

**COVID-19 AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS: A
STUDY OF RHETORICAL DEVICES IN WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION'S COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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<p>COVID-19 pandemia on vaikuttanut globaalisti ihmisten jokapäiväiseen elämään. Laajamittaiset rajoitustoimet sekä uudenlaiset terveyteen liittyvät käytännöt ovat vaatineet päättäjiltä ja terveysviranomaisilta vakuuttavaa ja luotettavaa viestintää, sekä hyviä perusteluita. Retoriikalla ja retorilla keinoilla pyritään vaikuttamaan viestien vastaanottajiin. Retoriikan ja retoristen keinojen tarkoituksena on vaikuttaa kuulijoihin niin, että he tulevat vakuuttuneeksi viestin sisällöstä. Tämän kandidaatintutkielman tavoitteena oli selvittää Maailman Terveysjärjestön pääjohtaja Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesusuksen yleisimmin käyttämiä retorisia keinoja puheissa, jotka käsittelivät COVID-19 pandemiaa ja siihen liittyviä asioita. Lisäksi tutkielman tarkoituksena oli verrata mahdollisia syitä retoristen keinojen käytölle muihin aiheeseen liittyviin tutkimuksiin nojaten.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen aineisto koostui kymmenestä lehdistötilaisuudessa pidetystä puheesta, joille tehtiin laadullinen sisällönanalyysi. Teemaksi valikoitui Adhanom Ghebreyesusuksen käyttämät retoriset keinot. Puheista identifioitiin kaikki retoriset keinot ja ne kategorisoitiin, jonka avulla selvitettiin viisi yleisintä puheissa esiintynyttä retorista keinoa. Nämä viisi keinoa olivat luetteleminen, toistaminen, sanonta, tieteellinen tieto ja vertaus. Näille viidelle keinolle tehtiin retorinen analyysi, joka osoitti, että Adhanom Ghebreyesus käytti retorisia keinoja tehdäkseen viestinnästään vakuuttavampaa, helpommin muistettavaa sekä korostaakseen tärkeitä asioita viestinnässään. Tutkimuksen tulokset olivat samankaltaisia verrattaessa niitä esimerkiksi poliittisessa kontekstissa käytettyihin retorisiin keinoihin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tuloksia voitaisiin hyödyntää jatkossa esimerkiksi yksittäisten retoristen keinojen vaikuttavuuden tutkinnassa, jossa laaja testiryhmä arvioisi keinojen vaikuttavuutta. Tämän lisäksi tutkimuksessa esiintynyttä retoriikkaa ja retorisia keinoja voitaisiin verrata lehdistön julkaisemiin artikkeleihin liittyen COVID-19 pandemiaan ja selvittää, että käyttääkö lehdistö samaa retoriikkaa ja retorisia keinoja kuin Maailman Terveysjärjestö aiheeseen liittyen.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization is a global foundation which aims to coordinate the global response in health emergencies, such as COVID-19 (About WHO: 2022). COVID-19 is the disease that is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. According to WHO (Timeline: WHO's Covid-19 response: 2021), COVID-19 pandemic began in China, Wuhan, during the end of 2019, and the virus quickly spread all over the world the following months. As of March 11, 2020, COVID-19 has been characterized as a pandemic (Timeline: WHO's Covid-19 response: 2021). The pandemic has affected everyone everywhere; wide-scale lock downs, shutting down businesses and prohibiting people to live their life normally such as going to school and work have been clear indicators that the pandemic needs drastic actions. Governments, politicians, and leaders around the world have faced the situation where persuasion and good skills in rhetoric have been useful when making such drastic actions and policies. WHO's guidelines and policies are largely cited in global decision making and they are widely regarded as the "gold-standard" of health information. Therefore, this study focuses on WHO's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who has been a prominent figure and the main spokesperson in WHO's media briefings on COVID-19.

The roots of rhetoric trace back to Mesopotamian ancient cultures and their communication norms, discourse systems and literary traditions (Lipson & Binkley 2004: 1-12). Furthermore, Hallo (2004: 33) argues that Gilgamesh Epic, originating from Akkadian kingdom in Mesopotamia, includes the use of rhetorical devices such as repetition and apostrophe. However, the modern study of rhetoric dates to Ancient Greece, where the powerful usage of words and sentences was necessary in public speaking platforms such as law courts, assemblies, and other legal causes to affect the situation and persuade the listeners (Kennedy 2011: 3). The current situation with COVID-19 has been a similar one: national leaders and politicians have persuaded people to limit

their personal freedom and rights and to make sacrifices for the greater good during the time of health crisis. Many people have been accustomed to regular briefings from leaders and daily reportages by different media outlets on COVID-19 during the pandemic. Moreover, authorities and media outlets often cite WHO and its outcomes on the current situation with COVID-19. In the given context, it is logical to consider that the WHO, media, and authorities use rhetoric in their communications, since their intention is to communicate as efficiently as possible and to persuade people to adapt to the constantly changing situation with COVID-19.

There have been a small number of studies about rhetoric on COVID-19 but most of them have featured national leaders and politicians such as the UK prime minister and the previous US president. Moreover, these studies have concentrated mainly on rhetorical storylines on a general level and how various models of citizenship are built with the help of rhetoric. However, previous studies suggest that the metaphor of war is constantly used when referring to the battle against COVID-19. Therefore, the present study concentrates solely on the World Health Organization and its rhetoric in COVID-19 media briefings. The data in the present study was gathered from 10 different media briefing sessions from 2021. Subsequently, the data was analyzed with qualitative content analysis where rhetorical devices were identified, and a rhetorical analysis was done on the five most appearing rhetorical devices in the data. The main aim of the study was to find the most common rhetorical devices used by WHO's Director-General and analyze them in the context that they appeared, comparing the study results with other related studies.

