METADISCOURSE MARKERS AS PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES IN JOE BIDEN'S 2024 STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the address in The State of the Union delivered by President Biden in 2024 using Hyland's (2005) interpersonal metadiscourse theory to examine how metadiscourse markers function as persuasive strategies. The research identifies and categorizes the interactive and interactional elements of metadiscourse including transitions, frame markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers elements, and explores their role in enhancing the speech's persuasiveness. Data were collected from the official transcript and video of the address, a key political event offering rich persuasive discourse. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study found a total of 72 interactive markers, dominated by transitions and frame markers, which help organize the speech and clarify its structure. More prominently, 306 interactional markers were identified, with self-mentions and engagement markers prevailing, indicating Biden's effort to build rapport with his audience and assert his authority. The findings reveal that Biden strategically employs these markers to guide his audience, establish credibility, and foster engagement, thereby enhancing both the clarity and emotional appeal of his speech. By examining metadiscourse in a political speech, this study offers new perspectives on its communicative role and lays groundwork for future exploration of persuasive discourse in politics.

Keywords: metadiscourse, interpersonal metadiscourse, political speech, persuasive strategy, discourse analysis.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji Pidato Kenegaraan yang disampaikan oleh Presiden Joe Biden pada tahun 2024 dengan menggunakan teori metadiskursus interpersonal Hyland (2005) untuk menelaah bagaimana penanda metadiskursus berfungsi sebagai strategi persuasif. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dan mengkategorikan elemen metadiskursus interaktif dan interaksional, termasuk transisi, penanda bingkai, penyebutan diri, dan penanda keterlibatan, serta mengeksplorasi perannya dalam meningkatkan daya persuasif pidato tersebut. Data dikumpulkan dari transkrip resmi dan video pidato, sebuah peristiwa politik penting yang menyediakan wacana persuasif yang kaya. Menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, hasil dari penelitian ini memiliki total 72 penanda interaktif yang didominasi oleh transisi dan penanda bingkai, yang membantu mengorganisasi pidato dan memperjelas struktur pembicaraan. Lebih dominan lagi, ditemukan 306 penanda interaksional, dengan penyebutan diri dan penanda keterlibatan yang mendominasi, menunjukkan upaya Biden membangun kedekatan dengan audiens dan menegaskan otoritasnya. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa Biden secara strategis menggunakan penanda-penanda tersebut untuk membimbing audiens, membangun kredibilitas, dan meningkatkan keterlibatan, sehingga memperkuat kejelasan sekaligus daya tarik emosional pidatonya. Dengan menelaah metadiskursus dalam pidato politik, penelitian ini menawarkan perspektif baru tentang peran komunikatifnya dan membuka jalan untuk eksplorasi lebih lanjut mengenai wacana persuasif dalam konteks politik.

Kata kunci: *metadiscourse, interpersonal metadiscourse, political speech, persuasive strategy, discourse analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

Political speeches function as more than just informational tools. They are also designed to persuade audiences and shape the speaker's public image. As a form of political discourse, these speeches often involve rhetorical techniques aimed at influencing public opinion and legitimizing leadership. Scholars like van Dijk (1997) and Apter (2001) have emphasized that political discourse carries symbolic power, with language serving to frame meanings, assert authority, and manage relationships between the speaker and audience. To achieve this, political figures frequently employ linguistic strategies to organize ideas, anticipate audience reactions, and establish a credible presence. These strategies highlight the persuasive nature of political speech and its dual function as both a communicative and influential tool.

There are many types of political discourse, including The State of Union Address (henceforth, SoU), where the president had a joint session of the US Congress at the start of most calendar years to discuss the state of the country (Diaz. Daniella, 2017). In general, the speech contains updates on the country's economy, budget, news, agenda, accomplishments, progress, and the president's legislative priorities. Language is strategically employed in political discourse, particularly in formal addresses like the State of the Union, to organize ideas, express positions, and appeal to the logic and emotions of the populace. This is consistent with the purpose of persuasive discourse, in which carefully chosen rhetorical devices are used to affect the attitudes and actions of the audience.

