

**Towards modelling the linguistic execution
of communicative goals of political persuasion in
selected presidential Covid-19 related speeches**

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TOWARDS MODELLING

the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion in selected presidential Covid-19 related speeches

LUTENDO NENDAUNI
PhD Thesis

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PREFACE

While the pursuit of a PhD traditionally aligns with the pursuit of career advancement, my motivations extend far beyond the sphere of professional progression. My objective was to craft a thesis that not only contributes to the field but also blends with the knowledge I have accumulated over the years. With a background in teaching modules such as Discourse analysis, Political communication and Journalism, my curiosity in the strategic application of language has been constant throughout my academic career. As I embarked on this doctoral journey, I aimed to encapsulate the multifaceted dimensions of my teaching repertoire.

The concept of persuasion, particularly in its strategic application, has consistently stood out as a focal point in both my teaching and research activities. Its real-world applicability intrigued me, and I aspired to elevate this exploration to a doctoral level. My aspiration was to forge a thesis that impeccably melds with the intricate arrays of reality while radiating profound significance and effecting tangible change in the field of linguistics.

Amidst the myriad challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, I found myself drawn to the compelling persuasive messages woven in presidential speeches. The pandemic's toll has been unparalleled, marked by a staggering loss of lives, grieving families, overwhelmed healthcare systems, and the haunting specters of lockdowns, isolation, and distancing. These measures, while crucial for public health, led to economic downturns, widespread unemployment, and the shuttering of countless businesses.

Central to this web of adversity stood politicians, particularly presidents, who were entrusted with making critical decisions that encompassed lockdowns, travel restrictions, testing and vaccination campaigns, and resource allocation. Their decisions resonated across society, shaping the path of the virus, determining the strength of healthcare infrastructure, and overseeing the management of the pandemic. What intrigued me the most was the fact that these presidents were compelled to strategically persuade the public to follow the strict guidelines enforced by the pandemic.

With unwavering determination, I resolved to direct my thesis toward this compelling arena. This decision marked the genesis of a complex yet immensely rewarding expedition for a *Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics and Literary Theory* at the North-West University. As I embarked on this intellectual journey, I was driven by a fervent desire to unravel the intricacies of how presidents have harnessed the power of persuasion to model their citizens' behaviours and 'others' to navigate the unprecedented challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. My

aim, in this thesis, is to not only contribute to academic discourse but to also offer insights that could inform politicians' communication techniques in future crises management and facilitate better public compliance with health protocols.

With immense pride and gratitude, I celebrate the submission of my doctoral thesis at the youthful age of 27, a milestone that reflects not only my academic dedication but also the resilience and determination forged in the crucible of my rural upbringing. This accomplishment serves as a testament to the power of perseverance and the transformative potential of education, inspiring not only my own journey but also the countless others hailing from similar backgrounds.

I cannot thank every person individually for their help with this thesis, but please know that your contribution, no matter how small, means a lot to me. I am deeply indebted and overflowing with gratitude to the following individuals and institutions for supporting me on this remarkable journey:

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Fascinatingly, while searching for a university to pursue my PhD, I chanced upon your online profile on the NWU website. Choosing to reach out via email, your prompt and affirmative response set the wheels in motion for this PhD journey. Nearly three years have passed since, and despite never meeting in person, your virtual presence has been truly remarkable.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for embracing and nurturing my research idea until it became flawless. What I hold most dear is the timely and constructive feedback you consistently provided, along with your words of encouragement. Your ethic of caring for your students is praiseworthy, you really made my PhD journey enriching. If I were to embark on this journey anew, there is no doubt in my mind that I would choose you as my promoter once more, for your support has been nothing short of extraordinary. *Miljoen keer dankie.*

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The journey towards obtaining this PhD would not have been possible without your pivotal introduction to the art of persuasion and compliance-gaining messages during my Honours level at the University of Venda. In fact, I have cited your groundbreaking work on persuasion in this thesis. Continue enjoying your well-deserved retirement and take pride in knowing that I am one of your success stories. *Mudzimu a dzulele u vha shudufhadza, Ndaa!!*

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I wish to express my appreciation to you for training me in the use of the ATLAS.ti software. Your humility and dedication have not gone unnoticed, and I am genuinely thankful for your efforts. Showers of blessings and grace to you and your family. *Ndatenda!!*

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I would like to express my gratitude for your consistently positive and prompt responses whenever I request graphics. Thank you for taking time out of your busy media schedule to design a prelude for this thesis. *Ngiyabonga mngane wami, sengathi unkulunkulu akubusise.*

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Humility precedes learning.

(Maxime Lagacé)

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic triggered a significant surge in speeches from political leaders, aimed at persuading the public to adhere to strict social distancing measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. This study was designed to comprehensively model the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion in selected presidential Covid-19 related speeches. In this study, persuasion was analysed from communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic perspectives. The study aimed to shed light on how language was strategically employed during the pandemic to influence public behaviours and perspectives concerning Covid-19 as well as compliance with the recommended protocols. The primary focus of this study centred on the speeches delivered by three presidents: Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, Donald Trump of the United States of America, and Cyril Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of persuasion, the study employed theory triangulation, incorporating Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1965) as the central framework operationalised through the Goals-Plans-Actions theory (Dillard, 1989), Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), and Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (Maritz, 2009). Theory triangulation enabled a thorough comprehension of the communicative goals, elements of persuasion, and strategies of persuasion used by the three presidents in their Covid-19 related speeches. In addition, it highlighted that persuasion is multi-faceted. Therefore, exploring it accordingly from an interdisciplinary theoretical framework brings to the fore a tapestry of interlinked components; one weave reinforcing the other. Modelling this intricate interplay of goals, elements and strategies set this thesis apart from other studies conducted on persuasion, Covid-19 related communication and presidential speech styles.

The study's methodology embraced an interpretivist qualitative paradigm, amalgamating theory triangulation and discourse-textual analysis. Data for the study was drawn from purposively sampled fifteen (15) speeches, to map the linguistic traits of persuasion while striving for data saturation through an inductive logical approach. The data analysis process involved a thorough two-staged examination of the sampled speeches, employing a manual close-reading and ATLAS.ti software analysis techniques. During the analysis, a provisional model specifically designed for this study served as a comprehensive checklist for identifying communicative goals, elements of persuasion, and strategies of persuasion. This model was developed based on an extensive review of the literature pertaining to persuasion in the context of political discourse. Stringent ethical considerations were accurately addressed, including requisite approvals from pertinent committees.

The central finding of the study spotlights the prevalence of primary and secondary communicative goals within presidential Covid-19 speeches, accentuating calculated endeavours to achieve persuasive outcomes. These goals were strategically deployed to sway public attitudes and conduct towards Covid-19, thereby manifesting a nuanced interplay between primary and secondary goals, and their consequential impact on the elements and strategies of persuasion. This implies that primary goals guide cognitive processes in encoding and retrieval, while secondary goals set boundaries for linguistic and communicative choices to initiate and maintain social action.

Subsequent in-depth analyses revealed a comprehensive spectrum of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of persuasion that were adroitly harnessed by the three presidents to mold public perceptions and attitudes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Also, communicative strategies of persuasion emerged as particularly conspicuous, succeeded by pragmatic and linguistic strategies of persuasion. Ultimately, the study culminated in the reconstruction of the provisional model, resulting in the development of a comprehensive model that guides the linguistic execution of communicative goals in the context of political persuasion.

The resultant comprehensive model integrates six intricate categories: *message, elements of persuasion, strategies of persuasion, communicative goals, goal influence factors*, and the *theoretical properties of persuasion*. This model augments the comprehension of how linguistic constituents were wielded in the domain of political persuasion against the backdrop of Covid-19-related presidential speeches. The study underscores the perpetual significance of the message as the central conduit for persuasion, encompassing linguistic tools to mold attitudes, convictions, and behaviours of the targeted audience.

While acknowledging its groundbreaking contributions, the resultant comprehensive model is acknowledged to be context-bound, bearing limitations concerning its extensibility to disparate political contexts and communicators. The study advocates adopting longitudinal approaches, comparative analyses, and quantitative methodologies to broaden the model's scope and applicability. In its entirety, this thesis has advanced the boundaries of knowledge in linguistics, political communication, and crisis management, with practical implications for public health communication and governance during pandemics.

Key terms: *Persuasion; Modelling; Covid-19; Discourse; Political discourses; Presidential speeches; Goals; Plans; Discourse Analysis; Meaning & Linguistic intention.*

DEDICATION

For my late mother and grandmother,

***Mmbengeni Thelma Netshiluvhi
Mukhatshelwa Shonisani Nendauni***

Despite your restrained education, and the obstacles we encountered, you recognised the significance of learning, and for this, I am genuinely appreciative. You imbued in me qualities of benevolence, modesty, self-assurance, and resilience. Your guidance propels me to exceed boundaries and establish a lasting impact. Continue to rest in peace. This doctoral thesis also stands as a homage to those who preceded me, illuminating my path, and propelling me towards a future of excellence. I am the son of the soil, a descendant of esteemed dynasties who trod this soil before me, and their essence and attributes now course through my being.

Like branches of trees, our lives may grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS INDEX

ANC	African National Congress
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAQDAS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DS	Discourse segment
G20	Group of Twenty
GPA	Goals-Plans-Actions theory
LPIM	Linguistic Propaganda Identification model
NWU	North-West University
PCR	President Cyril Ramaphosa
PDTs	President Donald Trump's speeches
PDT	President Donald Trump
PXJ	President Xi Jinping
PCRS	President Cyril Ramaphosa's speeches
PXJS	President Xi Jinping's speeches
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SARS-CoV-2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
SAT	Speech Act theory
SFL/G	Systemic Functional Linguistic/Grammar
UG	Universal Grammar
UPSET	Understanding and Processing Language in Complex Settings
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation

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B	ATLAS.ti data analysis project bundle	https://drive.google.com/file/d/14EevMbdEqbYEdYSTafkFULjCnSWFixbA/view?usp=sharing
C	Sampled presidential speeches	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DJa-6mqjgk0YVWxWJxBWbKjaMAhIESg/view?usp=sharing
D	UPSET CAD study approval	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y8EJuXN1bmLIV2jH1CslzLfuEpiHfxgg/view?usp=sharing
E	ECLM Ethics approval	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IDPO_AdedMe5cykB0BmeHXIoE8OYYylU/view?usp=sharing
F	Turnitin similarity index	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PCCnZ1YFmskj1k8NrQ5MVini-LIC3fTx/view?usp=sharing

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the latter months of 2019, a previously unknown virus attributed to the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) emerged in Wuhan, China, sparking global interest and concern. The virus, subsequently identified as Covid-19, exhibited rapid transmission capabilities, and caused severe respiratory illnesses (Guardian, 2020). It swiftly disseminated to numerous countries worldwide, prompting the World Health Organisation (WHO) to declare it a global pandemic on the 8th of January 2020, instigating an unparalleled global crisis (de Coning, 2020:74). In response, nations across the globe implemented various measures, including border closures, travel restrictions, and widespread lockdowns, aimed at curbing the spread of the virus.

Divergent approaches were observed among political leaders, particularly presidents, in their response to the pandemic. Some presidents promptly initiated strict measures to safeguard their populations, while others encountered political and public resistance, leading to delays in implementing necessary restrictions and exacerbating challenges (Akinola & Tella, 2022:601). For example, in the United States of America (USA), Lawrence, James and Lindsay (2020:1547) report that President Donald Trump initially underestimated the gravity of the virus, resulting in a sluggish response and public confusion. Eventually, however, he declared a national emergency and called for adherence to health guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP).

Conversely, certain countries such as South Korea and New Zealand demonstrated proactive and aggressive action, with the implementation of extensive testing, contact tracing and isolation measures (WHO, 2022:18). Transparent communication from these countries' presidents fostered public trust and compliance with imposed restrictions. In contrast, Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro faced criticism for downplaying the severity of the virus and opposing lockdown measures, leading to public discontent and demands for improved leadership and greater public health protection efforts (Marsh, 2020:34).

According to Zhang, Luo and Zhu (2021:190), China as the origin of the outbreak, took stringent containment measures early, including widespread lockdowns and strict control measures. President Xi Jinping emphasised national unity and compliance with restrictions as pivotal in controlling the virus's spread. Although concerns were raised regarding transparency during the initial stages, China managed to bring the situation under control through rigorous measures (Fabricius, 2020:113).

The Covid-19 pandemic has underscored the critical significance of effective leadership, proactive decision-making, and transparent communication in managing global health crises (Blumczynski and Wilson, 2023). As countries grappled with unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, their approaches to tackling this crisis varied, with some nations demonstrating adaptability and resilience, while others encountered hurdles arising from political and public reservations. An understanding and examination of these diverse responses can yield valuable insights for enhancing preparedness and response efforts for future health emergencies.

To date, Covid-19 has emerged as a distinct area of discourse, attracting scholarly attention for linguistic investigation (Yule, 2022:188). From a multidimensional perspective, there are several scholars such as Anyanwu and Abana (2020), Rudwick, Sijadu and Turner (2021), and Hunt (2021), who have explored Covid-19 discourses from a persuasion perspective. Further, motivated by the need for a cross-cultural comparison of presidential speeches that have revolved around the Covid-19 pandemic and an extension of existing studies, this calls for undertaking linguistic research to shed light on this pertinent and less explored area of inquiry.

This study's researcher has observed that throughout the pandemic, presidents all over the world employed various persuasive approaches to encourage compliance with restrictions among their citizens. While some presidents effectively communicated the gravity of the situation, others faced criticism for their handling of the crisis (Lawrence, James and Lindsay, 2020:1548). Also, governments sought to influence public opinion and gain widespread acceptance for their policies by employing persuasive strategies essential to the successful management of the Covid-19 pandemic. They disseminated timely and accurate information on Covid-19 (for example, symptoms, medical treatment, protective and preventive measures), advocating a range of safety protocols and urging the public to adhere to them to curb the spread of the virus and mitigate its adverse impacts, particularly on the economy and public health (Tan, Woods, Azman, Abdullah, Hashim, Rahim, Idrus, Said, Lew & Kosem, 2020:191).

According to Mukherjee (2020:343), governments enhanced their communication efforts by utilising a variety of persuasive justifications to establish the veracity of their claims, employing diverse techniques to sway public opinion and behaviour in their favour. It is important to note that messages conveyed by presidents possess “political authority” and wield a substantial influence on public perceptions, potentially fostering voluntary compliance with their directives. In this regard, political discourse, often employing figurative language and linguistic strategies, aims to persuade the public and shape their perspectives on specific situations or events. Thus, noticeable in Covid-19 discourse.

The Covid-19 pandemic has engendered a plethora of speeches from political leaders aimed at persuading the public to comply with strict social distancing measures, which arguably may appear unreasonable and potentially unconstitutional. Subsequently, these Covid-19 related speeches present valuable data to investigate the political and linguistic dynamics of persuasion i.e., how language was utilised to achieve political persuasion and elicit compliance from the populace. Therefore, this study analytically explores persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches by examining communicative and linguistic elements of persuasion that shape meanings in contexts. The researcher delineates persuasion in this specific context from communicative (goals pursuit), linguistic (evident grammatical conventions), and pragmatic (meaning in context) perspectives, to elucidate how language was deployed during the pandemic to model public behaviour and adherence to lockdown restrictions.

According to Dillard and Marshall (2003:502), persuasion permeates the domain of politics. A seminal work on political persuasion by Burnell and Reeve (1984) posits that political persuasion can be distinguished from other, less acceptable forms of influence (e.g., manipulation, coercion, indoctrination) through the condition of “good faith”, and when applied judiciously, it can serve as a powerful tool in the political arena. This study considers communicative, linguistic and pragmatic aspects of persuasion, recognising that the strategic choice of words can significantly impact linguistic persuasion within the political context. Subsequently, the study amalgamates communicative and linguistic approaches to explicate political persuasion, thereby seeking novel insights into how political leaders influence the public in times of health crisis. The study explores persuasion in the Covid-19 related speeches of selected presidents, namely: Cyril Ramaphosa (RSA), Donald Trump (USA), and Xi Jinping (China).

It is important to note that the study and examination of persuasion have long been subjects of scholarly interest, with extensive research exploring its multifarious forms. For example,

Rashidi and Souzandehfar (2010) analyse the political speeches of the US presidential primaries in 2008, concentrating on the candidates from the major American political parties (Republican and Democratic) and their stance on the continuation of the war in Iraq. Similarly, Biria and Mohammadi (2012) investigate George Bush's second term in 2005 and Barack Obama's inaugural speech in 2009, employing Van Dijk's (2004) CDA model to comprehend persuasive elements. Cirugeda and Ruiz (2013) shed light on the use of rhetoric and figurative language as electoral persuasion in President Obama's addresses to the Latino community. Alayo (2016) delves into the self-representation of Hillary Clinton in public discourse, using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. Additionally, Darweesh and Abdullah (2016:87) explore the structural, lexical, and rhetorical persuasive strategies employed by Donald Trump, particularly in negatively representing and underestimating women. Lastly, Jensen, Jakobsen and Pichler (2016) analyse Clinton's campaign discourse, investigating gender references, persuasive techniques, and aspects of social inclusion and exclusion using CDA and corpus linguistics.

Despite the extensive body of research on political persuasion (e.g., Moir, 2013) and the ongoing investigations into political speeches related to Covid-19 (e.g., Dada, Ashworth, Bewa & Dhatt, 2021), it is evident that most studies tend to adopt a one-sided theoretical perspective, leading to a disjuncture in terms of the findings. Hence, there is a lack of a comprehensive model that connects communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic aspects (elements & strategies) of persuasion to the nature of political discourse in this context. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by proposing a comprehensive model that bridges the gap between linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic elements and strategies, as well as the intricacies of political discourse within the context of Covid-19 related speeches.

Accordingly, the underlying goal of this study is to model the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches. This is feasible through a detailed analysis of communicative goals, elements of persuasion and strategies of persuasion (communicative, linguistic & pragmatic) in the Covid-19 related speeches of Cyril Ramaphosa, Donald Trump, and Xi Jinping. This study adopts a goal-oriented approach to investigate political messages (which for the purpose of this study, are termed persuasive discourse segments) embroiled in presidential speeches pertaining to the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Considering the above, the study adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework (Halliday, 1965), considering linguistic elements as grammatical conventions and

communicative elements as tactics in the act of persuasion. As such, this study departs from the assumption that “[t]he work of language is *always* and *only* done in society...hence the importance of asking where, why, and how people use language and what is indicated from this fact” (Hasan, 2005:56, emphasis in original). According to Lukin (2016:144), “Hasan has shown...that unravelling the web of interconnections between language and context is ‘a formidable endeavour’, which entails relating language to the ‘ceaseless flux of human life and activity’” (Lukin, quoting Spencer, 1978: v-vi.). Also, Lakoff (2017) consistently demonstrates that ‘context counts’ as echoed by the title of the publication.

In the context of this study, the aim is to unravel the interconnected elements that make up persuasion. The SFL metafunctions of field, mode and tenor are comparable in the instance of this study: the field is political discourse aiming to encourage compliance amidst a global pandemic; the mode is spoken public addresses, broadcast via media platforms; the tenor is a male president speaking to the citizens of the country he governs. Moreover, the study examines and compares the persuasive language used by the three presidents from African, Western, and Eastern regions to provide a cross-border insights and contribute to the existing literature on the topic.

However, this study considers the complex dimension of field to better comprehend how the selected presidents achieve the goal of persuading their targets (audience) to radically change their behaviours in response to the Covid-19 threat. As such, this study is focused on the form of the language employed to achieve the function of persuasion. Consequently, it employs ‘theory triangulation’ to explore the field with reference to the form of the language used to communicate the intention (ordering obedience) to achieve the final goal (i.e., compliance with strict regulations to curb the spread of the virus).

Accordingly, three theoretical tools are integrated, viz. the Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (LPIM) by Maritz (2019) developed from an SFL perspective and focusing on the linguistic forms; the Speech Act Theory (SAT) by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) to describe how the illocutionary forces are expressed; and the Goals-Plans-Actions (GPA) theory by Dilliard (1989), which stems from a communicative perspective and proposes that speakers purposively set goals, form plans to achieve them and then take specific actions to realise the plans. For instance, if the goal is verbal persuasion, the plan involves employing certain pragmatic strategies which are activated through linguistic forms. This, in turn, establishes a network among these three theoretical tools to effectively activate persuasion.

To state plainly, Maritz's LPIM as a product of SFL is set to analyse how language is systematically used in presidential speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a focus on propaganda as a form of persuasion. LPIM reveals linguistic elements of propaganda, supporting the study's goals. Additionally, the incorporation of SAT is motivated by its focus which emphasises the performative nature of language, and its examination of meaning and intention behind language use. On the other hand, GPA is integrated to address the strategic and goal-driven nature of communication. Despite GPA's insights into communicative goals, it does not fully account for micro-level linguistic features, hence the adoption of LPIM and SAT, since they successively contain linguistic tools and pragmatic frames to consider how goals, plans and actions are activated at a micro level.

In this context, the study shows how linguistic choices, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure, are strategically used in political speeches. The SFL framework allows for the analysis of language choices that shape social relations and presidents' communicative goals, including the identification of conjunctions and consideration of registers influenced by field, tenor, and mode.

In brief, the theoretical lenses complement each other, enabling a comprehensive analysis of goal-oriented political speeches during the pandemic. They are arranged to enable the researcher to model the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion. The use of theory triangulation in this study enhances the robustness of the research findings, providing a holistic understanding of persuasive communication by presidents. This approach strengthens the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions, offering valuable insights for future research in persuasive communication (refer to Section 2.3 for detailed explication).

By integrating the above-mentioned theoretical tools, the study is set to highlight how language was strategically used to shape public behaviour and encourage compliance with restrictions during the pandemic. Accordingly, the primary research question that this study seeks to address is: How do discourse segments evident in selected presidential speeches serve persuasive purposes during the Covid-19 pandemic?

To comprehensively explore and address the primary research question, the study delves into the pursuit of the following subsidiary questions:

- What are the prevalent types of communicative goals reflected in selected Covid-19 presidential speeches?

- Which communicative, pragmatic and linguistic elements of persuasion do selected presidents employ to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches?
- Which communicative, pragmatic and linguistic strategies of persuasion do selected presidents employ to execute goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches?
- How can the execution of communicative goals of political persuasion be modelled linguistically?

The Covid-19 pandemic stands as one of the most momentous global pandemics in recent history, with presidential speeches during this period assuming a pivotal role in shaping public perception, behaviour, and policy responses. So, the examination of these research questions provides valuable insights into how presidents communicate during health crises and their endeavours to persuade public opinion. As a result, addressing these research questions bears significance not only for academic inquiry but also holds practical implications for enhancing political communication, comprehending leadership during crises, and fostering effective public discourse. It may also prove useful for application in forensic contexts in cases where manipulation is at the core of the investigation. These research questions are tied to the goals of the study presented in the subsequent section.

1.2 GOALS OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study is to analytically investigate persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches by exploring communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of persuasion that regulate meanings in context, to model how language was used amidst the pandemic to influence the behaviour of the public. Thus, the study has the following interrelated objectives:

- To examine the prevalent types of communicative goals, reflected in Covid-19 selected presidential speeches.
- To identify and contrast communicative, pragmatic and linguistic elements of persuasion employed by selected presidents to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches.

- To establish communicative, pragmatic and linguistic strategies of persuasion employed by selected presidents to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches.
- To devise a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion.

Achieving the goals of this study can yield valuable insights into the dynamics of presidential communication during a global health crisis. Through the analytical investigation of persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches, the study contributes to the academic understanding of persuasion and linguistic elements in political discourse. Additionally, it is important to note that this study is not large-scale research but rather limited in scope, focusing on specific aspects as detailed in the subsequent section.

1.3 DELIMITATION AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is delimited to three primary dimensions: communicative context, linguistic choices and theoretical properties of persuasion relevant to political discourse. These dimensions serve as the parameters within which the study progresses to achieve its goals. Furthermore, this study is specifically centred around the analysis of a distinct dataset, encompassing three presidents (Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping), along with a total of 15 speeches. Each of the presidents has contributed five speeches to the dataset. More details regarding the study's boundaries and focus are provided in the ensuing sub-sections 1.3.1 to 1.3.2.

1.3.1 Selected presidents

This study specifically focuses on the Covid-19 related speeches of three selected presidents as main proponents of the tenor metafunction: Xi Jinping (People's Republic of China), Donald Trump (United States of America), and Cyril Ramaphosa (Republic of South Africa). The inclusion of these three presidents in the study is motivated by the trajectory of Covid-19 in their respective countries, making them worthy subjects of research. Additionally, comparing the persuasive language used by African, Western, and Eastern presidents provides cross-border insights and contributes to the existing literature on persuasion within the political context.

President Xi Jinping is chosen because the outbreak of Covid-19 was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, where he serves as the president. Despite initial criticism for withholding information about the virus, Jinping played a central role in China's response to the Covid-19 outbreak (Fabricius, 2020:113). His leadership saw the implementation of strict lockdowns, travel restrictions, and rapid construction of hospitals to manage the surge in patients, ultimately contributing to China's relatively successful containment of the virus within its borders (Guardian, 2020).

On the other hand, President Donald Trump's inclusion in this study is due to his prominent role in combating the virus during his presidency. He faced criticism for downplaying the severity of Covid-19 initially, but the Trump administration mobilised an extensive effort involving both public and private sectors, resulting in a robust testing system that became a global benchmark (Parker & Stern, 2020:252). Despite challenges and disagreements with state governors over pandemic-related measures, his administration's response marked a significant undertaking akin to those during World War II (Caldwell, 2021:45).

From Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa is selected for this study as the country recorded the first case of Covid-19 on the continent (Guardian, 2020). President Ramaphosa took swift action, declaring a state of disaster and implementing strict lockdown measures to curb the virus's spread. Ramaphosa's government focused on enhancing testing and contact tracing capabilities and providing support to vulnerable communities during lockdowns (Kapucu & Moynihan, 2021). However, South Africa faced unique challenges stemming from socioeconomic disparities and healthcare infrastructure limitations in certain regions.