In the beginning, necessary background information on rhetoric and rhetorical devices is presented. In addition, previous studies about rhetoric on COVID-19 are briefly reviewed and the WHO's role in health communication is described. The research questions and the purpose of the study are then discussed, and methods of data gathering and analysis are explained. Consequently, the results and analysis of this study are presented. Lastly, conclusions on the present study and possible further research topics based on the present study are discussed.

2 BACKGROUND

In the background section, relevant theories and concepts for the present study are examined and defined, and a small literature review on previous research related to COVID-19 and rhetoric is presented. Further, background information for The World Health Organization is presented and the reasons for the current study briefly examined.

2.1 Defining rhetoric

In this section, I briefly examine the history and origins of modern rhetoric. In addition, I define the concept of rhetoric and to what purposes it is used. Lastly, I present few views and ideas on rhetoric from scholars.

Kennedy (2011: 3) writes about the Greek origins of the word "rhetoric." The Greek word "rhêtorikê", which stands for the art of public speaking especially in law courts, assemblies, and other legal occasions, came into use in Greece during the fifth century B.C. According to Kennedy (2011: 3), the meaning of rhetoric, in the Athenian democracy for instance, can be recognized as a concept of the powerful usage of words, where speaking and receiving them can affect a situation. Further, the author writes that according to classical writers, rhetoric as a study has been found in the fifth century B.C. in the Greek democracies such as Syracuse and Athens since it was the first time then, that scholars pursued to describe the features of an effective speech and to instruct how to plan and give one.

According to Sellars (2006: 59), the modern study of rhetoric stems from Aristotle's book *Rhetoric*. Aristotle is a well-known Greek philosopher, who lived in 384 - 322 B.C.E (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). In his book *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines

rhetoric as the proficiency to recognize the techniques of persuasion in any given context or situation. Moreover, he notes that effective rhetoric, or persuasion, is carried through three different factors: ethos, pathos, and logos. Aristotle describes ethos as the speaker's character and its persuasiveness, and by pathos, he implies the ability to affect the audience's emotions. Logos is the apparent proof or argument that the speech delivers itself. Olmsted (2006: 15) writes that ethos, pathos, and logos are all integrated when determining the means of persuasion and rhetoric. Overall, one can say that the study of rhetoric handles with effective and persuasive human communications.

Scholars have interpreted Aristotle's Rhetoric in different ways. Jörke (2014: 69) argues that Aristotle's teachings in Rhetoric contradicts the rational decision making and some of the techniques are not far from manipulative techniques. Jörke (2014: 73) writes that the complex relationship between arguments, emotions and beliefs is central in Aristotle's Rhetoric. He goes on saying that Rhetoric presents knowledge about the human psyche and the components influencing it that can be used for achieving various political ends. However, Jörke (2014: 74) points out that Aristotle himself criticizes the exploitation of rhetorical skills for devious goals.

Meyer (2012: 250) examines the complex nature of rhetorical studies and if it can be viewed as a specific discipline. The author summarizes rhetoric as a "negotiation of the distance between individuals on a given question". He then explains that someone who speaks or writes has a question in mind, and this question needs to be answered with proper communication. According to Meyer (2012: 250), the use of rhetorical skills provides a solid answer to the question, which is then resolved and no more debatable. The author also points out that rhetoric is not only limited to politics or public speaking, but it is present in everyday life. Thus, one can recognize that rhetorical skills are helpful in various situations where persuasion is necessary.

2.2 Rhetorical devices and rhetorical analysis

In this section, I define the concept of rhetorical devices and give some reasons on why they are used. Furthermore, I explain the theoretical aspects of rhetorical analysis.

To understand the concept of rhetorical devices, it is essential to know that rhetoric pursues to influence and persuade people. Rhetorical devices are the tools, or means, which help to make the communication more persuasive and present one's information or evidence more solidly overall (McGuigan 2007: 12-14). The term "device"

means in this concept the technique that is used as a way of persuasion. According to Harris (2013: 2), the rationale for using rhetorical devices is following: "If your writing is to get through to him - or even to be read and considered at all - it must be interesting, clear, persuasive, and memorable, so that he will pay attention to, understand, believe, and remember the ideas it communicates." Thus, the term "rhetorical device" is a loose and broad term that realizes various techniques, which will be discussed more comprehensively later.

Willihnganz (2008) writes that rhetorical analysis delves into the strategies and techniques that are used to persuade the audience. The focus is on identifying these strategies and techniques and to find out how they work in each context. Willihnganz (2008) adds, that rhetorical analysis is not just about what is said, but rather finding out how a text or a speech persuades us of its position. Thus, Meyer's (2012: 250) view on rhetoric, that it intends to negotiate distance between individuals on any given question, is applicable when conducting a rhetorical analysis.

2.3 Previous research on COVID-19 and rhetoric

There have been a few studies about rhetoric in different COVID-19 related backgrounds. However, the focus in these studies have been in COVID-19 and political decision-making. Moreover, the construction of various citizenship models and effects on society with the aid of rhetoric are examined.

Isaacs & Priesz (2020) write about the metaphor of war, which is a rhetorical device, and how it is used during COVID-19 pandemic. Further, Isaacs & Priesz (2020: 6-7) note that leaders such as Boris Johnson and Donald Trump constantly refer the battle against COVID-19 to World War II. The authors assume that using the metaphor of war against COVID-19 encourages people and creates an "all-in-this-together" mentality. However, Isaacs & Priesz (2020: 7) consider the negative effects that the metaphor of war might induce such as fear among society. Furthermore, the authors consider that fear should be assuaged rather than incited during the pandemic. Generally, it is important to recognize the various effects that rhetorical devices might cause.

