the broader ideological narratives, the researcher develops and utilises an integrated framework based on Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model, which is supported by Van Dijk's (1997) ideological square, Ruth Wodak's (2001) argumentation strategies, and Charteris-Black's (2011) rhetorical concept of political charisma. The findings reveal that the impression markers are not only small and simple stylistic features, but they carry the potential to construct the broader ideological discourse. They facilitate Trump in building and legitimizing his discourse that immigration is a threat, national sovereignty is a sacred duty, and unilateral action is necessary to restore the global order. Moreover, the findings also highlight that Trump's speech contributes to the recent populist discourse.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Political Discourse, Populist Rhetoric, Ideological Polarization, Discursive Legitimation, National Sovereignty, Donald Trump

Introduction

In global politics, language has become an important tool to influence public opinion. The strategic use of language is very influential in constructing and maintaining power, authority, and national identity. Political leaders use language to shape public understanding of perceived threats like immigration. They share their policies to maintain global order. In this context, international platforms have become very significant to influence the global audience. The United Nations General Assembly is one of the most important platforms these days, for the global leaders to share their policies, to build national identity, to warn against perceived threats, and to maintain global order. According to Critical discourse analysis, language is not only a simple source of communication. It is rather a tool for controlling others, constructing social realities, and maintaining power structures. In political speeches, language serves as a tool of persuasion and ideological control. Political leaders, through the use of selective linguistic choices and other rhetorical devices, build such narratives that justify their policies, construct national identities and place themselves as moral authorities and saviours of their people. In this context, particularly presidential speeches are very important

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as they interlink their personal interests and beliefs with governmental power, and consequently influence native and international audiences. Particularly when the speeches are delivered by national leaders at international platforms like the United Nations (UN), they convey more than simple policies. They frame identities, construct ideologies, and make divisions between the nations and their opponents. Such speeches provide a very rich area of inquiry to explore small linguistic choices and other rhetorical devices that help to create and maintain ideological dominance, and reinforce social hierarchies (Fairclough, 2001; Ruth Wodak, 2001).

Donald Trump's address to the 80th United Nations General Assembly, on 23rd September, 2025, is a very significant example of political discourse that attracts and justifies critical attention. The address draws global attention because of his assertive tone, his warnings against immigration, and his criticism of multilateral institutions. Trump, in particular, emphasises national sovereignty that must be the guiding force for international policies and action. He stresses: "Your countries are being ruined, ruined by open borders, and weak leaders" (Trump, 2025, 00:23:30-00:23:53). He also presents America as the strongest country in the world. He asserts: "America is blessed with the strongest economy, the strongest borders, the strongest military, the strongest friends and the strongest spirit" (Trump, 2025, 00:02:06-00:02:44). These statements include rhetorical strategies that help Trump to construct his political discourse, particularly on the themes of immigration, sovereignty, and global order.

The previously conducted studies show that the research scholars have analysed Donald Trump's earlier speeches. The researchers have critically studied Trump's speech style. They have explored his populist discourse where he presents himself as the protector of his nation and the saviour of his people. They have also concentrated on his use of pronouns to make a clear distinction between groups and outgroups. Some scholars have concluded that Trump is a master of presenting complex issues as simple. He often deploys emotional language to win the hearts of his people. Moreover, previous studies have also explored that UN discourse is replete with tensions between nationalism and globalism (Ricketts, 2024).

However, there remains a gap that no scholar has conducted systematic Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's address to the 80th United Nations General Assembly, on 23rd September, 2025. Particularly, no previous research has ever examined the role of the four impression markers in relation to the three broad themes of immigration, sovereignty, and global politics. In addition to this, no existing study has ever integrated Fairclough's (2015) Three Dimensional Model with Van Dijk's (1997) Ideological Square, Ruth Wodak's (2001) Argumentation Strategies, and Charteris-Black's (2011) Rhetorical Analysis to study this particular speech of Donald Trump. Utilizing this integrated framework, the present study tries to fill the gap by studying the four impression markers pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism that link with and help to build the three broad and dominant themes immigration, sovereignty, and global politics present in Trump's 2025 speech to the 80th session of the UN General Assembly.

This study is significant in many ways. The study highlights the ways in which impression markers become useful ideological tools to create and maintain power on national and international levels. By critically analysing Donald Trump's 2025 UN speech, this research study explains that the use of language in political contexts can make certain ideas appear natural, justify specific policies, and maintain influence in global politics. The study also contributes to the current discussions on the ways national and international leaders deploy language as a tool to promote nationalism, populism, and particular views of world politics in the 21st century. This research study also contributes to developing and designing an integrated theoretical framework which combines the three-dimensional model of Fairclough (2015) with the supporting theories of Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and Charteris-Black. This new integrated framework provides a more comprehensive and multidimensional approach to studying political discourse. It comprehensively links micro level linguistic features with macro level political discourse. The main objective of this study is to analyse the impression markers which are used by Donald Trump in his 2025 speech at the 80th United

Nations General Assembly. The study aims to explore Trump's use of these small linguistic elements to construct his ideological stance on immigration, sovereignty, and global politics. The research also seeks to highlight the ways in which this speech creates polarization between sovereign nations and the globalist forces.

