

Delivering Covid-19 Containment Measures: A Case of Persuasion and Power

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Abstract: From the end of 2019 the world has been facing a devastating pandemic as the respiratory virus Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) has ravaged world populations and in a span of one year caused millions of infections and hundreds of thousands of deaths. Due to its scary nature it has forced people to limit their social activities and movements as well as closing work places hence dealing a huge blow to businesses and jobs in many parts of the world. As a response to the crisis, governments around the world have had to impose restrictions on movement, social interactions and gatherings and strict rules on sanitation and wearing of masks among other measures which have severely affected the lives of their citizenry. The unpleasant measures have often been spelt out by the top leadership of the various countries as addresses to the nation. This paper examines the strategies that the leadership employed to deliver the hard measures to their citizenry in a manner that sought understanding and acceptance. In particular, it investigates the use of rhetorical strategies and rhetorical devices in an attempt to persuade the citizenry to strictly follow the executive measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. The study has employed a phenomenological qualitative design underpinned by the Language Expectancy Theory. Data were drawn from the speeches of the heads of state on Covid-19 pandemic obtained through purposive sampling. The data were analysed descriptively and the various strategies identified and discussed. The study's findings indicate that the speeches on the covid-19 control employed oratory well as directives to get the citizens to adhere to Covid-19 protocols.

Keywords: Language Expectancy Theory, persuasion, persuasive strategies, rhetorical devices

1. Introduction

The novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that emerged out of the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019 has demonstrated an aggressive capacity to generate deadly explosive outbreaks in confined settings and across borders closely following human mobility patterns. From a few cases first reported in China, a few later in Europe and America the numbers increased rapidly and spread to many other countries. By the end of March 2020 the virus had spread to Africa. In total Africa had recorded 6555 cases including 244 deaths and 456 recoveries as of 1st April 2020. Governments around the world began taking precautionary measures including giving travel advisories and closing their borders. The virus, however, continued spreading rapidly and by the last week of December 2020 the World Health Organization reported global figures of 79.2 million cases of infection and over 1.7 million deaths (WHO 2020).

The discourse on the disease has presented a number of linguistic aspects there have been heavy borrowing of war metaphors with health care workers described as frontline staff and the disease as a formidable enemy. Reports on infections have employed present tense 'have' in reporting the cumulative number of infections to give the matter currency even when some of those infected have already passed away and there has been attempts to distinguish between deaths caused by Corona virus and deaths where Corona was a factor as dying of the disease and dying with the disease. Then language has been a critical vehicle to deliver

administrative measures to control the spread of the virus. What linguistic means have governments been employing to appeal to their people to observe the control measures?

The English term 'persuasion' is borrowed from the Latin term '*persuadere*' which is a blend from the prefix '*per*' meaning 'completion' and the base '*suadere*' meaning to 'advise' or 'urge' (Sandell, 1977). The term 'persuasion' in English refers to an attempt to convince rather than convince (Brembeck and Howell 1976). Persuasion is an art and science as well and has a close connection with human daily life. It is an intellectual and formal process that is used by someone to influence another and aims to change or reform attitudes, beliefs, opinions or behaviours towards a predetermined outcome through voluntary compliance (Mortensen 2004).

There are basically two categories of beliefs: core and dispositional. Core beliefs encompasses what people have actively engaged in and created over the course of their lives. On the other hand, dispositional beliefs are those that people have not actively engaged in but rather judgments that they make, grounded on their knowledge of subjects that are related, upon encountering a proposition. Sometimes dispositional beliefs are referred to as virtual beliefs (Frankish, 1998). It is rather difficult to persuade audiences to change core beliefs than persuading them alter dispositional beliefs. Nevertheless, persuasive speech on a topic that is related to the audience dispositional belief may have a better chance of success.

This paper interrogates the linguistic persuasive techniques used by four national heads in an attempt to convince their people to follow the Covid-19 protocols. The study aims to identify the kinds of strategies used in the statements and to discuss how the techniques have been used.