Andreouli & Brice (2021) have done a rhetorical analysis of the UK government discourse on citizenship during the first 9 months of COVID-19 pandemic. They analyzed 91 televised briefings and other relevant interviews that were given by the Prime Minister or his cabinet and scientific advisors. Moreover, the authors focused on how

citizenship and “good citizen” were constructed in the data and to what effect. Andreouli & Brice (2021: 4-7) report that they found five different models of good citizenship from the UK government rhetoric. These were the confined, the heroic, the sacrificial, the unfree and the responsible citizen. According to Andreouli & Brice (2021: 9), the unfree citizen, who stays at home and sacrifices their freedom, was the “good citizen” in the political rhetoric, for example. Moreover, Andreouli & Brice (2021: 5) show how the use of war metaphors are visible in political rhetoric considering COVID-19; people working in the healthcare are those of the “frontline” and doctors and nurses, who die during the pandemic, are the nation’s heroes. Thus, the metaphor of war is rather commonly used in this context as Isaacs & Priesz (2020) also mentioned.

Jayme Montiel et al. (2021: 5) have analyzed over 1000 publicly available speeches from 26 different countries given by national leaders. They identified five main rhetorical themes in the speeches being the enforcement of systemic interventions, upholding the global unity, encouraging communal cooperation, stoking national fervor, and assuring responsive governance. Furthermore, they compared the rhetorical storylines with the COVID-19 growth rates and examined whether there was a connection between a certain rhetorical storyline and COVID-19 growth rates in each country. According to Jayme Montiel et al. (2021: 15-18), one of the central findings was the two opposites in rhetoric; populism, or leading over, that focuses on the individual’s exceptional qualities in controlling the pandemic, and cosmopolitanism, or leading with, that aims to build an international identity devoted to responsibility and future activity. Furthermore, Jayme Montiel et al. (2021: 8-9), write that a common storyline among leaders in upholding global unity is the “war against the pandemic” and “sense of responsibility towards the international community”. All in all, according to the authors, the political leaders assemble their rhetoric to create a strong sense of unity during difficult times and they address people’s feelings by talking about incredible and tremendous struggles that people have gone through in controlling the pandemic.

The previous research shows that rhetoric and rhetorical devices are applied when talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among the people, who have power over decision-making. The metaphor of war emerges constantly in the previous research, for example. In general, politicians and people with power use rhetoric to encourage people in difficult times.

2.4 The World Health Organization and the present study

In this chapter, I present background information about the World Health Organization and its role as a global informant in health-related issues. Further, I will explain why the current study is important.

The World Health Organization (WHO), founded in 1948, is the United Nations agency that operates globally, and their aim is to promote health and provide accurate health information to everyone everywhere. Moreover, WHO oversees and coordinates the global response to health emergencies (About WHO 2022). WHO is currently implementing their thirteenth general program of work, that sets the guidelines and goals for their operations. In the program, WHO sets forth that “WHO will continue to develop evidence-based public health messaging, advocacy initiatives and campaigns aligned with the Organization’s strategic priorities” (WHO 2019). Thus, WHO is regarded as the “gold standard” of health information, and it plays a central role in public communications regarding health and well-being.

As of March 11, 2020, Covid-19 has been characterized as a pandemic by WHO (Timeline: WHO’s Covid-19 response). Merriam-Webster defines pandemic as “an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and typically affects a significant proportion of the population...”. Therefore, in the global crisis that affects the whole world, it is essential that a central operator such as WHO is effective in its communications. Moreover, a great deal of the health measures and actions that have been instructed by WHO and implemented by governments around the world due to the COVID-19 situation have changed people’s lives. Hence, people have been presumably persuaded and influenced by WHO and governments to comply with the new situation and to accept new rules and regulations.

In this thesis, I examine the ratio of the most common rhetorical devices that WHO uses in its communications. Further, I conduct a rhetorical analysis on the most common rhetorical devices that intends to analyze why these devices are used and what are the purposes for using these rhetorical devices in the given context, comparing them to other studies about rhetoric. This thesis focuses exclusively to the rhetorical devices and fills the gap in the previous research on COVID-19 related rhetoric since the previous research has focused mainly on political leaders and the socio-cultural effects of their rhetoric. Therefore, it is important to study WHO’s rhetoric and to find out whether it is effective or not.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter, the aim and the study questions concerning the present study are introduced. Moreover, the data and the methods of analysis are presented, and ethics concerning the present study is briefly discussed.

3.1 Aim of the study

The World Health Organization has a crucial role as being the global informant for health-related issues, and their views and outcomes are respected by media, politicians, and people around the world. There are some studies that have studied the rhetoric of national leaders and politicians on Covid-19. Moreover, the socio-cultural effects of their rhetoric have been at the center of the analysis in previous studies. Therefore, the main aim of the present study is to concentrate solely on rhetorical devices and their usage in WHO's communications since no previous studies have been conducted on WHO's rhetoric. Precisely, the focal point of this study is to examine the WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus' rhetoric, who has been a prominent figure in WHO's Covid-19 media briefings. The study was conducted with the following study questions in mind:

1. What are the most common rhetorical devices that the WHO's Director-General uses in his media briefings on Covid-19?
2. What are the possible purposes for using these rhetorical devices based on how they are used in other contexts, according to other related studies?