The emergence and spread of Covid-19 in China, the USA, and RSA exhibit both similarities and differences. While all three countries faced challenges in containing the virus, the effectiveness of their responses varied. Jinping's early aggressive measures and experience with previous outbreaks, such as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), contributed to a relatively successful containment effort. The Trump's decentralised approach and delayed response hindered containment efforts, leading to widespread outbreaks, while Ramaphosa's response was characterised by stringent measures, but underlying socioeconomic disparities posed unique challenges in controlling the virus.

Apart from the selected presidents, the scope of the study is further delimited to focus specifically on the value and motivation of the selected speeches, as discussed in the ensuing sub-section.

1.3.2 Value and motivation for studying Covid-19 presidential speeches

The speeches comprise the mode, which is part of the SFL ideational metafunction in the form of spoken discourse. Mode specifically concerns the representation of experiences and includes how language is used to depict the world and reality, express ideas and to convey information. Presidential speeches offer valuable linguistic data that, from a constructivist perspective, highlight real-life contexts of different citizens and how they process messages from their political leaders to fulfil social goals. The study of persuasion in these speeches provides essential insights into effective communication, political influence, leadership, policy advocacy, and historical analysis. The messages conveyed in selected presidential speeches involve interactions where the source (president) attempts to induce the targets (citizens, in this context) to perform a desired behaviour that they might not otherwise do. In this regard, the source engages the target through compliance-seeking messages in their communication, thus resulting in persuasion (Wilson, 2002:7).

During a crisis i.e., the Covid-19 pandemic, the way presidents communicate with the public can significantly impact public perception and behaviour. There are two primary modes of communication: declarative and interrogative mode. Analysing speeches can offer insights into the messaging techniques used to convey information, reassure the public, and promote adherence to guidelines or restrictions. These speeches often outline the government's response to the pandemic, including the implementation of public health measures, resource allocation, and strategies for containing the virus's spread. Such analysis can shed light on the effectiveness of different approaches and provide valuable lessons for handling future public health pandemic.

To sum up, studying persuasion in presidential speeches pertaining to Covid-19 provides important insights into leadership, communication, public trust, policymaking, and crisis management. This study may deepen readers' understanding of how presidents influence public behaviour and decision-making during a global health crisis, with implications for both current and future pandemic responses. To implement the designated focus, this entails the incorporation of pertinent research methods, as delineated in Section 1.4. These methods enable

a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of the communicative goals, elements of persuasion, and strategies of persuasion used in the selected speeches, contributing to a deeper comprehension of the dynamics of political persuasion and communication during times of crisis. These insights facilitate the modelling of persuasion from a multidisciplinary perspective.

1.4 METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

This study employed a qualitative research approach situated within the interpretivist paradigm to investigate persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches. The interpretivist paradigm was preferred as it enables the researcher to comprehend the socially constructed meanings present in the selected presidential speeches, facilitating the development of a comprehensive model of linguistic persuasion based on the gathered data and interpreted social constructions. The method used consists of two main components: a comprehensive literature survey covering topics such as communicative, linguistic, and political persuasion, elements of persuasion, strategies of persuasion, and a qualitative empirical analysis. The preferred research design of choice being discourse-textual analysis.

As a qualitative study, the study employed a theory triangulation approach, integrating multiple theoretical lenses within the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework to comprehensively explore persuasion in the political context. Following Angen's (2000:66) approach, theory triangulation involves employing multiple theoretical perspectives to examine and interpret the same data set. In this context, the primary objective was to attain a thorough understanding of the communicative goals, elements, and strategies employed in presidential speeches and how they are executed. The utilised theoretical lenses include the Goals-Plans-Actions theory by Dillard (1989), the Linguistic Propaganda Identification model by Maritz (2019), and the Speech Act theory by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The researcher intended to illuminate how linguistic choices, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure, are strategically employed in political speeches to garner persuasion.

The SFL framework allows for the analysis of language choices shaping social relations and presidents' communicative goals, including identifying conjunctions and considering registers influenced by field, tenor, and mode (refer to Section 4.2.2.1 for a detailed discussion). In brief, the inclusion of theory triangulation enhances confidence in the study findings by

revealing unique findings and offering a clearer comprehension of the complex phenomenon (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014).

The data utilised for this qualitative study consists of written versions of presidential Covid-19 related speeches. These texts were meticulously collected and sorted using a provisional checklist of persuasive goals, elements and strategies informed by an extensive literature survey within the context of political discourse. The researcher extracted data from a purposively selected set of fifteen (15) selected speeches to map the linguistic traits of persuasion, aiming for data saturation through an inductive logic approach (Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Burroughs & Jinks, 2018). The base-sample of 15 speeches was sourced from presidents Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa (RSA), Donald Trump (USA), and Xi Jinping (China), each contributing five (5) speeches. The selection of these specific speeches was grounded in the theoretical and practical considerations concerning the descriptive properties of persuasion and the potential richness of the data in terms of the goals of the study.

The study adopted a two-staged analysis: first, manual close-reading, followed by a second analysis using computational software, ATLAS.ti, to refine and enhance the original analysis. The manual close-reading involved an examining of 120 discourse segments from the sampled presidential Covid-19 related speeches, ATLAS.ti version 8.4 was then utilised to visually explore the semantic repertoire of the dataset, which had been previously analysed through close-reading. This comprehensive analysis encompassed speeches by President Donald Trump (coded as PDTs), President Cyril Ramaphosa (coded as PCRS), and President Xi Jinping (coded as PXJS). This two-staged analysis facilitated the identification of patterns, themes, and connections within the data. The double analysis serves as a strength and provides evidence of the study's reliability. Moreover, both stages underwent moderation by the supervisor, further enhancing the overall reliability.

This section serves as an outline of the research methodology which is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The subsequent section introduces the research procedure for the study.

1.5 STUDY PROCEDURE

This section provides an outline of the study's procedural framework, consisting of five distinct phases designed to facilitate the accomplishment of the study's goals, as detailed below.

1.5.1 Phase one: Determining theoretical gap

This phase entailed identifying the theoretical grounds of the study. In this phase, the researcher defined persuasion from various theoretical perspectives and devises a working definition of persuasion for the purpose of this study. The researcher also acknowledged existing definitions and approaches to persuasion but redefines persuasion as the “attainment of communicative goals through linguistic elements within a specific context” (refer to Section 2.3). During this phase, it became evident that there is a lack of comprehensive studies that merge linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic elements in political persuasion. To address this gap, the study adopts ‘theory triangulation’, as noted above. The aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the goals, elements, plans, communicative and linguistic strategies used by selected presidents in their political speeches, to form a network, thus bridging the identified gap.

1.5.2 Phase two: Review of literature

Since Phase 1 exposed the theoretical gap in studying political persuasion, Phase 2 involved conducting a systematic literature review of earlier studies on elements and strategies of persuasion. The researcher synthesises the reviewed literature to devise a provisional model of persuasion in Chapter 3. This provisional model serves as a temporary structure subject to modification in subsequent phases. Also, the provisional model informed the empirical analysis conducted in Phase 3.

1.5.3 Phase three: Data collection, sorting and analysis

In this phase, the researcher identified appropriate categories of analysis to inform the empirical research, utilising the discourse-textual analysis design within the triangulation framework. A total of 120 discourse segments from a base of 15 speeches of the three participants (presidents) were sampled for analysis in the study. The analysis involved qualitative examination of the sampled discourse segments using the provisional model and theoretical tools from Phase 2. The provisional model helped to identify prevalent goals, elements, and strategies of persuasion. The analysis was carried out chronologically and involved a close-reading and manual mark-up, followed by a second iteration using computer-aided qualitative data software ATLAS.ti to refine the initial analysis and improve the reliability of the findings.

1.5.4 Phase four: Revision of the provisional model of persuasion

This phase involved presenting and evaluating the empirical findings against the provisional model. As stated in Phase 2, the model was subject to modification based on the study's findings for the purpose of the present research. The empirical findings included the identification of primary and secondary communicative goals reflected in the discourse segments, as well as the communicative, linguistic and pragmatic elements and strategies of persuasion. Throughout the analysis, salient theoretical properties of persuasion emerged, not initially accounted for in the provisional model. These properties were classified, and the provisional model was revised accordingly and presented in Chapter 6 (refer to Figure 6.2).

1.5.5 Phase five: Consolidation and reconstruction

Building upon the 'theory triangulation' outlined in Phase 2 and the provisional model developed in Phase 3, this phase (5) fulfils the final objective of the study, which was to devise a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion. Based on the empirical findings and theoretical implications, a revised model (Figure 6.2) was presented in Section 6.5. The revised model included the most relevant features and potential applications. The phase concluded by exploring the limitations of the proposed comprehensive model, noting its relevance not only to presidential goals during Covid-19 but also to various domains where persuasive communication is essential.

Having outlined the study procedure and its five phases, the subsequent section delves into the ethical methodology pertaining to the study.

1.6 ETHICAL METHODOLOGY

This section underlines the significance of ethical considerations in the context of social research. The integration of ethical principles spanning the entire research process, from conceptualisation to execution, is deemed essential (refer to Section 4.3 for detailed explication). Approval for the study was granted by UPSET's Committee for Advanced Degrees and the NWU Ethics Committee for Language Matters (Reference number: NWU-01110-22-A7). Given the text-based nature of the study, ethical concerns are minimal. Using publicly available political speeches does not necessitate specific authorisation or written consent due to their public domain status. The researcher's pivotal role in data collection and

analysis is acknowledged, with a specific emphasis on transparency and reflexivity to uphold research integrity. Prior to commencement of the study, measures were implemented to mitigate potential biases, and the study's promoter played a part in detecting inadvertent prejudices.

Owing to limitations within the scope of the sample, the study refrains from making broad generalisation based on its findings. To bolster the study's credibility, it aligns its approach with akin datasets and collectively addresses encountered challenges, elaborated further in Section 7.3 as restrictions of the study. Moreover, future researchers are encouraged to extrapolate and validate this study's proposed comprehensive model of persuasion (refer to Section 6.6) to various political texts and settings, thus fortifying its applicability and validation potential.

Having expounded upon the ethical methodology employed in the study, the subsequent section delineates the research prospectus. This segment elaborates the precise research objectives and the thematic expanse encapsulated within each chapter, thereby engendering a comprehensive grasp of the trajectory embarked upon in this study.

1.7 PROSPECTUS

This study is structured into seven chapters, each dedicated to achieving specific objectives. **Chapter 1** introduces the research topic and its significance; it also outlines the research questions, goals and offers an overview of the structure of the study. **Chapter 2** presents a comprehensive working definition of persuasion for the study and identifies the theoretical foundations and points of departure that inform the study. It further presents the theoretical framework of the study. Furthermore, **Chapter 3** conducts a comprehensive literature review on elements and strategies of persuasion. The focus is on communication, linguistics and pragmatics in the context of political persuasion. Lastly, the reviewed literature is synthesised to develop a provisional model of persuasion.

Moving on to **Chapter 4**, which describes the research methods and procedures adopted for the study. This chapter provides details on data collection methods, including the sampling of 15 Covid-19 related political speeches of the presidents. It also outlines the procedures for data sorting and analysis, combining manual close-reading and ATLAS.ti methods. Further, **Chapter 5** presents and interprets the empirical findings of the study, which relates to the

communicative goals, elements of persuasion, strategies of persuasion and emerged theoretical properties of persuasion employed by the presidents during the Covid-19 context.

Furthermore, in **Chapter 6**, the provisional model is revisited, empirical findings are discussed in the context of the reviewed literature, and theoretical implications are highlighted. Lastly, the provisional model is revised, and a comprehensive model on the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion is constructed. This leads to **Chapter 7**, which draws conclusions and discusses the broader implications of the study's findings for the field of persuasion and political communication. It also offers suggestions for future research and practical applications.

Overall, the study follows a logical and coherent progression, starting with the introduction of the topic, research goals and concluding with a comprehensive model of persuasion based on empirical findings and literature review. Each chapter contributes to the overall understanding and achievement of the research goals, making the study organised and insightful.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 served as a foundation for this study by defining the research problem and its significance. The clear articulation of the study's goals and research questions provides a well-defined path for the research direction. Moreover, by highlighting the gaps in current knowledge that this study seeks to address, Chapter 1 underscores the study's vital contribution to the field of political communication and persuasion. The subsequent chapters build upon this groundwork, delving into theoretical points of departure and conducting a thorough exploration of persuasion in political discourse.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a theoretical foundation for the study, commencing with a scrutiny of prevailing theoretical perspectives that reveal notable gaps in scholarly discourse. Specifically, there is an identified deficiency in the comprehensive synthesis of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements within the context of political persuasion. To address this scholarly void, the chapter reviews persuasion from diverse theoretical standpoints, subsequently re-defining persuasion for the purpose of this study. Integral to the methodological framework is the rigorous application of ‘theory triangulation’, elucidated earlier in Section 1.4, which aims to integrate various theoretical dimensions. This synthesis is facilitated through the utilisation of the central framework, namely Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1965), which serves as the principal theoretical underpinning of this study.

Within the SFL framework, this chapter introduces key theoretical tools, namely Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), the Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (Maritz, 2019), and the Goals Plans Actions (GPA) theory (Dillard, 1989). The incorporation of these theoretical tools is guided by specific rationales; for instance, Maritz’s LPIM addresses linguistic forms of persuasion, SAT places emphasis on the meaning and intention behind language use, and GPA navigates the strategic and goal-driven nature of communication, albeit with limited consideration for micro-level linguistic features, which are comprehensively addressed by SAT and LPIM.

This chapter also notes the contextual dependence of SAT and LPIM on language, aligning with their manifestation as functional linguistic theories within the broader SFL framework. The overarching aim of theory triangulation in this study as evident throughout this chapter is to cultivate a holistic understanding of persuasion, accommodating overlapping perspectives from cognitive and functional linguistics. The assumptions and rationale underpinning the adoption of these theories are expounded upon in this chapter, with an initial exploration into the definition of persuasion.

2.2 DEFINING PERSUASION

The study of persuasion is no novel undertaking. According to Afzaal (2020:123), the study of persuasion is conditioned by three shifts. First studies were held in ancient Greek and were focused only on the ability of how communicators build their speech. The second shift of studies from the 16th up to the 19th century concentrated on the target rather than on the communicator. On the contrary, the third wave of contemporary researchers, for instance, Perloff (2003) believes that persuasion is a bilateral process, which involves both sides: the communicator and the target. This study recognises that the target will either be persuaded or not, but the focus of the present research is specifically on how communicators or persuaders (presidents in this context) build their persuasive political speech in an interpersonal and mass communication setting.

In modern times, persuasion can be tentatively defined as the deliberate effort to elicit a controlled response in action or belief using language (Thomas, 2009:44). In the complex fabric of society, persuasion holds a pivotal role. The effectiveness of governance, business endeavours, social dynamics, and personal relationships significantly hinges upon a deep comprehension of the mechanics of persuasion, the ability to assess persuasive tactics, and adeptness in wielding persuasive techniques. Perelman (1982:5) underscores persuasion's place within the broader context of argumentation, stating that: "Argumentation encompasses the entire spectrum of discourse aimed at persuasion and conviction, regardless of the audience and subject matter involved". In a similar vein, Simon (1976:21), as cited in Breuer (2008:1), characterises persuasion from a belief perspective as: "Human communication designed to influence others by altering their beliefs, values, or attitudes".

Various researchers offer distinct perspectives on the definition of persuasion. Some regard it as a process of communication or information processing (Eagly, 1987; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999; Stiff & Mongeau, 2003). O'Keefe (2015) asserts that persuasion involves intentional, non-coercive communication capable of inducing changes in mental state that subsequently lead to behavioural shifts. Perloff (2003) concurs with O'Keefe (2015), emphasising persuasion's intentional and non-coercive nature. It is vital to note that these varying interpretations converge in the idea that persuasion entails altering the target's behaviour, either verbally or non-verbally. The diverse definitions of persuasion across different fields are summarised in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2. 1: A systematic review of persuasion definitions

Source	Field	Definition
Andersen (1971:26)	Communication	“A communication process whereby the communicator seeks to influence behaviour, change attitudes and beliefs, or otherwise cause acceptance of a new cognitive state in an area where the person being persuaded has some measure of freedom”.
Rogers (1995:34)	Communication	“Occurs when a potential adopter forms a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards and (sic) innovation”.
Ross (1990:85)	Communication	“A process through which one skillfully and ethically uses logical thoughts, appeals, credibility, and ethical proof to influence and motivate others to respond as one wish”.
Steiny (2009:474)	Psychology	“Non-coercively changing an individual’s attitudes or behaviour”
Kenrick, Neberg and Cialdini (2005:346)	Psychology	“Persuasion is defined as the modification of a private attitude or belief resulting from the receipt of a message”.
Fogg (2003:172)	Persuasive technology	“A deliberate attempt to change attitudes and/or behaviors”.
Reardon (1981:12)	Management	“The attempt to guide people toward the adoption of some behaviour, belief, or attitude preferred by the persuader through reasoning”.

From these multifaceted viewpoints, it becomes evident that persuasion finds application across diverse domains. The common thread unifying these perspectives is the notion of influencing behaviour or attitudes. Psychology leverages communication to reshape targets’ behaviour or attitudes, and communication employs persuasion for conveying ideas or achieving influence, while management wields persuasion to steer employees toward embracing principles and organisational culture, enhancing productivity.

The context of the present study is the Covid-19 pandemic, which has brought forth a large pool of messages from political leaders to persuade the public to comply with strict social distancing measures. These restrictions would otherwise seem unreasonable and even unconstitutional. Therefore, Covid-19 related messages by presidents to the public offer an important source of data to explore the political and linguistic act of persuasion, that is, how linguistic elements are used to effect political persuasion, i.e., to activate communicative goals toward compliance.

As highlighted in Section 1.1, the broad aim of this study is to analytically investigate persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches by exploring communicative, linguistic

and pragmatic elements of persuasion that regulate meanings in context. The researcher describes persuasion in this context from communicative (goals pursued) and linguistic (evident grammatical conventions such as nouns, adjectives, and verbs) and pragmatic (direct or indirect speech acts) to show how language is used amid the pandemic to influence the behaviour of the public.

Words are polysemic, meaning that they serve multiple functions in different contexts and their meanings are inherent on the communicator (persuader) and the receiver (persuade). Persuasion is not an exception; various researchers have explored the concept of ‘persuasion’ from multiple perspectives. As evident in Table 2.1 above, it is important to highlight some of these perspectives before proposing a working definition of persuasion for the purpose of this study. For instance, various sources are available on communicative persuasion (Bird, 2011; Alemi, 2018), political persuasion (Altikriti, 2016; Minoo, Ashkan & Arash, 2018), and linguistic persuasion (Kamalu & Iniworikalo, 2016).

Moreover, while this study adopts a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach at a macro-level to investigate persuasion, various theoretical approaches have been employed to examine political speeches and persuasion. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stands out as one of the most prevalent approaches, as indicated by Maritz (2019:8). Eminent scholars engaged in exploring persuasion through a critical discourse perspective include Fairclough (2013), whose work examines the complex connections between language, power, and social structures, providing insights into how discourse shapes and reflects societal dynamics. Additionally, van Dijk (1998) investigates the role of discourse in reinforcing and challenging power relations, particularly within the context of politics and media. Wodak (2013) also contributes significantly with her focus on critical discourse analysis applied to issues such as racism, populism, and identity politics.

Recent studies that adopted CDA approach to explore persuasion include for example, Ayeomoni (2012), who investigates the Nigerian military coup speeches of the three military-political rulers, viz. General Thomas Aguiyi Ironsi, General Yakubu Gowon, and General Murtala Muhammad. Also, from an Aristotelian perspective, Da Silva (2020) navigates from ethos, pathos and logos to rhetorical figures or tropes that achieve an explicit persuasive function. Altikriti (2016) on the other hand, explores persuasion from a speech act perspective.

Contrary to the CDA approach, the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) approach, advocated by scholars like Halliday (1965), centres on analysing language in terms of its function within

social contexts, emphasising the interplay of grammar, semantics, and social structures. While both approaches share interest in language and society, CDA prioritises uncovering power relations and social inequalities embedded in language, whereas SFL is more concerned with the functional aspects of language use within a broader social context. To the best of the current researcher's knowledge, evidence of what constitutes persuasion from these perspectives has not yet been combined into a single comprehensive model, hence the relevance of the present study.

Having noted the above, a multitude of recent publications on Covid-19 speeches have been conducted from various theoretical angles concerning communication strategies and linguistic choices. Publications focusing on communicative strategies include Hatcher's (2020) investigation into the danger of presidential misinformation during the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, Panzeri, Di Paola and Domaneschi (2021) investigate the Covid-19 war metaphor influence on reasoning. They analyse the context and chronology of presidential speeches in Brazil and reveal the relationship between statements made by President Bolsonaro on Covid-19 prevention measures and adherence to social distancing policies. Additionally, in an earlier publication on persuasive message production, Sopory and Dillard (2002) investigate influence strategies, typologies, and ways in which goals shape and constrain influence exertion.

Although there is already a wealth of knowledge on persuasion and many academics are looking into political speeches on Covid-19, to the best of the current researcher's knowledge, there is no single study that links communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic components of persuasion to political discourse. This study addresses this gap by analysing persuasive communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of political discourse. It does so to model the interaction between communicative and pragmatic strategies as well as linguistic choices to demonstrate how communicative goals are linguistically activated in presidential Covid-19-related speeches. The subsequent section situates persuasion within the political context, given the political nature of the speeches under examination.

2.2.1 Persuasion in political context

Politicians of all stripes have one thing in common, which is the “want” to make “fetch” happen. That is, in a world of high-stake politics, they are all trying to make friends and influence people through the magic of persuasion. Throughout political history, researchers have been fascinated by the powerful words, speeches, slogans, and catchphrases that

politicians use to sway their audiences into massive undertakings, from matters of war to peace to defining the national identity. Covid-19 presidential speeches are of pivotal relevancy in the context of this study, since presidents sought public compliance from citizens concerning regulations and measures to curb the spread of the virus.

Given the popularity and impact of presidential rhetoric on the national agenda and numerous amounts of studies devoted to the understanding of presidential speech (for example, Olmat, 2020; Anbers, 2020), presidents had a lot of influence on Covid-19 related issues. Therefore, studying presidential speeches may provide an account of presidential priorities during their presidency. By examining presidential speeches, the researcher intends to use the data to determine how political discourses evident in selected presidential speeches served persuasive purposes during the Covid-19 pandemic. Such findings could be beneficial for future agenda-setting researchers studying presidential influence.

Van Dijk (1998:244) succinctly defines persuasion as the process through which discourse prompts individuals to shift their perspectives. In simpler terms, within the confines of political speeches, this equates to the ability to not only alter the audience's opinions but also to implant the speaker's viewpoints in their minds. Van Dijk (ibid) further underscores that political discourse encompasses 'text and talk' within the political and institutional framework (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2002:12). The extensive pervasiveness of persuasion in the context of politics is emphasised by Dillard and Marshall (2003:502).

Pioneers in political persuasion, Burnell and Reeve (1984), posit that political persuasion distinguishes itself from less ethical forms of influence (like manipulation, coercion, indoctrination) by its foundation in "good faith". They propose that, when employed judiciously, political persuasion can serve as a potent tool within the political arena. Perloff (2003:34) echoes this sentiment by projecting political persuasion as a process wherein communicators employ persuasive tactics to "alter individuals' attitudes or behaviours regarding political issues through messages, all in an atmosphere of volitional choice".

Based on this brief overview, it seems clear that political persuasion is a complex phenomenon that depends on persuasive principles and a carefully constructed message with a particular aim to effect behavioural change. In other words, the message serves to materialise the persuasive principles to realise the communicative goal of willing behavioural change. Therefore, to model political persuasion comprehensively, it is necessary to consider the interface between the linguistic, pragmatic and communicative aspects of political persuasion. Currently, this gap

remains in literature. Therefore, this study takes the communicative and linguistic approaches to study persuasion in political context. This means adopting theoretical tools that account for communicative approach (GPA), linguistic approach (LPIM), and pragmatics (SAT) to bring persuasion to surface. Sub-section 2.2.2 below delves into communicative persuasion, which in this study is associated with GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) as the theoretical tool.

2.2.2 Communicative persuasion

In this study, the researcher espouses the perspective that humans communicate with the intention of achieving specific goals (see Dillard, 2015; Meyer, 2021). In their definition of persuasion, Mongeau, Jacobson and Donnerstein (2007:4) emphasise the notion of message production and message selection, implying that persuasion is any message intended to shape, reinforce or modified answers from others. Further, Reardon (1991:3) considers the term ‘persuasion’ as an activity that attempts to modify the behaviour of at least one person through symbolic interaction. Pertaining to the threshold of persuasion, O’Keefe (2009:287) claims that,

“It is a ubiquitous function of human communication which is pursued in a variety of settings from face-to-face to mass media”.

This is relevant in this study as it investigates persuasion threaded in Covid-19 presidential speeches as part of mass communication since these speeches were broadcast on public media channels. O’Keefe (2009:288) gives prominence to the views that people’s lives are woven around relationships through contact and exchange of messages during social interactions that determine mutual influence and agreements on actions to take. In this context, when presidents deliver their speeches on Covid-19 measures and express directives to seek compliance and mutual agreement, there are perceived persuasive strategies evident in their speeches. For example, in his analysis of persuasive speech used by the former USA President Barack Obama, Abbas (2008) identifies rationalisation, identification and conformities as some of the persuasive strategies. While, in their analysis of political talks of the former-late President Nelson Mandela, Tang, Sharmini and Yahya (2023) report quasilogical, presentational and analogical as some of the communicative persuasive tactics.

According to De Wet (2010:3), when people use any form of communication, they are confronted with some forms of persuasion. Therefore, people communicate to achieve specific

goals, as evident in the Goals Plans Action (GPA) theory (Dillard, 1989), which details how communicators in communicative spaces achieve their goals or future states of affairs, thereby ultimately achieving persuasion and compliance from the target (Wilson, 2002:134-136).