This paper aims to study four impression markers in Donald Trump's 2025 speech at the 80th United Nations General Assembly. These impression markers include: pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism. The use of pronouns like "we" and "they" marks a distinction between groups and outgroups; the repetition of words like "ruined" and "destroying" presents "them" as a threat and creates the fear of invasion. The strategic use of modal verbs including "must", "cannot", and "will" creates a sense of urgency and moralizes national defence. The rhythm of speech is created by repetition and parallelism. The Repetition and the parallelism create unity between the speaker and the audience, and present ideological claims as natural. The use of these two impression markers is prominent in the populist discourse where the populist leaders present themselves as the protector and saviour of the people against external threats. Donald Trump uses all these impression markers to create broader political meanings.

The analysis of this paper connects Trump's use of four impression markers with the three dominant themes of his speech: immigration, sovereignty, and global order. One of the three most dominant themes is immigration. Trump repeatedly warns against immigration as an external threat. He says: "Your countries are being ruined, ruined by open borders, and weak leaders" (Trump, 2025, 00:23:30-00:23:53). Trump time and again emphasizes border security. He considers illegal migration as one of the biggest problems. According to Gambino et al., (2025), Donald Trump signed an order to declare "national emergency" at the southern border. He issued orders to deploy troops to resume wall construction. The second most dominant theme of his speech is sovereignty. The use of parallelism and modal verbs emphasizes national defence as a moral obligation. The third theme is global politics. Trump is critical of international institutions where the US has to bear the costs without any favourable return. In addition, he also presents the US as the unique leader of the world. All these three themes are tied together through the use of impression markers to influence national and international audiences. This leads to some definite research questions, which are given as follows:

Research Questions

1. What are the impression markers used in Donald Trump's 2025 UN General Assembly speech, and how are they textually distributed?
2. How do these impression markers construct Trump's ideological stance on immigration, sovereignty, and global politics?
3. How do Trump's discursive strategies and rhetorical patterns reinforce populist and nationalist ideology in the broader context of international relations?

Literature Review

This section reviews scholarly works on critical discourse analysis and political narratives. It provides strong reasons to study the role of small linguistic features in constructing ideological narratives. Previous research shows that political speeches, particularly at international platforms like the UN, rely on strategic use of language. The strategic linguistic choices help to justify policy positions. They help to shape public opinion and maintain power relations in the global context. Explicitly, the review deals with the use of impression markers, framing of ideology, Donald Trump's discourse, and the friction between populist and globalist discourse.

Empirical CDA Investigation of Political and International Discourse

The use of Critical Discourse Analysis in the context of political communication has attracted considerable attention from scholars of the world. Past research shows that political leaders around the globe often build legitimacy and authority through the use of carefully crafted language that ties personal authority and

leadership to broader collective identity. Cap and Okulska (2013) argue that rhetoric of crisis in political speeches serves to justify extraordinary measures by merging narratives of threat and renewal. Likewise, Wang et al. (2024), in their study of climate change discourse at the United Nations, highlight the ways the modal verbs like “must” and “will” convey urgency while shifting direct responsibility and accountability in subtle ways. These small linguistic choices help to reveal the ideological and moral positioning embedded in apparently neutral international rhetoric. Yasmin (2024), in her linguistic analysis of Indian and Pakistani civil and military conflict discourses, examines the discursive processes of legitimization and delegitimization in politically contested contexts. This perspective is particularly relevant to understanding how political leaders construct legitimacy for their own positions while challenging the legitimacy of opposing actors. Such findings affirm the value of critical discourse analysis in exposing the ways in which political leaders around the globe encode ideology within apparently neutral discourse.

CDA and Donald Trump's Discourse

Recent studies have examined the ideological foundations of Donald Trump's discourse, with a special focus on his populist and nationalist strategies. Awawdeh and Al-Abbas (2023) used Fairclough's model to analyse the speeches of Trump during the COVID-19 pandemic. They highlighted that his frequent use of first-person pronouns, “we” and “our”, alongside assertive modals, “will” and “must”, constructed a narrative of unity and control. These linguistic patterns produced a blend of inclusivity and authoritarian control and certainty. Similarly, Majeed (2025) studied Trump's campaign and inaugural speeches. They found that his lexical choices established a clear moral dichotomy between “the people” and “the elites”. It shows his populist discourse. In addition to this, Wodak (2021) accentuates the rhetorical style of Trump as an example of emotional simplicity and polarization. He used repetition and exaggeration to support his ideological messages which are typical of right-wing populism. In a related political context, Irshad and Yasmin (2025) examine positive self-representation and negative othering in a Pakistani political press briefing. Their study provides a relevant comparative perspective for investigating how political discourse constructs distinctions between the self and opposing groups, a central concern of the present analysis of Trump's rhetoric.