Effective communication and persuading the audience for a successful interaction can be achieved, according to Sukma (2017), by employing a unique type of linguistic resource called metadiscourse. Metadiscourse refers to the language used to organize discourse, express the speaker's attitude, and engage the audience. Metadiscourse serves as a key linguistic tool that enables speakers to express their stance on a given proposition, construct coherent discourse, engange in meaning negotiation with audience, and involve them in the argumentation process. According to Hyland (2005), metadiscourse is categorized into interactive and interactional elements, which help guide listeners and build interpersonal connections. This model has been widely applied in the analysis of political texts to understand how language functions beyong content delivery. These markers also are not directly related to the content itself, but rather to how the content is communicated, and they play a key role in shaping the persuasive effect of the text.

Several previous studies have demonstrated how political figures use metadiscourse to strengthen their persuasive strategies. For instance, Etemadfar and Namaziandost (2020) examined Donald Trump's 2016 campaign speeches and found a widespread occurrence of interactional devices, particularly attitude markers and self-mentions. Similarly, Alkhodari and Habil (2021) explored the persuasive language used by Dr. Zakir Naik and emphasized the strategic role of interpersonal commentaries such as direct address and personalization. Extending this line of inquiry, Kashiha (2022) examined Barack Obama's speeches and concluded that interactional metadiscourse markers played

a critical role in shaping his rhetorical presence. Other instances, Zhuang and Li (2022) explored Xi Jinping's use of metadiscourse in his new year message for the people of China, from 2014 to 2022 and found directives, attitude markers, and self-mentions are frequently used by the President. While these studies focus on campaign or religious discourse, offer valuable insights into the persuasive functions of metadiscourse, they primarily focus on earlier political figures and campaign-related contexts. However, there remains a lack of research on Joe Biden's recent political discourse, especially within formal institutional settings such as the State of the Union Address, where he not only delivered a report on his work program for the past year and his plans for the next year to the people, but also delivered it in front of members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives. It is also expected that he can make his party proud and also convince the opposition parties. This study addresses that gap by analyzing Biden's 2024 State of the Union Address using Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model. The novelty of this research lies in its contemporary focus, examining how a sitting president, employs metadiscourse to structure arguments, assert stance, and engage a national and international audience during a major political event.

In particular, President Biden's address presents a relevant and contemporary case for analyzing persuasive discourse in action. Delivered in the context of his re-election campaign and in response to ongoing national and international challenges, this speech demonstrates how language is used to persuade a broad audience including political allies, opponents, and the general public. Despite its significance, this speech has not yet received academic attention from a metadiscourse perspective. Consequently, this research seeks to examine the different types of metadiscourse markers present in the 2024 State of The Union Address by President Joe Biden and to explore their role as tools of persuasion. Hyland's (2005) interpersonal metadiscourse model guided this research and the study focuses on the two main research questions:

1) What kinds of metadiscourse markers does the speaker employ in the speech?
2) How do these markers function as persuasive strategies?

By applying Hyland's model to a recent and highly relevant political text, this study theoretically advances the field of discourse analysis by providing insight into how metadiscourse works in high-stakes, real-time public communication. From a practical standpoint, this study could help students, teachers, and political communication analysts better understand how language influences political persuasion. It also acts as a guide for upcoming research on metadiscourse in modern or intercultural political discourse.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive method to investigate metadiscourse markers in the address in The State of the Union delivered by President Biden in 2024. The focus is on uncovering how linguistic elements are used to organize the speech and enhance its persuasive impact. This address, delivered in a high-stakes political context, provides a valuable case for analyzing persuasive discourse. A qualitative approach is well-suited to this study because it allows for a detailed interpretation of textual features

without relying on numerical data. The population includes political speeches by Joe Biden during his presidency. The sample is a single, the address that delivered on the 7 March 2024. This speech was selected because it represents a high-profile and strategic example of persuasive political communication, addressing national and international audiences during a critical period in Biden's presidency.

This study's data were obtained from both the official transcript and video of the 2024 State of the Union speech. The speech transcript was accessed through trusted sources such as Time Magazine and the official White House communication. The video was accessed through CNBC Television YouTube channel, one of the trusted media and television in the world. The transcript was manually reviewed and segmented to identify linguistic features relevant to Hyland's (2005) interpersonal metadiscourse model.