A number of linguists have tackled the topic of persuasion. Sandell (1977) endeavored to interrogate persuasion in his book *Linguistic Style and Persuasion*. He indicates that there are a variety of stylistic markers of persuasive style that can arise at all levels of expression; namely, semantics, morphology, syntax and phonology. In addition to these persuasive markers, some techniques are used to achieve persuasion. Cialdini (2007) and Walton (2007) identified some techniques that aid in achieving persuasion thereby enabling people to share the speaker's point of view, which is considered instrumental to social influence. Both Crismore and Farnsworth (1990) and Hyland (2005) concur that people make deliberate choices while using language in interacting with others.

In addition, the study of language and power indicates that powerful language plays a key role in persuasive communication, more so, when transmitted through audio and video channels. Sparks and Areni (2002) discovered that powerful language triggered more favourable attitudes in audio and video messages than powerless language and that speakers were more persuasive when they used powerful language instead of powerless language. O'Barr (1982) in his analysis of courtroom transcripts found out that witnesses with low social power used powerless speech whose characteristics were the use of verbal and non-verbal hesitation markers, hedges and tag questions. These markers were absent in the speech of witnesses with high social power.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Language Expectancy Theory (LET) envisages language use socially to show power. The proponents of this theory are Burgoon & Miller (1985). The theory posits that people verbally communicate in agreement with socially and culturally appropriate expectations. Violations from these norms can trigger either positive or negative reactions. LET presupposes that people have expectations not only about culturally and socially acceptable behaviour but also about the appropriate language and linguistic strategies which are used with the purpose of persuasion. These linguistic expectations determine whether a message will be positively or negatively accepted – in the latter case, the message will probably be rejected. LET is based on a close relationship between language and social power. One of the propositions of LET claims that individuals who have credibility, that is, social power, are free to select linguistic strategies to achieve persuasive goals, whereas those with low credibility and low social power are restricted to more neutral linguistic behaviour. Aristotle (350 B.C.E) cited in Nurrosyidah (2016) sheds light on the art of oratory through his pioneering contribution in classical rhetorical strategies. He identifies three pillars of persuasion as making rational (logos), credible (ethos), and affective (pathos) appeals to the reader/audience.

Logos is the reason; the reasoning part of the presentation and is based on rationality. It may involve citing facts and statistics, historical and literal analogies, examples, quotations and certain authorities on a subject. Ethos is appeal to the audience by demonstrating one's own credibility or authority. It is the image that the speaker presents to the audience. According to Foss (1966) cited in Zhiyong (2016), ethos is the effect of appeal of the speaker's character. To appeal to ethos one may demonstrate their own practical skills in specific aspects or wisdom, which demonstrates authority in a given field. A speaker's profound knowledge makes them reliable and the audiences are willing to believe what the speaker talks about. In addition, the essential goodness of the speaker and great character help them establish credibility. Ethos also includes a speaker's goodwill towards the audience and people prefer to follow a speaker who shows respect for the audience's interest or who sets common ground with them. In general, ethos helps the speaker create a trustworthy image, making his speech more persuasive. Pathos is the appeal to the emotions of the audience. Pathos concerns appeals designed to generate emotions in the audience and thus influence them.

The paper examines selected addresses of four heads of state; namely, American President Donald Trump, Russia's Vladimir Putin, Britain's Boris Johnson and Kenya's Uhuru Kenyatta for the rhetorical strategies and rhetorical devices as well as issuing of directives spelling out covid-19 control measures. The selected speeches are for the first five months of 2020 when new measures had to be introduced in many parts of the world.

The paper considers the use of persuasive strategies and devices as well as the issuing of directives in spelling out measures to control the spread of covid-19. The strategies examined include Aristotle's logos, ethos and pathos.

4. Analysis and Discussion

I) Use of Rhetorical Strategies

a) Strategies Employed by the American President

The American President Donald Trump addressed the American people on 11th March 2020. He addressed them as 'fellow Americans', therefore, presenting himself as one of the members of the nation thus using ethos. He, therefore, identifies with them.

