

The Linguistic Construction of Resilience and Power: A Discourse Analysis of Kamala Harris's 2024 Post-Election Speech

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how language constructs resilience, sustains authority, and conveys ideological meaning in Kamala Harris's post-election speech following the 2024 United States presidential election. Using a qualitative approach within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study analyzes the official transcript to identify recurring linguistic patterns and their discursive roles. It addresses the limited attention given to post-election speeches in discourse analysis, particularly in understanding how meaning and authority are negotiated after electoral outcomes. The findings show that the speech systematically employs personal pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and metaphorical expressions to shape meaning, engage audiences, and position the speaker within a broader political context. These linguistic choices function as discourse strategies that transform an unfavorable electoral outcome into a narrative of continuity and future engagement. The speech also reflects democratic values, collective resilience, and inclusive leadership in political discourse.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis; Linguistic Features; Resilience and Power; Fairclough's Modality.*

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INTRODUCTION

Political speeches have long been recognized as an essential component of democratic life, functioning as a primary medium through which political leaders communicate their visions, values, and ideological positions to the public. Through political communication, leaders not only deliver information but also shape public opinion, influence political attitudes, and negotiate power relations within democratic processes. Among various forms of political discourse, post-election speeches occupy a distinctive rhetorical position because they often function to preserve political dignity, project resilience, maintain legitimacy, and rebuild solidarity between leaders and supporters during transitional periods.

Within democratic systems, language plays a crucial role in shaping political power and public perception. Elections are considered a central element of political systems where communication functions as a strategic tool for persuasion and influence (Opeibi, 2009, as cited in Ademilokun, 2016). Language therefore becomes a mechanism through which political actors construct social realities, legitimize authority, and shape public interpretations of political events. Fairclough (2003) emphasizes that discourse is closely related to power and ideology because it actively shapes social reality. Similarly, van Dijk (1997) views discourse as a social practice in which language is strategically used to influence actions, shape perceptions, and reproduce ideological structures.

This study focuses on Kamala Harris's 2024 post-election speech delivered on November 6, 2024, at Howard University, Washington, D.C. The speech was initially prepared as a victory celebration but shifted following Donald Trump's Electoral College victory. In response, Harris formally conceded the election and reaffirmed her commitment to a peaceful transfer of power alongside President Joe Biden. This shift transformed the event into a significant political moment in which language became central to managing transition and collective response. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, electoral defeat is not merely a factual condition but can be discursively reconstructed through language into narratives of resilience, legitimacy, and future political engagement.

Previous studies have widely examined political speeches, campaign discourse, and victory speeches. For example, Ademilokun (2016) analyzed political campaign speeches as persuasive discourse, while more recent studies have explored linguistic strategies in political communication and leadership discourse. However, post-election speeches remain relatively underexplored, particularly regarding how political leaders maintain authority after electoral defeat. This study differs from previous research by specifically examining how linguistic features construct resilience and power in post-election discourse.

This study addresses the following research questions: (1) What linguistic features does Kamala Harris employ to construct resilience and power in her 2024 post-election speech? (2) How do these linguistic features function as discourse strategies to maintain authority and leadership in a post-election context? (3) How do these discourse strategies reflect Harris's ideological stance on gender, resilience, and empowerment?

Based on these questions, this study aims to identify linguistic features used in the speech, examine how they function as discourse strategies, and investigate the ideological meanings related to gender, resilience, and empowerment in political leadership discourse.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research refers to interpretive practices used to understand social phenomena in their natural

contexts. This approach is appropriate because the data are textual and narrative, and the study focuses on meaning-making processes rather than quantitative measurement. Within this framework, the study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the research design because it allows an in-depth examination of how language constructs power, ideology, and social identity in political discourse.

The primary data source is the official transcript of Kamala Harris's 2024 post-election speech delivered on November 6, 2024, at Howard University, Washington, D.C. The speech lasted approximately twelve minutes and was fully transcribed in English. Secondary data include scholarly works related to Critical Discourse Analysis, political discourse, resilience, power, and gender in political communication, which serve as theoretical references.

Data were collected through several stages. First, the researcher obtained official video recordings of Harris's speech from publicly accessible broadcasts uploaded on YouTube by major American television networks. Second, the authenticity of the video was verified to ensure reliability. The speech was then manually transcribed and cross-checked with available references and the original video to ensure accuracy. Third, the transcript was reviewed repeatedly to identify possible errors in punctuation, wording, and spelling.