Considering the goal-orientedness of political speeches around the Covid-19 global pandemic, this study adopts the GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) as the theoretical point of departure. GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) dwells on how desires are achieved and maintained through plans that guide actions. This theory is adopted on the grounds that it comprises communicative tools to explore how communicators produce persuasive messages through the sequence of having goals, planning their utterance on how to attain such goals, and then acting on those plans (through language).

Although the GPA theory is skewed towards communication, there are few scholars who have found it useful in linguistic studies, for example, Sadiki (2017) uses the GPA theory to study communication theoretical approach to compliance gaining messages in Tshivenda literary texts. In the same vein, Titi (2018) applies the GPA theory to study persuasive strategies used by Xhosa men when proposing marriage to women. Also, using the GPA theory, Ralarala (2010) explores the social influence goals that are characteristic of interpersonal persuasive communication in IsiXhosa.

However, it is important to highlight that these available studies on GPA focus on the communicative goals' pursuit or intention of the communicators as well as the compliance and resistance of the targets without detailing the role of linguistic elements in attaining such goals. This suggests a one-sided investigation of persuasion as GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) does not account for the micro-linguistic choices of persuaders to operationalise the communicative goals. However, verbal goals are necessarily activated through language choices.

Consequently, GPA is useful to consider macro-level features of political persuasion. However, utterances are wrought in different ways to achieve different communicative purposes. Therefore, it is essential to explore the micro-level linguistic features that embody the macro-level communicative goals. As indicated, this leaves a gap of focus on linguistic resources utilised to explore such communicative goals. For this reason, this study also integrates linguistic perspectives on persuasion to critically analyse how linguistic tools are manipulated to achieve persuasion within the political context. Hence the adoption of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the principal theoretical underpinning (refer to Section 2.2.3.1, for a detailed account on SFL).

In acknowledgement of all the definitions and approaches in persuasion, what sets this study apart from the earlier studies discussed above, is that it encompasses a blend of communicative, political, and linguistic elements of persuasion. It is different on the grounds of thematic properties embedded in linguistic elements (refer to Section 2.2.3) which give evidence to how communication with goal attainment intentions occur amidst Covid-19 presidential speeches. Hence, the study theoretically departs from a GPA perspective as one of the theoretical tools, to explore the macro-level communicative features of political persuasion.

Hess and Coffelt (2012:134) propose that GPA provides insights into how individuals utilise communication to accomplish goals. The theory suggests that messages are most effective in persuading when they are suitably customised to align with the speaker's objectives, and that employing clear and explicit language is optimal for conveying intentions. Additionally, Hess and Coffelt (ibid) accentuate the theory's basis in the persuasion tradition, highlighting its ability to elucidate the communicative strategies and cognitive strategies that contribute to the attainment of relational goals. Consequently, this theory serves as a valuable framework for directing this study on persuasion within the domain of political communication.

In the context of this study, the Covid-19 pandemic raised exceptional ethical predicaments because it made demands on society from all sectors of life, not only in South Africa but across the globe. Owing to the Covid-19, a lot of negative impacts on human activities in terms of private and work-life were affected and life as the world knows had changed. Given the rise in infection and death toll, political leaders, particularly presidents, since the outbreak communicated with the citizens through plans and planning (devising strict measures) aiming to gain compliance from them by adhering to the set measures, with the primary goal being to curb the spread of the virus. Thus, GPA is relevant in this regard.

The main theoretical points of GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) are that (i) communicators create messages to achieve some end, (ii) communication is strategic, motivated, and purposive, and (iii) message production is a result of a goal-driven process as affirmed by Sopory and Dillard (2002:225) cited in Nendauni (2018:23). Using the GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) in this study, the researcher explores persuasive message production perspectives that explained how compliance-gaining messages are produced to accomplish the primary (influence) and secondary (awareness) goals of persuaders (presidents).

As an important theory of message production, the GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) also distinguishes between primary and secondary goals (Dillard, 2004:185; Burleson, 2010:153).

This is an important consideration for the purpose of this study because political speeches may aim to achieve more than one goal (multiple goals), and some goals may be communicated more explicitly than others (dominant and lower goals).

As proposed by Dillard (2008:277) and supported by Burleson (2010:153), the GPA theory gains ground as one of the theoretical tools for this study since it:

- Interprets a situation (Covid-19 pandemic) with values and motivational orientations (an increase in infections rates and death toll) giving rise to a set of interaction goals (restricted measures).
- Shows goals (to curb the spread of the virus) and their representations of the situation which lead to existing message plans or schemes adaptable to current needs.
- Evident existing or new plan (compliance to the set strict measures) to achieve goals.

Following the application of GPA to the study of political persuasion, this study intends to highlight prevalent goals exhibited in presidential Covid-19 related speeches. The next section discusses goals threaded in persuasive discourse segments.

2.2.2.1 Goals threaded in persuasive discourse segments

Goals are taken to be desired future states of affairs including the desire individuals should maintain (Caughlin, 2010:826). The intended goals may be “formative, reinforcing and converting, depending on the persuader’s motive after having observed the target’s need for change” (Larson, 1995:160). Presumably, Covid-19 speeches by political leaders would originate from the desire to keep the nation safe or to curb the spread of the virus, the greater goal would be to achieve this. Dillard and Schrader (1998:2) assert that goals serve as behavioural motivators and constitute the initial phase of the goal-setting-action process in persuasion. Correspondingly, Sopory and Dillard (2002:226) stipulate that endeavours to elicit compliance from others (persuasion for specific behaviour) are inherently directed towards a persuasive objective, irrespective of the persuader’s conscious awareness of that goal.

Following Sopory and Dillard (2002:227), goals are not behaviours, but they share a complex relationship with behaviours on the basis that people adopt certain behaviours to achieve specific goals. In the political persuasive speeches in the Covid-19 context, the goal is acted out verbally and/or in writing i.e., by means of language - but the goal is reached when the

audience complies with strict regulations and lives are saved. Communicative strategies are used to activate the goal, so to speak.

Kunkel and Wilson (2000:203) maintains that goals are hierarchically ordered in three levels, namely:

- Motives that are at the highest level of the hierarchy representing abstract cause of behaviour (the detrimental effects of Covid-19);
- Goals (ending Covid-19) are specific changes that persuaders hope to achieve;
- Sub-goals (devising strict social distancing measures for residents) are specific actions to be conducted to fulfil goals.

Schrader and Dillard (1998:277) cited in Ralarala (2010:46) argues that the GPA theory spells out several functions of goals in the communication process, which assert that:

- Goals are at the starting point of the GPA sequence from which behaviour flows;
- Goals make provision of being reinforcement to the planning process which enables the action process take off;
- Goals provide culturally viable explanations for the behaviour of actors and observers; and
- Goals enable the splitting up of the stream of behaviour into segments often referred to as action units or social episodes.

In the context of this study, goals are a communicative starting point toward engaged behavioural change. Citizens across the world reacted differently to the Covid-19 pandemic; some complied with the set restrictions while others chose not to. Bearing this in mind, along with the fact that measures needed to be followed to minimise the spread of the virus, governments under the leadership of their presidents planned with the goal of curbing the virus spread. Tapping deeper, the next sub-section covers the different types of communicative goals threaded in persuasive discourse.

2.2.2.2 Types of communicative goals threaded in persuasive discourse segments

Goals may vary in status, as highlighted above, GPA theory (Dillard, 1989) distinguishes between primary and secondary goals (Dillard, 2004:185; Burleson, 2010:153). These are the

goals that persuaders seek to achieve whenever they produce messages, and these goals differ per individual. As such, this study presents multiple goals classified as primary and secondary goals. During data analysis of the presidential Covid-19 related speeches, the researcher is set to flag these goals from the selected speeches and bring them into context. For example, a political speaker may communicate restrictions on the times people are allowed access to grocery stores – secondary goal - to slow down the spread of Covid-19 - primary goal.

a) Primary goals

The primary goal is that which the persuader is trying to accomplish. It imbues the interaction with meaning and enables the individual to parse the stream of behaviour into coherent conceptual units (Dillard & Solomon, 2000:77). Primary goals or push goals are the goals that motivate or push one to speak, and they determine the plans and actions (Solomon, 2005:34). A primary goal is viewed as a linguistic goal to produce a message that will be understood as a particular type of message with respect to its intent (e.g., as a request, answer, or account). Identifying a speaker's primary goal both categorises and attributes purpose to his or her communication. Intent to produce a request for action is one type of primary goal. According to Dillard and Marshall (2003:482), the primary communication goal is pursued in a unique situational context.

Furthermore, their investigation on interpersonal influence goals reveals that there are seven primary goals specified as follows:

- Gain assistance - when trying to obtain favour, information, and materials;
- Give advice - as an effort to change the undesirable habits, and lifestyle of the target;
- Share activities - in doing things together such as going to the mall;
- Change relationship - which involves changing the target view towards social affiliations such as law, religions, culture, politics and economy;
- Change orientation – in effort to engage target on a sociopolitical issue;
- Obtain permission – when one tries to get endorsement from those in power or authority; and
- Enforce right and obligation – in a situation where the communicator wishes to force someone to be responsible.

Following the type of primary goals in his 2007 publication, Dillard provides common reasons for persuading others. The reasons provided are related to primary goals as evident in the table below.

Table 2. 2: Most common reasons for persuading others (Adopted from Dillard, 2007:41)

<i>Primary/Influence Goals</i>		
<i>Types</i>	<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Gain assistance	Obtain material or nonmaterial resources	Can I use your car to go shopping?
Give advice	Provide counsel (often about health & relationships)	I'm worried about you because you've been drinking a lot lately. Do you think you should take a break from it?
Share activity	Promote joint endeavors between source and target	Let's do something together tonight. How about going to see that new band?
Change orientation	Engage target on a sociopolitical issue	I'm going to do my class project on medical marijuana. There are some good reasons to legalise it.
Change relationship	Alter the nature of the source-target relationship	I think that we ought to have a monogamous relationship. What do you think?
Obtain permission	Secure the consent of the (more powerful) target	Would it be OK if I handed in the assignment one day late?
Enforce rights and obligations	Compel target to fulfil commitment or role requirement	I'm still trying to study. You promised that you would keep the music down. So, how about it?

Drawing from the information presented on the above table, it is appropriate to assert that primary goals lie at the beginning of the GPA sequence. Also, primary goals are potential realities that individuals strive to construct, and primary goals energies cognition and behaviour. It can be said that they serve a motivational function. This study is concerned with the primary goal of political speeches to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

b) Secondary goals

Following Berger (1997:52), primary or push goals instigate the influence process, while secondary goals shape it. Secondary goals are also called pull goals since they are set of boundaries that limit plans by addressing other concerns that arise from considering how to achieve the primary goal. From Schrader and Dillard's (1998:30) investigation, five secondary goals identified are:

- **Identity goals:** Identity goals are objectives related to the self-concept, including ethical standards and preferences for conduct and they derived from a person's moral, principles of life and personal preferences guiding one's conduct (Dillard & Harden, 1989:21). For example, "my fellow South Africans, we will triumph over Covid" – President Cyril Ramaphosa (2020 – *SA response on Covid-19*);
- **Interaction goals:** Interaction goals refer to the social appropriateness of an action and managing the public impression. They represent the communicator's desire to manage his or her impression successfully, to ensure a good communication flow, to avoid threats, and to produce relevant and coherent messages (Grice, 1975 cited in Dillard & Harden, 1989:22). For example, "we have let down our guard, and unfortunately we are now paying the price" – President Cyril Ramaphosa (2020 – *SA response on Covid-19*).
- **Resource goals:** According to Dillard and Harden (1989:22) resource goals deal with increasing or maintaining value assets, which can be relational, material, and physical. Relational asserts incorporate all personal rewards and gratification which arises from an interaction with a target. Hill (1987) cited in Dillard and Harden (1989:22) says that the substance of these goals includes qualities such as emotional support, positive stimulus, and social comparison. Material assets involve physical objects such as money whereas physical assets refer to aspects of communicator's health (Dillard & Harden, 1989:22). For example, "we will deal with the Chinese virus" – Former President Donald Trump (2020 – *America's response to Covid-19*). This might affect the relationship that exists between the two nations; thus, it qualifies as a resource goal;
- **Arousal management goals:** Arousal management goals include maintaining the desired level of arousal. Dillard and Harden (1989:23) assume that communication events have arousal properties which are internal experiences to be pleasurable or unpleasurable. For example, "we can do it" – President Xi Jinping (2020 – *Deepening BRICS Cooperation to Combat Covid-19*);
- **Relational resource goals:** They value social and personal relationships and seek to maintain and improve pre-existing relations, consequently, they focus on maintenance or enhancement of personal rewards or gratification form.

Sopory and Dillard (2002:134-136) conceptualise goals as interactive and explains that they are achieved through interaction when individuals communicate and coordinate with others. In

agreement, Clark and Dillard (1979) assert that goal pursuit is influenced by interaction. Still on the same issue, Sopory and Dillard (2002:135) argue that interaction goals are cognitive or mental in that they motivate and explain behaviour. For communicative goals to be achieved, a plan is a requirement, hence the following section details how plans are affected to achieve goals.

2.2.2.3 Plans for achieving desired goals

Persuasion unfolds as communicators seek to achieve their goals or desired ends. It leads individuals to formulate plans for their accomplishment, and these plans are used to identify and guide actions for carrying out those plans (Berger, 1997:33). Communicators do not only vary in their goals, but also in their schemata (plans) for organising goals as well as skills at enacting plans (Burleson, 2010:146-148). Otherwise, the relevancy of adopting speeches of three different presidents in this study is due to the different persuasion-theoretic properties in their execution of goals. Having different audience under various horizons means that the three presidents selected for this research, plan differently and executive their plans differently, in alignment with how their messages are accepted or resisted by the targets (citizens).

Burleson (2010:147) asserts that plans are knowledge structures representing actions required to overcome obstacles and accomplishing goals and are ideally specified as such. Berger (1997:27) asserts that plan generation process occurs in two ways:

- Top-down where plans are formulated at high levels of abstraction while details are generated during influence interactions; and
- In bottom-up planning, plans generated during interactions amount to abstract plans at a later stage.

In relation to Covid-19 communication, a top-down plan would be to restrict social interaction, whereas a bottom-up plan may be employing stricter measures such as earlier curveaus on account of non-compliance from the public's side. On the same note, Sopory and Dillard (2000) in declaring that there are several qualifications for communicative competency facilitation evident in the complexity of plans and in planning process namely:

- A complex plan is neither necessary nor sufficient for competent performance;

- Planning too many alternatives in advance may undermine fluidity of speech performance;
- Relations between plan specificity and competence may vary depending on culture values detailed, short-range plans versus flexible, and long-range plans; and
- Complex and specific plans must be adapted to changing circumstances during interactions.

In the context of this study, for competent performance to be attained in terms of plans and planning, presidents deliver sequences of speeches following scientific research, evidence and observation of the spread of the virus. Sopory and Dillard (2003:21) say that communicators are more likely to persuade if they plan only a few alternatives, rather than too many. Delivering separate speeches over different time intervals ensures that the plan is specific and competent to garner persuasion.

With regards to plans in persuasion, it is evident that message production is fundamental to communication whether the message is being produced verbal or non-verbal regardless of context and situation or place. Furthermore, plans are specified as knowledge of structures representing actions necessary for overcoming obstacles and accomplishing goals which are mental representations of actions while strategies are overt behaviour exhibited by individuals.

The discussion in this section has motivated the adoption of GPA theory as the theoretical point of departure in mapping how persuaders garner persuasion and gain compliance. As stated earlier, GPA serves as a valuable tool for examining the macro-structure of political persuasion. However, it is crucial to note that goals are specific linguistic targets aimed at crafting a message that conveys a particular ‘type’ of intention, such as an instruction. This, however, necessitates an exploration of persuasion at a micro-linguistic level, which GPA does not account for as highlighted earlier.

As a result, to explore persuasion at a micro-level, the subsequent section brings in context linguistic theoretical tools and highlights how they interplay and complement the GPA theory in achieving linguistic persuasion, which is also critical in this study.

2.2.3 Linguistic persuasion

When a communicator within a text (spoken or written discourse) presents a viewpoint, he or she uses a wide range of linguistic elements to produce messages that influence the target (listeners, readers, and viewers) to comply. Unlike political persuasion which is for instance skewed to political discourse within a social standing, linguistic persuasion focuses on grammatical constituents that resort to influence (Jarraya, 2013:45). In other words, linguistic persuasion may be considered the building blocks of the plans and goals as discussed above. Linguistic persuasion has the following linguistic markers, which are often observable (Olimat, 2020:33):

- Repetition and redundancy - as messages are repeated, over and over, more and more receivers get to understand them. If receivers are not thinking very carefully about the persuasive appeal, a cliché draws their attention and makes them think;
- Authoritative appeal or even appeal to fear;
- Fixed topic and syntax, non-fluctuating meaning; and
- Evidence is something that somebody else created, that a source uses as a means of persuasion.

Similar to communicative and political persuasion, linguistic persuasion has been extensively investigated. For instance, Halmari and Virtanen (2005) edited a book comprising nine chapters devoted to the exploration of linguistic persuasion. Linguistic persuasion is focused on the selection of words and their arrangement to influence the target. In relation to GPA theory, this means that linguistic elements are used to activate the plan and achieve the goal. For instance, the use of hedges, hesitations, tag questions and disclaimers communicate uncertainty or lack of knowledge, and might not be effective in persuading the target, but using powerful speech such as power verbs might be very persuasive (Muradyan, 2015:44).

Based on an exploration of Barack Obama's campaign speeches, Zipagan, Tak and Kwak, (2021) find Barack to employ interpersonal metadiscoursal markers categories, viz. hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries. Furthermore, Zipagan et al. (2021) report that Obama uses attitude markers and commentaries to build emotional bonds with the audience as a persuasive strategy. Almutairi, Kous and Zitouni (2022) also highlight the importance of hedging in political speeches. They find the modal auxiliary verb 'can', to be the hedging device most often employed by Barack Obama, as a catchword in his campaign

slogan “Yes, we can”. Vivian, Boyd, Keller, Griffith, Loggarakis and Medema (2022:883) note that:

Linguistic features of a message necessarily shape its persuasive appeal. However, studies have largely examined the effect of linguistic features on persuasion in isolation and do not incorporate properties of language that are often involved in real-world persuasion. As such, little is known about the key verbal dimensions of persuasion or the relative impact of linguistic features on a message’s persuasive appeal in real-world social interactions.

Accordingly, this study departs from the researcher’s assumption that linguistic persuasion forms the basis of most types of persuasion (communicative and political). Since persuasion is threaded in language resources, either linguistically or in its visual-gestural modality, therefore, it seems sensible to consider the linguistic manifestation of communicative goals and plans as per GPA to model political persuasion comprehensively.

Topical research focusing on persuasive linguistic aspects include Al-Khayyat and Anber’s (2020) investigation of Covid-19 and its influence on political speeches. Their major finding is that pronouns “I”, “we” and “us” play major roles in promoting persuasion. Similarly, Tan, Woods, Azman, Abdullah, Hashim, Rahim, Idrus, Said, Lew and Kosem (2020) examine group of Covid-19 research papers by different scholars following a corpus-based, comparative textual and content analysis at the macro-linguistic and micro-linguistic levels. Tan et al. (2020)’s study reveals that scholars from different parts of the world explored, at the macro-linguistic level, several ways by which government institutions and agencies can communicate with the public about Covid-19 global pandemic.

Also, Olimat (2020) explores the Jordanians’ use of euphemistic and dysphemistic expressions for dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. From a sociolinguistic point of view, Olimat finds that the Jordanian citizens adopted several euphemistic strategies when talking about Covid-19 pandemic, such as scientific abbreviations, metaphors, medical terms, and shift from Arabic into English.

Furthermore, Obiajulu (2021) investigates strategic choice of language use in Bush’s Covid-19 message from a linguistic adaptation perspective. He finds that through the strategic choice of language use which adapts to the social, mental, and physical world, the former American

President Bush tends to persuade, encourage, and inculcate a sense of unity and the American spirit in the American citizens to remain calm by following health regulations. With a distinct focus on propaganda (a particular kind of persuasion), Maritz (2019) also explicates linguistic elements and proposes a model of linguistic elements and non-linguistic elements of propaganda.

To encapsulate, this study explores persuasion at micro and macro linguistic levels. The macro elements are accounted for by communicative and political approach to persuasion while the micro elements are accounted for by the linguistic approach to persuasion. The study aims to understand how selected presidents use language to convey goals, plans, and actions in speeches. The focus is not on an exhaustive account of linguistic theories but on features relevant to explaining linguistic building blocks for communicative goals. Adopting a functional linguistic perspective, the study draws on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework (Halliday, 1965), as the central framework to study persuasion. To operationalise SFL, Speech Act theory (Austin, 1969; Searle, 1962) and Maritz's (2019) Linguistic Propaganda Identification model are used as descriptive tools, contributing to theoretical triangulation for a comprehensive political persuasion model. The next sub-section provides a detailed account on SFL.

2.2.3.1 Systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1965)

SFL is adopted as the prominent theoretical lens in this study since it allows the researcher to focus on contextualised practical use of language as opposed to formal grammar in isolation (Muradyan, 2015:44). In this study, linguistic elements are viewed as grammatical conventions whereas communicative elements are tactics incurring the act of persuasion, and these linguistic elements are analysed in terms of the different metafunctions of language (Halliday, 1985). Although critical discourse analysis (CDA) is often used to analyse persuasive texts (Maritz, 2009:1), it mainly focuses on the underlying power relations in specific texts and not necessarily on the systemic aspect of language itself.

In contrast, SFL in textual analysis brings to the surface, the hidden discourses embroiled in the persuasive texts (presidential speeches) explored in the study (Maritz, 2009:78). SFL aims to unpack meaning, as opposed to traditional linguistic perspectives such as Universal Grammar theory (UG; Chomsky, 1965) that focuses on linguistic structure only (Ross, 2020).

The example below shows how a sentence can be analysed from a universal grammar (UG) approach versus against SFL approach.

The police quickly removed protesters from the controversial site.

In UG, this sentence would be analysed in terms of word classes, and grammatical arrangements. However, in SFL, the focus goes beyond grammatical conventions to a more practical pattern, taking into consideration the persuader, the target, and their context.

Table 2. 3: Traditional linguistics versus SFL

Sentence	The	Police	quickly	removed	protesters	From	the	controversial	site
UG	Det	Noun	Adverb	Verb	Noun	Pronoun	Det	Adjective	Noun
	Subject		Verb		Object	PP			
SFL	Participant: actor		Process: materials		Participant: goal	Circumstances (location – place)			
	Theme		Rheme						
	Mood: declarative			Residue					
	Given		New						

From the table, it becomes clear that SFL provides a breakdown of how the communicative goal is activated. This depicts that to persuade others, confronting them with the possibilities and expanding their understanding of themselves and their lives through asking them to act upon the advice and make the changes themselves (the material process) prove to be more effective than involving their emotions (the mental process) and pushing certain words into their minds (the verbal process). However, in the context of this study, the analysis of these aspects does not employ the above terms, as Martiz (2019) has already conducted this work and put forth a linguistic model for propaganda – a specific facet of persuasion. Therefore, by utilising Martiz’s Linguistic Propaganda Identification model, the study engages with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as the model is an expression of SFL principles.

Following Ross and Rivers (2020:643), in this study, SFL is adopted to explore persuasion because.

- It is more skewed towards communicative aims of a language;

- It is more concerned with the rationale and execution of communicators words in fulfilling their communicative function;
- It talks about context-dependent use of a language;
- It talks about the sociological aspect of a language;
- It aims to study the actual use of a language in society.

To understand persuasive messages embroiled in presidential Covid-19 speeches, one needs to firstly understand the linguistic elements in context. This means understanding the social setting and its people as well as the rationale behind their wording, thus, yielding the semantic meaning. In this study, SFL enables the researcher to explore these elements.

In alignment with the above, on their explanation of SFL, Hasan and Fries (1995) make the following assumptions:

- SFL is concerned with the grammatical choices made by communicators as opposed to the formal structure;
- Functionalism is the underlying principle i.e., the notion that linguistic form serves communicative function.

Halliday (1965)'s immediate goal in stylistic analysis is to achieve communicative goals. Accordingly, SFL views language as a complex adaptive semiotic system for making meaning. It is in this meaning wherein persuasion is realised. Therefore, SFL is suitable to inform the present study. There are some studies that have been carried out to explore persuasion through SFL framework. For instance, in her article titled "*Thai persuasive discourse: a systemic functional approach to an analysis of amulet advertisements*", Patpong (2009) investigates amulet advertisements as examples of persuasive discourse widely found in Thailand. Two key aspects of SFL analysed are context and lexicogrammar strata. Also, Schulze (2011) explores how a genre-based approach to writing instruction influenced by both genre theory and SFL supports the academic writing development of English language learners (ELLS) transitioning to middle school.

In the same vein, Adeyinka (2012) uses SFL to explore persuasive strategies in the language of insurance advertising in the print media in Nigeria. Drawing on Halliday's transitivity framework rooted in SFL, Darani (2014) reveals the persuasive style of the short story entitled '*Animal Farm*' by George Orwell (1945) from a semantic-grammatical point of view. On the

other hand, Khany and Hamzelou (2014) analyse 20 speeches of prominent historical political dictators using SFL to reveal their disguised intention and disclose their style as well as the structure of persuasion.

Recently, in his study, Yusuff (2020) adopts SFL to examine visual and verbal modes of persuasion in selected print advertisements on consumables in Nigeria with a view on revealing the visual and verbal modes of persuasion of the discourse. Yusuff (2020:24) concludes that print advertisements on consumables are multimodal, as visual images complement verbal modes in persuading the target audience.

While there is already an abundance of information on SFL and persuasion, existing studies tend to be theoretically biased, resulting in disconnected findings. Maritz (2019) proposes a linguistic model of persuasion (based on an analysis of persuasive messages and propaganda texts), based on an SFL-oriented exploration of propaganda (an extreme form of persuasion). However, the interface between the communicative goals, plans and actions are not addressed, which leaves a gap, motivating this study. However, as Maritz (2019)'s model is based on comprehensive analysis of text that propagates certain beliefs and behaviours, it is adopted as a theoretical tool to inform the present research, as motivated in the onset of this chapter. Therefore, SFL is adopted as the central theoretical framework guiding this research and is employed according to the LPIM.