He said that the World Health Organization had declared the virus a global pandemic and his administration was working with their allies to protect the American people an effort he considered the most comprehensive in modern history. This is again an instance of the use of ethos detailing what kind of administration he had before he reasoned that going by history the comprehensive measures would help beat the virus - a case of use of logos.

Related to the fact that the virus had been declared a global pandemic he listed the swift actions that his administration has taken including sweeping travel restrictions on China, the first federally mandated quarantine in over 50 years and declaration of a public health emergency and issuing the highest level of travel warning on other countries. These drastic measures are presented as justified by the gravity of the problem - a case of appeal to logos and he concludes that these had kept the numbers of infections dramatically low which qualifies his assertion that his administration was the best in managing the pandemic.

President Trump then plans to introduce a raft of new measures which he explains arise from his consultations with the country's top health officials. The measures are based on sound professional advice (logos). The measures are directives and include suspending travel from Europe to the U.S for the next thirty days. He assures the nation that his administration is monitoring the situation in China and Korea and they will re-evaluate the restrictions. In addition to that, he had met leaders of health insurance industry and they had agreed to waive all co-payments for corona virus, extend cover to these treatments and prevent surprise billing. These acts by the president are a reflection of his character(ethos) which presents him as concerned about the citizens.

The president further reported that his administration had truncated the process of acquiring antiviral therapies and he had signed into law a bill to avail more money for working on vaccines, medical supplies and testing kits all which paint a positive picture of the speaker and those working with him (ethos).

The president reasoned that if the nation acted smart today it will prevent the spread of the virus tomorrow and thus urges the citizenry to follow the guidelines of their local officials and practices hygiene and if one is unwell they stay at home. He further promised to seek reliefs for those affected by the pandemic (ethos).

The president also enumerates the strengths that he believed would enhance the country's ability to observe these restrictions as the government provided financial support. These are sound economic policies that had made their economy the strongest in the world and hence their financial institutions had good capital and unemployment has been greatly reduced.

The president further announced a programme to offer low interest loans to the affected states and asked congress to increase funding to the programme and he would order deferment of tax payment without penalties to those affected (ethos).

The president also asked Congress to provide tax relief to the employed. He vowed not to hesitate to take any action that protected the lives, health and safety of the American people and he would always put America first (ethos).

b) Strategies Employed by the Russian President

The Russian president addressed his nation on the pandemic on 25th March, 2020. The president described the pandemic as an issue of concern to every citizen that is affecting many countries and the global economy. He consequently said that his government had instituted precautionary measures to control the spread. By stating what his government has done the president is applying ethos. As a further demonstration of the sensitive government that he heads (ethos) he reports that he had mobilized many health professionals to combat the pandemic to whom he was thankful. Having painted a picture of the pandemic as a global threat the president advises the citizenry to observe the advice they get from health professionals – a case of appeal to logos.

The president also notes that there is a referendum scheduled to take place in a month's time but insists that given that his administration gives priority to safety, life and health, the vote would jeopardise this and he proposes a postponement. This is highlighting of the character of his government as concerned about the wellbeing of his people (ethos) and reasoning based on the circumstances regarding the vote (logos).

The president, owing to the need to prevent the spread of the disease, declared the following week a non-work period but wages will still be paid – a case of use of a directive. This is the use of reason (logos). He also urged all to be very disciplined noting that what has happened in other parts of the world regarding the spread of the pandemic could also happen to Russians (logos).

The president further reasoned that there were steps that needed to be taken to protect jobs and incomes of the citizenry. Consequently, he listed a raft of measures the government would take including automatic renewal of all social protection benefits, speeding up payments to war veterans, raising of maternity capital, sick leave and unemployment payments.