The data were analyzed using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. The units of analysis included words, clauses, and sentences related to resilience and power. The researcher identified linguistic features such as pronouns, modality, repetition, and metaphor, then coded and categorized them based on their functions. The findings were interpreted at textual, discursive, and social levels to explain how linguistic elements function as discourse strategies in constructing meanings of resilience and power.

To ensure validity, this study applied several strategies. First, the analysis was grounded in Fairclough's established theoretical framework. Second, findings were supported by direct quotations from the speech to maintain transparency. Third, consistent coding procedures were applied throughout the analysis. In addition, findings were cross-checked with relevant literature to reduce bias and strengthen reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion systematically by explaining the context of Kamala Harris's post-election speech and analyzing the linguistic features used to construct resilience, maintain authority, and express ideological meaning. The discussion moves from contextual explanation to linguistic analysis and interpretation.

Research Findings

The findings reveal that Kamala Harris's 2024 post-election speech contains recurring linguistic patterns used to express resilience, maintain political authority, and build collective identity. These patterns are reflected in word choices, pronoun use, modal verbs, repetition, and metaphorical expressions. These linguistic elements do not function independently but work together to shape the overall message. The results indicate that language in the speech is used not only to deliver information but also to position the speaker, manage the tone of electoral defeat, and maintain a future-oriented perspective.

Overview of the Speech

Kamala Harris delivered the speech on November 6, 2024, at Howard University in Washington, D.C., shortly after the election results were announced. The speech occurred during a period of public attention, emotional uncertainty, and political tension. The 2024 election took place in a highly polarized environment marked by debates surrounding democracy, economic conditions, and social justice. As a presidential candidate and symbolic figure of representation and leadership, Harris's speech carried broader significance beyond acknowledging defeat.

In the speech, Harris accepts the election results and emphasizes the importance of a peaceful transfer of power. However, the speech gradually shifts toward a forward-looking message by emphasizing continuity, resilience, unity, and future participation. Through inclusive language and strategic framing, Harris is positioned not merely as a defeated candidate but as an active political leader who remains relevant. The speech addresses supporters, political opponents, media institutions, and broader public audiences while reinforcing democratic values. Its structure begins with gratitude, acknowledges the election outcome, revisits campaign values, and concludes with messages of unity and continuation. Overall, the speech reshapes electoral defeat into a narrative of resilience and continued political engagement.

Linguistic Features in the Speech

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the linguistic features in Harris's speech function as discourse strategies to construct resilience, authority, and ideological meaning. The analysis identifies the use of inclusive pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, collocations, and symbolic metaphors as dominant linguistic features. These elements help reframe electoral defeat as a moment of collective strength and democratic continuity.

The findings show that personal pronouns such as "I," "we," "our," and "you" are strategically used to express responsibility, build solidarity, and engage audiences. Modal verbs reflect commitment and obligation, repetition emphasizes key political messages, and metaphors symbolically frame resilience and future hope. Collectively, these linguistic choices strengthen Harris's political legitimacy and reinforce her connection with audiences while maintaining narratives of resilience, leadership, and collective power.

Table 1. Pronouns and Collective Identity

No.	Pronoun	Speech Excerpt	Discursive Function
1	I	"I spoke with President-elect Trump and congratulated him on his victory."	Asserts personal responsibility and democratic respect.
2	I	"I will never give up the fight for a future where Americans can pursue their dreams."	Projects individual determination and leadership perseverance.
3	We	"We must accept the results of this election."	Distributes responsibility and fosters shared democratic commitment.
4	We	"We will continue to wage this fight in the voting booth, in the courts, and in the public square."	Frames struggle as a collective effort beyond the election.
5	Our	"Full of love for our country."	Builds national belonging and emotional solidarity.
6	You	"You have power."	Empowers the audience, especially youth, for future agency.
7	People	"People who have suffered... found strength within	Evokes a universal narrative of

themselves.”

resilience.

To provide a clearer overview of the data, this section explains how pronouns are used throughout the speech. In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris employs personal pronouns such as “I,” “we,” “our,” and “you” as important linguistic features that serve different communicative purposes.