Since LPIM focuses on the semantic level, SAT and GPA are used to explicate different levels of meaning making in political persuasion. In doing so, this study addresses the gap between communicative and linguistic perspectives on political persuasion by puzzling out the communicative and linguistic elements of persuasion that characterise political discourse and model the relationship between communicative and pragmatic strategies and linguistic elements, which ultimately yields communicative goals of presidents in the Covid-19 speeches.

To employ LPIM appropriately and interpret the data accordingly, it is necessary to understand the theoretical underpinnings of SFL. This also allows for considering how GPA and SAT align with SFL. Accordingly, SFL is considered in some detail below.

2.2.3.1 SFL strata and their relation in achieving persuasion

In SFL, language is analysed in five strata, which include phonetics, phonology, lexicogrammar, semantics and context. However, phonetics and phonology are beyond the

scope of the present study and the focus is only on lexicogrammar, semantics and context, to show how the interface of linguistic conventions, structure and social settings bring persuasion from meanings embedded in discourse segments. The figure below shows the relation between the five strata, though this study focuses only on the last outer three, viz. context, semantics and lexicogrammar.

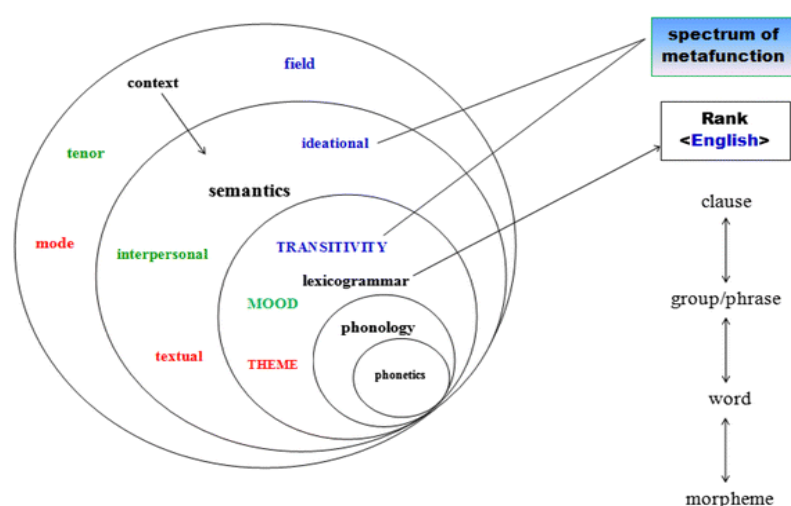


Figure 2. 1: Strata and their relations (adopted from Van Hoang, 2008)

One of the central tasks of linguists is to characterise and explain relations between form and meaning in language. Linguists differ in how they go about this according to their theoretical orientations and practical goals. However, they do converge on broad levels or domains (semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, and phonetics) as relevant to any account. SFL claims that the relation between the strata is that of realisation, with the lower stratum realising the next higher one; thus, phonology realises lexicogrammar which realises semantics, which in turn realises context (Patpong, 2009:197). However, the relation of realisation between strata is not the same everywhere. This implies that wording, meaning implied and situationality impact on the realisation of persuasion.

The relationship between the three higher strata is not one-way but a dialectic or a bi-directional one. So far as the relation between context and language is concerned, the bi-directional nature of realisation is reflected in the fact that, given a specific use of language operative in context, one may infer what the context may be; reciprocally given a particular context one may anticipate what kinds of meanings are likely to be exchanged (Halliday, 1975).

In this regard, it is evident that persuasion is embroiled in the semantic strata. However, to understand the semantic structure, one should understand linguistic tools in the

lexicogrammatical strata and understand the participants and other social etiquettes in the context strata. To comprehend the linguistic execution of communicative goals of the presidents in their Covid-19 speeches, the researcher ought to firstly understand their domestic setting, people involved, their usage of words and intention as well as other factors of influence.

Here the concepts ‘activation’ and ‘construal’ most clearly articulated by Hasan (1993, 1995) and Hasan and Perrett (1994) are crucial. They reflect two aspects of the relationship of realisation: the stratum above activates the stratum below; the stratum below construes the stratum above. Therefore, to flag persuasion, lexicogrammar construes semantics which activates lexicogrammatical choices. In the same way, semantics construes social context which activates semantics (Hasan, 2005:110-11).

Drawing from the above, it is evident that strata in SFL are:

- To achieve specific purpose e.g., persuade;
- To exhibit stages e.g., the beginning; and
- To show linguistics features e.g., rhetorical question, tenses and epithets.

2.2.3.2 Metafunctions establishing persuasion in SFL

Literature (e.g., Halliday, 2002; Patpong, 2009; Ross, 2020) shows that there is a close connection between the three semiotic functions and the three semantic metafunctions, which are field (ideational metafunctions), tenor (interpersonal metafunction), and mode (textual metafunctions).

According to Halliday (2002:24), the SFL’s semantic element can be categorised into three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction represents how the text portrays external reality. Informally, it refers to the message’s substance, often the initial consideration when discussing the semantic component (Ross, 2020:54). Consequently, it is complexly linked to the processes, encompassing actions, events, or states, the entities involved in these processes, and, if referenced, the circumstances in which they occur. The interpersonal metafunction focuses on the connections between the speaker and the receiver, as well as between the speaker and the message. Lastly, the textual metafunction contributes to the textual coherence, distinguishing a text from a mere series of words or clauses (Patpong, 2009:199). It involves aspects such as thematic structure, information structure, and cohesion.

In the same way that language encoding relies on semantic metafunctions, the substance of these metafunctions is contingent upon and controlled by the semiotic functions of register (Halliday, 2005:112). Consequently, SFL emphasises the crucial link between context and language. This pertains to communicative persuasion, wherein the influence is context dependent.

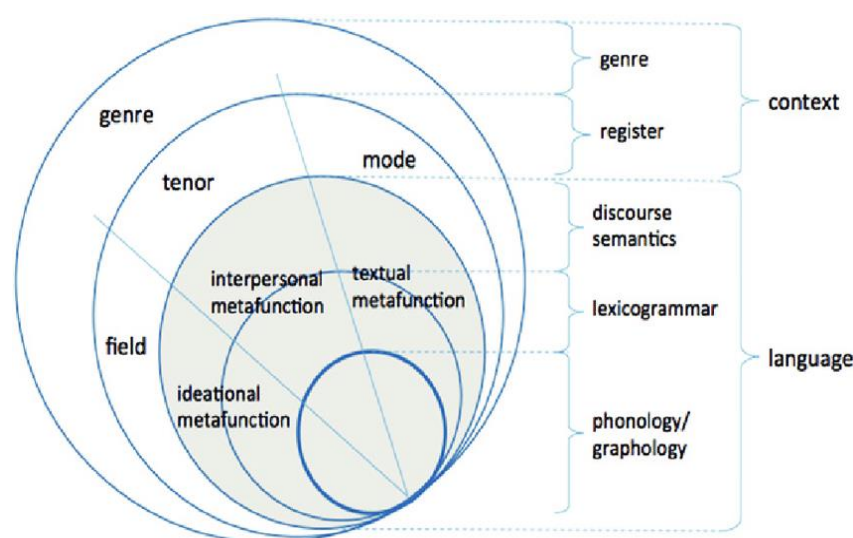


Figure 2. 2: Metafunctions in SFL (adopted from Van Hoang, 2021)

At a textual level, conjunctive adjuncts can be used to place textual parts in relation to one another. An important differentiation can be made between circumstantial adjuncts that can be understood from the ideational metafunctions because it presents events (Simon-Vandenberg, 2014:125). As opposed to this, modals and comment adjuncts can be understood from the interpersonal metafunctions. With the use of modal adjuncts, the communicator can indicate the chance of something happening.

The persuader can use commentary adjuncts to reach out to the target audience to evoke certain emotions with the help of, among others, emotive adverbs (Patpong, 2009:188). Also, when exploring persuasion, collocations can also be used for semantic manipulation of nouns by ascribing a new contextual meaning to them. For example, nouns such as “force”, “power” and “skills” can be powerful persuasive devices when contextualised.

The impact of these nouns can be intensified with persuasion, through the simultaneous use of evaluative adjectives, in that, certain negative ideas are strengthened from the one word to the next (Nurroysida, 2016:26). For example, specific quantifiers may be used specially to copy scientific discourse or media discourse to increase the trustworthiness of a persuasive text. Metafunctions in SFL directly link to registers in realising persuasion, as discussed below.

2.2.3.3 Role of registers towards persuasion

A particular concern is that Halliday's own view of register as a "semantic configuration" (e.g., Halliday, 2002) and "setting of probabilities in the semantics" (Simon-Vandenberg, 2014, 125) has not had sufficient critical explication (Moore, 2017:445), nor has his claim that register is the product of settings in the three dimensions field, tenor, and mode (Bowcher, 2009:420). Halliday describes register as a "variety of language, corresponding to a variety of situation" (Halliday, 1985:29). Regardless of this assertion, this study adopts registers due to their complex nature of yielding persuasion.

Across Halliday's accounts of context-language relations, features of the context, namely, field, tenor, and mode, tend to be given an agentive property in that they are often said to determine (Halliday et al., 2007:20) or activate (Halliday, 2002:54) corresponding features in the semantics. Matthiessen (2015:54) shows how 'a register' can be thought of as one 'state' of the overall language system, activated by field, tenor, and mode settings. Alternatively, registers can be modelled as a partitioned system, where access to options in the generalised language system be 'blocked' for certain registers. Empirical descriptions of register variation that exemplify this approach include Nesbitt and Plum's (1988) large-scale quantitative study of clause complexing in different narrative registers, and Caffarel's (1992) work on French tense in different registers.

In the context of Covid-19 presidential speeches, activation of persuasion through registers is a critical facet. The researcher observes that the selection of registers plays a pivotal role in shaping the persuasive impact of these addresses. For instance, employing a tone and language choice characterised by empathy and connection fosters resonance with the public, encouraging adherence to recommended Covid-19 guidelines.

- **Field**

Field is what is going on, the topic in the exchange such as linguistics or coffee or puzzle construction or magnetic field or constructing a robotic arm in a science classroom, anything that serves as the central content in which language is situated. Field expresses the "happenings and doings" of the exchange (Sepbrina, 2019:43). The resources used in the field are participants (the 'whos' or the 'whats' expressed through noun phrases), processes (actions, expressed through verb groups), and circumstances (the 'wheres' and the 'hows,' expressed through adverbials).

In terms of Covid-19 presidential speeches, one may expect the field to entail Covid-19, health, safety of the public, curbing the spread of the virus, the lack of beds and medical staff available in hospitals, symptoms of Covid-19 and the effects of contracting Covid-19.

- ***Tenor***

Tenor is concerned with the role relationships of those involved in language use, with the audience and voice. Tenor is present regardless of whether the exchange is a monologue or a dialogue (Halliday, 1985:29). Tenor points to the fact that all of language is dialogic and even heteroglossia. A tenor is used to construe our identity or position ourselves as self-confident and direct or timid and suggestive.

In persuasion, communicators use tenor to take on expert roles when presenting their knowledge or engaging in debates. In the context of this study, this is apparent when presidents are addressing the public on their speeches. Presidential speeches in this study contain information that has been duly researched by experts in terms of how to deal with virus, so, they are persuasive in that nature. In this context, presidents wield “vested powers” by virtue of their position and the delivery of well-informed speeches. The power dynamic is discernible in the imbalance of information and resources. Presidents commonly possess access to privileged information, expert advice, and institutional authority to implement policies. This information asymmetry positions them to shape narratives and influence public opinion in promoting adherence to Covid-19 protocols.

- ***Mode***

The mode is concerned with what role language plays. Is it spoken-like (but written) or is written-like (but spoken)? Halliday called attention to the difference between written and spoken language. According to Halliday (2002:19), written language is not spoken language written down, it is a distinctly different activity that humans engage in. Spoken languages existed long before written systems were created to encode the culture’s knowledge. Communicators do different things when engaged in different modes, but the mode of language is not dichotomous: spoken or written. This brings the mode to continuum (Sindoni, 2014:78).

The mode continuum places language use from language as action to language as reflection. The mode continuum is defined by the distance between language and the social process occurring. It also can be described as the “experiential distance.” In the action end, language is part of the social process, while at the reflection end, language constitutes the social process.

Language as reflection constructs the experiences. In the language as action end of the continuum, the context helps the language such as pointing or the presence of people or things in the action (Halliday, 2004:33).

In the language as reflection end, the language does the heavy lifting because there is not much in the context to help (Halliday, 2004:33). The language resources, therefore, is strategically selected for the experience to be construed so that the audience can understand what is going on. The language as action can also be described using the words of Macken-Horarik (1996:133) as the language of “here and now, you and me”. The language accompanying action may not require complete sentences, precise words, and even objects might not need to be named. For example, using words such as ‘*they*’ and ‘*this thing*,’ ‘*does this stuff*’ and people can understand us because the context helps to fill in those gaps. The language as reflection is constructed through language of abstraction and precision because the context is not there to help.

In the context of presidential Covid-19-related speeches aimed at persuading citizens to comply with protocols, the strategic selection of language resources becomes crucial for effective communication. To ensure a clear understanding of the experience, presidents ought to choose language strategically to convey a sense of immediacy and personal relevance. Adapting language resources to the specific communicative context enhances the persuasive impact of presidential speeches, fostering understanding and encouraging compliance with Covid-19 protocols. Having expounded on SFL, the next section discusses a product of SFL, which is Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (Maritz, 2019).

2.2.4 Linguistic Propaganda Identification Model (Maritz, 2019)

Drawing from SFL framework, Maritz (2019) developed a Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (LPIM) in her study titled “*Linguistiese eienskappe van propaganda*” (Linguistic properties of propaganda). With the help of narratology, Maritz (2019) finds a way to analyse a text by doing a cohesive analysis of the non-linguistic and linguistic aspects of a text. The study provides a structured set of linguistic properties of propaganda at a linguistic level. Employing SFL, a clear connection is made between the general functions of language and the specific language used in propaganda. Maritz’s study, therefore, provides a workable, dependable, and systematic set of tools for future analyses of propaganda texts, primarily at a linguistic level, but also at a content level.

Since propaganda and persuasion are related concepts (refer to Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion), this study adopts Maritz's (2019) model as a theoretical tool to guide in devising a comprehensive model on the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion in selected presidential Covid-19 related speeches. The assumption is that the features of propaganda included in the model are per definition features of persuasion, though not all persuasion is propaganda.

Following the approach taken by Maritz in her provisional systematic model in determining linguistic segments that could potentially be used in propaganda, the current researcher is able to extract and highlight linguistic elements employed by presidents in their Covid-19 speeches. This enables the current researcher to develop this study's provisional model on the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion (refer to Figure 3.2 in Section 3.4). By employing this model, this study also achieves a secondary aim by contributing to the field of knowledge through critical interaction with Maritz's model. Despite its potential benefits in this study, LPIM does not fall short of criticism, the most prominent one being the fact that it does not provide theoretical constructs to interpret speech acts entailing acts of persuasion. It is also vital to note that recent studies such as Duerr and Gloor (2020) as well as Oktiani and Putri (2022) report that persuasion is an act by itself which can be gained using other acts beside the verb to persuade. This brings into context, the Speech Act theory which accounts for pragmatic frames entailing acts of persuasion (SAT; Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), as discussed next.

2.2.5 Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969)

Studying persuasion from a speech act perspective is not a new thing, there are studies that have attempted to explore persuasion from this perspective for example, Altikriti (2016) explores persuasive speech acts in Barack Obama's inaugural speeches (2009, 2013) and the last state of the union address (2016). Similarly, Asma-Dahmoune (2023) investigates the relationship between persuasion and SAT, by looking at persuasion from a speech act theoretical lens. The main finding is that persuasion is the perlocutionary effect that is generated from any situation that has a persuasive impact. Also, from an SAT perspective, Aziz, and Othman (2020) explore speech acts use in persuasion and deception in marketing discourse. The findings show that marketers apply mostly assertive speech acts to persuade and avoid commitment.

In this study, SAT (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) is adopted for the purpose of interpreting the existence of linguistic manifestations in discourse segments or excerpts from selected presidential speeches by means of examining the apparent speech acts employed by selected presidents in consideration of the illocutionary force or intention, such as a command and the desired perlocutionary effect or reaction, for example, to comply with the Covid-19 protocols. SAT is further used to specify how persuaders (presidents) make their intentions apparent as set out on the second objective of this study in Chapter 1.

SAT sees language as an instrument for the performance of social acts. In this regard, it aligns with SFL as both are concerned with communicative functions. SAT postulates that the smallest unit of human communication is not the sentence as a syntactic unit but entities, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, and describing, regardless of their linguistic form as basic communicative units. These are labelled speech acts, whereby speakers do things in the real world.

It is understood that in this theoretical tool, a statement is essentially considered as a means for the description of states of affairs or facts. Austin's original foundations soon gave way to a more comprehensive theory of speech acts, or what he calls a "sea-change" (Levinson, 1983:231). Austin (1962) proposed a five-fold categorisation of performative verbs which plays a role in persuasion, as shown in Table 2.4 below.

Table 2. 4: Speech acts categories yielding persuasion

Category	Use
Verdictives	They involve giving a verdict or findings. Pragmatic cases include sentencing, pleading, and pronouncing.
Exercitives	Exercising power and influence.
Commissives	They commit a speaker to do an action e.g declaring.
Behabitives	This group relates to attitudes and social behaviours.
Expositives	Clues on how words are used.

Searle's (1975) refined this model, proposing the following types of speech acts:

- **Representatives/assertives:** They commit the speaker in varying degrees to the truth of the expressed proposition. They include asserting, claiming, saying, reporting, doubting, denying, concluding, and the like. For example, "while this measure will have

a considerable impact on people's livelihoods, on the life of our society and on our economy, the human cost of delaying this action would be far, far greater." (President Ramaphosa, 2020).

- **Directives:** They are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. Requests, suggestions, commands are all cases of directives. For example, "the National Corona Virus Council has decided to enforce a nationwide 21-day lockdown" (President Cyril Ramaphosa, 2020).
- **Commissives:** They commit the speaker to some future course of action as in promising, threatening and offering. For example, when presidents state that failure to adhere to Covid-19 social distancing measure can result in higher death toll.
- **Expressives:** They express a psychological state like feelings or attitudes about states of affairs. This category subsumes thanking, apologising, welcoming, congratulating, deploring, regretting, etc. For example, when presidents thank residents for adhering to the set protocol to combat the Covid-19 virus.
- **Declarations:** Resembling Austin's performatives, these speech acts effect immediate changes in the institutional situation and tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions. This includes cases of excommunicating, christening, firing from employment, and so on. For example, when President Cyril Ramaphosa said that those who will be found on the streets without permits will be arrested (SA response to Covid, 2020).

It is paramount to highlight that several other taxonomies have been offered, adding further categories such as Fraser's (2012) acts of evaluating and Hancher's (2010) inviting, challenging and contracting, as well as others. It is also observed that there are countless cases of speech acts which do not seem to belong to any of the postulated classes, such as greetings and farewells (Schmidt & Richards, 1980:45). By far, Searle's (1969) five-fold taxonomy remains the most influential (Huang, 2006:23) and is therefore adopted for the purpose of this study.

The notion of an illocutionary act is central to SAT. This refers to intended communicative force or function of the utterance. In this case, the dominant illocutionary force of the speeches in question is persuasion to comply. This intention may be expressed directly or indirectly by means of the different types of speech acts. As such, SAT can give insight into persuasion in a

way that compliments the LPIM and GPA. The subsequent section synthesises the discussion thus far and presents the theoretical framework for the current study.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

To achieve effective persuasion, communicators deploy a range of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic tools to secure compliance. For instance, individuals with higher social status might exert their authority over those with less influence and do so in a direct or indirect manner. This discourse dynamic hinges on both contextual nuances and vocabularies cultivated through social, professional, and vocational training (Dillard & Marshall, 2003:502). Drawing from the discussion above, this study re-defines persuasion as the attainment of communicative goals through the manipulation of linguistic tools within a specific context.

What distinguishes this study from related studies is its integration of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic facets of persuasion. Particularly, it stands out by delving into the thematic attributes embedded within linguistic elements, revealing how communication with goal-oriented intentions transpires within Covid-19 presidential speeches.

This study centres on how presidents strategically employ linguistic resources to realise their communicative intentions to attain communicative goals. Consequently, the study delves into the interplay between linguistic and political persuasion, unraveling the extent of their reciprocal influence. The present academic landscape offers minimal, if any, studies that merge linguistic, communicative, and political persuasion for a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Thus, the relevance of this study lies in its novel fusion of these dimensions, exploring and consequently modelling linguistics, and communicative strategies to wield political persuasion. The study's scope encompasses message production, examining how persuaders (in this case, presidents) leverage their understanding of linguistic forms and conventions when crafting persuasive messages. This often involves issuing directives, commands, instructions, and making requests, particularly in the context of Covid-19-related discourses.

To achieve this, a multipronged perspective is required, centred around the multifaceted notion of 'persuasion'. Within the SFL broader framework, viewing linguistic elements as grammatical conventions, and communicative elements as tactics incurring the act of

persuasion, this study first draws on GPA theory (Dillard, 1998) to outline communicative goals, plans and actions of persuaders in question.

The adoption of the GPA theory as one of the theoretical tools is not without its limitations. While GPA theory provides a valuable lens for examining the macro-structure of political persuasion by focusing on overarching goals, plans, and actions, it falls short when scrutinising persuasion at a micro-linguistic level. The theory's emphasis on specific linguistic targets related to crafting messages for intentions, such as instructions, overlooks the complex nuances inherent in persuasion at a finer linguistic granularity. The inadequacy of GPA in accounting for micro-linguistic intricacies necessitates the integration of additional theoretical perspectives to offer a comprehensive understanding of persuasive elements in presidential speeches. Triangulation, involving the incorporation of other theories (LPIM & SAT), becomes imperative to bridge the gap and provide a holistic analysis. By bringing in contextual linguistic theoretical tools in the theoretical framework, this study addresses the limitations of GPA and illustrates how these theoretical tools complement and enrich the analysis of linguistic persuasion.

To account for the goals, plans and actions derived from GPA theory, the study adopts Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (Maritz, 2019). Maritz's (2019) LPIM serves as a foundation for understanding persuasive messages and propaganda through a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)-oriented approach. This triangulation of theoretical tools within the SFL framework aims to illuminate how linguistic choices, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure, are strategically employed in political speeches. The SFL framework allows for the analysis of language choices shaping social relations and presidents' communicative goals, including identifying conjunctions and considering registers influenced by field, tenor, and mode.

The LPIM primarily focuses on the semantic level, offering a comprehensive analysis of texts promoting specific beliefs and behaviours. Despite its strength in unveiling persuasive strategies, it is vital to note that LPIM cannot serve as the sole theoretical framework in this study because it falls short in addressing the intricate interplay between communicative goals, plans and actions, leaving a substantial gap in understanding the dynamics of persuasion in political discourse.

While Maritz's model is adopted as an informative tool, its narrow focus necessitates the incorporation of additional theoretical perspectives to fully capture the nuanced relationship

between goals, elements and strategies of political persuasion. In essence, LPIM's deficiency in considering the broader communicative context prompts the need for a more comprehensive theoretical framework to guide the analysis of presidential speeches and their persuasive elements. In this regard, the study also incorporates the Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) abbreviated as SAT in this study.

Primarily, SAT focuses on the illocutionary force of utterances, categorising them as directives, assertives, commissives, and so forth. However, this narrow focus on speech acts may overlook the complex interplay of various linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed in persuasive discourse. This means that while foundational in understanding linguistic communication, SAT falls short as a comprehensive theoretical framework for studying persuasion from communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic perspectives, it only accounts for pragmatics. Therefore, a more comprehensive theoretical framework would need to consider broader linguistic features, such as figurative language, rhetorical structures, and contextual factors, to capture the nuanced strategies used in persuasive communication by political figures. Speech act theory's limitation in addressing these additional layers of complexity makes it insufficient for a study seeking to delve deeply into the goals, persuasive elements and strategies of presidential speeches. Therefore, the adoption of additional theoretical tools is necessary; this is referred to as theory triangulation.

Theory triangulation allows the researcher to explore the phenomenon of persuasion beyond the borders of what is currently available in literature, since it entails using different theories to analyse the same dataset (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021:2). It enhances the robustness and reliability of the analysis, since the same data is explored from different theoretical frames (Angen, 2006:66). Theory triangulation supports a holistic understanding of complex phenomena, as demonstrated by Lu (2018), who considers persuasion from the overlapping perspectives of cognitive and functional linguistics. This strategy harnesses the benefits of increased confidence in findings, as the integration of these theories unveils distinctive insights, offering a comprehensive grasp of this complex phenomenon (Thurmond, 2001:254; Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011; Carter et al, 2014).

Accordingly, unlike previous studies (e.g., Ralarala, 2010; Sadiki, 2017; Titi, 2018) which focused only on the communicative constituencies when exploring persuasion, this study follows functional interrogative approach to uncover the hidden discourses embroiled in the evident persuasive discourse segments and grammatical constituencies. Adopting this approach

underscores the foundational principle of functionalism. The intent here is to cultivate a nuanced comprehension of the goals, elements and strategies employed by the three selected presidents in their political speeches and how these are executed linguistically.

Thus far, the discussion in this chapter demonstrates that ‘persuasion’ is a multifaceted, multidimensional construct. Consequently, drawing on the selected theoretical tools allows the researcher to obtain unique insight from each perspective, while complimenting strengths and weaknesses of each single approach. However, for theory triangulation to be useful, the researcher ought to have a deep understanding of each individual theory. This section serves the purpose of demonstrating how each of the theoretical perspectives relate to each other and are relevant to exploring persuasion in the selected data. Figure 2.3 below illustrates the study’s theoretical framework to visually show how the adopted theories are applied.