CDA and Political Discourse in Multilateral and Global Forums

The researchers have also applied Critical Discourse Analysis to political speeches on international platforms. They highlighted the hidden ways in which leaders communicate and establish their national agendas. Wang et al. (2024) applied Critical Discourse Analysis to the speeches on climate in UN conferences. They highlighted that the careful use of inclusive pronouns and passive sentences balances the rhetoric of cooperation and accountability. (Ricketts, 2024) discussed the debates on the themes of sovereignty and identity at the United Nations. It clearly shows that discursive framing is used to assert and maintain national independence and identity while, apparently, being cooperative. These research studies justify that the discourse of the United Nations often incorporates the friction between nationalism and globalization, a binary which is central to Trump's UN address in 2025.

Impression Markers, and Ideological Positioning in Political Discourse

The research scholars have also pointed out time and again that some specific linguistic choices, such as pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism, are very important because they indicate of ideological positions. Li and Zhang (2019), in their research study on Trump's 2017 UN and 2018 G20 speeches, concluded that the repeated use of the inclusive pronoun “we” and modal verb “will” reflected their collective strength and determination. On the other hand, negative references to “they” were employed to convey external threats. By the same token, Kanwal and Maldonado Gracia (2019) found that Hillary Clinton, the former United States Secretary of State, in her campaign speeches, used repetition and inclusive language to build empathy and trust. These research studies accentuate that such impression markers are not only stylistic elements but key ideological tools to construct authority and collective identity.

Research Gap in Existing Literature

Though previous research scholars have studied Trump's earlier political speeches, there remains a lack of CDA research on his 2025 speech at the 80th United Nations General Assembly and particularly one that applies an integrated analytical framework based on Fairclough's, Van Dijk's, Wodak's, and Charteris-Black's approaches. Therefore, the current study, dealing with this research gap, places Trump's political discourse within a broader geopolitical context and examines how impression markers are used to promote narratives on immigration, sovereignty, and populism in global political discourse.

Methodology

This study analyses the impression markers used by Donald Trump in his 2025 speech at the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly. For this purpose, the study develops and utilizes an integrated framework based on Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model, Van Dijk's (1997) Ideological Square, Ruth Wodak's (2001) Argumentation Strategies (2001) and Charteris-Black's (2011) Rhetorical Analysis. The methodology section ensures a systematic and transparent research process. Explicitly, it describes the research design, data source, and theoretical framework developed and utilized to study Trump's 2025 UN speech.

Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. It is based on the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. Instead of only describing linguistic elements, CDA investigates how language is used as a tool to shape, reinforce, or challenge power relations and ideologies in society (Fairclough, 2015; Wodak, 2001). The present study focuses on impression markers in Donald Trump's speech at the 80th United Nations General Assembly and analyses the ways in which the themes of immigration, sovereignty, and global politics are constructed ideologically. The qualitative orientation helps the researcher to uncover and analyse the hidden meanings and intentions of the speaker.

Data Source

The data for the current study is the transcription of Donald Trump's speech at the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, delivered on 23rd September, 2025. The transcription of the speech is accessed through Roll Call and Factbase (2025). This transcription provides a verbatim account of the original speech. In addition to this, the video recording is also consulted from official media platforms; it further offers notes on aspects of emphasis, tone, and speech delivery. Trump's speech is selected for its international relevance and the fact that it signifies his return to global politics after regaining the office as President of the United States of America.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis studies power structures, ideologies, and social inequalities which are created and maintained through the tool of language. CDA goes beyond the surface meaning of words and explores the hidden discourse integrated, in subtle ways, in the social structures and relations. According to Fairclough (2015), CDA links the micro level of textual analysis with the macro level of interpretation of social practices. It shows that the linguistic choices reflect, shape, and maintain social realities. Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on the organization of texts and highlights the hidden purposes behind them. It uncovers that language is used as a form of social practice to construct power relations, to build identity, and to create legitimacy in social, political, and institutional contexts.

This study utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which helps to explore the ways in which language reflects and creates power and ideology. Explicitly, the researcher uses Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model as the major theoretical framework. It helps to explore the speech at three levels: textual, discursive and social practice. In order to make it more comprehensive, the study also draws upon Van Dijk's (1997, 2001) Ideological Square that examines the division between "us" and "them". In the context of revealing