3.2 Data and methods of analysis

The data in the present study consists of 10 speeches given by WHO's Director-General on Covid-19. The speeches were given in WHO's weekly media briefings addressing the current Covid-19 situation. The data is openly available to everyone in WHO's website, and they provide transcripts and videos to every media briefing that they have held up to the current date. These speeches contain public health information meant to be disseminated across the world, and therefore, can be considered as an open-source data to be freely examined. Moreover, it is stated in WHO's website, that all their publications may be used for research and study purposes (WHO: Terms of use). The chosen media briefings were given in the late 2021, from October to December, compiling 10 hours of spoken material altogether, where Director-General's speeches round up for nearly 2 hours of spoken material. This amount of material was considered sufficient for the length and nature of the BA thesis. In addition, the material was found to contain enough of the key issues relevant to the study. All the data analyzed in the present study can be found in the World Health Organization's website.

The data in this study was analyzed by conducting a qualitative content analysis mixed with quantitative elements. Qualitative content analysis was chosen as a study method since it is suitable for material that requires interpretation to some extent, and only selected aspects of the material are analyzed (Schreier 2012: 8). Rhetorical devices were chosen as a coding frame, and by selecting rhetorical devices as coding frame, the material was structured in relation to the research questions in the present study (Schreier 2012: 61). First, the 10 speeches chosen for this study were examined meticulously for identifying all the rhetorical devices that they contained. Second, all rhetorical devices were sorted into subcategories such as *enumeratio*, *repetition* and *sententia* based on which device was involved and the quantity of each rhetorical device in the subcategories was counted. Harris' (2013) and McGuigan's (2007) handbooks on rhetorical devices were used in identifying various rhetorical devices, alongside Wikipedia page "Glossary of rhetorical terms". Further, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus used five different rhetorical devices more frequently compared to the other rhetorical devices in the data, and they were chosen for further rhetorical analysis and comparison with other related studies.

The content analysis was complemented by doing a rhetorical analysis on the five most common rhetorical devices that occurred in the speeches. Rhetorical analysis focuses to the techniques and strategies that are used to persuade or influence audience in the given setting (Willihnganz 2008). In the analysis, the focus was on analyzing the

reasons for using a certain rhetorical device and describing its purposefulness and effectiveness as a persuasive strategy in the given setting. Further, possible purposes and effects for using the certain rhetorical devices in the speeches in the given context were examined, comparing the results with other rhetorical studies in different contexts.

Rhetorical analysis can be done as a gradual process, where different phases of the analysis are conducted in a certain order to facilitate the whole procedure. Short (2007: 2) recommends that the one doing the analysis should first examine the data profoundly and figure out the main ideas, arguments, or thesis statement. Second, Short (2007: 2) provides questions that aim to facilitate the process of rhetorical analysis for a researcher; identifying elements such as the intended audience, the author's purpose whether it is to persuade, to inform or to criticize and the author's stylistic preferences being word choices, informal or formal speech, and the use of repetition for certain terms. According to Short (2007: 1), the main aim of the rhetorical analysis is to determine why the author chooses to write or speak in a certain way and these auxiliary questions help to figure out the essence of the material.

In this thesis, the focus of the analysis is on the rhetorical devices. Harris (2013) and McGuigan (2007) have classified over 60 different rhetorical devices. Further, they have provided an extensive analysis for each rhetorical device where they explain why it is used and what are the possible reader or listener responses to it. Moreover, they have produced sample cases where various rhetorical devices are used. Harris' (2013) and McGuigan's (2007) broad work on rhetorical devices help one to identify and analyze them.

4 ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the central findings from the data and a rhetorical analysis on the most common rhetorical devices featured in Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus' speeches are presented.

Generally, Adhanom Ghebreyesus used various rhetorical devices in his media briefing speeches. It became evident, that *enumeration*, which is a figure of amplification that is used to list causes, problems, or solutions, was the most common rhetorical device in Adhanom Ghebreyesus' speeches. Repetitive rhetorical devices such as *conduplicatio* and *anaphora* were used often too. In addition, he backed up his arguments with *evidence* and *data*, and used *sententia* to sum up his views. All in all, Adhanom Ghebreyesus used rhetorical devices 88 times combined in his ten media briefing speeches on COVID-19. The five most occurring rhetorical devices were selected for further rhetorical analysis in the study. A table containing all the rhetorical devices, their frequency and an example from the data is presented on the next page.

Table 1. All the rhetorical devices in the data

Rhetorical device	Fre- quency	Example from the data
Enumeration	24	We hear reports from many countries about lack of ICU beds, lack of supplies, overwhelmed health workers, and hospitals deferring other needed procedures.
Repetition in its various forms	20	All of us are sick of this pandemic. All of us want to spend time with friends and family. All of us want to get back to normal.
Sententia	10	This is the moment for leaders to banish the politics of populism and self-interest, which are derailing the COVID-19 response and threaten to undermine the response to the inevitable next disease X.
Evidence and data	8	The emergence of Omicron has prompted some countries to roll out booster programmes for their entire adult populations, even while we lack evidence for the effectiveness of boosters against this variant.
Simile	7	Finally, inequitable access to life-saving products is unfortunately not just a problem in COVID-19; it's a problem in many diseases, including diabetes.
Comparatio	5	There were an estimated 14 million more malaria cases and 47 thousand more malaria deaths in 2020 compared to 2019.
Metaphor	4	And we must do better at sharing the fruits of science.
Exemplum	4	Two years ago, as people gathered for New Year's Eve celebrations, a new global threat emerged. WHO's health emergency system immediately swung into action, establishing an Incident Management Support Team, to run the emergency response and requesting more information about the reports of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown origin in Wuhan, China. Although we had little information, we had enough experience and expertise to know that this looked serious.
Petitio	2	We are at a decisive moment, requiring decisive leadership to make the world safer. I have three requests for the G20 leaders. First, fully fund the ACT Accelerator. Second, support the creation of an overarching framework for global health security, through a legally binding treaty on pandemic preparedness and response. And third, support the creation of a Health Threats Financing Board, supported by a Financial Intermediary Fund, hosted by the World Bank.
Accumulatio	2	Countries with the highest vaccine coverage continue to stockpile more vaccines, while low-income countries continue to wait. Every day, there are six times more boosters administered globally than primary doses in low-income countries. This is a scandal that must stop now.
Amplification	2	While 2021 has been hard, I ask everyone to make a New Year's resolution to get behind the campaign to vaccinate 70% by the middle of 2022. We have 185 days to the finish line of achieving 70% by the start of July 2022. And the clock starts now!
Total number	88	