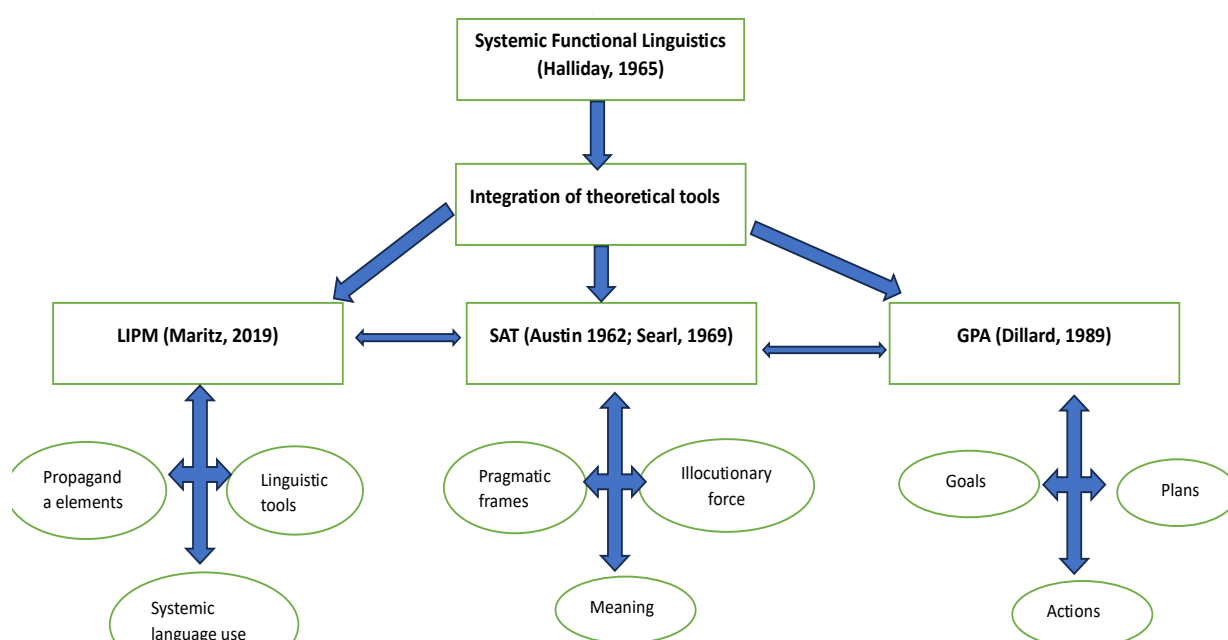


Figure 2.3: Theoretical framework¹

As evident in this figure, triangulating LPIM, SAT and GPA within the SFL framework offers a comprehensive approach to analyse persuasion in Covid-19 presidential speeches. As a product of SFL, LPIM shows the systematic use of language to activate persuasion and it aids in identifying linguistic elements employed for persuasion, helping uncover subtle techniques such as framing and narrative construction. On the other hand, by focusing on the illocutionary force of utterances, SAT reveals how speech acts function persuasively in shaping public perception. SAT facilitates the unraveling of meaning intertwined with linguistic features of

¹ Figure 2.3: Theoretical Framework

persuasion. Finally, the GPA theory aids in discerning goals embedded in presidential messages and provides insights into the cognitive processes behind goal formation, planning, and action, elucidating the strategic objectives embedded in the speeches.

Moreover, this study ventures into a cross-cultural comparison of persuasive language employed by African, Western, and Eastern presidents, enriching its insights and contributing to the global discourse on the subject. These elements collectively render this study's framework timely, relevant, and appealing to researchers worldwide.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In summation, this chapter has laid the foundation of the study's theoretical framework. The review of existing theoretical perspectives has brought to light noteworthy gaps in scholarship, particularly the absence of a comprehensive amalgamation of communicative, linguistic, and political persuasion. In response to this void, the present study adopts a rigorous approach termed 'theory triangulation', aimed at harmonising these three dimensions. This integration is achieved through the application of key framework, which is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The SFL framework manifested through the following theoretical tools: Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and the Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (Maritz, 2019) as well as the Goals Plans Actions (GPA) theory (Dillard, 1989). Theory triangulation fosters a comprehensive understanding of persuasion and allows for overlapping perspectives of cognitive and functional linguistics. The chosen theoretical lenses stand as apt choices for this study's subject matter. It provides the requisite analytical tools for deconstructing and reconstructing meaning within the complex interplay of communicative, linguistic and political persuasion contexts.

Drawing from the insights gained in this chapter, this study re-defined persuasion as the attainment of communicative goals through the manipulation of linguistic tools within a specific context. This chapter has thus illuminated the study's unique approach of weaving communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements together to investigate political persuasion in a complete manner. Building upon this foundation, the subsequent chapter delves more deeply into the existing literature, offering a comprehensive review of communicative, linguistic and pragmatic elements, as well as various strategies of persuasion. This study provides an in-depth understanding of the complexities within these components, setting the stage for the subsequent chapter which delves into elements and strategies of persuasion.

CHAPTER THREE

ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIES OF PERSUASION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter laid the theoretical groundwork for this study by exploring diverse theoretical approaches to persuasion and endorsing theory triangulation as a suitable theoretical framework for informing the current research. Chapter 2 emphasised the existing void in the amalgamation of linguistic, pragmatic, and communicative elements to induce persuasion in Covid-19 presidential speeches. To bridge this gap, the current chapter conceptually delves into the communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies of persuasion.

This chapter provides a thorough examination of persuasive elements and strategies within political discourse, exemplified by relevant instances from presidential speeches pertaining to Covid-19 and other domains. Within the scope of this study, elements of persuasion are deemed fundamental, while strategies of persuasion are deliberate actions undertaken for persuasive success. To facilitate a comprehensive understanding, the chapter systematically presents prior studies showcasing communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements, along with strategies of persuasion.

Furthermore, the chapter unpacks the theoretical toolboxes identified for triangulation in the preceding chapter. In this process, the researcher integrates aspects of the study's theoretical framework into the discussion of various elements and strategies of persuasion, thus creating a multifaceted network. Guided by the study's framework (refer to Section 2.3) and the reviewed elements and strategies of persuasion, the chapter formulates a provisional model of persuasion, intended for use in the analysis of sampled speeches in subsequent chapters. This provisional model remains open to revision and further development. The chapter starts by delving into elements of persuasion.

3.2 ELEMENTS OF PERSUASION

Persuasion involves a deliberate effort to alter the attitudes or beliefs of an individual or group toward a particular event, idea, object, or other individuals, achieved through the presentation of information and arguments. While this definition may seem straightforward, scholars such as Dontchevareveal-Navratilova, Adam, Povolna, and Vogel (2020) reveal the sophisticated

nature of persuasion by exploring various specialised discourses, genres, and cultural nuances. This study acknowledges the complexity highlighted by Dontchevareveal-Navratilova et.al (2020) and seeks to contribute to existing scholarship.

Dontchevareveal-Navratilova et al. (2020) delve into the examination of rhetorical strategies employed for persuasion across cultures and genres. Their analysis encompasses a corpus of academic research articles, corporate reports, religious sermons, and user manuals. Drawing on Biber and Conrad's (2009) model for contextualising interaction in specialised discourses, Bell's (1997) framework for analysing participant roles, Swales' (1990) genre analysis approach for considering genre constraints, and Hyland's (2005;2017) metadiscourse model for investigating writer-reader interaction, the authors make a substantial contribution. However, it is noteworthy that their text does not fully capture the interconnected nature of communicative and linguistic elements within persuasive strategies.

In contrast, Lu (2018) approaches persuasion as a rhetorical phenomenon in public discourse. Lu views persuasion as a method for speakers to appeal to the intellectual and emotional capacities of the audience amid various competing elements in the environment. This perspective on persuasion integrates overlapping insights from cognitive and functional linguistics. To bridge the gap between communicative and linguistic perspectives on political persuasion, as highlighted in Section 2.3, this study puzzles out the communicative and linguistic elements of persuasion that characterise political discourse and models the relationship between communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies, which ultimately yield communicative goals of presidents in the Covid-19 speeches. This section, therefore, discusses elements of persuasion, which for the purpose of this study are threaded into three groups, namely communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic. Section 3.2.1 below details communicative elements of persuasion.

3.2.1 Communicative elements of persuasion

This study's exploration of persuasion will remain incomplete without a brief deliberation on communication in general. According to Du Plooy (2009:1) and Wilson (2023:2), researchers in human communication have throughout history attempted to explore, uncover, and rediscover reasons for communication occurrence. Burleson (2010:150) articulates:

Communication refers to a name for everyday activity in which people build, but sometimes blast apart, their intimate, work, and public relationships; it is an offered

routinely solution to the problems engendered in societies in which people need to live and work with others who differ from themselves.

Similarly, De Wet (2010:2) highlights the fundamental modes of communication within the context of the process of communication, including intrapersonal, dyadic, or interpersonal, small group, mass, and vertical communication. Of all these forms, mass communication is of interest to the current study, on the basis that political speeches being explored were broadcast live on national television and digitally published for millions of audiences to access, this forms the basis of mass communication wherein the communicator communicates with masses of people at the same time, without them responding (Duplooy, 2012:47). Further, Mongeau, Jacobsen, and Donnerstein (2007:536) believe that messages are uttered with the intention of influencing or persuading others. While Dillard and Marshall (2003:30) believe that all communication gesture have meaning and should influence the target.

This study takes a different approach from previous studies including Ralarala (2010), Titi (2014) and Sadiki (2017), who explore persuasion from an interpersonal perspective, with a distinct focus on both the communicator (persuader) and the target (recepient). Unlike in interpersonal communication wherein persuasion is threaded during the interaction between the communicator and the target, the focus of this study is on the communicator rather than on the target, because the presidential speeches are not “dialogic” but “monologic”.

Therefore, the present study takes a mass communication approach. This means that this study puts emphasis on the execution of communicator’s goals instead of how the target responds to persuasion. Although this may be considered a shortcoming, there are already studies that have explored persuasion from the target’s perspective i.e., how the target complies with or rejects persuasion and the strategies they use. Limiting the focus of the present study to persuasion in mass communication, therefore, serves to address a specific gap.

Burleson (2010:151) alludes to communication as a type of social interaction centred in the process of producing and interpreting messages. This view is in line with SFL as discussed in the Section 2.2.3.1. In the context of this study, presidential Covid-19 related speeches serve as mass communication since they involve sharing of messages from the presidents to the public. Communicators communicate to achieve specific goals, which are also encapsulated in the persuasive messages of political leaders (Nendauni, 2018:44). However, people are more easily persuaded if they think the message is not deliberately intended to persuade or manipulate them (Dillard & Marshall, 2003:33). Therefore, various strategies –

communicative, linguistics and pragmatics - are employed to guise persuasive messages in such a way that the audience will comply without resistance.

In furthering the discussion, Baxter and Byland (2004:192) suggest that in the 'social-meaning perspective' of communication whereby parties are identified in terms of rights and obligations, the target is also a co-constructor of the meaning of the strategic message during a communicative exchange. For example, messages regarding Covid-19 disseminated from the presidents to the public require the public to comprehend, make meanings and decode either by complying or resisting compliance (although this study's focus is on the communicator as opposed to the target).

According to Solitz and Giles (2010:75), communication transpires when language is used to formulate messages and to perform social actions. Hence this study is relevant because it may expose the role of communicative and other elements in attaining communicative goals. There are several communicative elements of persuasion that have been flagged by early researchers of persuasion. This study systematically reviews previous studies to identify evident communicative elements of persuasion as detailed in Table 3.1 below.

Obeng (1997) identifies apologetic expressions, deferential modes of address, reference, and speech forms as some of the communicative elements of persuasion. A further exploration by Sadiki (2017) reveals message content, message structure, liking and the credibility of the communicator, intelligence, and trustworthiness as communicative elements of persuasion. On the other hand, Drażkowski et al. (2021) name the following communicative elements of persuasion; negotiation, acknowledgement of imposition, and the use of compliments (refer to Table 3.1).

Table 3. 1: A systematic review of communicative elements of persuasion

<i>Source</i>	<i>Study title</i>	<i>Study aims</i>	<i>Communicative elements of persuasion evident</i>
Obeng (1997)	Communication strategies: Persuasion and politeness in Akan Judicial discourse	The aim of this study was to determine persuasive communication discourses evident in Akan judicial discourse.	Apologetic expressions, deferential modes of address, reference, speech forms, credibility, and good attitude towards the speaker.
Sadiki (2017)	Persuasion in compliance-gaining messages in Tshivenda drama Texts: a communication theoretic approach to interpersonal Interactions	The aim of this study was to explore compliance-gaining messages during interpersonal interactions that garner persuasion by critically analysing discourses excerpts from selected Tshivenda drama texts.	Message content, message structure, liking and the credibility of the communicator, intelligence, trustworthiness, and competence.
Drażkowski, Trepanowski, Chwiłkowska and Majewska (2021)	Self-persuasion increases motivation to social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic through moral obligation	The aim of this study was to investigate how self-persuasion increases motivation to social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic through moral obligation	Negotiation, acknowledgement of imposition, and the use of compliments, credibility, and liking.

From the summary provided in Table 3.1, there are major communicative elements of persuasion that are evident in all the reviewed studies. These are: ‘credibility of the communicator’ and ‘liking of the communicator’. However, in their study, Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953), cited in Mongeau, Jacobsen, and Donnerstein (2007:538), note three general communicative elements of persuasion, viz. the communicator or the source (who); the communication, or message (what); and lastly, the audience (to whom). It seems plausible then that credibility and likeability of the speaker are interlinked with who the speaker is, who the target is and what the message is. Each of these elements are briefly considered in more detail below in relation to the elements of credibility and likeability.

O’Keefe (1990:133) describes credibility as the judgements made by the target regarding the believability of the communicator, with varying perceptions from one target to the next and from one context to another. However, it is worth noting that credibility may be observable from competence and trustworthiness as two dimensions that represent many communication-relevant judgements made by targets. According to Sadiki (2017:41), the competence dimension which is usually referred to as “expertise, authoritativeness, or qualification is commonly denoted in assessment binary expressions such as (in)experienced, (un)informed, (un)trained, (un)qualified, (un)skilled and (un)intelligent”. This means that targets are more likely to be persuaded if the communicator is considered an expert and if they understand what it means to be an expert. However, failure to recognise the expertise of the communicator might

yield failure to persuade. Ultimately, these items determine whether the target is in the position to know the truth and what is right to conclude about the communicator's credibility or reliability. For example, former president Trump, according to Faiz Yulianti and Septiana (2020), employed logos in his speech about Jerusalem by giving information about the role of Israel in creating peace in Jerusalem.

O'Keefe (1990:133) explicates that education, occupation, and experience are also manipulated in judgements of the communicator's credibility. In addition, Burgoon, Dunbar and Segrin (2012:160-162) argue that source attractiveness determines the target's positive attitude, viz. similarity in sharing background, values, knowledge, or communication styles that sharpens attraction and thereafter enhances persuasion. Further, similarities and commonalities between communicator and target is determined by relationships such as age, gender, occupation, affiliations, interpersonal styles, attitudes and so on (Sadiki, 2017:42). For example, the public is more likely to believe an elderly politician than a young politician due to their experience in political scenery. All three presidents whose speeches serve as data for this study are more experienced politicians.

Sopory and Dillard (2002:84) assert that communicators who are specialists are more persuasive than laypeople. For example, when debating a political issue, it is easier to believe a political analyst than a mere citizen who does not have certified political knowledge. Sopory and Dillard contend that when a message is conveyed by a person who is presumed to be fully informed, such as a politician or a member of the community, the same message has more significance and is valued more. This means that communicators who are popular and more persuasive than those who are not are more likely to persuade the targets. This is supported by Titi (2009:55) who says, "messages spoken by well-known individuals, such as political leaders, are readily absorbed by audiences". The three presidents relevant to this study may also be considered political specialists, although Mr Trump is traditionally from a business background.

In the context of this study, it is important to highlight that most presidents have both scandals and achievements (Zapiro, 2018:12). So, these factors play a role in how their Covid-19 messages are perceived by the public. For example, President Donald Trump with history of racism and xenophobic, caused a stir when he named Covid-19 the "*Chinese virus*". His idea was to persuade the world to believe that Covid-19 is a virus made by Chinese to destroy the rest of the world so that they can take over the world markets. However, with regular allegations of racism and xenophobia made against, certain groups may be more likely view him and his

opinion as credible than others (Daily Maverick, 2018:19). This also relates to the second major feature, which is being likable as a communicator, as discussed below.

In terms of the message component, of persuasive communication, O'Keefe (1990:150) writes that messages that instil terror in the audience may increase persuasion. For instance, informing the public that the death toll from Covid-19 is rising rapidly may scare people into complying with the set strict regulations. The impact of this factor may be increased if the speaker is a credible source.

Drawing from the above discussion on racism and xenophobia which is likely to make one less likeable, the second major feature, 'liking of the communicator' on the other hand, is much more likely than credibility to influence one's judgement about the communicator's dispositional trustworthiness and competence. If an individual is liked, they are more easily considered credible. For instance, fans and supporters of President Cyril Ramaphosa are more likely to comply with his persuasive messages relating to Covid-19 strict measures and social distancing because of the positive attitude they have towards him, as opposed to people who criticizes him. However, credible individuals are not necessarily likeable. For example, despite people holding unfavourable opinions of Trump, there is a possibility that he may be regarded as a more credible source than Biden.

In terms of the message component, it is important to highlight that "humour has vast and varied effects on persuasion that may increase or decrease likability" (Sadiki, 2017:46). For example, former Presidents Nelson Mandela, Jacob Zuma and Barack Obama have a track record of making jokes whenever they utter their speeches to garner persuasion (Olimat, 2020:63).

Lastly, the recipient is also considered as an element of persuasion in Hovland, Janis and Kelley's (1953) study. Whether the target or recipient either does not find the source credible, and/or is antagonistic toward the speaker, the audience are less likely to identify with what the politician is uttering. This aligns with both elements of credibility and likeability. O'Donnell and Garth (1999:185) report that persuasion can be difficult. As stated earlier, if recipients or targets believe that the message is not being sent to persuade them, they are more likely to be persuaded. In interactions, persuasion takes place in a natural and unassuming way without the audience being aware that they are being persuaded to act or behave in a particular way (Finn & Rensburg, 1983:24).

The discussing in this section thus far focuses on communicative elements of persuasion with reference to politics in a mass communication set up. From this discussion, it is apparent that some communicative elements support persuasion more than others. Prominently, success depends on the credibility and likeability of the speaker. These aspects affect the target and how they perceive the message, and this is further facilitated by guiding principles of persuasive communication. Principles of persuasive communication serve as overarching principles that guide the effective use of communicative elements. These guiding principles may aid a speaker to come across as more credible and as more trustworthy. They are briefly outlined here as they support the communicative elements (Ugande, 2001:5).

- i. **Identification principle:** Unless individuals can clearly identify how an idea, perspective, or point of view affects their own fears, ambitions, dreams, or aspirations, most people will dismiss those concepts. The message should be presented in terms of the audience's interest. For example, statements such as, "in order to protect you from the virus, we have decided to enforce a 21-days lockdown" – President Cyril Ramaphosa (2020).
- ii. **Action principle:** Images and videos are ideal inclusions in media texts since visual communications have the greatest impact on people, though not applicable in the analysis of this study. In this regard, the speeches were broadcast on television and the scenes were formal to support the gravity of the situation.
- iii. **Principle of familiarity and trust:** Members of society frequently embrace the views, values, and ideologies contained in the statements of individuals who are popular in terms of rank, class, and authority because they trust them. Due to the power vested on presidents as the heads of the states, their messages become influential.
- iv. **Clarity principle:** The message conveyed should be clear and incapable of being misunderstood to influence people. For instance, using language, symbols, or stereotypes that the targets understand and respond to when communicating.

These principles are relevant to this study because the presidential Covid-19 related speeches explored in this study are a form of media texts, that were delivered live on national television, with the audience watching, listening, and observing cultural and non-verbal cues. This section discussed communicative elements of persuasion and their guiding principles. Credibility and likeability are key communicative elements for speakers to persuade successfully. To be more

credible and more likeable, speakers may follow Ugande (2001)'s principles outlined above. The next sub-section discusses linguistic elements of persuasion. Also, it is observable that communicative elements of persuasion are often dependent on linguistic elements. These are considered next in more detail.

3.2.2 Linguistic elements of communication

A message's compelling appeal is inextricably shaped by its linguistic elements (Vivian, Ryan, Boyd, Sarah, Keller, Griffith, Loggarakis & Medema, 2021:883). Studies such as Komar (2015), Dillard (2014) and Sulistyowati (2017), generally focus on the impact of linguistic elements on persuasion in isolation and have not considered linguistic elements that are frequently utilised in real-world persuasion. As a result, little research proves that there is no sufficient understanding regarding the essential verbal elements of persuasion or the relative influence of linguistic elements on a message's persuasive appeal in actual social encounters (Vivian et al., 2021:884). One may ask, for example, how Cutlip and Centre (1978)'s guidelines are affected linguistically by different speakers who are then either less or more successful as persuaders? To address this, the current study explores how communicative or verbal goals are executed through linguistic elements of persuasion. By so doing, the gap is bridged between verbal and linguistic elements of persuasion.

Researchers have sought to identify linguistic elements that are linked to a message's persuasive appeal (Vivian et al., 2021:884). For instance, Sandell (1977) in his book "*Linguistic Style and Persuasion*" explains that altered stylistic markers on four levels of expression: syntax, morphology, phonology, and semantics are used to achieve persuasion. These markers are the effective textual elements used by the persuader to convince the targets to accept an idea before persuading them to act differently or change their behaviour.

A body of research (including Breuer & Naphine, 2005; Cildini, 2007; Walton, 2007; Skriabina, 2018; Koay, 2019 & Baldi, 2020) reveal a fairly large number of linguistic elements that are crucial to message persuasiveness, including characteristics that reveal both what a message expresses and how it is conveyed.

Skriabina (2018) identifies lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic means of persuasion. "Lexical means of persuasion include etiquette clichés, terms and idioms, abbreviations, international and bookish vocabulary which add a special tonality to the diplomatic document. The use of grammatical means of persuasion (the superlative degree of adjectives and adverbs,

intensifiers, infinitive, verbal, and parallel constructions) helps to accentuate and highlight important elements in diplomatic texts. In turn, stylistic means, especially epithets, metaphors, and metonymy, contribute to the credibility of diplomatic speeches and addresses” (Skriabina, 2018:266). Based on a corpus-analysis, Koay (2019) considers linguistic features of persuasion such as narrative, pronouns, grammar, and structure in self-help books. These linguistic elements, therefore, echo those communicative elements discussed above, and speak to the embodiment of those communicative features.

Models of persuasion, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1980) have been used to identify linguistic elements and to explain how they affect message persuasiveness (Vivian et al., 2021:884). Although it is possible to make theory-driven predictions about how each linguistic element relates to persuasion, there has been a lot of variation among studies in terms of which elements positively or negatively relate to persuasion, as well as studies that produce conflicting or inconclusive results about the impact of a particular linguistic element on persuasion (Hosseinzade, 2015; Hassan, 2017).

Given that the main rationale for this study is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the political pathways to persuasion via linguistic elements, the study’s approach is exploratory and inductive, rather than deductive, and the anticipated findings will help the researchers understand the directionality of the relationship between linguistic elements and the persuasiveness of political messages and anticipated goals. In general, analysing the interaction between crucial linguistic elements on persuasion utilising significant, authentic examples such as presidential addresses related to Covid-19 might help inform theories, that address how linguistic elements influence political persuasion.

That said, it is important to acknowledge the findings of previous research in this regard. There is a plethora of studies on varying linguistic elements of persuasion as detailed in Table 3.2 below. This table also demonstrates the lack of consistency in this regard.

Table 3. 2: A systematic review of previous studies on linguistic elements of persuasion

Source	Study title	Study aims	Linguistic elements of persuasion evident
Komar (2015)	Linguistic features of persuasive communication: The case of DRTV short form spots	This paper presents the findings of the structural and the linguistic analyses of three English DRTV short form spots as seen on Highstreet TV. The emphasis is on the verbal strategies used by advertisers to get the consumers' attention, develop their interest and desire to own the product and to convince them to purchase it.	Lexical elements (cohesion, lexical diversity, concreteness, imageability, word length). Syntactic elements (exclamation, negation, indicative statements, imperatives, compounding, second person pronoun <i>you</i> , possessive adjective <i>your</i> , imperative mood).
Dillard (2014)	Language, style, and persuasion	This paper reviews empirical studies on language and persuasion from a message effects perspective.	Self-referencing, rhetorical questions, conclusion explicitness, vividness, gain/loss framing, powerful(less) language, and domineeringness.
Arakelyan and Muradyan (2017)	Language as an influential tool for persuasion	This article focused on verbal language in persuasion found in several sources like the campaign on human rights by Council of Europe, journalistic article in Health Communication and in Federal Express TV commercial.	Metaphor, repetition; personal pronouns and narratives.
Pendidikan (2018)	An analysis of linguistic features and persuasive techniques used in written advertisements by Maybelline New York.	This thesis investigated the linguistic features and persuasion techniques used in Maybelline New-York written advertisements.	Hyperbole, potency, long noun phrase, present tenses, and incomplete sentences.
Sulistyowati (2017)	The Linguistic features and persuasion techniques in Marlboro cigarette advertisement	The purpose of the thesis was to analyses linguistic features and persuasive techniques used in Marlboro cigarette advertisement.	Lexical elements (hyperbole, neologism, weasel words, familiar language, repetition, euphemism, humour, glamourisation and potency) Syntactic elements (short sentences, long noun phrase, ambiguity, use of imperatives, simple and colloquial language, present tense, syntactic parallelism, association, ellipsis, and incomplete sentences)

Skriabina (2018)	Linguistic aspects of persuasion in diplomatic discourse	This article aimed at the study of linguistic aspects of persuasion in a diplomatic discourse.	Lexical means (etiquette clichés, terms and idioms, abbreviations, international and bookish vocabulary) Grammatical means (the superlative degree of adjectives and adverbs, intensifiers, infinitive, verbal, and parallel constructions) Stylistic means (epithets, metaphors, and metonymy)
Baldi (2020)	Persuasion we live by symbols, metaphors, and linguistic strategies.	The study analysed the rhetorical choices and symbols used, investigating the concealed or implied semantics of the messages.	Argumentative and rhetorical devices, metaphors, the structure of the sentence, lexical selection, symbols, and images.