The pronoun “I” appears in statements such as “I spoke with President-elect Trump and congratulated him on his victory” and “I will never give up the fight for a future where Americans can pursue their dreams,” showing personal responsibility and commitment. The pronoun “we” appears in expressions such as “We must accept the results of this election” and “We will continue to wage this fight in the voting booth, in the courts, and in the public square,” referring to both the speaker and a broader collective group. Similarly, “our” in “full of love for our country” emphasizes shared national identity.

The pronoun “you,” as in “You have power,” directly addresses the audience and encourages participation, while “people” in “people who have suffered... found strength within themselves” refers to a broader and unspecified group. Overall, these pronouns show variation in how the speaker positions herself, the audience, and wider communities, indicating their important role in organizing participant reference within the speech.

Modal Verbs and Expressions of Determination

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris also conveys political messages through modal verbs and lexical repetition. These linguistic features function not only as grammatical elements but also as strategies to emphasize commitment, responsibility, and civic participation in a democratic context. This section examines how these choices construct meaning, reinforce political stance, and shape the relationship between the speaker and the audience.

Table 2. Modal Verbs and Expressions of Determination

No.	Modal Verb	Speech Excerpt	Discursive Function
1	Will	“We will continue to wage this fight...”	Signals unwavering future commitment.
2	Will	“I will never give up the fight...”	Emphasizes personal perseverance.
3	Must	“We must accept the results...”	Imposes moral and democratic obligation.
4	Can	“Americans can pursue their dreams.”	Projects optimism and empowerment.

To provide a clearer view of the data, this section outlines how modal verbs and repeated lexical items appear across different parts of the speech. In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris employs modal verbs as a recurring linguistic feature. The findings indicate that “will,” “must,” and “can” occur in several key statements and serve different functions.

The modal “will” appears in expressions such as “We will continue to wage this fight” and “I will never give up the fight,” signaling future-oriented action and expressing commitments at both collective and individual levels. The modal “must” is found in the statement “We must accept the results,” expressing necessity and presenting the action as a shared democratic obligation. In contrast, the modal “can” in “Americans can pursue their dreams” conveys ability and possibility for individuals and groups.

In addition, the findings show repetition of key lexical items across the speech. The word “fight” appears in expressions such as “I will never give up the fight” and “we will continue to wage this fight,” emphasizing persistence and collective struggle. The term “democracy” is associated with civic processes,

while “power” in “*You have power*” directly addresses and empowers the audience. These lexical items are consistently distributed and linked to the central themes of the speech.

Overall, modal verbs and lexical repetition function to express future action, obligation, and possibility, while simultaneously reinforcing key ideological concepts such as democracy, resilience, and empowerment.

Repetition and Emphasis

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris uses repeated lexical items to emphasize key political ideas. These repetitions highlight themes of persistence, democracy, and empowerment, while also reinforcing the importance of public participation. This section examines how repetition functions in the discourse to construct meaning and position the audience.

Table 3. Repetition and Emphasis

No.	Repeated Word/Phrase	Speech Excerpt	Discursive Function
1	Fight	“I will never give up the fight... we will continue to wage this fight...”	Stresses ongoing struggle and determination.
2	Democracy	Repeated references to “democracy” and participation.	Underscores civic duty and continuity.
3	Power	“You have power.”	Empowers audience agency.

To provide a clearer view of the data, this section describes how repeated words appear across different parts of the speech. In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris employs lexical repetition as a key linguistic feature. The findings show that the words “*fight*,” “*democracy*,” and “*power*” appear repeatedly in different sections and are closely connected to the main ideas of the speech.

The word “*fight*” appears in expressions such as “*I will never give up the fight*” and “*we will continue to wage this fight*,” referring to ongoing effort and persistence at both individual and collective levels. Its repetition across sentences highlights its central role in constructing a message of continuity and determination. The term “*democracy*” appears in references to civic processes and participation and is distributed across different parts of the speech, indicating its importance in the broader political context. Meanwhile, “*power*” in “*You have power*” directly addresses the audience and emphasizes their role in the discourse, despite its lower frequency.

Overall, these repeated lexical items consistently appear in varied contexts and reinforce key themes such as persistence, civic engagement, and audience involvement, showing how important ideas are strengthened throughout the speech.

Metaphor and Symbolic Language

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris does not rely solely on direct political statements but also uses metaphorical expressions to make abstract ideas such as hope, struggle, and democracy more concrete and relatable. This section examines how these metaphorical choices function in the discourse to shape meaning, interpretation, and audience engagement.