In addition, the citizens servicing loans were granted consumer loan and mortgage holidays and bankruptcy laws were made more friendly. The government would also offer assistance to businesses that were badly hit as well as reducing insurance contributions by half. The government would seek more revenue by charging higher interest on money paid to expatriates in foreign accounts as well as taxing high bank deposits and debt securities. These measures were based on the reasoning that there was need to protect jobs and were, therefore, an appeal to logos.

c) Strategies Employed by Britain's Prime Minister

The Prime Minister addressed his nation on 23rd March 2020. He described the coronavirus as the biggest threat his country has faced for decades and which had devastating impact all over the world. The address was meant to update the nation on the steps the government was taking and what the citizens can do to help. The Prime Minister (PM) appeals to reason(logos) by linking the steps taken to control the spread of the disease

and to the devastation that the disease was causing in many parts of the world. He also appealed to ethos when he presented the citizenry as participants who could do something to help in the fight.

He explained that the strategy to keep the spread low was calculated to avoid a moment of great danger where there would be too many sick people who could overwhelm the health care system. For this, he said there was need for a huge effort, part of which, had been asking people to stay at home. This is appeal to reason.

He thanked those who had complied, thus, appealing to ethos and announces that time had come for more to be done. He instructed the people to stay at home and only leave for a number of listed purposes, thus giving directives, and explained that that is the critical thing to do to stop the disease from spreading. This is appeal to reason(logos). He also warned that these restrictions would be enforced by the police.

To further strengthen the stay- at- home measures, the PM also issued directives: the closure of shops selling non-essential goods, recreational facilities, libraries and places of worship and stop gatherings.

The Prime Minister (PM) further noted that no leader wants to enact such measures and says that he knew they would cause great damage and disruption to lives, businesses and jobs therefore expressing his sympathy with the situation, an appeal to ethos. To cushion the people from these effects the PM reminded the nation that his administration has produced an 'unprecedented program of support' and that they would keep reviewing the restrictions, a show of concern appealing to ethos. He also said that the options available at the time were hard and many lives would sadly be lost. This is appeal to emotions(pathos).

He also explains that by complying with the rules the citizens are enabling the government build its capacity to combat the disease by bringing in more medical personnel and equipment, case of use of logos. He expressed his gratitude to all and said that everyone has a role in this fight and going by the past the country would win, an appeal to logos.

d) Strategies Employed by the Kenyan President

In Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta gave an address to the nation on 25th March 2020. In the opening statement he addressed the people of Kenya as 'fellow citizens' identifying with them thus employing ethos.

He stated that the pandemic was a global crisis that had so far recorded over 40,000 cases and as a result the Ministry of Health had announced measures to limit the spread. The country had so far recorded twenty-eight cases but had also recorded a recovery which was a sign that the country could beat the virus. This is reasoning from observations (logos).

The president also looked at the economic impact of the pandemic and noted that it has brought about anxiety with families fearing for their future and possibility of job losses. This is the use of pathos where the feeling of desperation is evoked. He, therefore, ordered certain measures including tax reliefs, tax reduction and cash transfers to the elderly, orphans and other vulnerable members, suspension of listing with Credit Reference Bureaus of persons in small and medium enterprises, pending bills to be paid within three weeks, payment of verified VAT refund claims within three weeks and recruitment of additional health workers. These are directives.

To facilitate the above financial commitments, the president reported that his administration had offered to take a reduction in salaries of senior executive officers of between 20% and 80%. He also urged others in the government to make similar offers. The president uses ethos by declaring the offer to reduce his own salary and that of other senior members of the government. On the basis of this he requests others to do so.

The president also reported that The Central Bank of Kenya had lowered the Central Bank Rate which would result in lowering of interest rates to borrowers. In addition, the Cash Reserve Ratio would be lowered to enable banks support borrowers. The Central Bank of Kenya would also be flexible to banks regarding classification of loans. These were all actions that reflected on the character of the government(ethos).

He also cites guidelines that require staff to work from home and orders that state and public officers in lower grades with pre-existing conditions aged 58 and above take leave or work from home, thus applying logos.

The president reported that he had re-organized the calendar of the cabinet and its committees and key state agencies with a view of having a whole-of-government approach to the covid-19 pandemic and that his administration had established close co-ordination with the County Governments for speedy and efficient action. This is the use of ethos.