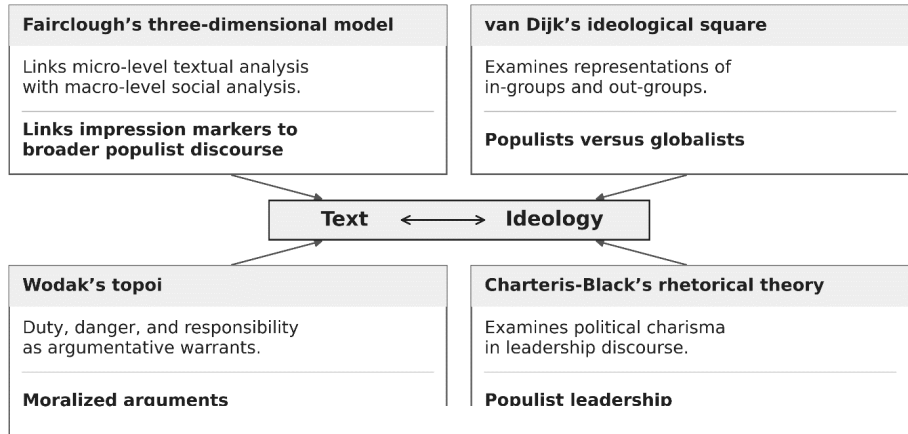
how certain claims are justified, the study incorporates Wodak’s (2001) Argumentation Strategies. In addition to this, the researcher also utilizes Charteris-Black’s (2011) rhetorical theory that highlights the role of metaphor, ethos, pathos, and logos to explain the underlying ways in which the emotional appeal and repetition strengthen persuasion.

Norman Fairclough’s (2015) Three Dimensional Model helps to analyse Trump’s speech at three levels. At the textual level, the researcher examines four impression markers used in the speech: pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism. For example, at this level, the analysis focuses on the use of pronouns like “we” and “they”, the modal verbs like “must” and “will”, the repetition of words like “ruined”, “destroying” and “overwhelmed”, and the parallel structures that create rhythm. At the discursive level, the analysis identifies that Trump draws on populist and nationalist discourse. He also adds his contribution to the populist and nationalist discourse. He legitimizes his hard policies on immigration. At the social level, these discursive patterns are linked to the broader ongoing political discourse. For instance, on the international level, Trump’s discourse is connected to right-wing populism. In short, Fairclough’s 3D model takes the analysis from micro to the macro level in a systematic way.

For the purpose of analysing Trump’s speech in a better and more systematic way, the major framework of Fairclough is integrated with Van Dijk’s (1997, 2001) Ideological Square, Wodak’s (2001) Argumentation Strategies, and Charteris-Black’s (2011) rhetorical. Van Dijk’s (1997, 2001) Ideological Square is used to examine the division between “us” and “them”. For instance, Trump, in his speech, legitimizes positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Wodak’s (2001) Argumentation Strategies are utilized in the context to reveal the ways in which certain claims are justified. For instance, Trump draws on the topi of duty, danger, and responsibility. In addition to this, the researcher also incorporates Charteris-Black’s (2011) rhetorical theory that highlights the role of metaphor, ethos, pathos, and logos to explain the underlying ways in which the emotional appeal and repetition strengthen persuasion. It helps Trump to create political charisma. This integrated framework is developed and utilized to better answer the research questions of the current study. Figure 1 presents the visual form of the integrated framework.

Through the use of this integrated framework, the study mainly, focuses on impression markers: pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism. These impression markers appear small, but they are very meaningful linguistic elements to build authority and to create ideology. Therefore, these key linguistic indicators of ideology are examined to understand how Trump constructs the polarized vision of world politics and maintains his populist image as the defender of their national sovereignty. For example, he frequently uses “we,” which creates unity with the listeners, whereas the use of “they” qualifies others as threats.

Figure 1
Integrated Theoretical Framework for Analysing Text, Ideology, and Populist Discourse



By the same token, the modal verbs like “must” and “will” express obligation and certainty and make his message urgent and unquestionable. That is how this analysis, connecting the micro level of textual patterns with the macro level of political practices, aims to reveal how small and ordinary linguistic elements contribute to the production of broader ideological constructions.

Analysis and Findings

This section deals with the analysis of four impression markers present in Donald Trump’s political address to the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The analysis is organized into three main sections according to the ideological themes dominant in the speech: immigration as external threat, sovereignty as national duty, and global politics. The analysis moves, according to Fairclough’s (2015) Three Dimensional Model, from textual analysis of the pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism to the discursive strategies, and, then, finally to the social practice. In addition to this, the analysis is supported and informed by Van Dijk’s (1997) Ideological Square, Ruth Wodak’s (2001) Argumentation Strategies, and Charteris-Black’s (2011) Rhetorical Analysis.

Section 1: Immigration as Threat and Crisis

This first section deals with immigration as a threat and crisis. Donald Trump presents immigration as one of the most urgent dangers of the world. He constructs the identity of the migrants as “others” who are the cause of destruction. Through the use of pronouns and parallelism, he presents them as a threat to the peace and progress of the nations. The strategic use of these small linguistic choices helps Trump to create the fear discourse of invasion, loss, and destruction. The use of these impression markers aligns with Van Dijk’s (1997) idea of negative other-presentation. It also agrees with Ruth Wodak’s (2001) topoi of danger and burden. In addition to this, it also correlates with Fairclough’s idea of language as a tool to reproduce social ideologies.