4.1 Enumeratio

Enumeratio is the rhetorical device that Adhanom Ghebreyesus used the most in his speeches. According to Harris (2013: 48), enumeratio is used for “detailing parts, causes, effects, or consequences to make a point more forcibly”. Typically, a speaker delivers a list of details about something, that is used systematically to develop the central idea. Further, the idea becomes more convincing when a speaker clarifies its many sides and aspects (McGuigan 2007: 169).

When doing the analysis, it became clear that Adhanom Ghebreyesus used enumeratio in all the analyzed speeches, and it was the most frequently used rhetorical device too. He used enumeratio to list details, causes, effects, and consequences to make his point stronger or to shed light on the many aspects of the spoken matter. Further, enumeratio was used for instructive and educative purposes, as can be seen in the excerpts. Excerpt 1 is taken from press conference in Geneva, December 8th, 2021, when Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus gave a speech on COVID-19 in a media briefing session. Excerpt 2 is similarly taken from a media briefing session on COVID-19 in Geneva, October 28th, 2021.

Excerpt 1

“All individuals can reduce their risk by keeping a safe distance from others, avoiding crowds, wearing a mask, cleaning your hands, and meeting outside if possible, or in a well-ventilated space indoors.”

In the Excerpt 1, Ghebreyesus talks about the risk of getting infected by COVID-19 and how to avoid it. He stresses the importance of not getting infected and provides a detailed list on how to reduce the risk. By giving detailed instructions and means for reducing the risk, Ghebreyesus amplifies his original idea in a practical way; instructions such as avoiding crowds, wearing a mask and good hand hygiene are simple and easy to follow instructions for a regular person. Further, Adhanom Ghebreyesus' straightforward approach in his instructions, despite being a professional health researcher, does not create extensive distance between him and the people listening or reading his speech. Therefore, Excerpt 1 demonstrates how the usage of enumeratio works as a persuasive strategy since it adds up to the original idea and makes it easy to follow and understand for the vast majority.

The intended audience in the Excerpt 1 is the news industry. In the given context, Adhanom Ghebreyesus' rhetoric does not contain scientific terms and difficult words

and his articulation is calm and clear. Thus, it makes it uncomplicated for the press to quote his speech and convey his message to the wider public. The use of enumeratio in the Excerpt arguably draws media attention too since Adhanom Ghebreyesus deliberately stresses the importance of not getting infected by giving clear instructions on how to avoid it.

Excerpt 2

“All countries, including high-income countries, are at continued high risk of being exposed to new variants – infecting those who are fully vaccinated, risking the effectiveness of the tools we have, and risking the re-introduction of more stringent public health measures.

The high transmissibility of the Delta variant has reinforced what we have been saying since we set up the ACT Accelerator: vaccines alone will not end the pandemic. We need all tools – vaccines, tests, treatments, PPE and public health measures – to fight COVID-19 and save lives and livelihoods now.”

In the Excerpt 2, Ghebreyesus talks about the consequences that high infection rates could cause and how vaccines alone cannot stop the pandemic. In the first part of the Excerpt, Ghebreyesus explains the consequences that the new virus variants can cause, and he brings forward matters such as getting infected despite being vaccinated, risking the existing tools against the pandemic and the re-introduction of strict restrictive measures. By listing these consequences, he emphasizes the fact that new virus variants can cause more infections which can then lead to more undesirable repercussions. The first part of the Excerpt prepares the way for Ghebreyesus' next sentence; he outlines the fact that vaccines alone will not stop the infections but utilizing all the possible tools being tests, treatments, personal protective equipment, and public health measures are all necessary in fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In both parts of the Excerpt, Ghebreyesus uses enumeratio to strengthen his original idea that is saving lives with all the possible tools. First part of the Excerpt arguably stirs a negative emotional response in listeners since things such as getting the infection and strict restrictive measures are all things to be avoided. The latter part then utilizes enumeratio to convince people to take the fight against COVID-19 seriously and take responsibility in applying all the tools in the situation. Excerpt 2 is similarly taken from a media briefing session, and the intended audience is the news industry. Taking the context into account, Ghebreyesus' rhetoric is clear, and it sends a strong message; the new variants pose a possible risk, and the situation must be managed attentively, and everyone can do their part by acting responsibly in the given situation.

Adhanom Ghebreyesus' use of enumeratio differs in some ways to the use of enumeratio in a political context. Quijano & Bulusan (2020) have examined the rhetoric of

three Philippine presidents and their use of rhetorical devices in political speeches. Quijano & Bulusan (2020: 45-46) report that enumeratio is the third most used rhetorical device among the three presidents, suggesting that the use of enumeratio as the most frequent device in the present study is not exceptional. Further, the researchers argue that enumeratio is used for presenting detailed visions of winning the war against poverty, for example. By contrast, the purpose of Adhanom Ghebreyesus is to use enumeration to highlight existing, important issues in the fight against the COVID-19. Thus, comparing the study results of Quijano & Bulusan (2020) with the present study, there is a slight difference in the use of enumeratio in a political context, where it is used more speculatively and with a purpose of describing possible scenarios in the future.