The president, on behalf of the nation, also thanked the medical professionals and health workers for having done exemplary work which he said was responsible for the success in controlling the spread of the disease in the country. He also thanked all those offering essential and critical services. This show of gratitude on the part of the president reflects on his character and is, therefore, use of ethos. The president offered gratitude on behalf of the nation which he said was grateful and therefore suggests that they are a grateful people (ethos). Apparently, on the basis of this gratitude the president states that it is incumbent upon every Kenyan to support the efforts of these groups of people by limiting movement and meeting in large groups. The president applies reasoning (logos) asking Kenyans to reciprocate the hard work of those offering critical and essential services.

To facilitate the limitation of movement the president imposed a curfew from 7p.m to 5 p.m in the country and placed the management of Kenya Ferry Services under the National Police Service, the Coast Guard and the National Government Administrative Officers. These are directives.

The president further reminded Kenyans that social distancing is the new normal citing cases where the virus had spread due to failure to observe the laid down guidelines. He then called upon all to wash hands, frequently cover their nose and mouth when coughing and avoid close contact with those with cold or flu-like symptoms arguing that the measures will slow the spread and reduce the effects of the pandemic in Kenya - this is reasoning (logos).

The president also refers to history, generally, saying that the nation had overcome such challenges and insisted that defeating the pandemic required co-operation and collaboration, thereby, using logos.

From the above discussion it is clear that the leaders employed the three persuasive strategies and issued directives. Ethos were used most extensively followed by logos while pathos were the least used.

II) Use of Rhetorical Devices

In addition to the use of the above strategies, the leaders applied certain rhetorical devices in their addresses. By couching their messages in these devices, they were able to deliver messages that would appeal to their people to adhere to the Covid-19 protocols in their respective countries.

Some of the rhetorical techniques exhibited in the statements are discussed below.

(a) Asyndeton

An asyndeton is a sequence of words or similar expressions without the use of conjunctions where they could otherwise be used. The Kenyan President is quoted saying:

Our families, our schools, our way of life, the way we worship, our economy, our businesses, our workers, every single Kenyan stands threatened to this extent before.

In the above asyndeton, the President of Kenya makes the speech more dramatic and effective by speeding up the rhythm and pace because conjunctions are omitted. This rhetorical technique leaves the impression that the list mentioned is not complete – leaves the possibilities or even the likelihood that other spheres of life are also greatly affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The British Prime Minister stated:

I believe that as the prime minister of the United Kingdom – Scotland, England, Wales, Northern Ireland – there is a strong resolve to defeat this together.

Through the use of asyndeton, the British Premier creates a sense of emotional distress and sounds more solemn and respectful. Thereby, the Prime Minister builds up tension and speed as conjunctions are not used.

(b) Polysyndeton

Polysyndeton is a repetition of conjunctions in a series of coordinated words, phrases, or clauses. The President of Kenya stated:

Alongside them are all other Providers of Critical or Essential Services, including our security personnel; Administration Officers; our Electricity, Water, Sanitation, Telephony, Banking and Retail Sector Workers; and our farmers and food transporters. On behalf of a great nation, we appreciate all that they have done and are doing for Kenya.

In the extract above, there are a number of conjunctions (commas, semi-colons and the conjunction 'and'). Polysyndeton, in this case creates a powerful rhetorical effect – as one thought finishes, the next one is right behind it which can purposely overwhelm the audience.

In the same vein the Prime Minister of Britain had this to say:

That is why people will only be allowed to leave their home for the following limited purposes: Shopping for basic necessities as infrequently as possible; one form of exercise a day, for example, a run, walk, or cycle alone or with members of your household; any medical need provide care or to help a vulnerable person; and traveling to and from work, but only where this is absolutely necessary and cannot be done from home.

In the Premier's speech, polysyndeton slows down the pace of sentences. It adds the rhythm and cadence to speech. It has been used to add weight to words and enthusiasm. There is a feeling that the ideas are being build up.

(c) Antanagoge

Antanagoge involves responding to an allegation with a counter allegation. The President of Kenya stated:

While the majority of people who get it recover, most without showing severe symptoms, if it spreads to large numbers, it can lead to unprecedented pressure on our medical facilities which will lead to unprecedented loss of life.