Hyland's (2005) framework that includes two primary categories which is interactive and interactional elements, is the basis for the qualitative coding and categorization used in the data analysis. Every marker in the transcript was located, highlighted, and categorized by the researcher. Following that, the purposes of each marker were analyzed in light of their contribution to discourse organization and persuasive power. Examples taken directly from the speech were used to support the findings, which were presented in a descriptive manner.

Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model serves as the basis for classifying metadiscourse markers in this study. Each category contains several subtypes that serve specific rhetorical functions. The framework used in this analysis is shown in the following table:

Categories	Functions	Examples
Interactive	*Help to guide the reader through the text*	*Resources*
Transitions	Express relations between main clauses	In addition; but; thus; and
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences and stages	Finally; to conclude; my purpose is
Endophoric markers	Refer to the information in other parts of the text	Noted above; see figure; in Sect. 2
Evidentials	Refer to information from other	texts According to X; Z states
Code Glosses	Elaborate propositional meaning	namely; e.g.; such as; in other words,
Interactional	*Involve the reader in the text*	*Resources*
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	Might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	Emphasize certainty and close dialogue	In fact,/definitely/it is clear that
Attitude Markers	Express writer's attitude to the proposition	Unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly

Self-mentions	Explicit reference to authors	I; we; my; me; our
Engagement Markers	Explicitly build a relationship with the Reader	Consider; note; you can see that

Table 1 Categories of Hyland's Interpersonal Metadiscourse.

This framework guided the process of identifying and analyzing the metadiscourse markers in the transcript of Biden's speech in The State of The Union. Identified markers were categorized based on their type and analyzed to interpret their role in enhancing the persuasive quality of the discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that Joe Biden's speech was compelling due to the extensive use of interpersonal and interactive metadiscourse markers. Each category is discussed separately to show how Biden uses these features to structure his speech and strengthen his persuasive strategies. While some numerical data are included for descriptive purposes, the primary focus of this study remains interpretive and context-based, aligning with qualitative discourse analysis.

1. Interactive Metadiscourse Markers

The results demonstrate that interactive types served the persuasive goal of showcasing the speaker's efforts to lead audiences through the speeches. After gathering the necessary information, the analysis of Biden's address identified 72 interactive metadiscourse markers.

Interactive Metadiscourse Markers	Frequency
Transitions	42
Frame markers	15
Endophoric markers	0
Evidentials	12
Code Glosses	3
Total	72

Table 2 Frequency of Interactive Metadiscourse Markers

According to the results presented in Table 2, Transitions were found to be the most frequently used category among the interactive metadiscourse markers, accounting for 56.76% of all the markers identified. This indicates that Joe Biden strategically employs transitions to guide his audience smoothly through the speech, helping to clarify the organization of his ideas and maintain coherence. Frame markers also played a crucial role in the President's speech with 15 markers found. In addition to a lot of transitions and frame markers, evidentials and code glosses also play essential roles in Joe Biden's address, although they occur less frequently. It is interesting that there is no endhoporic markers found in the address. The followings are detailed analysis in every category of interactive metadiscourse with selected instances.

1.1 Transitions

Transition markers are mainly conjunctions and adverbial phrases which help readers interpret pragmatic connections between steps in an argument (Hyland, 2005). Transitions indicate additive, causal, and contrastive connections in the writer's reasoning, showing how different parts of the text relate to one another. To be considered metadiscourse, they must function within the text itself, guiding the reader in understanding how ideas are connected. The word and frequency of this marker from the address is shown in the table below.

Transition Marker	Frequency
And	20
But	6
So	4
Also	2
Instead	3
as well	2
Yet	1
not only	1
Then	2
that's why	1
Total	42

Table 3 The word and frequency of transition markers found from the address.