4.2 Repetition and anaphora

It became apparent, that Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus used various forms of repetition in the analyzed speeches and *anaphora* was the repetitive technique that he used the most among other repetitive rhetorical devices. Therefore, anaphora was chosen for further rhetorical analysis. Anaphora means the repetition of same word or words at the opening of successive clauses, sentences, or phrases (Harris 2013: 17). Moreover, anaphora is generally used to build a sense of climax that is built by repetition and advancing the speech from least to most important clause (McGuigan 2007: 217). On many occasions, Ghebreyesus used anaphora to emphasize his message and make it more memorable, since repeated words or phrases draw attention and people generally notice these kind of patterns (McGuigan 2007: 219). Both excerpts chosen for the analysis are from media briefing sessions that were held in 14th and 20th of December 2021.

Excerpt 1

“It’s not vaccines instead of masks. It’s not vaccines instead of distancing. It’s not vaccines instead of ventilation or hand hygiene. Do it all. Do it consistently. Do it well.”

In the Excerpt 1, Ghebreyesus uses anaphora twice in a row, repeating the phrase “It’s not vaccines instead of” and “Do it” both few times in consecutive sentences. This excerpt from the speech is arguably structured in a certain repetitive pattern as to make it memorable and emphasize the bottom line of the message; people cannot be lulled into a sense of security from the vaccine but must be able to take other precautions in their daily lives too. By repeating “It’s not vaccines instead of”, Ghebreyesus

wants the public to be aware that vaccines alone are not enough to prevent infections and that other precautions are also important. He then goes on saying “Do it” in three consecutive sentences, stressing the importance of what is said before. By using anaphora twice in a row, Ghebreyesus arguably draws a great deal of attention to his words and therefore the audience is likely to take his message more seriously and understand its importance.

The intended audience of the speech is the press. In the given context, the purpose of repetition is to draw the attention of the press to the important parts of the speech and thus ensure that the most important parts get wider coverage. All in all, Ghebreyesus’ usage of anaphora likely assures that his message is understood and remembered.

Excerpt 2

“I thank the health workers all over the world who continue to put themselves in harm’s way to serve and save others.

I thank the scientists, researchers and public health experts who continue to develop new tools against this virus, and to study it.

I thank you, our friends in the media, for the role you play in covering WHO, helping to get our messages out, and in holding us accountable.

We very much appreciate those of you who have worked to cover WHO and the pandemic fairly and accurately.

Finally, I thank WHO’s staff all over the world, who have continued to work in ways most people don’t see, to promote health, keep the world safe, and serve the vulnerable.

I thank you.”

In Excerpt 2, Ghebreyesus repeats the “I thank” phrase several times in consecutive sentences. In his sentences, Ghebreyesus distinguishes between different professional groups and praises them one by one for their achievements in defeating the pandemic. By repeating his thanks at the beginning of each sentence and addressing it one by one to the different groups, Ghebreyesus emphasizes his gratitude to everyone who has been involved in the work to defeat the pandemic. It is important to note, that Ghebreyesus notes also the media and their role in covering WHO’s outcomes on the pandemic since the intended audience is the news industry. In this Excerpt, the anaphora is possibly intended to address everyone individually and thus elicit a response on an emotional level. Moreover, in the last sentence, the thanks are addressed to "you", possibly addressing each individually, making the message feel personal to each recipient. As a result, it can be argued that the use of anaphora in this excerpt makes everyone feel important, regardless of their profession, in the battle against the

pandemic. In addition, showing the WHO's gratitude to all those working against the pandemic will probably motivate them to keep up the good work in the future.

A study conducted by Forraiová (2011) examines the usage of various forms of repetition in Barack Obama's political speeches. Forraiová (2011: 43-44) argues that Obama's usage of anaphora creates rhythm in his speeches, which makes it easier for the listeners to remember the speech and its key points. Further, repetition is used to draw the listeners' attention to new added information and each repetition increases the sense of emphasis in those words. Similarly, in a study by Taping et al. (2017: 230-231), which focuses on Hillary Clinton's rhetoric in political context, the researchers conclude that anaphora is used for reinforcing key points in her speeches. Thus, Adhanom Ghebreyesus' purposes for using anaphora are similar comparing to the results of the above-mentioned studies. Adhanom Ghebreyesus similarly creates rhythm in the Excerpt 1 with the aid of anaphora, making his speech more memorable and emphasizing important points in his speech. All things considered, the purpose of repetition is to draw listeners' attention to important parts of the speech and make it memorable.

4.3 Sententia

Sententia came up in the analyzed data eight times, being the third most used rhetorical device in Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus' speeches. McGuigan (2007: 107) describes that *sententia* is used to summarize previously spoken matters in the form of a generally valid truth. Moreover, he goes on saying that using *sententia* adds weight to one's argument, making it much harder for the audience to ignore it. Hence, Ghebreyesus used *sententia* for summarizing what he had said earlier in his speeches and making strong, undeniable arguments on the spoken matter. Excerpts 1 and 2 in the analysis are taken from media briefing sessions on COVID-19 on December 14th and 29th, 2021.

Excerpt 1

"It's really quite simple: the priority in every country, and globally, must be to protect the least protected, not the most protected."