In this extract, the Kenyan President uses an antanagoge of the prevailing situation – recovery of those suffering from Covid-19 and subsequent danger were it to spread enormously. In this circumstance, the President is using the positive aspect of the problem to counter-balance its negative aspects – in order to reduce the impact or significance of the positive effect, thereby, attempt to change the peoples' mind.

(d) Anaphora

Anaphora refers to repetition of a word or phrase in successive phrases. There are a number of occasions where it is evident in the speeches of the world leaders. For instance, the Kenyan head of state says:

Our victory will come from a whole-of-society approach to fighting this coronavirus. This includes our acts of solidarity with others, as individuals, as institutions and as a country.

Let me finish by reminding every Kenyan that we will get to the end of this challenging period. We will overcome this pandemic.

We will return to our work places and see our friends and family who we miss. We will return to the previous work of building our nation for our children.

The word 'our' and the phrase 'we will' have been repeated a number of times in the statement. In essence, anaphora has been used here to create a sense of inclusivity and unity in action among the audience. The urgency of action is reinforced.

The British Prime Minister used this technique in the following statement:

You should not be meeting your friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say no. You should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home. You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine, and you should do this as little as you can and use food delivery services where you can.

The phrase 'you should' has been used severally. Anaphora is used in this statement, again, to state and emphasize the rules for curbing the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. The statement creates power and highlights the importance of the message.

(e) Germinatio

Germinatio involves a repetition of a word or word group within a sentence. Some of the instances of germinatio are as follows:

President Trump of the United States of America says:

If we are vigilant and we reduce the chance of infection, which we will, we will significantly impede the transmission of the virus. The virus will not have a chance against us. No nation is more prepared or more resilient than the United States. We have the best economy, the most advanced healthcare, and

the most talented doctors, scientists, and researchers anywhere in the world. We are all in this together. We must put politics aside, stop the partisanship, and unify together as one nation and one family. As history has proven time and time again, Americans always rise to the challenge and overcome adversity. Our future remains brighter than anyone can imagine. Acting with compassion and love, we will heal the sick, care for those in need, help our fellow citizens, and emerge from this challenge stronger and more unified than ever before. God bless you and God bless America.

And the British Prime Minister had this to say:

.....these are the only reasons you should leave your home. You should not be meeting friends. If your friends ask you to meet, you should say no. you should not be meeting family members who do not live in your home. You should not be going shopping except for essentials like food and medicine, and you should do this as little as you can and use food delivery services where you can.

If you don't follow the rules, the police will have the powers to enforce them, including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

The possessive pronoun 'we', the modals 'will' and should are repeated in the two statements to indicate inclusivity and capability of the populace involvement in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic. In the same vein, power is created through the use of this rhetorical technique.

(f) Metaphor

A metaphor is an implied comparison that compares two things by stating one is the other. Examples of metaphors used in this work include:

The President of Kenya said:

Thank you all for being a beacon of hope and for being steadfast soldier in our Nation's war against the Covid-19 pandemic.

.....The key to returning to normal life is keeping infections rates falling and raising our testing rates.

With this viewpoint on the table, I was dealing with a right and a wrong: I was caught in between two rights. Those who want to open up are right and those opposed to opening up are also right. And this clash of two rights placed me on the "horn of a dilemma."

Over the time, we have demonstrated the resilience, courage, and ingenuity required to defeat this invisible, lethal enemy.

In the statement above, 'beacon of hope', 'steadfast soldier', 'key' and 'horn of a dilemma' are metaphors. The President refers to citizens as 'beacon of hope' for they hold the promise of hope. By referring to citizenry as 'steadfast soldier' he is applauding them for their firmness in fighting the pandemic while the 'key' refers to the most important factors to consider before opening up the economy. The 'horn of a dilemma' implies the challenging nature of the decision about whether escalate or de-escalate the measures.