Trump’s use of plural third person pronouns, like ‘they’ and ‘them’, qualifies migrants as ‘others’. ‘They’ are presented as outsiders who are dangerous entities for the peace and progress of the world. Trump (2025) emphasises that “millions and millions of people were pouring in from all over the world, from prisons, from mental institutions, drug dealers” (00:04:46-00:05:22), “illegal aliens are pouring into Europe” (00:25:44-00:26:21), and “they’re destroying” (00:34:12-00:34:39) your countries. Trump (2025) also reports: “they used to send them to us in caravans of 25,30,000 people each, these massive caravans of people pouring into our country totally unchecked and unvetted, but not anymore” (00:27:59-00:28:31). There is a clear division between in-groups and out-groups. “They” are presented as “illegal aliens.” The pronoun “they” qualifies immigrants as outsiders. “They” are presented and linked with negative words like “pouring”, and “destroying” that create the sense of dangerous invasion. It seems to be a clear and classic example of Van Dijk’s (1997) negative other-presentation. Trump presents “them”, the immigrants, as negative forces who are destroying the peace of his country. The construction of threatening out-groups can also be considered in relation to research on racialization in public discourse. Sufi and Yasmin (2022), for example, examine the portrayal of Islam and Muslims, offering a comparative context for understanding how social groups become objects of ideological representation.

Trump’s use of repetition intensifies the influence of his discourse on immigration. He time and again warns his people that the nations are being “ruined”, “destroyed”, and “overwhelmed” by outside immigrants. He asserts in his 2025 speech: “your countries are being ruined, ruined by open borders and weak leaders” (00:23:30-00:23:53). The repetition of the word “ruined” intensifies the impact of his narrative on immigration. Repetition is obvious in another instance where Trump (2025) says: “Millions of people came through that southern border. Just a year ago, millions and millions people were pouring in, 25 million altogether...” (00:24:30-00:24:57). Here, numerical repetition intensifies the impact of his reported discourse on immigration. It creates a sense of urgency and fear about immigrants. In this way repetition helps Trump to intensify immigration as a threat and crisis.

At the third level of Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model, social practice, Trump's discourse on immigration aligns with populist discourse. According to populist discourse, immigration is a security threat. Trump's ideology clearly correlates with Populist discourse. He presents migrants as invaders, nations as victims, and himself as the protector and saviour of his people. In this way, he legitimizes his harsh policies regarding immigration.

Section 2: Sovereignty as Sacred Duty

Sovereignty is one of the most dominant themes in Trump's speech, which is delivered before the global audience, on 23rd September, 2025. For Trump, sovereignty is the main pillar of his nation. He presents sovereignty as a moral obligation. His speech reflects that it is the sacred duty of nations to protect national sovereignty. Through the use of modal verbs, Trump frames sovereignty as a sacred duty and moral obligation. At the textual level, modal verbs are identified. The analysis incorporates Wodak's (2001) Argumentation Strategies to identify danger and to justify moral duty. At the social practice level, the analysis qualifies Trump as a populist leader.

Trump frequently uses modal verbs like "must", "will", "should", "have to", and "cannot" in his speech. Through the use of the modal verb "must", Trump presents sovereignty as the sacred duty of the nations. For instance: "Every sovereign nation must have the right to control their own borders" (Trump, 2025, 00:26:44-00:2:03). In this statement, Trump consciously uses "must" to frame border control as the moral duty for every sovereign nation. Here, Trump not only qualifies his nation as sovereign but also justifies border control as the moral obligation. It is border control that qualifies national sovereignty. By using the expression "every sovereign nation", Trump presents the rule of becoming a sovereign nation as general and universal. Actually, he naturalizes his hard policies on immigration as common sense: sovereign nations control their borders. In this way, he links "must" with border control for the survival of collective national identity.

Trump incorporates the use of "will" to build the theme of national sovereignty. It shows determination and certainty. It also shows the projection of sovereign authority. In this statement, "we will also be proudly hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup and, shortly thereafter, the 2028 Olympics, which is going to be very exciting" (Trump, 2025, 00:51:43-00:52:16), the modal verb "will" is used to project national strength. America is capable of hosting international events. America is strong enough to lead in every walk of life, including the games. In another statement, Trump (2025) declares: "As president, I will always defend our national sovereignty and the rights of American citizens" (00:50:51-00:51:16). This is one of the clearest examples where Trump links the modal "will" directly to national sovereignty. The use of "will" shows his determination to defend their "national sovereignty". In addition to this, Trump's use of "will" assures his people that he is their savior who will always protect them and their sovereignty. Here, he presents himself as the true leader of his nation who will always defend the rights of American citizens and who will remain loyal to his country.