Table 4. Metaphor and Symbolic Language

No.	Metaphor	Speech Excerpt	Symbolic Domain	Function
1	Light	“The light of America’s promise will always burn bright.”	Hope optimism	/ Enduring ideals
2	Fight Struggle	/ “I do not concede the fight... we keep fighting.”	Battle	Continuous engagement
3	Stars	“Fill the sky with the light of a billion brilliant stars.”	Cosmic collective	/ Individual contributions to democracy
4	Roll up sleeves	“Roll up our sleeves.”	Labor	Call to action

The table provides an overview of how metaphors appear across the speech. The data show that these expressions are not used randomly but follow clear patterns and contexts, with each metaphor contributing to the overall message conveyed by the speaker.

The metaphor “*light*” in “*The light of America’s promise will always burn bright*” represents hope and continuity, reflecting an effort to maintain optimism and a forward-looking perspective. The metaphor “*fight*” in “*I do not concede the fight*” and “*we keep fighting*” expresses persistence and frames political engagement as an ongoing process rather than a final outcome. The metaphor “*stars*” in “*Fill the sky with the light of a billion brilliant stars*” symbolizes individuals within a collective, emphasizing shared contribution and participation. The expression “*roll up our sleeves*” is associated with action and readiness to work, highlighting practical involvement rather than symbolic meaning.

Overall, the findings indicate that these metaphors are used in specific contexts and are linked to key themes such as hope, struggle, collective participation, and action. The table shows that metaphorical expressions are distributed throughout the speech and support its main ideas in a structured and meaningful way.

Discourse Strategies in Constructing Leadership

This section analyzes how linguistic features function as discourse strategies in shaping Kamala Harris’s leadership in her 2024 post-election speech. Moving beyond textual analysis, it focuses on how these elements operate within the broader discourse context using Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis. Through strategies such as self-positioning, collective positioning, and moral framing, the speaker constructs an image of responsible and principled leadership despite electoral defeat. The speech reframes the outcome as an expression of democratic responsibility and resilience, allowing Harris to maintain symbolic power, reaffirm democratic values, and preserve political legitimacy.

Self-Positioning as a Responsible Leader

In her 2024 post-election speech, Harris uses simple but deliberate linguistic choices to communicate her political stance. Through pronouns and verb forms, she expresses responsibility, continuity, and shared commitment. Although these elements appear simple, they carry significant meaning in constructing the overall message of the speech.

Table 5. Self-Positioning as a Responsible Leader

No.	Linguistic Feature	Excerpt	Strategy
1	I + declarative	“I accept the results of the election.”	Democratic responsibility
2	I + will	“I will continue to fight...”	Resilience and commitment
3	I → we shift	“I accept... we will continue.”	Shares burden collectively

The table presents several linguistic patterns related to how the speaker positions herself throughout the speech. The data indicate that pronoun selection and verb constructions play an important role in expressing responsibility, continuity, and collective involvement in a structured way.

The findings show frequent use of the first-person pronoun “I” in declarative statements such as “*I accept the results of the election.*” This construction highlights individual responsibility and provides clarity and certainty in acknowledging the outcome. The modal verb “will” also frequently appears with “I,” as in “*I will continue to fight,*” indicating future-oriented commitment and ongoing engagement beyond the immediate result.

In addition, there is a shift from “I” to “we,” as seen in “*I accept... we will continue,*” which expands responsibility from an individual to a collective level. This shift includes the audience within the action, transforming personal acknowledgment into shared commitment. These patterns form a sequence from individual responsibility to future intention and then to collective alignment, creating a coherent structure across the speech.

Overall, the data show that pronouns and verb forms are systematically used to construct self-positioning. The combination of “I” and “we,” along with declarative and modal structures, consistently represents responsibility, continuity, and shared engagement.

Collective Positioning with Supporters

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris uses collective pronouns such as “we” and “us” to frame the message as shared rather than individual. These linguistic choices position the audience as active participants in a collective response, highlighting solidarity, continuity, and shared ownership of the political message.

Table 6. Collective Positioning with Supporters

No.	Pronoun/Structure	Excerpt	Function
1	We + will	“We will continue to wage this fight.”	Solidarity and continuity
2	Our	“Our country, our fight.”	Collective ownership

The analysis shows that plural pronouns are consistently used to construct collective involvement in the speech. Forms such as “we” and “our” do not function separately but work together to build a shared perspective between the speaker and the audience.