To fulfil the communicative goals, language is constructed at multiple levels as a medium of communication. It is evident in Table 3.2 that many persuasion researchers have explored various linguistic elements of persuasion. For instance, Komar (2015) and Sulistyowati (2017) concurrently identify two main types of linguistic elements of persuasion, which are lexical and syntactical. However, these two authors provide different examples to these two categories. Crystal and Davy (1985) propose graphology, phonetics and phonology, lexis or vocabulary, syntax, and semantics as linguistic elements.

Contrastingly, in his study, Dillard (2014) identifies self-referencing, rhetorical questions, conclusion explicitness, vividness as the main linguistic elements of persuasion. In the same vein, Arakelyan and Muradyan (2017) add metaphor, repetition, personal pronouns, and narratives as linguistic elements of persuasion. Also, Pendidikan (2018) lists hyperbole, potency, long noun phrase, present tenses, and incomplete sentences as linguistic elements of persuasion. One may assume then that all these elements potentially contribute to linguistic persuasion.

Other linguists focus on macro-level features, such as power relations. For example, in their analysis of linguistic elements of persuasion in courtroom transcripts, Lakoff (1975) and O'Barr (1982) report that communicators with low social power use powerless linguistic elements such as hedges and tag questions. These linguistic elements are often absent in the speech of communicators with high social power. This relates to the notion of credibility as a communicative element of persuasion as discussed in the above paragraphs, in Section 3.2.1.

It, therefore, shows that communicative elements of persuasion are strongly rooted in linguistic choices to enhance their persuasiveness appeal.

In support, Sparks and Areni (2002) discover that communicators are more persuasive when they use powerful linguistic elements instead of powerless linguistic elements such as inclusive pronouns, authority, and credibility markers. They also recognise that powerful linguistic elements triggered more favourable attitudes than powerless linguistic elements. In other words, more powerful speakers may be more likeable. Areni and Sparks (2005:507) confirm that, regardless of the mode of delivery, “speakers using powerful language are more persuasive than speakers using powerless language”.

According to a similar study by Sallomi (2018:360), the processing of the message and linguistic intensity (emotional lexical items) are closely related, and result in persuasion. Similar findings are made by Petty and Cacioppo (1986:11), who write that linguistic intensity indicators such as emphatic pronouns and superlatives heighten the perception of contradiction between the message and the initial attitude, which may cause the initial attitude to change. Faiz, Yulianti and Septiana (2020), for example, explored Trump’s speech about Jerusalem. They found that the speaker actively employs pathos by showing his perceived intellect, virtuous character as well as goodwill to create peace in Jerusalem. In addition, Trump created mildness, gave admiration and confession to affect pathos to persuade.

In addition, the Reinforcement theory by Insko (1965) claims that linguistic intensity makes a message more convincing. In the context of this study, the researcher does this by examining lexical employed by presidents in their emotional appeal messages. According to a study by Craig and Blankenship (2011:55), using strong arguments and language extremes or intensity markers like ‘far more’, ‘very’, ‘very’, and ‘amazing’ boost persuasiveness and credibility. As highlighted in the commencement of section 3.2.2, linguistic elements of persuasion are mainly clustered into lexical and syntactic elements, and these are detailed below.

3.2.2.1 Lexical and syntactic elements of persuasion

There are very few studies which analysed lexical and syntactic forms of linguistic complexity and intensity specifically (see Skriabina, 2018; Baldi, 2020)). Other examples include’ Averbeck and Miller (2014:123) who studies the relationship between cognitive complexity on the one hand, and syntactic and lexical complexity on the other. For the sake of clarity, lexis refers to the collection of single words, while vocabulary is the inclusion of multi-word lexical

items. This is supported by Trick (2011:56) who writes that lexis refers to a language's vocabulary as opposed to other features such as text's syntax. Following this, language users utilise strings of lexical items to make statements to persuade others (Finegan, 2008:7).

The structure of sentences, as well as how they relate to one another structurally and functionally relate to syntax. Syntax offers guidelines for word placement that reflects intentions or thoughts (Finegan, 2008:7). As mentioned before, Skriabina (2018:266) report that grammatical means of persuasion emphasise important elements in diplomatic texts that a speaker may wish the accentuate. This implies that the users' word choices and placement convey their intended message, thus achieving persuasion.

The range of complexities and nuances of meanings that a political leader might want to express and distinguish from other possible meanings is much larger than what can be expressed by the lexical and morphological resources of any language, according to McGregor (2009:445). Utterances gain meaning in context; yet meaning is intended and affected through linguistic features. This suggests that the communicative intention and linguistic execution of persuasion are inextricably linked. The following are some of the lexical and syntactic elements of persuasion evident in political speeches of earlier studies, and they reflect register of politics (Sharndama & Mgbemena, 2015:19; Adenyika, 2012:74 and Al-Faki, 2014:34).

a) Personal pronouns and kinship terms

Pronouns are used to position the speaker in relation to the audience or targets (Boyd, 2013; Koay, 2019). Subjective personal pronouns are used to refer to a subject complement or subject of a clause; they include "*I*", "*we*", "*you*", "*he*", "*she*", "*it*", and "*they*". On the other hand, objective personal pronouns refer to the same people or things as the equivalent subject pronouns (Collins, 1990:29). Further, object pronouns are used as either the object, subject complement, or prepositional complement of a clause (Quirk et al., 1972:208). The objective personal pronouns are "*me*", "*us*", "*you*", "*him*", "*her*", "*it*", and "*them*" (Collins, 1990:29). Table 3.3 below shows subjective pronoun and their objective pronoun.

Table 3. 3: Pronoun functions (adopted from Quirk et al, 1972:110)

<i>Function</i>	<i>Subjective case</i>	<i>Objective case</i>
Subject	<i>She</i> was there	-
Subject Complement	It was <i>she</i>	It was <i>her</i>
Object	-	I saw <i>her</i> in church
Prepositional Complement	-	We cannot make it without <i>her</i>

Table 3.3 is vital in the context of this study because it presents the functions of pronouns as a lexical persuasive element of persuasion. In support of this, Sharndama and Mgbemena (2015:19) state that political leaders often use the plural personal pronoun “we” which echoes “our” to show connection, collectivism, and unity of purpose with the audience or targets. Political leaders may strongly influence or persuade the targets, since “we” signals collectivism and support. This may, for example, increase their likability as the audience may feel closer to the speaker. For example,

We intend to do this by instituting a national industrial policy, coupled with a national employment directive, that together shall revive and expand our manufacturing sector.

This excerpt is extracted from the Nigerian president General Buhari’s speech. President Buhari uses pronoun “we” and “our” to create a sense of unity and collective responsibility under the umbrella of his party, thus intending to achieve persuasion. To further demonstrate this, the excerpt below also reflects the usage of personal pronoun “I” in the speech of the former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan.

I will give my all. I will not let you down. I will not fail the PDP. I will not fail you. Above all, I promise, I will not fail our great nation, Nigeria.

This excerpt indicates the responsibilities that rest on the speaker. President Goodluck Jonathan uses the personal pronoun ‘I’ to emphasis his readiness to lead the party. It shows a sense of responsibility, credibility, and likeability. Personal pronouns make up a big part of political speeches, because they can give an idea of whom the speaker in question identifies with (Gustafsson, 2020:271).

b) Parallelism

Parallelism or parallel structure is a syntactic device used in speech or writing to create effect through repetition of a sentence or parts of it (Adenyika, 2012:74). The repetition evokes emotion of the audience because it creates rhythmic flow. According to Al-Faki (2014:34), politicians often use “parallelism when they want to draw attention to a particular part of their message and make it stand out from the rest of the speech”. This observation is supported by authors such as Watling (2015), Al-Ameedi and Mukhef (2017) and Green (2023). The excerpt below is extracted from former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan’s speech, as an example of parallelism with the phrase “*we will campaign*” indicating oneness as well as dedication (Adenyika, 2012).

We will campaign in peace. We will campaign with hope in our hearts. We will campaign on the facts and the truth. We will campaign with issues and ideas. We will campaign on our record of performance. We will campaign to win.

In this excerpt, the party members are persuaded by President Goodluck Jonathan that they have performed well. The rhythmic repetition helps to bring home this notion. It is used to arouse the audiences’ feelings. Through this device, several ideas are expressed in a series of the same or similar structures. This can serve to affirm that “the ideas are equal in importance and can add a sense of symmetry and rhythm, which makes the speech more memorable and persuasive” (Adenyika, 2012:74).

c) Antithesis

Antithesis according to Encyclopaedia Britannica is derived from Greek word “*antitheton*” which means opposition. It is a figure of speech in which “irreconcilable opposites or strongly contrasting ideas are placed in sharp juxtaposition and sustained tension” (Sharndama & Mgbemena, 2015:19). The opposing clauses, phrases, or sentences are roughly equal in length and balanced in contiguous grammatical structures. Antithesis is also defined as a rhetorical device which implies contrast, and it is achieved by placing two opposite things to appeal to emotions (Reisler, 1978; Sharndama & Mgbemena, 2015; Green 2023)). It plays on the complementary property of opposites to create one vivid picture.

Green (2023:1-2) notes that antithesis is quite commonly used in slogans, such as *Buy low; sell high* (which also aim to persuade) and in political addresses, such as employed by Martin Luther King Jr's in his speech supporting civil disobedience: *An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. . . Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust.* However, despite its common use, little work has been done on antithesis in argumentation (Green, 2023:2). The excerpt below from the inaugural address of the former president of the USA John F. Kennedy serves as an example of an antithesis in a political speech.

Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country. Let us never negotiate out of fear but let us never fear to negotiate.

In this example, John F. Kennedy employs antithesis to persuade the audience by juxtaposition of the negative and the positive to evoke the emotion of the audience. Kennedy persuades the citizens to be active and involved instead of passively waiting on the government. The purpose of using antithesis in texts is to create a balance between opposite qualities and to lend a greater insight into the subject thus achieving persuasion. Through antithesis, political leaders seek to persuade the public to accept their promises, irrespective of any apparent hinderances.

d) Interrogative mood/rhetorical questions

According to Sharndama and Mgbemena (2015:19), “political leaders also use interrogative mood (also known as rhetorical questions) as a persuasive element”. As discussed in Section 2.2.3.2, on the metafunctions of SFL, it is vital to highlight that the interactional mode of SFL is sometimes activated by the interrogative mood. In the context of presidential speeches addressing the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of interrogative sentences can be observed as a persuasive tool. For instance, a president might pose questions to the audience that subtly guide them toward a desired conclusion or action.

By framing questions strategically, leaders can influence public opinion, encourage cooperation, or emphasise the urgency of certain measures. For example, a president might ask, “Don’t we all want to protect our loved ones from the threat of the virus?” Rhetorical questions are used to draw the attention of the audience. Yu (2017) posits that interrogative and imperative make texts more interactive, thereby attracting the readers through involvement.

The excerpt below extracted from the first president of Indonesia Soekarno in his 1955 speech in the first 1955 Asian-African Conference, serves as an example of interrogative mood.

Are not these aims mentioned in the letter of invitation to which you responded?

Soekarno does not anticipate an answer by using the interrogative mood, but he does so to draw attention to his argument, emphasise it, and enthuse the audience about overcoming the challenges they are currently facing. Soekarno also wants to convince the delegates that they had received the letter of invitation to come to the conference. This certainly relates to the discussion in Section 2.2.3.3 on the different categories of registers in SFL. From an SFL perspective, Soekarno's statement would be considered as residue in terms of mood categorisation. Residue, in SFL, refers to linguistic elements that carry traces of previous discourse, establishing a connection with prior information or context. In this interrogative sentence, the use of "these aims" and reference to the "letter of invitation" assumes shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener. The question presupposes that the recipient of the inquiry is familiar with the content of the invitation letter and the mentioned aims. By incorporating these references, the sentence relies on the residue of prior information, creating a cohesive link to the context and emphasising the importance of the aims stated in the invitation. The shared knowledge impact shall be made explicit in Section 3.2.3.2 on presupposition.

e) Declarative mood

Declarative mood is used for making statements - usually about the way things are. Thorne (1997:11) is of the view that declarative structures can be identified by the position of the subject in the clause structure. Conventionally, the subject of the sentence usually precedes the verb in a sentence, and where the sentence is complex, the mood is determined by the main clause (Sharndama & Mgbemena, 2015:19).

In political discourse, declarative sentences are used for making persuasive statements to evoke the emotion of the audience. The aim is to make the audience drop their ideologies and shift to the speaker's side. This means that understanding the functions of different moods within the framework of SFL enables communicators to tailor their linguistic choices for maximum persuasive impact, effectively engaging and influencing their audience.

Maisarah (2020) explores mood types in communication by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), finding that the ISIS- author “chooses the declarative mood that mainly tells success stories gained by the past Muslim warriors”. Maisarah considers this purposeful since it motivates the readers to commit to fighting Allah’s cause. Furthermore, the text is characterised by declarative mood in the form of ‘telling past event’; ‘presenting the characteristics of something’ and ‘giving evaluative opinion’. In these cases, the declarative mood functions as statement of fact and helps the author to act as informer, according to Maisarah. This aligns with the communicative element of credibility. Employing the linguistic strategy of declarative mood, then, may serve to increase credibility of the speaker.

The excerpt below also extracted from the first Indonesian president, Soekarno, in the first 1955 Asian-African Conference, serves as an example of declarative mood.

This conference is not to oppose each other; it is a conference of brotherhood.

Soekarno uses the word “brotherhood” to make delegates sure that they were all relatives in the continents of Asia and Africa. Besides trying to convince them by using the word “brotherhood”, the statement above also proves that the conference did not intend to oppose other countries who had different principles from them. From an SFL perspective, the statement is used to convey information and describe the even. It also serves the ideational function using the declarative mood, as discussed in Section 2.2.3.1. However, this is also a pragmatic element, central to SAT (refer to Section 2.2.3.3) and will be considered in Section 3.2.3.

f) Compounding

Compounding is another syntactic element found in persuasive speeches. Compound sentences consist of two or more independent clauses. It is achieved by joining two or more independent clauses of equal ranks with coordinating conjunctions such as “and”, “but”, or “so” and “for” (Al-Faki, 2014:34). Hussein (2023:14) comments that compound sentence present a sort of tension that has either been resolved or not. In delving into Covid-19 related discourse, he finds that compound sentences suggest that speakers are aware of complexities of the situation. The more tension, the more frequently complex sentences are employed, and the more complex sentences become. Consider the following examples provided by Hussein (2023:15-16):

- a) *Travelers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share travel history with their healthcare provider;*
- b) *[Thus, there is an obligation to] find, isolate, test and care for cases; and trace and quarantine their contacts.*
- c) *Keep your distance from others, wash your hands frequently, stay away from crowded spaces, and wear a mask when advised. We are aware of the frustration that many people, organisations, and governments are feeling as the pandemic persists.*

This suggests that compound sentence reflect the complexity of a situation and may aid to persuade the audience. The compounding of actions and responsibilities in these sentences enhances persuasion by creating a cohesive and comprehensive message, urging the audience to adopt a series of related behaviours or obligations in response to health recommendations and pandemic challenges. Refer to an exemplary excerpt below from the speech of the former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan.

Nigeria is undergoing great changes at this time, and also experiencing great challenges; so, political parties must rise above the fray, to provide hope and clear direction, to propel the development of our country.

This excerpt shows evidence of compounding through the usage of “and” and “so”. He does this to persuade the citizens to vote for his party, so that his party can help steer the change in the right direction. “And” lists things that give reason for the proposal signalled by “so”, of which the audience must be persuaded. It serves to relate the aspects logically and in so doing, the speaker comes across as more credible.

g) Subordination

Subordination in grammar refers to the process of joining linguistic units that are not of the same status (Sharndama & Mgbemena, 2015:19). A subordinate clause extends or complements the meaning of an independence clause. In a sentence, subordinate clause depends on the independent clause. Nikolenko, Zakharchu, Babakova & Morenko (2019) investigates the implementation of homogenously collateral subordination to promote the

author's hidden meaning, aiming to affect or persuade the audience. They argue that "the persuasion effect in such structures is produced through the lexically expressed 'I' of the author (parenthetic words, expletives, phrases like "it is known that" or "it is possible to" as correlative words in the main clause)" (2019:2). In other words, subordinate clauses suggest information, often passing off the author's perspective in a subtle way to influence the audience.

In their study on stylistic features of persuasion, Sharndama and Mgbemena (2015:22) provide the following excerpt as an example of subordination.

Fellow delegates, dear party members, while we congratulate our candidates, who have emerged at the primaries, we must reassure all our members that our party remains a large, accommodating and responsible party. After our victory at the polls in 2011, we articulated a transformation agenda, which we have faithfully implemented.

In this excerpt, it is evident that the underlined subordinate clauses compliment meaning of the independent clause. This helps to emphasise the intended purpose and promotes the main meaning of the sentence, thus enabling persuasion.

h) Fronting

Fronting, also known as foregrounding, is a grammatical device that is used to create dramatic effect (Sharndama & Mgbemena, 2015:19). A part of the sentence, such as any word group that usually follows the verb, is brought to the subject position for emphasis and prominence. It involves shifting a part of a sentence from its normal position to the beginning of the sentence. The part of the sentence moved to the front might be the object (An apple John ate) or some other compliment (Talented, she is an artist); adverbial clauses (Beautifully, she sang); prepositional (Across the stage she marched) and gerunds or even the main verb itself (Burton, 2020:123). In other words, it entails giving prominence to an item in a sentence for emphasis, gaining the attention of the audience by means of changing the word order. The excerpt below from the popular tongue twister serves as an example of fronting.

She sells seashells on the seashore.

It is plain that “s” and “sh” are foregrounded for their euphonic effect in the above-provided example. It is evident that fronting serves many purposes. The following examples may also help to demonstrate the effect that fronting may have. Consider the sentences:

- i. *Defeated, this virus must be. (Fronting the object for emphasis).*
- ii. *This virus, we must defeat. (Fronting the object for emphasis).*
- iii. *Our most powerful weapon is defence against this virus. (Fronting the subject for emphasis).*

Drawing from this example, it is evident that fronting may serve different purposes, but the most common one is emphasising to draw the attention of the audience to basic themes, thus enabling persuasion. Utilising fronting in these sentences strategically amplifies key elements, influencing the audience and reinforcing the persuasive message through increased emphasis and rhetorical effectiveness.

i) Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (2003:5) define metaphors as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. They also explain that “every experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions” (also see Lakoff, 2017). Sopory and Dillard (2012:156-159) argue that metaphors in figurative language have effects on attitude and communicator’s credibility. Metaphors are more likely to produce greater attitude change. In addition, Osborn (2008:112) propositions that communicators who use metaphors are judged as credible, because metaphors are also judged as highly creative in positive message advocacy. This means that metaphors produce semantic connections for elaboration and coherent organisation of arguments in message content which increases the persuasive power. Skriabina (2018) also emphasises metaphors along with metonymy and epithets means of accentuating important aspects of diplomatic texts.

Metaphors can enhance persuasion by increasing understanding of topics and in so doing, connecting the proposal to other issues. Statements such as “Racism is a virus,” “Cancer is a journey,” and “Ideas are light bulbs” prompt people to draw connections between their knowledge of viruses, wars, journeys, and light bulbs and their knowledge of racism, climate change, cancer, and ideas. These metaphors aim to influence their perception and consequently

their behaviour. Political leaders employ metaphors to establish positive links with what they wish to be supported as well as negative links with what they wish to be rejected.

This section discussed linguistic elements of persuasion in political discourse, relevant applicable examples were provided. From the reviewed linguistic elements, there are two groups of linguistic elements evident which are, lexical and syntactical. Lexical and syntactical elements of persuasion that are deemed relevant for this study include pronouns, parallelism, antithesis, interrogative mood, declarative mood, compounds, subordination, fronting and metaphors. For this study, each of these elements are considered during the empirical analysis to determine their relevance and/or prominence in political persuasive speeches of the three sampled presidents (refer to Chapter 5).

The next section discusses pragmatic elements of persuasion as the third category of elements of persuasion. The study of pragmatics relates to how meaning is made through linguistic choices in a particular communicative context. Whereas the emphasis in Section 3.2.2. was on micro-linguistic textual elements, the following discussion focusses on the macro-linguistic meaning making in relation to contextual factors with reference to pragmatic elements.

3.2.3 Pragmatic elements of persuasion

Following communicative and linguistic elements of persuasion, this section discusses pragmatic elements of persuasion. According to Mey (2019:12), pragmatics look at how language use in contact and communication is defined by social circumstances. Accordingly, language is linked to its use within a society and pragmatics comes to reveal this special relationship between language and its context (see Druckman, 2022) political language is more likely to drive the target to do specific activities when the communicator intends to persuade him or her to do so, and this is at the core of the pragmatic elements, which is why utilising pragmatics to evaluate a political discourse's persuasiveness is justified.

Further, both pragmatics and persuasion are affected by the setting and circumstances in which they occur. De facto, pragmatics has been viewed from various perspectives and defined by numerous authors in relation to persuasion (refer to Section 2.2.4). Following Hussein and Abttan (2018), the speech act of persuading may be achieved indirectly using syntactic structures such as declarative, active and simple sentences. This underlines the complex interaction between the syntactic and pragmatic level, but also between the general elements

of language and the goal of persuading. The following are some of the pragmatic elements of persuasion adopted for the purpose of this study.

3.2.3.1 Implication as an element of persuasion

Political discourse is a crucial kind of communication with the main goals of grabbing the public's attention and persuading them to change their ideas and behaviour. To accomplish these goals, politicians frequently infer important messages mostly through indirect persuasion (Druckman, 2022). As pointed out earlier, an audience is more likely to be persuaded when they are unaware of the persuasive goal. "Political discourse occasionally tries to persuade by communicating indirect or subliminal messages regarding the topic at hand" (Sadiki, 2017:34). Similarly, Davis (2005) writes that implicature is something that is intended, indicated, or hinted but not explicitly stated. To further explore how meaning is achieved, Grice (1957) first examines the difference between communicators meaning and sentence meaning.

Accordingly, Grice (ibid) establishes the concept of implicature to "highlight the circumstances and context in which a communicator means or implies something by saying something else" (Davis, 2005:5). This is relevant to SFL (Halliday, 1965), which suggests that the grammatical constituents are determined by the function that the language serves. So, it may be that a specific grammatical structure is chosen, such as passive voice, because the political leader does not want to identify the actor, or person responsible (this relates to textual fronting discussed earlier in 3.2.2.1.). For example, "it must be done!" as opposed to "I must do this". In this regard, the voice used has a particular effect on the audience.

Sometimes political leaders may be more persuasive by not saying certain things and leaving the audience to infer the intended meaning. This may, for example, come into play when the politicians do not want to come across as deliberately trying to persuade a potentially unwilling audience. Indirect suggestions then serve to guide the audience to the conclusion that the speaker wishes them to understand. However, the audience may be unaware of this subtle manipulation. The illocutionary force remains a persuasive act, but the surface-level linguistic forms suggest a different denotation.

3.2.3.2 *Presupposition as an element of persuasion*

Presuppositions are also effective as a means of persuasion because the communicator often knows that the audience is aware of the circumstances, before making a statement (see Moldovan, 2023). Further, Moldovan (2023:96-97) highlights two prominent features of presuppositions, viz. 1) presuppositions are “indirect or less explicit in contrast to assertion”; 2) it is a supposition that the speaker “takes for granted and treats as uncontroversial”; 3) “presuppositions are preserved under embedding the initial sentence in a variety of linguistic contexts, such as negation...modal operators, conditional ‘if’, and questions”. In the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, South Africans were already aware of the spreading virus and the potential dangers it held before President Ramaphosa addressed the nation and enforced lockdown. Due to this, the communicators in this sense are aware of the proper approach to form their statements.

Presuppositions do, in fact, enable communicators to position themselves in the most efficient manner for communicating. Presuppositions “let the communicators imply notions that their targets must accept as true for what they are saying to be true, which undoubtedly increases the discourse’s persuasiveness” (Sadiki, 2017:34).

Additionally, it is made evident in the book ‘*Social Psychology and Discourse*’ that politicians depend on presupposition to persuade successfully (McKinlay & Chris, 2007:123). This means that presupposition is not just an element of persuasion but can also function as a persuasive strategy. These functions therefore overlap. In other words, in every kind of communication, the communicator’s history, expertise and presumptions about the targets are important.

Stalnaker (2008:48) makes the case that “presuppositions are knowledge and beliefs that the communicators implicitly assume about the targets and the environment in which they are believed and shared by the participants”. Accordingly, the persuader may position themselves in the best way possible to achieve persuasion.

In addition, Jones and Peccei (2002:42–43) state that presupposition is achieved in political discourse using adjectives, specifically comparative ones, to compare the present situation with the future, presuming that the latter would be better. The discourse segment below adopted from a transcript of a parliamentary meeting in Kenya serves as an example of presupposition in persuasion.

Mr. Musyoka: ... I am aware that the prices of farm inputs and more so fertilizer, have shot up and that this poses a challenge to farmers in the current planting

season... the Government has set aside Kshs 294 million from the 2KR Japanese Grant Counterpart Fund to assist farmers, who were adversely affected, with fertilizer and seed maize. The Government has given the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) a credit line of Kshs 850 million to purchase fertilizer to stabilise the prices... His Excellency the President together with the Prime Minister- designate, will meet the people of the Rift Valley Province... assure the IDPs that they can now go back to their farms. These are the number one farmer. (Hansard: 25th March 2008).

In this utterance, the presupposition trigger is the first-person singular pronoun ‘I’ and it confirms that the speaker is well informed about what is happening – “*I am aware*”. In the utterance, it is assumed that giving the small-scale farmers fertiliser and seeds will alleviate famine. It is also assumed that the price of fertiliser has gone up because of some occurrences in the country. Another assumption is that the fertiliser and seeds will be given to the farmers before the long rains so that they will have adequate time to plant. The statement makes one to presuppose that the IDPs are very good farmers as compared to others, thus achieving persuasion. It also suggests that they will take care of their people, making them more likeable and, as such, they become stronger persuaders.