Ruth Wodak's (2001) Argumentation Strategies are very helpful to analyse Trump's justification of sovereignty. He incorporates the use of *topoi*. He uses the *topos* of duty, the *topos* of danger, and the *topos* of responsibility to justify his theme of national sovereignty. *Topos* of duty says that it is the moral duty of political leaders to protect their nations. This is quite obvious when Trump (2025) says: "As president, I will always defend our national sovereignty and the rights of American citizens" (00:50:51-00:51:16). In this example, he declares that as a president, it is his moral duty to protect national sovereignty and the rights of American citizens. The *topos* of danger says that if there is some danger, action becomes inevitable. This is quite obvious in Trump's discourse on immigration. He repeatedly presents immigration as a threat. For instance, he says: "your countries are being ruined, ruined by open borders and weak leaders" (Trump, 2025, 00:23:30-00:23:53). He creates a sense of urgency that immigration is destroying their countries and it must be stopped immediately. Sovereignty acts as a shield against this threat of immigration. In addition to this, Trump uses this *topos* of danger to justify his hard policies about immigration. *Topos* of responsibility says

that leaders are protectors and they must act to protect their nations and their citizens. Trump incorporates this topos of responsibility to support sovereignty. He asserts: “They must take control strongly and immediately of the unmitigated immigration disaster and the fake energy catastrophe before it's too late” (Trump, 2025, 00:41:35-00:42:02). Trump, in accordance with Wodak's (2001) topos of responsibility, puts heavy responsibility on the shoulders of national leaders. They must take responsibility and take action immediately to control immigration so that they may protect their national sovereignty. It is their sovereign duty to protect their borders, their nations, and the rights of their citizens.

At the third level of Fairclough's (2015) Three Dimensional Model, Social Practice, Trump's narrative on national sovereignty qualifies him as a populist political leader. Like populist discourse, he presents sovereignty as a shield that provides protection against external threats. It is a source of protection that saves culture from decline. It also saves the world from instability. In the context to justify his hard policies on immigration, he calls those nations sovereign that have strong control over their borders. Those who fail to secure their borders are presented as weak; they do not qualify for their national sovereignty. In this way, Trump projects his anti-globalist view of world politics and connects sovereignty to his populist discourse that promises defence and dignity.

Section 3: Global Politics and Populist-Self Representation

Donald Trump's address to the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly is an important political event to understand his discourse on global politics. Trump deploys a dual strategy to create his narrative on global politics. On the one hand, he presents populist political ideology as natural and common sense. He qualifies himself as the saviour of his nation, and the defender of his citizens' rights. On the other hand, he undermines the global institutions. He criticizes their weak and invalid policies. This he achieves through the conscious use of language techniques. Fairclough's (2015) first level, textual analysis, reveals that Trump deploys parallelism and inclusive pronouns to justify himself as a populist leader. He clearly elevates his own image as a decisive leader who has heroic qualities. He distinguishes himself from the weak leaders who fail to protect their nations. This is quite obvious in Van Dijk's positive self and negative other presentation. In addition to this, Charteris-Black's (2011) rhetorical concept of political charisma helps to understand Trump's use of rhetorical strategies to build his discourse on global politics.

Trump's speech is replete with the deliberate use of first-person plural pronouns: “we”, “our”, and “us”. These inclusive pronouns help to build unity between the speaker, Donald Trump, and his people. It seems that Trump, by using inclusive pronouns, creates a sense of collective national strength. Inclusive pronouns help him to legitimize and validate his own political ideology. He blends himself with the nation and presents himself as one of them. In one of his statements, he promises: “We will turn it around. We're going to make our countries better, safer, more beautiful. We're going to take care of our people” (Trump, 2025, 00:56:10-00:56:36). The inclusive pronoun “we” is repeatedly used to reinforce shared purpose that is to make their countries better, safer, and more beautiful. The use of “we” facilitates Trump to create a sense of unity and unified determination. This technique of rhetorical blending, through inclusive pronouns, is very common in the discourse of populist leaders; they often claim to represent the will of their people (Wodak, 2021). In this way, Trump builds populist unity and legitimizes his authority.

Parallelism is another one of the most important impression markers used by Trump in his 2025 UN Address. Trump's conscious use of parallelism gives his speech rhythm and balance. It creates rhetorical momentum and moral force that make his speech more persuasive and powerful. His use of syntactic parallelism enhances the memorability and moral clarity of his message. He uses parallelism to build his image as a populist leader who is active and effective, unlike passive and failing leaders. Using this persuasive technique, he criticizes the inactive and passive leaders of the United Nations. Trump (2025) remarks: all they seem to do is write a really strongly worded letter and then never follow that letter up” (00:10:27-00:10:58). This statement presents a contrast between “write” and “never follow up”. The globalists are presented as incapable of taking concrete action. He further adds: “The United Nations wasn't there for us.