According to the table 3, the most dominant marker is "and", which appears 20 times. This high frequency reflects Biden's preference for additive sequencing, helping to accumulate arguments, build momentum, and maintain a conversational rhythm throughout the speech. Other transitions such as "but", "so", and "instead" reflect contrastive and consequential relations, which Biden uses to frame policy alternatives, criticize opposing viewpoints, and justify decisions. These transitions guide the audience's interpretation of complex issues by clearly signaling how ideas are connected, thus supporting his overall persuasive strategy by making his message coherent, structured, and rhetorically forceful. We can see the following instances:

1.1.1 Excerpt 1 : "*And yes, my purpose tonight is to both wake up this Congress, and alert the American people that this is no ordinary moment either.*"

1.1.2 Excerpt 2 : "*Over one hundred million of you can no longer be denied health insurance because of pre-existing conditions. But my predecessor and many in this chamber want to take that protection away by repealing the Affordable Care Act.*"

In Excerpt 1, the transition marker "and" is used by President Biden to add parallel purposes: waking up Congress and alerting the public, after he said that freedom and

democracy were under assault in the world. This additive structure reinforces the urgency and dual focus of the message, helping Biden present the moment as both nationally and politically significant. In addition, in excerpt 2, the contrastive transition "but" signals a shift from a positive achievement to a criticism of opposing efforts. This helps Biden establish a persuasive contrast between progress and threat, reinforcing his stance as a defender of healthcare access.

1.2 Frame Markers

According to Hyland, Frame markers signal text boundaries or elements of schematic text structure. Frame markers can therefore be used to sequence parts of the text or to internally order an argument, often acting as more explicit additive relations, explicitly, announce discourse goals, and indicate topic shifts. The word and frequency of this marker from the address is shown in the table below.

Frame Markers marker	Frequency
Tonight	7
Now	4
Let me	3
My purpose	1
Total	15

Table 4 The word and frequency of frame markers found from the address.

According to the table 4, the most frequently used marker is "tonight", appeared 7 times, which serves to draw immediate attention to new points and anchor the audience in the present moment. Phrases like "now", "let me", and "my purpose" are used to introduce new issues or policy goals, helping the speech maintain a clear and coherent progression. Altogether, these frame markers contribute to persuasion by structuring the speech in a way that is easy to follow, emotionally engaging, and logically compelling, allowing Biden to present complex national issues in a unified and persuasive narrative. We can see the following instances:

1.2.1 Excerpt 1 : "*Tonight, I want to talk about the future of possibilities that we can build together.*"
1.2.2 Excerpt 2 : "*Now, let me speak to a question of fundamental fairness for all Americans.*"

In excerpt 1, the frame marker "Tonight" functions to signal the start of a new thematic section, anchoring the audience in the immediate moment of the speech. This temporal marker draws attention and creates a sense of urgency and importance, preparing listeners for a forward-looking, hopeful discussion about shared possibilities. By situating the message in the "now," Biden effectively engages the audience's focus and fosters a collective mindset, which strengthens persuasion by making the vision feel immediate and relevant. In excerpt 2, the phrase "Now, let me speak to…" serves as a frame marker

indicating a clear topic shift. This phrase signals the conclusion of the previous point and directs the audience's attention to a new issue, in this case, "fundamental fairness for all Americans." This helps maintain clarity and logical progression in the speech's structure, ensuring the audience can follow the argument easily. The direct address ("let me speak") also creates a conversational tone, enhancing engagement and trust, which supports persuasion by making the speaker appear sincere and authoritative.

1.3 Endhoporic Markers

Interestingly, the analysis revealed no use of endophoric markers among the interactive metadiscourse categories. Endophoric markers typically refer to elements within the text itself, such as references to earlier or later parts of the speech, which help guide the audience through the structure by pointing to specific sections of the speech. The absence of these markers may indicate that Biden relies more heavily on other interactive strategies to organize and clarify his speech. This could reflect a deliberate choice to maintain a smooth and continuous flow without explicitly signaling references to other parts of the address, thereby keeping the audience's focus on the immediate message rather than on navigating the text.

1.4 Evidentials

Evidentials are linguistic markers that refer to ideas or information drawn from external sources, helping audiences understand the origins of claims while also demonstrating the speaker's or writer's knowledge and credibility (Hyland, 2005). While evidentials can contribute to persuasive strategies, it is important to distinguish them from explicit expressions of stance, as evidentials primarily function to attribute information rather than to convey personal opinion.