3.2.3.3 Politeness as an element of persuasion

Evidently, the effective application of politeness techniques, which are examined in this section of the study, can distinguish a persuasive communicator from a non-persuasive one. The communicator should keep in mind that choosing the right politeness element is necessary to persuade listeners, because both the communicator and the target hold distinct social standing (Gass & John, 2002:247). For clarification’s sake, and in accordance with Brown and Levinson (1987), a person would not be convinced if he or she felt as though their face was being threatened.

Brown and Levinson (1987)’s notion of face refers to the target’s public self-image, personal space, their sense of being and self-assumption of their social standing, as opposed to a physical face, and it can either be positively recognised or negatively recognised. It is important to note that the face-threatening conduct occurs when a speaker threatens the listener’s self-image by failing to take his or her face desires into account (Yule, 2010:135).

On the one hand, negative face refers to a participant's desire to have his image protected and unimpaired by other participants in a society. On the other side, a positive face expresses the need of every member of society to feel that at least some of the other members enjoy and admire his or her goals, personality, and character (Brown & Levinson, 1987:65-66). For example, to request indirectly for another to open a window by saying "It's warm in here" is to perform the request politely because one did not use the most efficient means possible for performing this act (i.e., "Open the window").

Particularly, the proper application of these two categories of politeness can aid in persuasion. Considering these theoretical arguments, it is reasonable to advance that politeness and persuasion are connected ideas. Since persuasion is a communicative phenomenon that is intrinsic to society's members, a communicator necessarily employs politeness techniques when attempting to persuade (Carl & Duck, 2006), either intentionally or unintentionally. Additionally, humans are distinctly social creatures that belong to many social groupings (Yule, 2008:4-5).

Holtgraves and Bonnefon (2017:385) find support for the assumption based on Brown and Levinson's theory that, "as the hearer power, relationship distance and act imposition increase, so too does the overall weightiness of the act." In other words, increased politeness reflects increased weightiness or seriousness.

In public speaking, such as political addresses, politeness refers to those characteristics and behaviours that are appropriately carried out in language and expressions so that a communicator is more likely to avoid offending his audience and be accepted by them. To avoid confrontation and face threatening acts, political leaders may be as polite and diplomatic as possible when persuading others (Grundy, 2007:146).

3.2.4 Final considerations on elements of persuasion

This section discussed communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of persuasion. From the reviewed elements, it can be concluded that the degree of successful persuasion depends on how well communicators apply these elements in their speeches. In consideration of the literature reviewed thus far, it is striking that previous scholars have analysed these elements in isolation, yet they have a mutual relationship to some extent. For instance, communicative and pragmatic elements are realised and effected through lexical items which form part of linguistic elements.

These elements - communicative, linguistic and pragmatics - do not come in isolation, but they are evident through persuasive execution, which is a strategy that is employed to achieve desired goals (refer to Section 2.2.2.3 on plans in achieving desired goals). They are, in fact, inextricably linked, as demonstrated in this discussion. This further motivates the present research. As highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, Section 3.1, using elements of persuasion, strategies of persuasion are realised. This means that while elements of persuasion are inherent, the strategies of persuasion involve deliberate actions aimed at achieving success in persuasion. Therefore, the next section reviews a plethora of multiple persuasive strategies from earlier studies.

3.3 STRATEGIES OF PERSUASION

Strategies of persuasion have been identified based on theories and evidence related to human psychology (Sopory & Dillard, 2012:156-159). Although based in psychology, such persuasive strategies are regularly employed and researched in communication due to their role in advertising, marketing, politics, and interpersonal relationships. Clancy (2022:1) argues that elements of persuasion are threaded in specific strategies, and for these strategies to be examined, the elements should be evident. Persuasive strategies are used to influence and change the audience's attitudes and their motives to do what the speaker wants them to do, according to Faiz, Yuliani and Septiana (2020). Drawing from Clancy's statement and as an extension from Section 3.2 which discussed three groups of elements of persuasion (i.e., linguistic, communicative & pragmatic), this Section (3.3) discusses strategies of persuasion from a linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic perspectives.

Due to the theory triangulation adopted for the current study (refer to Section 2.3), it would be a shortcoming if the researcher does not expound on recognised strategies of persuasion per se, since communicators use these strategies to convince others to agree with their opinions, share their values, accept their arguments and conclusions, and adopt their way of thinking. Though discussed separately in terms of Sections (i.e., 3.2 & 3.3), it is extremely important to flag that there is a very thin line between elements and strategies of persuasion because, from the reviewed literature, scholars often use them interchangeably, whilst other scholars draw elements from strategies. For example, a metaphor is an element of persuasion (Sopory & Dillard, 2012:156) but 'the use of metaphors' (Adeyinka, 2012:98) is considered a persuasive strategy. Therefore, it is not surprising to see some elements of persuasion overlapping with

strategies of persuasion. Be that as it may, this study will approve or disapprove of this view in the proceeding chapters after scrutinising the gathered data for this study.

According to Boords (2022:134), Aristotle’s three rhetorical proofs “ethos, logos, and pathos” have been employed as strategies of persuasion for thousands of years. Refer to Figure 3.1 below.

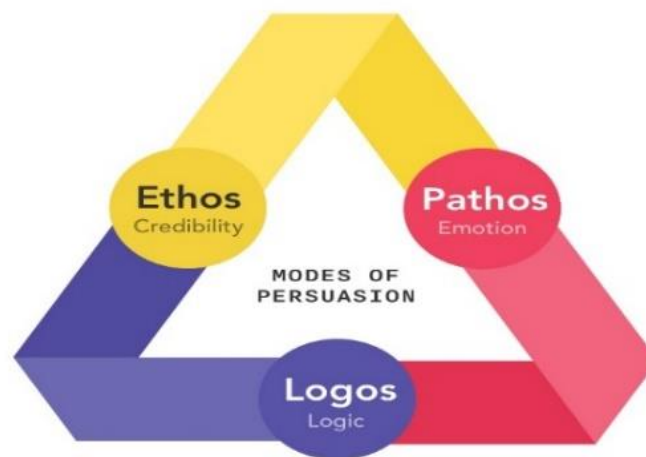


Figure 3. 1: Aristotle’s three rhetorical proofs (Adopted from Boords, 2022)

The division of strategies of persuasion into three different appeals “ethos, logos, and pathos” represents another of Aristotle’s ideas that continues to be crucial in modern rhetorical analysis (Samual & Hartford, 2008:88). These appeals draw on the communicator’s character, the argument’s logical reasoning, and the target’s emotional state, respectively (Charteris-Black, 2014:8). To further the discussion, Halmari and Virtanen (2005:23) propose that different genres generally tend to tilt toward specific persuasion. For instance, ceremonial genre is more inclined to pathos than to logos, whereas the forensic genre displays the opposite inclination. However, literature has shown that a strong combination of these three modes of persuasion is commonly found in political speeches, which are the focus of this study (Charteris-Black, 2011; Halmari & Virtanen, 2005; Sotirova, 2016). In addition to Aristotle’s strategies of persuasion, there has been a wealth body of research on strategies of persuasion over the years by researchers such as De wet (1988), Dillard (1998), Adeyinka (2012), Sadiki (2017) and Khalil (2017). This list is not exhaustive but will suffice for the purpose of the discussion in this section.

As highlighted on the onset of this section, persuasive strategies are categorised into communicative, linguistic and pragmatics to align with their respective persuasive elements,

for the purpose of this study. Table 3.4 below summarises some of the strategies of persuasion from previous studies.

Table 3. 4: A systematic review of previous studies on strategies/tactics of persuasion

<i>Source</i>	<i>Study title</i>	<i>Study aims</i>	<i>Strategies/tactics of persuasion</i>
Masroor, Shaikh, Marwa, and Afzaal (2020)	Persuasion and Mind Control in Leadership Discourse: A Socio-Cognitive Approach towards Selected Political Speeches	Considering the significance of speeches for moving the masses in their favour, this study carries out a critical discourse analysis of politician and current Prime Minister Imran Khan's speeches for uncovering the strategies adopted for such purposes.	Mind control, rhetoric art, argumentative move, emotional attachment and historical distortion.
Khalil (2017)	Persuasion and Political Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Imran Khan's Election Speech (2013)	The study explored how a political leader can propagate his ideology through the tactful use of language.	Referential strategies, repetition, word choice, positive self-representation, and negative other representation
Adeyinka (2012)	Persuasive strategies in the language of Insurance advertising in the print media in Nigeria.	The study applied John Gumperz's theory of interactional sociolinguistics to the language of Insurance advertising in newspapers and on billboards within the Nigerian linguistic and socio-cultural context, with the aim of analysing the persuasive strategies employed in it.	Shared social and cultural rules, allusion to shared history and values, reliance on shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world.

In this table, Adeyinka (2012) presents communicative strategies of persuasion which include, shared social and cultural rules, allusion to shared history and values, and reliance on shared knowledge (This echoes the previous discussion on presuppositions in Section 3.2.3.3). Khalil (2017) presents linguistic strategies of persuasion which includes referential strategies, repetition, word choice, positive self-representation, and negative other representation (These elements relate to the pragmatic notion of saving face, but also relate to the textual linguistic elements discussed earlier). Contrastingly, Masroor et al. (2020) present pragmatic strategies of persuasion such as mind control, rhetoric art, argumentative move, emotional attachment, and historical distortion.

Apart from the studies summarised in Table 3.4, there are other studies which investigate strategies of persuasion. For example, Hosseinizade (2013) investigates persuasive strategies in televised food advertisements whereas others researcher such as Sotirova (2016) compares the use of persuasive strategies in English and Arabic religious discourses. It is obvious from

the previous studies that though strategies of persuasion may differ in terminologies from one discourse to another according to the nature of the discourse, they have something in common, which is appealing to the audiences' emotions and consequently achieving persuasion. In other words, all types of argumentative discourse share the presence of some common strategy of persuasion regardless of the language used or what the type of discourse it is.

The novelty of this study lies in its limitation to investigate techniques of persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches. From the reviewed strategies of persuasion, there are three categories of strategies of persuasion, which are communicative, linguistic and pragmatics, the next section present these strategies in alignment with the elements of persuasion discussed above (refer to Section 3.2).

3.3.1 Communicative strategies of persuasion

Section 3.2.1 presented communicative elements of persuasion. As an extension, this section presents communicative strategies of persuasion aligned to the discussed elements. Communication is not only concerned with what a message is about, but with what a message intends to achieve (communicative goals). In her study, Sadiki (2017) identifies propaganda, manipulation, fear appeal and coercion as some of the major communicative strategies of persuasion, as discussed below.

3.3.1.1 Propaganda

Propaganda, according to De Wet (1988:42), is a term congruent with “mass persuasion”; and these should be interchangeable terms. Unlike De Wet (1988) who says nothing about the correlation between propaganda and persuasion, Larson (1995:30) regards persuasion and propaganda as unifying agents “that help to spread and maintain the fantasy of the movement” thus referring to “the kind of propaganda that is used within the movement to build emotion and develop loyalty in its membership”. He posits that propaganda by itself succeeds “mainly with the frustrated” (Larson, 1995:30). Further, he indicates that the latter's:

*...throbbing fears, hopes, and passions crowd at the portals of their senses....
It is the music of their own souls they hear in the impassioned words of the
propagandist (1995:31).*

Furthermore, Larson submits that, if fanaticism begets violence, “it is equally true that violence begets fanaticism or at least reinforces it” (1995:30). This means that persuasion and propaganda, for Larson (1995:31), frequently result in a powerful need to “proselytise or ‘spread the word’ to the committed”. In the context of this study, propaganda is in the form of presidents persuading masses of residents in their countries to adhere to Covid-19 regulations and to vaccinate. Hence, the application of Maritz (2019)’s LPIM is supported (refer to Section 2.2.4). The salient properties evident in propaganda are considered potentially useful in determining linguistic properties evident in selected Covid-19’s presidential speeches. This shows the intricate relation between communicative and linguistic elements (to be discussed in the next section) in achieving persuasion, hence this study’s adoption of theory triangulation (refer to Section 2.3).

Shabo (2008:123) provides the following techniques of propaganda: name-calling, glittering generalities, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, bandwagon, fear, bad logic, and unwarranted extrapolation. The excerpt below from George Bush’ speech delivered June 26, 2002, serves as an example of how presidents may employ propaganda as a communicative persuasive strategy.

Together with our coalition partners... After the liberation of Afghanistan, coalition forces searching through a terrorist safe house...

Bush uses the convoluted terms “coalition partners” and “coalition forces” to fascinate the targets. The use of those words is described to show that terrorism action will always face defiance from many nations wishing to establish a free world. Therefore, what Bush intends to deliver in those parts is: “We are friends in defeating terrorism”. Thus, based on the explanation what glittering generalities means, the usage of many personal pronouns of “we” and the derivatives (us, our, ours).

The sociological and political propaganda expressed in this section serves to lay some points of argument during the analysis of political speeches in this study.

3.3.1.2 Manipulation

De Wet (2010) argues that manipulation in communication occurs when the persuader views the target as a resource to be exploited by applying pressure. The states of manipulation are those in which the communicator strives to pursue his or her aim at the expense of the target,

according to Reardon (1995:1–10) and Ugande (2001:8). Language is frequently manipulated in common political speeches, inaugural addresses, and political campaigns, Covid-19 political speeches are not an exception.

Exploring persuasion through intimidation, Cap (2017) explains how speakers' construction of closeness and remoteness can be bound up with fear, security, and conflict to manipulate the public. The author shows how political and organisational leaders present imitating outside threats to legitimise preventative policies. This notion aligns with communicative elements of persuasion, other communicative strategies of persuasion (e.g., fear generation), but also with linguistic strategies of persuasion as various linguistic strategies are employed to construct threats and generate fear. To craft their messages, political leaders consider societal values, worldviews, and symbolic systems (Taiwo, 2007:333). Similarly, Nendauni (2018:23) describes manipulation as furthering the goals of the communicator at the expense of the target without encouraging him/her to reason about the situation, but lured to false promises, deceived by insincere verbal or nonverbal behaviour and tactics in a situation that limit the free will of the target's choices.

In the context of this study, manipulation may also be interpreted less negatively in terms of persuasion because Mulholland (1994: xv) elucidates that manipulation in persuasion is unethical as it is associated with misuse of power. The tweet extract below is an example of how political leaders may employ manipulation in their communication.

I just watched a world class loser, Tim O'Brien, who I haven't seen or spoken to in many years & knows NOTHING about me except that he wrote a failed hit piece book about me 15 years ago. Fired like a dog from other jobs? Saw him on Lyin's Brian Williams Trump Slam Show. Bad TB... (@realDonaldTrump, Adopted from Twitter 2:20 AM. Aug 8, 2019).

In this tweet, Trump callously calls O'Brien a "world class loser," and proceeds to explain how "he wrote a failed hit piece book" on the president before he took office (Trump, 2019). Trump uses the deflection tactic of rhetoric to go against a potentially more credible and likeable figure who poses a threat to his reputation and candidacy. This is reiterated when Trump elevates himself by countering O'Brien's own credibility, stating how he was "fired like a dog". Continuing with this statement, his comparison of Tim O'Brien to "a dog" and "a world class loser" falls in line with the stickiness factor, as these statements capture and maintain a reader's attention - regardless of where they fall on the political spectrum, thus achieving persuasion.

From this discussion, it is evident that manipulation is a powerful communicative strategy of persuasion which appeals to emotions, this ties in with the next strategy to be discussed which is 'fear appeal'. Gregory (2020:19) writes that manipulation is a prominent strategy in Donald Trump speeches. Though this study extends beyond Trump's speeches it is envisaged that other presidents (i.e., Ramaphosa & Jinping) do apply manipulation in their speeches.

3.3.1.3 Fear appeal

When elucidating the concept of fear appeal, O'Keefe (1990:156) articulates that fear appeal represents a prevalent strategy of persuasion within communication. High fear appeal messages encompass explicit, vivid portrayals of adverse outcomes, which are perceived as inducing significant fear or anxiety in the recipient. In contrast, low fear appeal messages are characterized by their subdued nature and the elicitation of comparatively lower levels of fear.

Boster and Mongeau (1984) cited in Sadiki (2017:44) say that the causal role of fear as an emotional role of the message may not be the cause for persuasion, but cognitive reactions to the message may lead receivers to believe that fearful consequences are more severe, harmful, and disadvantageous than they previously believed. This pertains to positive and negative face of politeness as previously discussed under Section 3.2.3.3. In this regard, audience responds positively to a positive face as opposed to a negative face.

In addition, Cho and Witte (2004:223) describe fear appeals as a powerful motivator in attempt to persuade people to change their attitude and behaviour. Two important constructs in fear appeals include perceived threat and perceived efficacy. Perceived threat emanates from the belief that one is in danger and that is serious, therefore perceive the threat as high whereas perceived efficacy refers to the individual's perception in response to fear appeal recommendation (Sadiki, 2017:37). The elements of perceived efficacy are self-efficacy which is the belief of ability to perform the recommended response and response efficacy as the belief of whether the recommended response works.

Cho and Witte (2004:229) and Ralarala (2010:82) contend that fear appeals are perceived as threats to freedom and may include forms of a threat to behavioural freedom. Examples of such threats are basically health and lifestyle behaviour, attitude and belief change. For instance, when the president declares that residents who will be found in public spaces without a face shield or mask will be arrested. This serves as a low-key threat and the public is left with no choice but to comply by wearing of masks.

Cap (2017) finds discursively constructed fear appeals to be one of the most successful ways of legitimising preventative policies, such as the extreme Covid-19 restrictions set in place and ensuring fast social mobilisation. According to *Times* (2017) “no president has ever spread fear like Donald Trump”. He is an expert at playing to the public’s phobias. The America rendered in his speeches and tweets is a dystopian hellscape. He shapes public opinion by emphasising dangers both real and imaginary that his policies purport to fix. The excerpt below is an example of fear appeal as a strategy of persuasion in Donald Trump’s speech at the Republican nomination convention.

The factories scattered like tombstones, the crime and gangs and drugs that have stolen too many lives. I alone can fix it.

In this excerpt, Trump describes the U.S.A. in a moment of crisis because of the alarming rates of gangs and drugs, interestingly, he cast himself as its saviour by stating that “I alone can fix it”. Thus, persuading the public to vote for him.

3.3.1.4 Coercion

Reardon (1991:2) portrays coercion as another means of influencing behaviour by employing physical force or some threat, especially in children, instead of assisting them to reason on their own during the process of shaping behaviour. Importantly, literature on persuasion research (Milner, 2002:4; Kellerman, 2004:40; Wilson, 2023:220-221) shows that the notion of indirect coercion applies during persuasive discourse, whereby messages for compliance-gaining goals, such as giving advice, may restrict the target’s autonomy or contain threats and punishment, rather than entailing a free choice activity (refer to Section 3.2.3.1).

Perloff (2003:12-13) and Moorosi (2009:16) suggest that coercion entails force and define it as a technique employed for forcing people to act as the course wants them to act regardless of their preferences. Following Perloff (2003:14), influence messages during communication may carry overlapping elements of persuasion and coercion concurrently.

Apart from the above four major strategies, other communicative strategies of persuasion applicable to this study are delimited to the following (Dillard, 1998:24).

- i. **Assertion:** The communicator to gain compliance forcefully in a way that will make the target to comply. For example, “Get out of here right now!”

- ii. **Audience-use:** The communicator tries to gain compliance by asking the target in front of the public. For example, “I asked her to marry me in front of the entire congregation”.
- iii. **Authority Appeal:** The communicator gains compliance based on power vested upon him/her.
- iv. **Aversive Stimulation:** The communicator tries to gain compliance by bothering others until they comply. For example, “My partner kept calling until I answered her call”.
- v. **Bargaining:** The communicator tries to gain compliance by bargaining a deal wherein both parties will benefit. For example, “If you come with me, I will help you with your homework”.
- vi. **Benefit (Other):** The communicator tries to gain compliance by telling the targets that if they comply the public will benefit. For example, if you pledge in our organisation the lives of ordinary kids will be transformed”.

From a unifying perspective, Dillard, Segrin and Harden (1989:20) grouped the communicative tactics or strategies of persuasion in terms of their commonalities, identifying five basic types of compliance-gaining strategies which are also adopted for this study, which are as follows:

- **Rewarding activity:** This involves seeking compliance in an active and positive way (e.g., using promises).
- **Punishing activity:** This involves seeking compliance in an explicitly negative way (e.g., making threats).
- **Expertise:** This involves attempts to make a person think that the persuader has some special knowledge (e.g., trying to appear credible).
- **Activation of impersonal commitments:** which involves attempts to appeal to a person’s internalised commitments (e.g., telling the person he or she will feel bad about him/herself if he/she does not comply).
- **Activation of personal commitments:** which relies on appeals to a person’s commitment to others (e.g., pointing out that the person is indebted and should therefore comply to repay the favour).

Due to the nature of relatedness between compliance-gaining strategies and persuasion, the above two list are related, and they both serve as communicative strategies of persuasion. This shows that there is a mutual relationship between all these various persuasion strategies.

This section discusses communicative strategies of persuasion. Among the reviewed strategies, there is an influence of lexical items, indicating a close relation between communicative strategies of persuasion and linguistic strategies of persuasion, which will be discussed next. In this section, the most prominent communicative strategies of persuasion include propaganda, manipulation, fear appeal, and coercion. Other communicative strategies of persuasion encompass assertion, audience-use, authority appeal, aversive stimulation, bargaining, and benefits (both self and others). Marwell and Schmitt (1967: 3-60) categorise them into rewarding activity, punishing activity, expertise, activation of impersonal and personal commitments.

In their study titled '*Taxonomic Disorder and Strategic Confusion*,' Kellermann and Cole (1994: 3-60) compiled communicative strategies of persuasion (compliance-gaining) to classify more than 820 previous strategies. This demonstrates that there are numerous strategies, with some not covered in this study. The next sub-section discusses another category of strategies of persuasion, namely linguistic.

3.3.2 Linguistic strategies of persuasion

There are different linguistic strategies of persuasion, and they are all used to achieve the process of persuasion. Caps (2017) highlights various linguistic strategies of threat construction and fear generation used by politicians and organisation leaders to construct fear, closeness, otherness, and other constructs that are useful to support persuasion.

Also, Johnstone (1989:145) mentions three strategies of persuasion: quasilogic, presentation and analogy. Johnstone mentions that in the quasilogical strategy, persuaders use vocabulary (refer to Section 3.2.2.1) and structures of the formal logic (refer to Section 3.2.2.2) to create the rhetorical impression that their arguments are logical. The presentational strategy assumes that being persuaded is being moved, being swept along by the rhythmic flow of words and sounds (ibid:149). Finally, the strategy of analogy is used to make analogies between current issues and past events (Johnstone, 1989:145). For example, showing the public statistical records of how the Covid-19 virus has progressed over the months may persuade them to adhere to the set protocols.

Aristotle indicates that beyond the basic means of producing persuasion, attention should also be paid to "the style, or language to be used" (Smith, 2009:57). In addition, Sandell (1977:75)

maintains that the employment of stylistic devices is used to achieve force, freshness, directness, and interest in speeches. He adds that simile, metaphor, repetition, rhetorical question, and personification, among other devices, are the most effective linguistic elements aiding persuasion to a significant degree (these were detailed in section 3.2.2.2 on linguistic elements of persuasion).

From the reviewed literature (Adeyinka, 2012; Khalil, 2017; Masroor et al., 2020), this study categories linguistic strategies of persuasion in three categories, which are 1- syntactic strategies, 2- rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies, and 3- verbal strategies, as detailed below.

3.3.2.1 Syntactic strategies

There is a relation between the various syntactic elements discussed earlier in Section 3.2.2.1, as such the syntactic strategies build from that. It should be stated from the onset that this is not a research work in syntax, therefore the focus is limited to the primary level of persuasive discourse segments in political speeches into linguistic elements and how they are used as varying strategies of persuasion. Earlier on in Section 3.2.3.1, the study showed through Halliday's (1965) SFL that the grammatical constituents are determined by the function that the language serves. This means that grammatical constituents are to a certain extent ignored, and the focus is put on the context, goals, and implications. So, it may be that a specific grammatical structure is chosen such as passive voice because the political speaker does not want to identify the actor, or person responsible. In this section, syntactic strategies discussed include sentence structural category, sentence functional category, pronominal reference, and the use of conjunction.

a) Sentence structural category

A sentence is one of the highest grammatical units in linguistic persuasion. As mentioned earlier in this study, Halliday's (1965) SFL is used in the analysis of the syntactic and lexico-semantic strategies employed in the collected data (political speeches) for this study. In this model of grammar, the sentence is the highest grammatical unit, and it plays a crucial role in carrying meaning (Huddleston & Pullum, 1997:13). This is followed in a descending order by

the clause, the group, the word, and the morpheme, which ultimately leads to context, participants and intended goals (refer to Section 2.2.3.1 for detailed explication).

The sentence structural category impacts its persuasiveness (Adeyinka, 2013:87). For example, a compound sentence gives information and ideas that have equal importance and significance with the aim of persuading audiences.

b) Sentence functional category

According to Khalil (2017:114), the functional category of an uttered sentence determines its persuasiveness, for an example, declarative sentences often make assertion which may be true or false but are uttered with the goal of persuading. Also, imperative (commands) sentences play a big role in influencing people (Adeyinka, 2012:88).

c) Pronominal reference

The use of personal pronouns “*you*”, “*we*”, “*yours*”, “*us*” are used to affect this. There are instances of the use of demonstrative pronouns “*these*” and “*this*” to achieve the same purpose (Hussein & Nasef, 2015:15). This pertains to personal pronoun and kinship terms as discussed in lexical and syntactic elements of persuasion in Section 3.2.2.1.

d) Use of conjunctions

Conjunction links information together for cohesion and this persuades the recipients of the message. Conjunctions are grouped into coordinate and subordinate conjunction. For example, “*and*” and “*but*”, subsequently (Hussein & Nasef, 2015:15). As a sub-system of cohesion in SFL (Halliday, 1965), conjunction connect words to words and paragraphs to paragraphs, which plays a role in political speeches, and helps speakers to clarify their points and helps listeners to unveil the hidden meaning of language (Zhou, 2021:77).