The pronoun “we” appears in expressions such as “*We will continue to wage this fight.*” Here, “we” includes both the speaker and the audience, while the modal verb “will” adds a future-oriented meaning, indicating ongoing collective action rather than individual intention. This structure emphasizes shared participation across the speech.

The possessive pronoun “our” in expressions such as “*our country*” and “*our fight*” signals collective ownership and shared reference. It positions the speaker and audience within the same group,

reinforcing the idea of common experience and responsibility.

Further analysis shows that “we” and “our” appear in different sections but perform similar functions, consistently expressing shared responsibility, involvement, and belonging. Their repetition indicates a systematic strategy to maintain a collective frame throughout the discourse. Overall, plural pronouns construct a shared meaning system in which the speaker aligns herself with the audience, presenting the message as a collective experience.

Maintaining Political Authority After Defeat

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris does not simply report the election outcome but reshapes it through language. The speech moves beyond defeat and reframes it as a continuous and meaningful process, emphasizing continuity, democratic values, and leadership. This section examines how these linguistic strategies construct leadership, resilience, and political meaning within the discourse.

Table 7. Maintaining Political Authority After Defeat

No.	Strategy	Excerpt	Function
1	Frame as struggle	“Not the end... the fight continues.”	Continuity over closure
2	Democratic lexicon	“Will of the people... democracy.”	Moral legitimacy
3	Future projection	“We will keep fighting.”	Dynamic authority

The data show that several linguistic strategies are used to construct and maintain political authority in the speech. These strategies appear in specific expressions and consistently frame the message in terms of continuity, legitimacy, and forward movement. Rather than functioning separately, they work together to shape how the situation is understood.

One strategy is framing the situation as an ongoing struggle, as seen in “*Not the end... the fight continues.*” This contrast between closure and continuation presents the outcome not as an end but as part of an ongoing process, emphasizing resilience and sustained engagement.

Another strategy is the use of democratic references such as “*the will of the people*” and “*democracy.*” These terms function as legitimizing discourse and position the message within widely accepted democratic values, emphasizing participation, representation, and institutional legitimacy.

In addition, the expression “*We will keep fighting*” combines collective pronoun use with future-oriented modality. “*We*” includes both speaker and audience, while “*will*” signals intention and forward direction. The phrase “*keep fighting*” reinforces continuity of action, presenting political engagement as ongoing and shared.

Overall, these strategies do not appear randomly but form a structured pattern that includes framing struggle, invoking democratic values, and projecting future action. Together, they contribute to maintaining authority by constructing continuity, legitimacy, and collective orientation in the discourse.

Social and Ideological Implication

This section analyzes the speech at the level of social practice within Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis framework. The focus shifts from linguistic features to their relation with broader social structures, ideology, and power.

The findings show that the speech functions not only as a response to electoral outcomes but also as an effort to restore public trust and maintain social stability in a fragmented political context. Emphasis

on unity, legitimacy, and collective participation reflects the need for cohesion and continuity within democracy.

Ideologically, the speech aligns with liberal democratic values such as the will of the people, equality, and institutional legitimacy, reinforced through inclusive language and references to peaceful transition of power.

In terms of power, authority is constructed not as domination but as the ability to sustain values, shape perception, and maintain stability. Resilience is framed as both individual and collective, functioning as a social and political resource. Overall, the discourse shows how language actively shapes ideology and social reality in a post-election context.

Ideology of Resilience

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris reframes the electoral outcome through linguistic strategies that emphasize continuity, shared values, persistence, and moral responsibility. This section examines how these strategies construct ideological meaning related to resilience.

Table 8. Ideology of Resilience

No.	Strategy	Excerpt	Ideological Implication
1	Continuity phrasing	"We will keep fighting... the fight is not over."	Persistence as core value
2	Collective pronouns	"We... our fight."	Shared resilience
3	Strong modals	"We must... we will."	Moral commitment

The analysis shows that the ideology of resilience is constructed through recurring linguistic patterns that are closely linked to continuity expressions, collective pronouns, and modal verbs. These elements are systematically used to shape how resilience is presented in the discourse.

