

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Post-truth in the modern world has had an influential impact on political discourse around the world. Post-Truth is a new era epistemology where objective facts no longer play important role in molding public opinion, as compared to emotions and personal beliefs (McIntyre, 2018; Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). The term was selected as the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year in 2016 because it was deemed relevant in global politics at that time (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Under post-truth circumstances, the distinction among truth, belief, and opinion has become blurred due to the fact that what is true does not necessarily depend upon factual reality anymore but rather on its resemblance to social emotions and values. McIntyre (2018) refers to post-truth as an “epistemological crisis,” in which traditional sources of credibility, such as the mainstream press, academic institutions, and government agencies, experience a collapse of public trust. This is the reason why very personal stories are dominating discussions that can actually be backed by data.

The American political discourse is a prime illustration of the post-truth phenomena, which is mostly seen in democratic elections throughout various nations. In fact, a number of academics and politicians have recognized the importance of the post-truth phenomena to Donald J. Trump's 2016 presidential

discourse (McIntyre, 2018). As the 45th president, Trump earned the highest score in terms of the amount of false comments made throughout his administration (2017–2021). The Washington Post fact-checkers claim over the course of his presidency, he lied more than 30,573 times, or average of 21 lies every day (Kessler et al., 2021). After Joe Biden, a candidate from the Democratic Party, became victorious in 2020 presidential contest and became 46th president of the United States, Donald Trump get complete comeback in American politics by win the 2024 presidential elections. Former president defeat Kamala Harris, the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, with 312 votes from the electorate and 49.8% of the popular vote (National Archives, 2024). Biden serve one term as president. When Trump took oath of office on January 20, 2025, as 47th President of the United States, a number of news organizations and political analysts observe similarities between his rhetoric from first and second terms in office. Throughout his political career, immigration has been one of the most frequent and emotionally charged topics among the numerous policy sectors influenced by this rhetorical coherence.

Immigration is one of the main areas where rhetorical technique is obvious. Since his initial presidential campaign 2015, Donald Trump has consistently seen immigrants, particularly those enter the country illegally, as the greatest danger to American identity, national security, and economy. Trump's usage of phrases like "illegal aliens" is part of his views and shows more than just legality. Santa Ana (2002) argues that terms like "alien" imply a sense of withdrawal and even prejudice. Trump has used the theme of immigration in conjunction with the issues of crime, terror, and instability, making the immigrants a symbol for all the other

socio-economic concerns of society. The usage of digital media is one way that has helped him promote the said rhetoric through an effective strategy. Platforms such as X (previously known as Twitter) and Truth Social enable Trump to reach out directly to many of his followers without having to go through information gatekeepers. As per Harsin (2023), digital media not only speeds up the process of information flow but also that of affects, such as feelings of fear, anger, or pride, which contribute to belief systems beyond fact checking.

Considering all the things mentioned, this study aims to examine Trump's statements about immigrants or "aliens" via the lens of post-truth political discourse. The president's rhetorical form and meanings will be analyzed in the following two speeches from his second term: the "Big Bill" event address on June 27, 2025, and the Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on March 4, 2025. It is proposed that this research would show how language shapes identities and ideologies during a crisis of truth.

1.2. Research Problem

Based the background, the problems will be divided into two primary analyses. The following are two research problems:

1. How Donald Trump's rhetoric on immigrants or "illegal aliens" described in his second term?
2. In what ways do Trump's rhetoric reflect the post-truth discourse?

1.3. Objectives of The Study

The purpose of this study is:

1. To understand how Donald Trump's rhetoric on immigrants or "illegal aliens" described in his second term
2. To understand in what way Trump's rhetoric reflects the post-truth discourse

1.4. Scope of The Study

This study will examine Trump's rhetoric towards immigrants or "illegal aliens" throughout the second half of his presidency in relation to the chosen samples of his speeches, specifically the Joint Session of Congress Speech and the "Big Bill" Event Speech. Based primarily on Lee McIntyre's (2018) *Post-Truth*, the first chapter of which offers a thorough explanation of post-truthism using its several distinguishing characteristics, this study will use a post-truth approach and focus on word choice and rhetorical device. This research does not address questions of legality, the impact of current immigration laws, the accuracy of Trump's claims, how listeners responded to those speeches, or the political consequences of the immigration policy put in effect under Trump's presidency.

1.5. Previous Studies

Research on Donald Trump's political rhetoric, immigration issues, and the post-truth phenomenon has been conducted in various previous academic studies. Some of these are relevant as a theoretical basis for this study.