In the Excerpt 1, Ghebreyesus sums up his thoughts on inequalities in the pandemic management. It is important to know, that before the statement in the Excerpt 1, he has talked a great deal about inequity in the vaccination campaign as the richer countries vaccinate their citizens for the third round whereas the poorer countries have not

been able to start a vaccination campaign at all, leaving risk groups and older people unprotected from the virus. Thus, Ghebreyesus' use of sententia in this Excerpt ties everything he has said earlier in few words of wisdom and the use of sententia reinforces his appeal for the equality in pandemic management. By offering a simple solution to a problem, Ghebreyesus leaves no room for debate in the matter, which is an adept use of rhetorical skills, as Meyer (2012: 250) suggests. Moreover, it can be assumed that in this situation the aim is to build a sense of togetherness and joint liability for defeating the pandemic. This can be said on the basis that Adhanom Ghebreyesus appeals to every country and then to global responsibility.

Excerpt 2

"Ending health inequity remains the key to ending the pandemic."

In the Excerpt 2, Ghebreyesus refers to the situation where countries around the world have failed to meet the target of 40% vaccination coverage worldwide by 2021 due to the low supply rates of vaccines to the low-income countries. He also notes that 40 percent coverage was doable making the failure a moral shame. In this Excerpt, Ghebreyesus underlines the significance of equality in the pandemic management. Moreover, he makes a powerful statement that the key to defeating the pandemic is there and it is within the grasp of world leaders. By condensing many ideas into a single sentence, Ghebreyesus makes a powerful appeal to the whole world and thus one can expect that the use of sententia can arguably provoke a reaction on an emotional level too. Considering the context in which the speech was held, the use of sententia is to make a statement that is intended to gain the widest possible circulation and attention and thus have an impact on pandemic management around the world.

The study by Taping et al. (2017: 236) suggests that sententia is used quite similarly in a political context. The researchers report that Hillary Clinton used sententia "for summing her amazing and encouraging concession speech". Furthermore, the use of sententia "adds credibility to the words and lends a truth to the argument". Adhanom Ghebreyesus likewise summarizes his thoughts in one wise statement and demonstrates adept use of rhetorical skills as he makes the matter undebatable (Meyer 2012: 250). To sum up, Adhanom Ghebreyesus' purposes for using sententia in his speeches is to say succinct, contextual wisdom that is difficult to deny, thus strengthening his argument.

4.4 Evidence and data

This section focuses on the use of evidence and data as a rhetorical device in Ghebreyesus' speeches. Evidence and data are commonly used to support one's argument and persuade the audience (Literary Devices 2022). Further, evidence can be used also to demonstrate that something is not correct. Excerpts for this section are taken from media briefing sessions on 14th and 20th December 2021.

Excerpt 1

"At the same time, evolving evidence suggests a small decline in the effectiveness of vaccines against severe disease and death, and a decline in preventing mild disease or infection."

In this excerpt, Ghebreyesus points to the evidence that suggests the vaccine is losing its effectiveness against COVID-19 in both severe and milder forms of the disease. In this context, by relying on evidence, Ghebreyesus reinforces his message that the vaccines alone do not end the fight against the pandemic. It is important to note how he makes this claim with a certain doubt, using reporting verb "suggest" instead of "prove" and talks about "a small decline" in vaccine effectiveness, therefore making sure that the effectiveness of the vaccine is not completely questioned. Moreover, Ghebreyesus brings evidence forth after first using anaphora in the same speech to reinforce the message that vaccines alone are not enough without other security measures, as was discussed earlier in the Repetition and anaphora section of this thesis. It can thus be argued that Ghebreyesus aims to convince the audience of his earlier statements about the importance of precautions by reiterating the case from an evidence-based perspective.

Excerpt 2

"There is now consistent evidence that Omicron is spreading significantly faster than the Delta variant. And it is more likely that people who have been vaccinated or have recovered from COVID-19 could be infected or reinfected."

In this excerpt, Adhanom Ghebreyesus refers to the rising COVID-19 cases in South Africa in late 2021 due to the new Omicron variant. He talks about consistent scientific evidence that the Omicron variant is more likely to infect vaccinated people and those with previous COVID-19 infections too. Comparing this excerpt to the Excerpt 1 in this section, his rhetoric is more persuasive, and he is more definite in his statements

regarding the transmissibility of COVID-19 to vaccinated people and people who have already had it. By using words such as “consistent” and “significantly”, Ghebreyesus indicates in his rhetoric that the evidence is reliable, and thus he leaves no room for counterarguments.

Overall, it can be argued that the use of evidence as a rhetorical device in these excerpts influences public opinion on the efficacy of the vaccine since Ghebreyesus makes his argument based on credible evidence. Consequently, it can be assumed, that the desired effect is not to increase fear among people, but to raise awareness in times of crisis and to be realistic in the face of difficult issues.

Hoque et al. (2022) have delved into the rhetoric of various Australian universities. The researchers focused on universities' communication and rhetoric in the context of the difficult economic situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in which many universities were left without funding and cuts were inevitable. Hoque et al. (2022: 182) write that “Where there existed facts and myths about the situation, and the university staff may not fully understand the financial figures, we found that logos rhetoric that was fact-based can also be effective, especially when accompanied by a calm attitude and transparency from the leaders”. In addition, they found that presenting the data transparently, without fear-inducing messages, allowed recipients to draw their own conclusions in peace, without their emotions being directed in a particular direction. Thus, Hoque et al. (2022: 182) argue, that this led to a much calmer response from the recipients. Comparing Hoque’s et al. (2022) study results to the present study, Adhanom Ghebreyesus similarly explains the results shown by the data in a transparent way, but without stirring up unnecessary fear with emotionally appealing word choices. Hence, it can be argued that using data as a rhetorical device can increase trust in ambiguous situations, even if the conveyed message is unpleasant.