A total of 12 evidentials were found in the speech, consisting of references to historical figures, political opponents, legal decisions, and unnamed studies or data sources. These references serve to validate Biden's claims and position him within broader political and historical narratives in America. The evidentials found were context-specific and varied in form, making them less suitable for created a table. Instead, key instances are presented below.

1.4.1 Excerpt 1 : "In January 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt came to this chamber to speak to the nation. He said, "I address you at a moment unprecedented in the history of the Union.""

1.4.2 Excerpt 2 : "The year before I took office, murders went up 30% nationwide, the biggest increase in history. That was then."

In excerpt 1, the evidential marker quoting President Franklin Roosevelt draws on historical authority to position Biden's speech within a legacy of serious national moments. By invoking a revered former leader, Biden aligns himself with Roosevelt's credibility, which enhances the perceived importance of his own message. This

association fosters a sense of continuity and unity, reinforcing Biden's ethos as a responsible and trustworthy leader during a democracy crisis, thus strengthening persuasion through authoritative precedent. In excerpt 2, Biden uses statistical data as an evidential to highlight the sharp increase in murders before he took office. This concrete figure provides objective support for his claim about past failures, implicitly referencing the Trump administration without naming it directly. By contrasting "that was then" with his current efforts, Biden frames himself as a capable problem-solver who is addressing critical issues, thereby enhancing his credibility and persuasive appeal through factual evidence.

1.5   Code Glosses

According to Hyland, code glosses provide extra clarification by restating, defining, or expanding on a point, helping the reader fully grasp the speaker's intended message. The indicators must be explicit, not implied restatements. There are only 3 code glosses found in the address with following instances below.

1.5.1   *Excerpt 1   : "But Ukraine can stop Putin if we stand with Ukraine and provide the weapons it needs to defend itself. That is all Ukraine is asking."*
1.5.2   *Excerpt 2   : "There are 1,000 billionaires in America. You know what the average federal tax rate for these billionaires is? In fact, it is 8.2 percent!"*
1.5.3   *Excerpt 3   : "We cut the federal deficit by over one trillion dollars. That is the largest reduction in American history."*

In excerpt 1, the code gloss "That is" restates, simplifies, and clarifies the Ukraine statement, framing the request as reasonable and modest. This helps persuade the audience by reducing resistance and encouraging agreement, also supports persuasion by presenting the issue straightforward and in a not-threatening way. In excerpt 2, the gloss "In fact" emphasizes a surprising statistical fact "8.2 percent", clarifies and strengthens Biden's argument about tax inequality. The use of factual elaboration enhances the audience's understanding and makes the message more impactful. Meanwhile, excerpt 3's gloss "That is" expand the deficit claim by emphasizing its historical significance. This clarification reinforces the achievement and increases the persuasive effect by making the scale of success more memorable.

2.   Interactional Metadiscourse Markers

The findings indicate that the use of various interactional metadiscourse markers significantly enhanced the persuasive quality of the speech. Biden employed these markers to engage the audience, express attitudes, and manage interpersonal meaning, guiding listeners toward alignment with his stance.

Interactional Metadiscourse Markers	Frequency
Hedges	21

Boosters	28
Attitude Markers	11
Self-mentions	180
Engagement Markers	66
Total	306

Table 5 Frequency of Interactional Metadiscourse Markers

According to Table 5, self-mentions and engagement markers were the most frequently used types in Biden's speech, highlighting his efforts to present himself as a credible speaker while actively involving the audience. These markers helped personalize the message and build a strong connection with listeners. Other interactional metadiscourse markers also appeared, including hedges (21), boosters (28), and attitude markers (11). Hedges allowed Biden to express uncertainty and openness, making his claims sound more flexible. In contrast, boosters reinforced confidence and certainty, strengthening his arguments. Although used less often, attitude markers revealed Biden's personal feelings and evaluations, adding emotional depth and helping shape audience perception. By using these markers, Biden not only informs but also influences how listeners perceive the issues discussed, adding a layer of subjective engagement that enhances the overall impact of his speech. The following sections present a detailed analysis of each category with selected examples.