The first article, "Family separation as state violence: The politics of Trump administration policy" by Reilly Frye (2020), discussed the Trump administration's "Zero tolerance" policy, which separated families at the border between the United States and Mexico. The article makes it clear obvious that, in addition to being an issue of domestic policy, the potential for crimes against humanity is a matter of international law. The author gave examples of Trump's rhetoric about immigrants supports harsh policies and has negative impact on society.

Second, Nacos, Shapiro, and Bloch-Elkon's article "Donald Trump and right-wing populist movements: A discourse of exclusion and resentment" (2020) examines Trump's typical confrontational and hateful rhetoric. According to the study's finding, Trump's aggressive rhetoric has linked increased political polarization and violence against minorities. This study crucial because demonstrates that remark made by Trump are action rather than just talk.

Third, Evi Aryati Arbay and Ari Santoso Widodo's article "The post-truth phenomenon infiltrating the US political system, media, and populace: the critical thinking analysis about Donald Trump's political leadership" (2022) highlights how Donald Trump's language about immigrants shapes public opinion by portraying them as threat and source of fear. According to the article, Trump portrays immigrants as dangers to national security and social burdens by using terms like "illegal aliens" and criminal visuals. The results show that these kinds of language had a significant impact on public opinion and provided justification for some of the Trump administration's extreme policies. This article important because show

the connection between political rhetoric, immigrant identity construction, and the post-truth phenomenon, where feeling dominate reason.

Fourth, Yi Feng Wang, Xinyi Zhang, and Yuwei Zhong's paper "Blaming 'illegal aliens' for crisis?: Cultural worldview defenses in effects of death and economic threats on anti-undocumented immigrant attitudes" (2025) looked at perceptions of undocumented immigrants during the coronavirus pandemic. The authors noticed that negative attitudes about immigrants are often influenced by perceptions of threat, regardless of whether they are connected to the problem of mortality or economy. The growth of attitudes toward immigrants is significantly influenced by individual principles. This study's significance in relation to Trump's research comes from the idea that narratives of threat are used to stir up resentment towards immigrants.

In the final paper, "Immigrants Reduce Victimization, Increase Crime Reporting," by David J. Bier and Julián Salazar (2025), the author examined the connection between migration and criminal behavior based on empirical data. More specifically, the author's research revealed that immigrants contribute to lower assault rates, which is contrary to political discourse claiming link between migration and criminality. This study matter because it highlight the gap between post-truth discourse and reality.

In conclusion, all five study show that political discourse is often overly emotional and out of step with reality, especially when it come to immigration. Demonstrates how analyzing Donald Trump's remark about immigrants and "illegal

aliens" during his second term will be very helpful on understanding post-truth politics.

1.6. Method of Study

1.6.1. Method of Research

A qualitative research approach based on library research is used in this study. Primary and secondary are the two groups into which the data is separated. Transcripts of Donald Trump's speeches from his second term, especially the Joint Session of Congress address on March 4, 2025, and the "Big Bill" event speech on June 27, 2025, form the core data. These speeches notably address immigration concerns and apply the term "illegal aliens." Trump's tweets on Truth Social and X (previously Twitter), media stories that quote directly from the speeches, and video documentation are examples of secondary data that support the context-specific interpretation.

In order to analyze Donald Trump's post-truth discourse on immigrants or "illegal aliens," this study took a number of measures. First, the author collected and examined Trump's remarks on immigration-related issues during both his second term as president and his electoral campaigns. Moreover, certain statements were found to be related to the common topics of economic impact, criminalization, and invasion. For further support, secondary readings were included. In the end, a classification table including content, date, and recurrent phrases like "invasion" and "illegal aliens" was constructed.

1.6.2. Method of Approach

This study uses a methodology that includes post-truth concepts and rhetorical analysis. The concept of rhetorical analysis is the study of language from the viewpoint of persuasion, using traditional appeals like pathos, ethos, logos, and kairos, which were first defined by Aristotle (2007) and later developed by Kinneavy and Eskin (2000). Post-truth theory helps explain these notions within the broader context of a political discourse, where emotions continually take priority over facts (McIntyre, 2018). This combination helps in revealing the complexity of Trump's remarks against immigrants, commonly referred to as "illegal aliens."

1.7. Organization of The Writing

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter cover background, research problem, objective, scope of the study, previous studies, method, and writing organization.

CHAPTER II INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explains the concept of speech as a mode of communication, its existence as both an oral and written form, and the classification of speech types.

CHAPTER III EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter involve definition of theories that explain social, political, and cultural factor in the United States, with a focus on Donald Trump's history, second term rhetoric, public perception, immigration data, post-truth and rhetoric theory.

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION

This chapter, the research findings will be analyzed and data from Donald Trump's speech will be analyzed using the framework outlined above.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

The research finding summarized in this chapter, which will also address research question and make suggestion for further study.