4.5 Simile

The last section of the analysis deals with the use of simile as a rhetorical device. The analysis showed that Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus used simile in unconventional ways in his speeches since he did not use the typical “x is like y comparison”. Normally, simile compares two different things that resemble each other in some way (Harris 2013: 30). However, comparison can be done in many ways if the point of comparison is clearly stated. Therefore, possible ways include comparing things as being similar or saying that something is more than something else (Harris 2013: 31). In

addition, simile forms strong imagery, which adds details to the original object (McGuigan 2007: 57). The excerpts for the analysis are taken from press conferences held on 24 November and 22 December in 2021.

Excerpt 1

“The world has treaties to manage other threats; surely countries can agree on the need for a binding pact on the threat of pandemics.”

In the Excerpt 1, Ghebreyesus refers to the situation where each country is dealing with the pandemic in a slightly different way, without a commonly agreed policy. It is important to know that he points out earlier in the briefing that the world needs an “iron-clad common agreement” for preparing and dealing with future pandemics to avoid the ongoing chaos that the pandemic causes. After this statement, he uses a simile to strengthen the argument, comparing a possible global pandemic agreement with other common global agreements on threatening situations. By making the comparison, he illustrates how global agreements already exist, making a possible pandemic treaty just one among the others. Therefore, it can be argued that the use of simile in this situation persuades people of the necessity of the potential pandemic treaty, presenting it as a somewhat familiar, pre-existing thing. In addition to this, Ghebreyesus uses persuasive words in his rhetoric such as "surely" and "can agree" which in this context lead the audience to the simile itself, thus amplifying its impact.

Excerpt 2

“2021 was a year in which we lost 3.5 million people to COVID-19, more deaths than from HIV, malaria and tuberculosis combined in 2020.”

Excerpt 2 demonstrates how the usage of simile can create a powerful and intense description of the situation. In this excerpt, Ghebreyesus compares COVID-19 with other diseases that are commonly considered dangerous, such as HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. In addition, the comparison is used to further demonstrate how COVID-19 is more dangerous than the diseases mentioned above, when comparing the death rates between COVID-19 and the other diseases. It can be argued that by comparing COVID-19 mortality rates to other diseases generally considered dangerous, Ghebreyesus sets up a strong imagery of the fatalness of COVID-19. The context in which this simile is used relates to the unequal distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines and excess deaths resulting from this cause. Thus, it can be assumed that by making a

powerful simile, which arguably evokes strong emotions, Ghebreyesus wants to strongly emphasize the inequity in global healthcare he is hoping to change.

A study by Nurlintha (2020: 61-62) shows how Kofi Annan uses simile likewise compared to Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, thus making a direct comparison “by showing the similarities between two different things”. Moreover, the researcher argues that the purpose for using simile is to describe a possible development that happens in the same way as things that have happened in the past. Therefore, one can argue that Adhanom Ghebreyesus uses simile in the Excerpt 1 for similar purposes as Kofi Annan, comparing a possible global agreement with existing agreements that are already put into practice. In general, it can be assumed that simile is used in an identical way in contexts outside COVID-19.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to find out the most common rhetorical devices that appeared in the speeches of the WHO Director General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on COVID-19. In addition, this study included an analysis on the five most frequent rhetorical devices featured in the speeches. The aim of the analysis was to identify the purposes for using certain rhetorical devices, comparing them with other related studies.

The results of the study showed that Ghebreyesus used various rhetorical devices in the analyzed speeches and five different rhetorical devices came up more often than the others. These five were enumeratio, repetitio, sententia, evidence and simile. Based on the analysis, it can be said that Ghebreyesus used these rhetorical devices mainly to emphasize the main points in his speeches. His rhetoric highlighted the inequalities in the treatment of the pandemic and the importance of applying other protective measures among vaccines. The theme of inequality emerged at several points in the analysis, and Adhanom Ghebreyesus emphasized it with the aid of sententia and simile, for example. In addition, it can be argued that the use of rhetorical devices increased the persuasiveness of the speeches and helped them to achieve their purpose, whether it was to spread general information or to make a plea for something. However, this observation should still be confirmed by testing the impact of rhetorical devices, that appeared in the data, on a large target group.

The study also showed that Adhanom Ghebreyesus used rhetorical devices principally in a similar way comparing to the political context. However, there were some minor differences, such as the case with enumeratio; Adhanom Ghebreyesus used it to describe and emphasize existing things, while in the political context it was used to

describe visions and speculative issues. However, this study filled the research gap in the study of rhetoric in contexts related to COVID-19. According to the researcher's knowledge, no previous studies on the WHO's rhetoric in different contexts have been conducted before this study and therefore the findings of the present study can be considered significant.

Previous research on rhetoric on COVID-19 showed that people in leadership positions used rhetoric to create a sense of togetherness during the beginning of the pandemic. Furthermore, the metaphor of war emerged frequently in previous studies, and it was used to refer to the battle against COVID-19 in UK government rhetoric, for example. However, the metaphor of war did not emerge in the data of the present study; metaphor as a rhetorical device was used differently in the WHO's communications since Adhanom Ghebreyesus spoke metaphorically on the treatments against COVID-19 as "fruits of science" and healthcare workers as "backbone of the health system".

Identifying the purposes of rhetorical devices was based on theory related to rhetorical analysis and the intended uses of different rhetorical devices and thus, this study provided limited information on the effectiveness of different rhetorical devices in the contexts they appeared. In addition, the data represented only one of WHO's leading figures and consisted of ten different speeches. In the future, the results of this study could be used, for example, to present the samples found in the data to a large target group to evaluate their effectiveness and efficiency. Another interesting area of research would be to compare the WHO's rhetoric with that of the news industry. The rhetorical devices featured in this study could be compared, for example, with news published at the same time of the media briefings and see if they transfer directly to news publications.

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