2.1 Hedges

Hedges are used when writers choose to acknowledge other perspectives and avoid fully committing to a statement (Hyland, 2005). They highlight the subjective nature of a claim by presenting it as a personal view rather than an absolute fact, making the statement more open to discussion. The word and frequency of this marker from the address is shown in the table below.

Hedges marker	Frequency
Would	11
Think	4
Could	3
May	2
Might	1
Total	21

Table 6 The word and frequency of hedges found from the address.

According to the table 6, the most frequently used hedging marker is "would," appearing 9 times as the most dominant, followed by "think", "could", "may", and "might". These hedges serve to soften claims, express uncertainty, or show politeness, which helps Biden appear more thoughtful and considerate while presenting his arguments. By using hedges, Biden strategically reduces the forcefulness of statements, making them seem less dogmatic and more open to interpretation, which can engage the

audience by inviting reflection and agreement rather than confrontation. Collectively, these markers enhance persuasion by balancing confidence with humility, allowing Biden to present his policies and viewpoints in a nuanced and approachable manner. The following instances are presented below:

2.1.1 *Excerpt 1 : That's why I've proposed a minimum tax of 25% for billionaires. Just 25%. That <u>would</u> raise $500 Billion over the next 10 years."*
2.1.2 *Excerpt 2 : "<u>I think</u> snack companies will think that you won't notice when they charge you just as much for the same size bag but with fewer chips in it."*

In the excerpt 1, Biden uses direct, clear statements to present a specific policy proposal: a "minimum tax of 25% for billionaires." The hedge "would raise $500 Billion" softens the claim by framing the expected revenue as a projected outcome rather than a guaranteed fact. This hedge marker balances confidence with caution, which helps maintain credibility while persuading the audience that the plan is both impactful and achievable. Then, the excerpt 2 features the hedge "I think," which frames Biden's statement as a personal opinion, inviting the audience to consider his perspective without feeling pressured. The repetition of "think" (attributing the thought to snack companies) distances Biden from a direct accusation, making the critique less confrontational but still sharp. The phrase "you won't notice" appeals to the audience's awareness and encouraging them to be more alert. This combination of hedging and direct address creates an engaging and persuasive argument that fosters trust and critical thinking.

2.2 Boosters

According to Hyland, Boosters allow speakers to close down alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say. Boosters suggest that the writer recognizes potentially diverse positions but has chosen to narrow this diversity rather than enlarge it, confronting alternatives with a single, confident voice. The word and frequency of this marker from the address is shown in the table below.

Boosters marker	Frequency
Assure	*1*
Must	*7*
Certainly	*1*
Always	*3*
Never	*7*
In fact	*6*
Clear	*3*
Total	28

Table 7 The word and frequency of boosters found from the address.

According to the table 7, the most frequently used booster markers in Biden's speech include "must" and "never," each appearing 7 times, with the other markers

complement the address. These boosters serve to strengthen the force and certainty of Biden's statements, helping to convey confidence and emphasize the importance of his claims. By using boosters, Biden reinforces his arguments, leaving little room for doubt or alternative interpretations. This rhetorical strategy increases the persuasive impact by projecting authority and certainty, encouraging the audience to accept his messages as truthful and imperative. The following instances are presented below:

2.2.1 *Excerpt 1   : "If anybody in this room thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine, I <u>assure</u> you, he will not."*
2.2.2 *Excerpt 2   : "Meanwhile, my predecessor told the NRA he's proud he did nothing on guns when he was President. After another school shooting in Iowa he said we should just get over it. I say, we <u>must</u> stop it."*

In excerpt 1, the booster is used to convey strong certainty and confidence in Biden's statement. This phrase functions to eliminate doubt and reinforce the seriousness of the threat, increasing the urgency of the message. By directly addressing the audience with "I assure you," Biden establishes authority and trustworthiness, which helps to build credibility. This booster enhances persuasion by combining factual certainty with emotional appeal, making the message both convincing and compelling. In addition, excerpt 2 contrasts Biden's stance with his predecessor, highlighting inaction on gun control. The booster intensifies the necessity and moral imperative of taking action against gun violence. This marker communicates an obligation that leaves no room for negotiation, strengthening the call to action. The contrast between the previous president's inaction and Biden's strong call to action increase the speech's persuasive power by tapping into the audience's feelings of urgency and duty.