A key pattern is continuity-oriented expressions such as "*We will keep fighting... the fight is not over.*" This construction emphasizes ongoing action rather than closure, where "*not over*" rejects finality and "*will keep fighting*" signals continuation. Together, they frame the situation as an ongoing process rather than an endpoint.

Another pattern is the use of collective pronouns such as "*we*" and possessive forms like "*our fight.*" These expressions position the speaker and audience within the same group, creating shared ownership and collective experience. Their repeated use reflects a consistent effort to construct a shared perspective.

Modal verbs such as "*must*" and "*will*" also play an important role. "*Must*" expresses obligation, while "*will*" signals intention and commitment. Combined, they create a directive and forward-looking tone that not only describes the situation but also guides future action.

Overall, resilience is constructed as ongoing, collective, and action-oriented through these strategies, showing that it is not an abstract concept but a shared and continuous process within the discourse.

Ideology of Gender and Female Leadership

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris constructs an ideology of gender and women's leadership by emphasizing women as legitimate and capable leaders. The findings show the use of declarative sentences and values such as responsibility and integrity to reinforce this representation. This

section presents how these strategies function in constructing the ideology of female leadership in the speech.

Table 9. Ideology of Gender and Female Leadership

No.	Discursive Strategy	Linguistic Features	Ideological Meaning	Interpretation
1	Self-positioning	Declarative tone confident	Legitimacy of female leadership	Harris = competent leader
2	Moral framing	“care”, “responsibility”	Strength through empathy	Women’s leadership = moral strength + service
3	Collective inclusion	“we”, “our future”, “together”	Inclusive leadership	Representative and shared power
4	Reframing strength	“courage”, “stand firm”, “continue”	Redefinition of strength	Not dominance, but steadfast courage
5	Gender representation	“next generation”, “women/girls”	Gender empowerment	Symbol of hope for women

The analysis shows that the ideology of gender and female leadership is constructed through several consistent discursive strategies reflected in specific linguistic features and ideological meanings.

Self-positioning is realized through declarative and confident expressions that present leadership in a direct and assertive manner. This constructs a stable and authoritative leadership identity, framing female leadership as legitimate and competent.

Moral framing is expressed through lexical choices such as “care,” “serve,” and “responsibility,” which emphasize empathy and ethical orientation. This indicates that leadership is defined not only by authority but also by social responsibility, where strength is linked to empathy, service, and accountability.

Collective inclusion appears through pronouns such as “we,” “our future,” and “together,” which position the speaker and audience within a shared frame. This constructs leadership as inclusive and participatory, reducing distance and reinforcing shared purpose.

Reframing strength is shown through terms like “courage,” “stand firm,” and “continue,” which redefine strength as persistence and resilience rather than dominance. This associates female leadership with endurance and stability.

Gender representation is reflected in references to “the next generation,” “women,” and “girls,” linking leadership to broader social and future-oriented empowerment, positioning women and girls as capable leaders.

Overall, these strategies construct female leadership as legitimate, inclusive, ethically grounded, and future-oriented, forming a coherent alternative to traditional hierarchical models.

Empowerment Collectives of Power

In her 2024 post-election speech, Kamala Harris frames political participation as a collective effort rather than an individual one. Through expressions such as “we,” “our,” and “you have power,” she constructs responsibility and action as shared. This section examines how these linguistic choices shape the idea of collective power within the discourse.

Table 10. Empowerment Collectives of Power

No.	Discursive Strategy	Linguistic Features	Ideological Meaning	Interpretation
1	Direct empowerment	“you have power”, “your voice matters”	Individual empowerment	The community is positioned as the owner of political power
2	Collective pronoun usage	“we”, “together”, “our”	Collective power	Strength is built through togetherness and solidarity
3	Agency construction	“you can act”, “we must act”	Citizen agency	Citizens as active actors in democracy
4	Inclusive framing	“all of us”, “every community”	Inclusive empowerment	Empowerment covers all community groups
5	Motivational language	“keep going”, “continue the fight”	Sustained participation	Encourages long-term political participation

Discussion

This section explains the meaning of the findings in relation to the use of language in Kamala Harris’s post-election speech, particularly in constructing resilience, authority, and leadership. Linguistic features are not treated as isolated elements but as interconnected patterns that shape the overall message. The analysis also considers the social and political context to ensure an accurate interpretation of the speech situation. At the level of social practice in Fairclough’s CDA, the speech not only responds to the election outcome but also works to maintain public trust and social stability in a politically fragmented context. The emphasis on unity, legitimacy, and collective participation reflects the need for cohesion within democratic systems. Ideologically, the speech aligns with liberal democratic values such as popular will, equality, and institutional legitimacy, reinforced through inclusive language and peaceful transfer of power. Power is not understood as domination, but as the ability to sustain values, influence public perception, and maintain stability, closely linked to resilience as both an individual and collective commitment.