They weren't there" (Trump, 2025, 00:09:39-00:10:04). In this way, this parallelism helps him to delegitimize the United Nations in global politics. This delegitimization corresponds with Van Dijk's idea of other negative presentation. Trump also uses parallelism for his positive self-presentation. For instance, he says: "let us defend free speech and free expression, let us protect religious liberty... and let us safeguard our sovereignty" (Trump, 2025, 00:52:16-00:53:07). The repetition of the structure "let us + verb" creates a parallel pattern of moral imperatives. It projects national sovereignty and builds a positive image of Trump as a moral leader. In addition to this, Trump often frames success through the use of balanced syntactic structures. For instance, he says: "we will fight, fight, fight for their precious dreams and their cherished freedoms" (Trump, 2025, 00:55:08-00:55:46). This use of rhythmic repetition amplifies his conviction and a single patriotic goal. In the same fashion, he also uses negative parallelism as evident in: "we will not surrender, we will not weaken, we will not fail". It creates a tone of defiance and determination, and reflects the unwavering resolution of the leader.

At the level of social practice, the third level of Fairclough's (2015) Three Dimensional Model, Donald Trump presents global politics as a friction between two opposing forces: the populists and the globalists. There is a clear contrast between the strong, sovereign, and active nations, and weak, inactive globalist forces. He qualifies himself as a populist leader who is morally persuasive and a strong defender of his people. On the other hand, he disqualifies the globalist forces that fail to take strong, concrete actions. In this way, Trump constructs his international populist discourse as the only solution to all the problems of the world.

Discussion and Interpretation

In this part, the researcher integrates the impression markers identified in the analysis of this study and explains them in the broader context. The discussion, Fairclough's (2015) Three Dimensional Model, explains that Trump, in his 2025 UN speech, uses pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism to build his discourse on the three broader ideological themes, namely immigration, sovereignty, and global politics. The discussion also highlights that Trump's ideas about immigration, sovereignty, and global politics are linked with populist discourse. In addition to this, the researcher incorporates the supporting concepts from Van Dijk's (1997) ideological square, Ruth Wodak's (2001) argumentation strategies, and Charteris-Black's (2011) rhetorical framework. These frameworks help to highlight the deeper meanings of Trump's speech.

Integration of The Four Impression Markers and the Three Ideological Themes

The four identified impression markers pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and parallelism are not used only for the purpose of style and simple communication. Rather, Trump actually uses them as ideological tools. In the speech, they help him to build his narrative on the three most dominant ideological themes: immigration, sovereignty, and global politics. The use of third-person pronouns like "they" and "them", and repetition help to present immigration as a threat and crisis. It is informed by Van Dijk's (1997) negative other-presentation. Trump's use of modal verbs, corresponding with Ruth Wodak's (2001) topoi of duty, danger and responsibility, helps him to present sovereignty as a national duty. The use of inclusive pronouns like "we" and "our", and parallelism, aligning with Charteris-Black's (2011) rhetorical concept of political charisma, facilitates Trump to show unity and build populist ethos. All these three major ideological themes of the speech are intertwined through the use of impression markers. It makes Trump's populist discourse natural, moral, urgent, and unavoidable.

Textual Level

At the textual level, the impression markers help to reveal the deeper ideological meanings of Trump's speech. They bring the underlying message to the surface. The first person plural pronouns, "we" and "our", and the third person plural pronouns, "they" and "them", clearly draw a line between the in-groups and the out-groups. The repetition of the words "ruined", "destroyed", and "overwhelmed" emphasises immigration as a

threat and a crisis. The use of modal verbs “must” and “will” helps to frame national sovereignty as a sacred duty and a moral obligation. Parallelism creates rhetorical momentum that adds persuasive power to the message. The analysis of these impression markers shows that the small linguistic choices help to simplify complex issues and influence the understanding of the audience.

Discursive Practice

At the level of discursive practice, Trump’s strategic use of linguistic choices helps to form argumentative strategies. These strategies help him to justify his discourse on the three ideological themes: immigration, national sovereignty, and global politics. Ruth Wodak’s (2001) argumentative strategies, particularly related to duty, danger, and responsibility, increase the logical reasoning of the speech. Migration, for instance, is presented as one of the most urgent security threats. It justifies strong and strict border control. By the same token, the United Nations and other globalist forces are presented as useless. Therefore, unilateral action is justified. In addition to this, Van Dijk’s (1997) ideological square is very helpful to explain Trump’s polarization in his speech. His speech presents a contrast between positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. It creates a contrast between sovereign nations and weak nations or dangerous immigrants. This polarization justifies Trump’s unique leadership. It legitimizes his authority that can restore the order at the national and international level.