The President of the United States of America stated:

Today, the World Health Organization officially announced that this is a global pandemic. We have been in frequent contact with our allies, and we are marshalling the full power of the federal government and the private sector to protect the American people. This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history.

The US President refers to the coronavirus as 'a foreign virus in modern history' thereby, assuring the citizenry the country's capable mobilization to deal with the foreign disease.

The British Premier said:

When this began, we hadn't seen this disease before, and we didn't fully understand its effects. With every day we are getting more and more data. We are shining the light of science on this invisible killer, and we will pick it up where it strikes, because our new system will be able in time to detect local flare ups – in your area – as well as giving us a national picture.

The UK Prime Minister refers coronavirus as the 'invisible killer'; showing its stealthy and lethal character and hence urgency for all and sundry to adhere to measures meant to curb its spread.

It is apparent that metaphors have been used by the three world leaders to reinforce a point –the deadly nature of the coronavirus. By using images, the speakers ultimately create interest and engage the audience.

(g) Metanoia

Metanoia is a rhetorical technique whereby there is a self-correction or qualification in speech or writing. It is also known as correction or the figure of afterthought. For instance, the British Premier when he says:

It is now almost two months since the people of this country began to put up with restrictions on their freedom – your freedom – of a kind that we have never seen before in peace or war.

And so I know – you know – that it would be madness now to throw away that achievement by allowing a second spike.

When the Prime Minister of Britain says ‘...their freedom – your freedom’ and ‘I know – you know’ there is metanoia. In the former, he belabours the point that he was directly talking about the freedom of the Britons in particular while in the latter case he directly self corrects by reminding that it is not him alone that knows the impending dangers of a second spike of the coronavirus pandemic but every citizen of Britain. Through metanoia the Premier frames his points and makes it easier for the audience to understand and create a sense of spontaneity (the audience thinking along with him).

(h) Enumeratio

Enumeratio is a rhetorical term for listing of detail – a type of amplification. In other words, enumeratio makes a point with details or evidence of proof.

The Kenyan president uses enumeration in the following statement:

Truth be told, if we had not taken the stringent measures we did in March 2020, the rate of infections would have peaked to 800,000 people by July 30th 2020. And if one infected person has potential to infect two people in 21 days, by the end of August 75,000 Kenyans would have died from this virus. But because of early interventions we took we have recorded only 2,600 infections and 83 deaths.

If this is the worst case of scenario, I wanted to know what other scenarios looked like. If we put all the necessary interventions and relaxed them by only 20%, what would this look like? According to the experts standing behind me, relaxing interventions by 20% would lead to 200,000 infections and 30,000 deaths by December 2020. Further, if we relax the intervention by 40%, the infections will peak in November 2020 with 300,000 infected and 40,000 deaths. And if we relax them by 60%, the pandemic will peak in October with 450,000 infections and 45,000 deaths.

The Kenyan President expounds the significance of ‘the stringent measures’ by breaking it down into parts and emphasizing the details. By this method, he forcefully emphasizes key points on the possible devastating effects of the coronavirus if drastic measures are not implemented in curbing the spread of the coronavirus.

5. Conclusion

The paper has presented an analysis of the speeches of selected leaders as they addressed Covid-19 related management. The findings indicate that logos, ethos and pathos were some of the most widely used strategies as well as rhetoric devices such as asyndeton, polysyndeton, antanagoge, anaphora, metaphor germination, metanoia, enumeration, and polysyndeton. The national leaders would also issue directives.

In the light of Language Expectancy Theory, the national leaders who occupy positions of power have the mandate to address their nations and give direction on matters of great importance. The speeches they make are formal and are meant to take stock of the situation and chart the way forward. The choice of strategies and devices used are culturally acceptable ways of making the otherwise hard message lodge easily. In addition, the leaders wield executive powers and hence couple the message with directives which the citizens are required to adhere to and which have legal force and law enforcers will enforce them.

From the findings in this paper, it is noteworthy that Aristotle's classical strategies remain relevant today and are widely applied. The heads of state appear to have used them as a means of exercising soft power as opposed to issuing orders and their accompanying penalties.

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