Linguistic Feature in the Speech

The linguistic features do not operate in isolation but are systematically organized to shape audience interpretation. A clear shift is observed from “defeat” toward continuity. Pronoun use shows movement from “I,” indicating individual responsibility, to “we” and “our,” constructing collective identity, in line with van Dijk (2008) on social relation and responsibility distribution in discourse. Modal verbs such as “will,” “must,” and “can” construct future orientation involving commitment, obligation, and possibility, consistent with Fairclough (2003) on modality and ideology. Repetition of “fight,” “democracy,” and “power” reinforces key themes and maintains audience engagement, as noted by Hyland (2005). Metaphorical expressions such as “light,” “stars,” and “roll up our sleeves” make abstract ideas more concrete and accessible, supporting Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Overall, the speech does not frame defeat as an end, but as an ongoing process that sustains authority and engagement.

Discourse Strategies in Constructing Leadership

Leadership is constructed through interconnected linguistic strategies. Self-positioning through “I accept the results of the election” expresses responsibility and democratic legitimacy, while “I will continue to fight” signals continuity, consistent with Fairclough and van Dijk. This then shifts to collective positioning through “we,” reducing social distance and constructing solidarity, reframing defeat as a shared experience. Authority is then maintained through expressions such as “not the end” and “the fight

continues,” along with references to democracy and the will of the people as moral legitimacy. Authority is therefore constructed as the ability to maintain direction rather than simply winning. Leadership is reconstructed through three stages: individual, collective, and continuity.

Social and Ideological Implication

The speech reconstructs the meaning of the electoral outcome through three key dimensions: resilience, gendered leadership, and collective power. Resilience is expressed through “we will keep fighting” and “the fight is not over,” emphasizing continuity (van Dijk). Gendered leadership is constructed through values of responsibility, stability, and integrity, aligned with Eagly, and extended through references to women and younger generations. Collective power is built through “we,” “our,” “together,” and “you have power,” indicating distributed agency in line with Foucault. These dimensions are interconnected and form a coherent discursive framework that maintains engagement and reopens meaning after the election.

Overall, ideological meanings are not explicitly stated but are constructed through consistent linguistic patterns. Language functions not only as communication but also as a tool for shaping interpretation. The speech does not close the meaning of defeat but keeps it open, allowing continuity, shared agency, and future action.

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion and suggestions of the study. It summarizes the main findings in relation to the research questions and highlights how the analysis contributes to understanding the role of language in the speech. It also offers suggestions for future researchers and readers for further development and critical application of the findings. Overall, this chapter concludes the discussion in a clear and concise way while still allowing space for further reflection and future research. Regarding the first research question, the analysis shows that linguistic features in the speech are used in a deliberate and interconnected way, where pronouns, modal verbs, repetition, and metaphor do not operate separately but work together to construct meaning; the shift from “I” to “we” builds a shared framework, while modal verbs, repetition, and metaphor reinforce key ideas and guide interpretation, so the speech is framed as continuation rather than closure. In relation to the second research question, the findings indicate that leadership is constructed through discourse, beginning with personal responsibility and extending into collective inclusion, while authority is maintained through forward-looking expressions and alignment with democratic values, showing that leadership is not defined only by electoral results but sustained through responsibility, consistency, and interpretative direction. For the third research question, the ideological meanings reflect an effort to reshape the meaning of political defeat, where resilience is framed as an ongoing process, leadership as inclusive and value-based, and collective power as distributed among participants, so defeat is repositioned as continuity, shared responsibility, and sustained engagement. Based on the findings, future researchers are encouraged to expand the analysis by examining different political speeches, speakers, or socio-political contexts, since this study focuses on a single post-election speech and a broader dataset would provide deeper and more generalizable insights, and future studies may also combine Critical Discourse Analysis with corpus-based or multimodal approaches to capture richer dimensions of meaning in political discourse.

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