Social Practice

At the third level, social practice, Trump’s speech reflects trends of right-wing populism in recent times. His narrative contextualizes him in the broader political discourse of 21st-century populism. Populist discourse is critical of global institutions like the United Nations. It projects global forces as useless. On the contrary, populist discourse appreciates sovereign nations. It presents them as defenders of their culture and their freedom. Trump’s speech builds three major ideological themes: immigration as threat, national sovereignty as sacred duty, and populist self-representation. Trump’s speech, through the use of pronouns and repetition, turns migration into a security threat and crisis. This discourse aligns with the populist discourse and the far-right discourse. These discourses emphasise extreme nationalism and strong border control. National sovereignty is treated as a sacred duty. Modal verbs facilitate the legitimation of strict border policies that appear to be the national and sacred duty. Globalism and global institutions like the United Nations are delegitimized, whereas populist policies are legitimized. Global forces are framed as useless, weak, and good for nothing. This justifies an anti-globalist worldview – only strong and decisive nations can solve global problems.

Impression Markers – A Coherent Ideological System

Trump, in his speech, does not deal with the three ideological themes as isolated from one another. He, rather, intertwines them. They are interlinked. His use of impression markers unifies and weaves them into a single ideological discourse. Immigration is the threat. Sovereignty is the protective national shield. Strong and independent leadership is the solution. Inclusive pronouns create unity. Third person plural pronouns exclude the out-groups. Repetition creates urgency and fear of immigrants. Modal verbs emphasise that action is inevitable. Parallelism creates rhetorical momentum and enhances the impact of the discourse. Collectively, these impression markers generate a single, unified ideological narrative. In this narrative, Trump qualifies himself as the representative of the sovereign nations and as a unique leader who can restore the global order.

The Implications for Understanding Trump’s Rhetoric

The findings of this study reveal that Donald Trump’s address to the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly serves to build a strong ideological purpose. It is not simply about statements or policies. It turns complex global issues into simple moral stories of crisis and responsibility. The impression markers facilitate Trump to amplify a sense of urgent threat and crisis. They highlight the importance of national sovereignty.

Then, they justify his discourse on unilateral action to restore global order. In this way, Trump's speech contributes to the 21st-century populist discourse. This interpretation also highlights that the political use of language at international platforms as the United Nations General Assembly, has the power to influence public opinion. It has the potential to change international relations. It can also strengthen broader nationalist movements. In addition to this, the findings of this research also accentuate the importance of an integrated framework of critical discourse analysis that helps to better explain the interlink between small linguistic choices and broader ideological narratives and their social impact.

Conclusion

This research paper studies the use of four impression markers "pronouns", "modal verbs", "repetition", and "parallelism" in Donald Trump's address to the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, on 23rd November, 2025. These four impression markers enable Trump to build his strong narrative on the three major ideological themes of his speech: immigration, sovereignty, and global order. The researcher develops and utilizes an integrated framework of Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse his speech. This integrated framework is based on Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model, which is supported by Van Dijk's (1997) ideological square, Ruth Wodak's (2001) argumentation strategies, and Charteris-Black's (2011) rhetorical framework of political charisma. The analysis shows that the four impression markers in Trump's speech do not simply express political views. Rather, they help to construct them.

At the level of textual analysis, impression markers facilitate Trump in amplifying the emotional appeal of his message. Inclusive pronouns "we" and "our" create unity. Third person plural pronouns "they", and "them" exclude the out-groups. Repetition of the words "ruined", "destroying", and "overwhelmed" creates urgency and fear of immigrants. Modal verbs "must" and "will" emphasize that action is inevitable. Parallelism creates rhetorical momentum that enhances the impact of the discourse. At the level of discursive practice, Trump incorporates argumentative strategies in his speech. These strategies justify his discourse on immigration, national sovereignty, and global politics. Ruth Wodak's (2001) argumentative strategies, *topoi* of duty, danger, and responsibility, make his speech logical and based on solid reasoning. Relying on these argumentative strategies, Trump presents migration as the most urgent threat to national security. It legitimizes strong and strict border policies. In addition to this, the globalist forces are presented as useless. It justifies unilateral action. Trump's speech strategies also align with Van Dijk's (1997) ideological square. His rhetoric creates polarization. He projects positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. At the level of social practice, Trump's strategic use of linguistic choices qualifies him as a modern populist leader. He defends national identity. He moralizes cultural protection. He prioritizes unilateral action over multilateral cooperation.

The findings of this study highlight the significance of the impression markers. They are not small and simple stylistic features. They hold a central position in the speech. They carry the potential to construct ideological power. These impression markers facilitate Trump in building his narrative that immigration is a threat, national sovereignty is a sacred duty, and unilateral action is necessary to restore the global order. In addition to this, the study also accentuates the importance of the integrated framework of CDA, which is utilized to analyse the speech. It helps to trace the link between small linguistic features, impression markers, and the broader political narratives and their impact on national and international levels.

This study contributes to the current scholarship on political discourse, particularly on populist rhetoric. It offers a comprehensive analysis of impression markers to guide interpretation of political speeches, particularly at international platforms. It also explicates that language continues to influence and shape public perception about border policies, national identity, and global order.

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