2.3   Attitude Markers

Attitude markers indicates the writer's affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions (Hyland, 2005). Instead of commenting on the status of information, its probable relevance, reliability or truth, attitude markers convey surprise, agreement, importance, obligation, frustration, and so on. The word and frequency of this marker from the address is shown in the table below.

Attitude marker	Frequency
Unacceptable	*1*
Unfortunately	*1*
Unforgivable	1
Important	2
Proud	4
Wrong	2
Total	11

Table 8 The word and frequency of attitude markers found from the address.

According to the table 8, Biden uses attitude markers such as "proud" most frequently, followed by "important", "unacceptable," "unfortunately," and "wrong". These markers express Biden's personal feelings and evaluations, helping to convey his stance on various issues clearly and emotionally. By using attitude markers, Biden connects with his audience on a more personal level, highlighting what he values and condemns. This emotional engagement strengthens persuasion by making his arguments more relatable and impactful, encouraging the audience to share his views and respond accordingly. The following instances illustrate below:

2.3.1 Excerpt 1   : "A former American President actually said that, bowing down to a Russian leader. It's _unacceptable_."

2.3.2 Excerpt 2   : "I'm _proud_ we beat the NRA when I signed the most significant gun safety law in nearly 30 years! Now we must beat the NRA again!"

In the excerpt 1, the attitude marker conveys strong disapproval of the former president's actions. This word clearly signals Biden's negative evaluation, appealing to the audience's sense of patriotism. By labeling the behavior as "unacceptable," Biden draws a moral boundary, encouraging the audience to view the action as a serious wrongdoing. This emotional stance strengthens persuasion by framing the issue in clear ethical terms. As far as the excerpt 2 is concerned, it expresses Biden's positive emotion and personal satisfaction regarding the achievement of passing a significant gun safety law. The use of "proud" connects Biden emotionally with the audience, portraying him as confident and committed. This attitude markers motivate the audience by highlighting past successes and rallying support for continued action, enhancing the speech's persuasive appeal.

2.4 Self-mentions

Self-mentions relates to how clearly the author presents themselves in the text, typically measured by how often first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives appear. While all writing reflects something about the author, using first-person pronouns is one of the strongest ways writers can express their identity. The word and frequency of this marker from the address is shown in the table below.

Self-mentions marker	Frequency
_I_	_77_
_Me_	_6_
_My_	_22_
_We_	_31_
_Us_	_17_
Our	_27_
Total	180

Table 9 The word and frequency of self-mentions found from the address.

According to Table 9, Biden frequently uses self-mentions such as "I," "we," "my," "our," and "us," with "I" appearing most often. These markers highlight his presence in the discourse, allowing him to take ownership of actions, assert authority, and align himself with the audience. By doing so, Biden not only presents himself as a responsible leader but also fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose. This direct involvement enhances the persuasiveness of his speech, as it builds trust and credibility while reinforcing a collective identity. The following instances illustrate below:

2.4.1 Excerpt 1   : "*I came to office determined to get us through one of the toughest periods in our nation's history.*"
2.4.2 Excerpt 2   : "*We are the United States of America. There is nothing beyond our capacity when we act together!*"
2.4.3 Excerpt 3   : "*Our North Star, the very idea of America, that we are all created equal and deserve to be treated equally throughout our lives.*"

In excerpt 1, the self-mention "I" conveys Biden's personal commitment to leading the nation through difficult times. By expressing his determination, Biden builds credibility and authority, presenting himself as a responsible and proactive leader. This use of "I" functions as metadiscourse because it communicates his stance and involvement in the argument, rather than merely reporting past events. For excerpt 2, the inclusive pronoun "we" emphasizes unity and shared national identity. It serves a metadiscourse function by aligning the speaker with the audience, enhancing solidarity and engagement. Meanwhile, in excerpt 3, the possessive pronoun "our" evokes shared values, highlighting America's core belief in equality. This strengthens Biden's appeal to national ideals, making the argument more emotionally resonant. The pronoun acts as metadiscourse by drawing the audience into a common vision. These self-mentions created Biden's authority, persuasive presence, and togetherness throughout the address.

