

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describe the background of the study, which includes the reasons for choosing this topic, followed by the research questions and the objectives of the study related to these research questions. This chapter also outlines the significance of the study, which contributes to the research both theoretically and practically, as well as the scope and limitations of the study, explaining the boundaries of what was researched.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is a very important tool for human communication. Language serves as the primary medium through which individuals express their thoughts, emotions and intentions. As social creatures, humans need to interact with others, making language the bridge of communication between individuals. This interaction is essential for building relationships, sharing knowledge, and growing understanding in society. According to Sujarwati (2017), language is a means used to communicate with others. Language allows people to convey their ideas and feelings effectively, facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation. In addition, language has different purposes for each person. Language can be used to convey a specific intent, incite, or influence others, in order to achieve the speaker's desired goal. For example, a speaker may use language to persuade an audience during a speech, provide comfort and support in a conversation, or to instruct and educate in a classroom. The versatility of language allows it to adapt to various contexts and functions, making it an indispensable tool in human interaction. Through language, individuals can connect on a deeper level, share experiences, and work together to achieve common goals.

Communication is a process that is very often carried out by two or more people. Communication is an important aspect of human interaction, allowing individuals to share information, express emotions, and build relationships. In communication, one person will act as the communicator, who sends the message, and the other as the receiver, who interprets and responds to the message.

According to Apriyanto (2020), communication is the process of delivering messages from one person to another. This process is essential for effective interaction and understanding between individuals. Communication can be easily understood if the message is delivered accurately, ensuring that the intended meaning is clear and can be understood by the recipient. The delivery of messages in communication can be done orally and in writing. Written communication is used to communicate with people who are far away or when a permanent record of the communication is required. This includes emails, letters, reports, and other written documents. Whereas, verbal communication, which includes the spoken word, is very often used to interact with others in real-time. Verbal communication allows for immediate feedback making it suitable for conversations, discussions, and verbal presentations. Common forms of verbal communication include speeches, conversations, meetings, presentations, and other verbal interactions.

Based on the types of communication discussed above, speech is a prime example of oral communication. Basically, a speech is a one-way form of communication where the speaker provides information to the audience, who serves as the receiver. The main purpose of a speech is usually to inform, inspire, or persuade the audience. However, the specific purpose of each speech can vary greatly depending on the intent of the speaker. To achieve these goals, speeches are carefully structured using clear and logical linguistic tools. Effective language is used to ensure that the message or idea conveyed is easily received and understood by the audience. Among the various linguistic devices that are available, discourse markers are very important and should be carefully considered while delivering a speech.

Discourse markers are words or phrases that help structure speech, making the message clearer and more accessible to the audience. According to Ussolichah et al. (2021), discourse markers are linguistic elements that maintain the smooth flow of conversation, making communication more structured and easier for listeners to understand. By using discourse markers, speakers can make their message clearer and more understandable to listeners, ensuring that the conversation stays on track and everyone can follow along easily. The example of the discourse markers that used in the conversation according to Schiffrin (1987):

Freda: How m-long has your mother been teaching?

Debby: **Well** she hasn't been teaching that long.

Based on Schiffrrin's (1987) example, when Freda asks Debby how long her mother has been teaching, Debby responds with "Well, she hasn't been teaching that long." Here, well functions as a discourse marker, providing several key roles: it gives Debby a moment to think before answering, signals to Freda that a response is coming, and softens the delivery of potentially disappointing news. This use of well helps manage the flow of conversation, making Debby's response smoother and easier for Freda to understand. Schiffrrin emphasizes that analyzing discourse markers like well across various contexts reveals their multifunctionality and importance in maintaining coherent and effective communication. Therefore, discourse markers play a crucial role in conversation to help the speaker convey meaning accurately.

One type of speech that often comes up and attracts public attention is a speech delivered by a former president. These speeches usually attract a lot of attention because former presidents have extensive experience and deep insight into national issues, having spent years at the helm of government and policy making. Their unique perspectives allow them to discuss current events and challenges with a depth of understanding that only they possess. In addition, former presidents often provide a critical view of current policies and to evaluate the actions of current leaders. Their critiques are often based on their own experiences and the lessons they have learned while in office. Moreover, these speeches are not just about criticism; they also serve to inspire the public with motivational messages. Former presidents use their speeches to energize and encourage citizens. They often highlight the values and principles that they believe should guide the nation, encouraging people to strive for a better future. Through their words, they aim to foster a sense of unity in society. This inspiring combination of critical analysis makes the speeches of former presidents highly impactful and memorable for their audiences and often influences public discourse.

The Democratic National Convention is an event held every four years by the Democratic Party of the United States to select the party's presidential and vice-

presidential candidates. During this convention, the candidates are also given the opportunity to present their vision and mission to the public. Barack Obama was one of the people who gave a speech at the event. In Barack Obama's speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention, he brought the theme of unity, hope, and the future of America. Obama praised Kamala Harris's track record and work ethic, giving his full support to her presidential candidacy. Obama also criticized former President Donald Trump and his policies. In his speech, Obama paid tribute to Joe Biden, the former Vice President who worked with him for eight years. He praised Biden for his empathy, resilience, and belief that everyone in America deserves a fair chance. Obama emphasized the importance of unity and urged supporters to participate by voting in the election. He called for support for a better future for America and stated that Kamala Harris is the right leader to bring positive change to the country.

This study used the video of Barack Obama's speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention on the second night of the convention in Chicago on August 20, 2024. The writer chose this speech because Obama is known as an outstanding orator who often uses discourse markers effectively to convey his message. This study aims to understand how Obama uses these linguistic elements to maintain the fluency and coherence of his speech, and how they contribute to communication effectiveness in the context of elections. By examining the use of discourse markers in Obama's speech, this study provides insight into the strategies he uses to engage his audience, emphasize key points, and ensure his message is clear. The study explain how discourse markers can enhance the credibility of the speaker and how they affect the overall impact of the speech.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the discourse markers used by Barack Obama in his speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention?
2. What are the functions of discourse markers used by Barack Obama in his speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the discourse markers used by Barack Obama in his speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention.
2. To identify the functions of discourse markers used by Barack Obama in his speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the development of linguistic discourse analysis, particularly discourse markers both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study contribute to enhance the understanding of discourse analysis and discourse markers, specifically through the examination of Barack Obama's speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention, and the results of this study are expected to contribute to theoretical advancements. Practically, the writer hopes the findings of this study are expected to serve as a valuable guide for future researchers examining discourse analysis and discourse markers in various speeches. This study also can be used as a reference or source of information for students, lecturers, and other researchers interested in studying discourse markers.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is the field of discourse analysis, focusing on discourse markers. This study also use Schiffirin's (1987) theory to identify the discourse markers and functions of discourse markers found in Barack Obama's speech. This study was limited to discussing discourse markers in Barack Obama's speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention, which was published on the PBS NewsHour YouTube channel on August 21, 2024.