2.5   Engagement Markers

Engagement markers are tools that directly involve audiences by either directing their attention or inviting them to participate in the discussion. Speakers can also choose to emphasize or minimize the audience role within the speech. The word and frequency of this marker from the address is shown in the table below.

Engagement marker	Frequency
You	*42*
Your	*9*
Let's	*7*
Remember	*4*
Look	*2*
Need to	*2*
Total	66

Table 10 The word and frequency of engagement markers found from the address.

According to Table 10, Biden frequently uses engagement markers such as "you," "let's," and "need to" to directly address and involve the audience. These expressions are used to guide the listener's attention, prompt reflection, and call for collective action. By engaging the audience in this way, Biden reduces the distance between speaker and listener, making his speech more interactive and inclusive. This rhetorical strategy not only fosters a sense of shared responsibility but also strengthens persuasion by inviting participation and emotional investment. The following instances illustrate below:

2.5.1 *Excerpt 1* : *"Four years ago next week, before I came to office, our country was hit by the worst pandemic and the worst economic crisis in a century. Remember the fear. Then, record job losses. Remember the spike in crime and the murder rate."*

2.5.2 *Excerpt 2* : *"My Republican friends, you owe it to the American people to get this bill done. We need to act."*

In excerpt 1, Biden uses the engagement marker "remember" to prompt the audience to recall the emotional and social impact of the pandemic. This direct appeal invites listeners to remember the struggles they had, which not only draws them into the speech but also strengthens the emotional impact of his argument. Rather than merely presenting facts, the repetition of "remember" actively involves the audience in constructing the message's meaning. In excerpt 2, Biden uses both "you" and "we need to act" to directly address his Republican colleagues and include the wider audience in a call for urgent political action. The use of "you" places personal responsibility on the audience, while "we need to" creates a shared sense of duty. Both markers function as engagement tools because they reduce the distance between speaker and listener, increase accountability, and promote collective ownership of the issue. Together, these strategies enhance persuasiveness by making the audience feel directly spoken to and involved in the outcome of the message.

CONCLUSION

Metadiscourse markers play a crucial role in shaping the structure of a text. The results demonstrated comprehensive utilization of metadiscourse markers, reflecting the inherently interactive character of Biden's speech. Employing Hyland's (2005) framework on interpersonal metadiscourse, the research analyzed interactive and interactional markers, finding 72 interactive markers overall. Transitions (42 times) and frame markers (15 times) were dominant. These markers help to structure the speech and guide listeners through the argument, ensuring logical progression and clarity. By signaling the relationships between ideas, Biden effectively helps listeners follow complex policy discussions and maintains coherence throughout his address.

In contrast, interactional metadiscourse markers were considerably more abundant, with 306 instances identified. Self-mentions and engagement markers were particularly

dominant, reflecting Biden's deliberate attempt to build rapport with his audience and assert his presence as a credible and trustworthy speaker. The frequent use of self-mentions personalizes the speech, while engagement markers invite the audience into a dialogic relationship, enhancing the speech's accessibility and persuasive impact.

Together, these interactional strategies demonstrate how Biden negotiates his authority and connects emotionally with listeners, which is essential in political communication.

These findings underscore the significance of metadiscourse as a rhetorical resource in political speeches. Metadiscourse markers not only facilitate the organization of ideas but also shape the interaction between speaker and audience, contributing significantly to persuasion and audience engagement. This highlights the importance for political speakers to be mindful of their language choices to maximize their communicative effectiveness.

For future research, it would be beneficial to conduct comparative studies involving speeches from different political leaders or diverse cultural contexts to explore how metadiscourse use varies according to speaker identity, audience, or sociopolitical environment. Additionally, examining the impact of these markers on audience reception through empirical methods could provide further insight into their persuasive power. From a practical perspective, speechwriters and political communicators can leverage the strategic use of metadiscourse markers to enhance clarity, foster engagement, and strengthen persuasive appeal in their speeches.

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