Halliday and Hason (2001:123) summarises four conjunction types: additive, adversative, causal and temporal. Additive conjunction words usually connect parallel sentences, meaning that there is still information to be added, for example “*and*”. In adversative conjunction, words follow a situation that is contrary to expectations, for example “*but*” (Halliday, 2001). On the other hand, Causal conjunction is used to connect two sentences of cause and effect (Halliday,

2001). The most common cohesive devices for causality are “because”, “so” and “therefore”. Lastly, Zhou (2021:78) explains temporal conjunction as the temporal relation between two adjacent sentences, indicating that one sentence follows another, for example, “now”, “then”, and “finally”.

The excerpt below adopted from Trump inaugural speech serves as an example of how conjunctions are used as a persuasive strategy in political speech.

For too long, a small group in our nation’s Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered but the jobs left, and the factories closed. The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country.

In this excerpt, “a small group in our nation’s capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost”, Trump uses the adversative conjunction “while” to express his dissatisfaction and disappointment that a small number of groups have reached the rewards for which the people have borne the cost. This sub-section discussed syntactic strategies of persuasion as a sub-set of linguistic persuasion, the next section details rhetorical and lexicosemantic strategies.

3.3.2.2 Rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies

Rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies point to the context and setting of a text. These are mostly traditional figures of speech, which are often thought of as features of meaning and expression. According to Leech et al. (1982:160), these are exceptional in ordinary language and have special communicative power and values, thus being utilised as persuasive strategies. Rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies of persuasion include but not limited to symbolism, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and idioms (Adeyinka, 2012:90).

a) Symbolism

Mcathur (1996:343) and de Silva (1991:22) define symbolism as the use of symbols to represent and send messages about different things other than themselves. Something concrete or material is used to represent or suggest something that is abstract or non-material if an

association can be found between them. It, therefore, becomes invested with symbolic meaning and can be used to express ideas and emotions.

b) The use of metaphors and similes

As explained earlier during the discussion on linguistic elements of persuasion under Section 3.2, metaphors serve a dual function, their functions overlap from being an element of persuasion to being a persuasive strategy. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which there is implicit comparison between essentially different things that have some strong point of resemblance (De Silva, 1991). A word is used in a metaphoric sense if a reference peculiar to that word is transferred to another. In other words, one is saying that **X** is **Y** because of a particular feature or quality that is common to both **X** and **Y**.

Ricoeur (1978:60) states that the purpose of a metaphor is often to achieve a better image or meaning of the referent; so that “one thought in the image of another that is better, suited to making it more tangible or more striking than if it were presented directly and without any sort of disguise”.

Simile on the other hand, may be defined as an overt comparison between two different things, actions, or feelings which is identified by using the words “*like*”, or “*as*”, and asserts that it is more tentative and decorative than a metaphor (Baldick, 2001:237). Using similes, political leaders can entice the imagination of their targets, to create a more interesting persuasive speech (McManus, 1998:63).

c) The use of hyperbole

A hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration or overstatement. Chilwa (2005:190) describes it as a strategy that is used in drama to show great emotion or passion. Even though it exaggerates excessively, its intention is not to tell a lie or deceive because the reader can easily infer the truth in question or the accurate picture from the exaggeration (Wales, 1989). Hyperbole means exaggeration through intensifiers to give force or emphasis, such as ‘really’, ‘extremely’, ‘enormously’, etc. For instance, for Donald Trump, when things are terrible or incredible, best or worst. He uses phrases such as “very, very” and “many, many”, as well as the rare “super-duper” (Inzaurrealde, 2017).

d) The use of idioms

Merriam-Webster (1986) defines an idiom as an expression that is established in the usage of a language and is peculiar to itself either in grammatical construction or in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the combined meaning of its elements. In English, these expressions are characteristically fixed in collocation and restricted in grammatical mobility (Wales, 1989:11) as in “*spill the beans*” not “*the beans are spilled*”. Also, their meanings are not determined by the linguistic forms or features that make up the expressions but the context of use. Some idioms are metaphorical, and their meanings have been determined and have become obvious over the years due to the frequency of use.

e) Lexical repetition

It refers to the repetition of content words in a text as opposed to grammatical words. This aligns with the discussion on Section 3.2.2.1 on parallelism, though parallelism and repetition are not entirely the same however they are similar in writing to create effect through repetition of a sentence or parts of it. The repetition of these content words links the meaning of the text together and make it a unified whole. Fahnestock (2011:230) mentions that orators since antiquity have drawn on the power of repetition for emphasis and emotional heightening and then have persuasive consequences. Repetition is one of the syntactic devices in which words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are used more than one time to draw the attention of the reader/listener and to have rhythmic flow of speech (Cuddon, 1998:742). This pertains to the discussion on fronting in Section 3.2.2.1.

In her paper, Markam (2018:1) states that repetition builds emphasis. She gives an example of Trump favourites “you know?”, which builds up trust with his audiences. For example, When Trump refers to Hillary Clinton as “crooked” or cites terrorists as “radical Muslims”, it is his way of strengthening those associations through repetition. Trump does not repeat phrases accidentally, says Liberman (Golshan, 2016:4); “for the most part, he is providing emphasis”.

f) Rhetorical questioning

A question that is “asked for the purpose of persuasive effect rather than as a genuine inquiry for information” is referred to as a rhetorical question (the discussion in this section, overlaps with the earlier discussion on interrogative mood in Section 3.2.2.1) in which the addressee

suggests that the response is unnecessary because the solution is plain enough. A rhetorical question is just a remark that seems like a question (Quinn, 2006:367).

According to Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), this device's illocutionary force is to make an assertion rather than raise an inquiry (Abrams and Harpham, 2009:315). Rhetorical questions are so questions in form, but they are employed to make a claim rather than to solicit a response. Most rhetorical questions serve some sort of persuasive purpose. The primary goals of employing such questions are to alter perceptions and strengthen the speaker's stance (Petty and Cacioppo, 1983:5).

This sub-section discussed rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies of persuasion as sub-strategies for linguistic strategies. The next section presents the verbal strategies.

3.3.2.3 Verbal strategies

Verbal strategies involve a wide range of strategies that people employ when uttering words. For this study, only speech-style switching, and shared knowledge are adopted due to their relevancy.

a) Speech-style switching

This involves formal and informal speech style. Adeyinka (2015:99) states that to effect persuasion, communicators "often switch from informal to semi-formal speech-style, informal to formal, formal to semi-formal, and semi-formal to informal". In the context, of this study, the researcher in impending chapters determines the application of speech style switching in political speech of presidents.

b) Shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world

Knowledge and presuppositions about the world shared by participants in a discourse are important for a smooth reception and perception of their messages. This pertains to the earlier discussion in Section 3.2.3.2 on presupposition as a pragmatic element of persuasion.

The concept of shared knowledge in this context extends beyond mere common understandings of linguistic interpretation. It encompasses a collective comprehension of the world to which a speaker can refer. For instance, Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as the President of South

Africa, possesses a distinct advantage in persuading the South African population regarding Covid-19 measures compared to a non-South African president. The enduring axiom remains unaltered: understanding your audience empowers you to construct a customised message that deeply connects with them.

c) Shared social and cultural rules

Politicians often rely on the social and cultural rules they share with their audience. Therefore, they can sometimes use words without explaining what they mean because they assume the public understands what they mean, for example, the name “juju” resonates with South African to mean Julius Malema.

This section discussed linguistic strategies of persuasion, which are grouped into syntactic strategies, rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies, and verbal strategies. Each of these three categories comprising of their sub-strategies. There is a direct relationship between these strategies and their elements that were previously discussed in section 3.2.2.2. The next section discusses the last category of strategies of persuasion, which is pragmatics.

3.3.3 Pragmatic strategies of persuasion

Pragmatics refers to the way we convey and interpret meaning in communication. The term ‘pragmatic’ is meant to emphasise not only the notion of the appropriateness of language in its social context, but also the function of language used to achieve communicative goals, thus the notion of persuasion. Context is particularly important in pragmatics.

Context has been the focus of pragmatics research since its beginning. According to Leech (1983:66), context is “any background knowledge assumed to be shared by the speaker and the hearer, which contributes to the hearer’s interpretation of what the speaker means by a given utterance”.

An utterance may be used to accomplish such speech acts as ordering, promising, arguing, and persuading. There are different types of pragmatic strategies of persuasion, however, due to relevancy, this study adopts those proposed by Faisal El- Samir (2018), which are discussed below.

- **Praising:** which leads to the intended meaning e.g “please let me go”.

- **Appealing to justice or morality:** which implies that “it would be unfair if you don’t let me go”.
- **Appealing to emotions / emotional blackmail:** which entails “could you risk me not loving you?”
- **Justification:** which appeals to rationalisation, it involves an underlying message, for example, “if you so much care for your life, you will stay home and avoid Covid”.
- **Conditioning:** involves a condition negotiated to appeal based on the current happenings.
- **Promise:** which is like a conditioning strategy. Yet, while conditioning is a main part of negotiation, promising is a mild strategy.

In summation, it is appropriate to assert that pragmatics deal mainly with implicature, with a focus on the meaning of utterances (Faisal El- Samir, 2018:34). It is also vital to highlight that these strategies pertain to pragmatic elements of persuasion, and they also overlap to communicative strategies of persuasion (refer to Section 3.3.1). This indicates that multiple researchers have examined them from diverse viewpoints within different contexts, notwithstanding occasional discrepancies, or inconsistencies.

This section examines three distinct categories of persuasion strategies, namely communicative, linguistic, and pragmatics. The analysis reveals an interconnected relationship among these strategies, with communicative strategies particularly reliant on linguistic and pragmatic strategies. In the next section, the reviewed literature is synthesised to form a unified network of persuasion.

3.4 SYNTHESIS OF THE REVIEWED LITERATURE

Based on the review of literature presented in this chapter, it is evident that persuasion includes communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements. These elements have been explored in relation to persuasion as well as identified as features of persuasion considered as a psychological construct. Despite the elaborate body of research to date, there are still some gaps in the literature. Studies that only focused on a few linguistic elements (i.e., one or two) at a time have generally explored the impact of linguistic elements on persuasion in isolation.

Although a substantial number of linguistic elements have been related to message persuasiveness in this body of study, it is still unknown how these connections, when taken together, affect the social dimensions of verbal behaviour in persuasion. Otherwise, the rationale of adopting theory triangulation in this study is to address theoretical gaps by converging communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies of persuasion, in exploring political persuasion.

This study explores linguistic and political persuasion in a way that shed light on the extent to which one influences the other. Vivian et al. (2021:884) pose the following query in their study on the characteristics of persuasion.

What do the linguistic features connected with message persuasiveness reveal about the key verbal behaviour involved in persuasion?

This means that a more thorough knowledge of the political pathways to persuasion can be obtained by combining these studies since language offers a rich stream of ongoing social activities. In a similar spirit, real-world messages are created employing a wide range of linguistic components to persuade people by conveying complicated ideas, feelings, and information. However, the examined studies frequently focus on the correlation between a single language characteristic (or a small range of traits) and persuasion without taking other potentially significant elements (such as pragmatic, communicative, and contextual factors) into account within a given message.

The meaning of a given word or element in any text is dependent on the context by which it is used which can be inferred by linguistic elements and other elements that surround it. As such, the effect of any linguistic element on message persuasiveness can be attenuated by the presence of other elements in the message. As these elements and strategies are typically studied in isolation, little is known about their relative impact on the message's persuasive appeal. Hence, the relevancy of the current study which intends to model communicative goals of political leaders through linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic elements as well as their relative strategies of persuasion.

From the reviewed literature, there appears to be extensive overlap between the elements identified from different perspectives. For example, researchers such as Adeyinka (2015) sees propaganda as a strategy of persuasion while other researchers such as French and Raven (1960) see it as an element of persuasion, the same applies to other elements as well. Be that as it may, there are elements that can still serve as strategies provided the researcher justify the

grounds of doing such because there is no universal agreement on specific elements and strategies since they all depend on the study and its context.

To mitigate these differences, the current study explored wide range of sources on persuasion from communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic perspectives. This motivates a unified model of political persuasion. From the reviewed studies, this study groups elements and strategies of persuasion in terms of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic approaches. This is done so that the communicative goals of political leaders can be modelled through utilisation of these three perspectives.

Subsequently, Figure 3.2 below presents a synthesised persuasive approach taken by this study based on the theoretical framework adopted in Section 2.3 and the reviewed literature in this chapter. This serves as a provisional or preliminary model to be utilised during analysis of political speeches and to help develop a comprehensive model during the discussion of the findings of the current study in the impending chapters. This provisional model provides a basic structure or direction until a more robust model can be established (for the robust mode, refer to Figure 6.2 in Section 6.5).

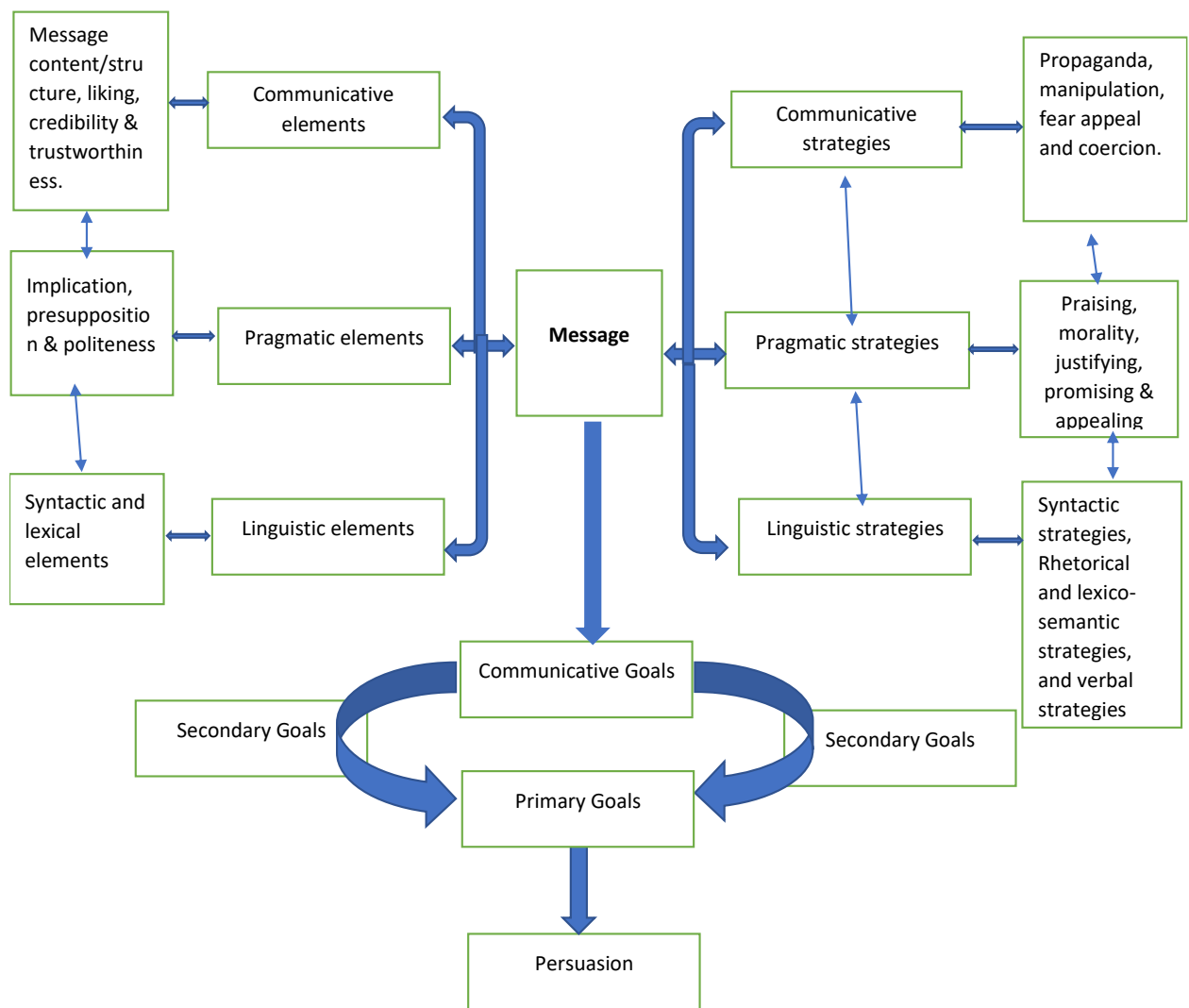


Figure 3. 2: Provisional model of persuasion

This provisional model informs the empirical analysis conducted for the purpose of this study and is reported on in Chapter 5. This model encompasses four main categories: *message* (referring to the content of what is uttered), *communicative goals* (indicating the intended purpose), *elements of persuasion* (highlighting linguistic choices), and *strategies of persuasion* (describing the manner of execution).

This model is a temporary or preliminary structure or outline that is subject to further development, refinement, or modification. It serves as an initial guide or starting point for organising and understanding persuasion, it may undergo changes after data analysis and as new insights emerge from the findings.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has laid the essential conceptual foundation for the present study by exploring a range of techniques to persuasion and advocating for the use of theory triangulation as an appropriate methodology. Chapter 2 accentuated the existing gap in integrating linguistic, pragmatic, and communicative elements to elicit persuasion in Covid-19 presidential speeches. To address this void, the current chapter has undertaken a conceptual exploration of the communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies of persuasion.

A comprehensive examination of persuasion elements and strategies within political discourse has been presented, illustrated by pertinent examples from presidential speeches related to Covid-19. In the context of this study, persuasion elements are recognised as fundamental, while persuasion strategies are purposeful actions taken for persuasive success. To foster a thorough understanding, the chapter systematically introduced prior studies that showcase communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements, as well as strategies of persuasion.

Additionally, the chapter unpacked the theoretical toolboxes identified for triangulation in the preceding chapter. In doing so, the researcher effortlessly integrated aspects of the study's theoretical framework into the discussion of various persuasion elements and strategies. Guided by this framework and the reviewed elements and strategies of persuasion, the chapter formulated a provisional model of persuasion. This model is intended for use in the analysis of sampled speeches in subsequent chapters and remains open to revision and further development, ultimately leading to the creation of a comprehensive model of persuasion (See Section 6.5). The next chapter provides a detailed account on the methods of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 introduced the theoretical foundations of the study, while Chapter 3 reviewed relevant literature concerning units of analysis pertinent to the research problem. Both chapters served to inform the empirical work required for this study. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to detailing the study's methods. The study adopted a qualitative research approach to explore persuasion within presidential speeches related to Covid-19. Bowen, Duffy and Steinberg (1986:155) state that the nature of data and the research problem guide the selection of the research method. This implies that the research methodology is guided by the goals and research questions outlined in Chapter 1 of this study. This current chapter provides comprehensive insights into the paradigm, design, population, sampling, data collection, and analysis. The research procedure employed to conduct this study is also elucidated on in this chapter.

The research questions central to the study's main goal (refer to Section 1.1) are as follows:

- What are the prevalent types of communicative goals reflected in selected Covid-19 presidential speeches?
- Which communicative, pragmatic and linguistic elements of persuasion do selected presidents employ to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches?
- Which communicative, pragmatic and linguistic strategies of persuasion do selected presidents employ to execute goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches?
- How can the execution of communicative goals of political persuasion be modelled linguistically?

To address these research questions, the following research objectives were devised in Chapter 1:

- To examine the prevalent types of communicative goals, reflected in Covid-19 selected presidential speeches.

- To identify and contrast communicative, pragmatic and linguistic elements of persuasion employed by selected presidents to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches.
- To establish communicative, pragmatic and linguistic strategies of persuasion employed by selected presidents to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches.
- To devise a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion.

In pursuit of these research objectives, the researcher manually constructed a provisional framework of persuasion, presented in Section 3.4, based on the comprehensive literature. Chari (2014:189) emphasises the importance of grounding research in a specific theoretical or conceptual framework. In alignment with this advice, this study's methodology is rooted in the devised framework. Additionally, the study adopted the interpretivism paradigm, also known as the phenomenological approach, as explained by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:34). Interpretivism regards the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced through human interactions within social systems (Antwi-Agyei & Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2021:1308).

The perspective, shared by Livesey (2006:9), underscores interpretivism as a method that views the social world as a product of daily human actions. This aligns with the study's objective of understanding socially constructed meanings in the scrutinised presidential speeches. Embracing the interpretivism paradigm permits the researcher to interpret data guided by the provisional model (refer to Section 3.4) and theoretical tools from the adopted theory triangulation (refer to Section 2.3).

The adoption of the interpretivism paradigm in this study not only enables the researcher to understand subjective realities but also to construct a comprehensive model on the linguistic execution of communicative goals of politicians (presidents) grounded in data and interpreted social constructs. Interpretivists seek to elucidate subjective realities and provide meaningful explanations for readers. In this context, the researcher interprets data guided by the provisional model (Figure 3.2) and theoretical tools embedded within the theory triangulation approach (refer to Section 2.3).

This introductory section has outlined the study's research questions and paradigm; the subsequent section delves into the specific research methods employed.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach due to the nature of the collected data, which is conveyed through language in the form of words, phrases, or sentences rather than numerical data. This characteristic aligns with one of the defining traits of qualitative research, as outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (1992:111). The qualitative research approach focuses on comprehending and building upon qualitative aspects of communication experiences (Verster, 2010:36). The speeches made by presidents in relation to Covid-19 are integral to this communication experience, produced by Presidents and interpreted by the public. The study's research approach comprised two key methods: a survey of scholarship and qualitative empirical analysis, elucidated further below.

4.2.1 Survey of scholarship

The survey of scholarship serves to conceptualise the concept of 'persuasion; for this study and to inform empirical analysis. This involved reviewing pertinent literature on communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies of persuasion, such as lexical features (nouns, adjectives, and verbs) employed in persuasive discourse. Additionally, literature on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1965), the Goals Plans Actions theory (GPA) (Dillard, 1989), and Speech Act theory (SAT) (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) was explored.

The literature review identified research gaps and facilitated the development of the provisional model for the study (refer to Section 3.4). After the literature review, empirical research was conducted, which is outlined in detail below.

4.2.2 Empirical research

Empirical research represents an evidence-based approach to studying and interpreting information (Patten, 2016). The empirical research components encompass research design, data collection, population, sampling, data analysis, and research procedure.

4.2.2.1 Research design

The study adopted a qualitative discourse-textual analysis as the specific research design. This approach integrated the triangulation of SFL as the central framework of the study,

operationalised through LPIM, SAT and GPA to comprehensively elucidate persuasive communicative goals within context. The qualitative exploration of Covid-19 presidential speeches entailed discourse-textual analysis as the chosen design for investigating how meanings are socially constructed (Du Plooy, 2009:216; Mouton, 2011:167; Babbie, 1992:94). This approach sought to comprehend how presidential Covid-19 related speeches serve persuasion and how communicative goals of presidents are realised through communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies. Noting that “language, the medium in and through which we attempt to influence each other, has rarely been the explicit focus of persuasion research”, Huma, Stokoe and Sikveland (2020:359) argue that “persuasion is best approached as a naturally occurring phenomenon that can be studied in such terms”. In other words, a discourse-based exploration of persuasion is ideal, because it centralises the actual behaviour of persuasion, rather than people’s opinions or reactions to it.

The discourse-textual analysis design zeroes in on presidential Covid-19 speeches, a unique form of media text that addresses vital societal concerns. Although not as common, discourse-textual analysis facilitates the illustration of diverse meanings generated on communicative and linguistic levels (Danjoux, 2007:289), which is fitting for a study that investigates communicative goals from a linguistic perspective. Schneider (2013:43) identifies six steps that guide this design:

- **Establishing the context** – In the context of this study, this refers to the researcher’s understanding of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts in China, South Africa and United States of America as the study focuses on the presidential speeches of these three countries. Another important factor is understanding the political and social surroundings during the time the speeches were delivered. It is vital to link this to the discussion made earlier in Section 2.2.3.1 on field, mode and tenor, because applying SFL involves examining how language is used (field), through what channels (mode), and by whom (tenor) in the presidential speeches related to the Covid-19 pandemic in China, South Africa, and the United States. This analytical framework may help uncover the linguistic choices made by political leaders and their implications in different sociopolitical contexts.
- **Preparing selected items for analysis** – This refers to gathering speeches and selecting content for analysis in alignment with the objectives of the study.
- **Examining the structure of the text** – In the context of this study, this refers to the speech’s conventions and their discourse segments.

- **Identifying significant issues reflected** – This refers to the direct and indirect communicative goals hidden under uttered discourses, which presidents seek to achieve. Other issues including theoretical properties of persuasion, cultural cues, and persuasive impact are also considered.
- **Identifying linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms** – In this study, this refers to linguistic and pragmatic elements and strategies utilised in captured discourse segments to achieve communicative goals of the selected presidents.
- **Interpreting the data** – In this aspect, the researcher interprets the data whilst informed by the reviewed literature and theoretical framework adopted.

These bulletins explain how discourse-textual analysis was applied in this study as the chosen design. The discourse-textual analysis, rooted in multiple theories, sets this study apart by enhancing the depth and confidence in findings. This critical approach is guided by theories such as SFL (Halliday, 1965), GPA (Dillard, 1989), SAT (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), and LPIM (Maritz, 2019). The rationale for adopting multiple theories (theory triangulation) was to explore the phenomenon of persuasion comprehensively and to enhance confidence in the findings since theories are integrated to reveal unique findings to provide a clear understanding of the complex phenomenon (Thurmond, 2001:254; Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011; Carter et al, 2014).

This section identified and discussed qualitative discourse-textual analysis as the specific research design for the study, the next section discusses the data collection process.

4.2.2.2 Data collection

The qualitative nature of this study necessitates the utilisation of written political speeches as the primary data source. These speeches were gathered, analysed, and interpreted against a checklist of persuasion i.e., the provisional model introduced in Section 3.4. This model was developed based on a comprehensive review of literature related to communicative, linguistic, and political persuasion.

To fulfil the study's objectives, the researcher extracted data from fifteen (15) carefully chosen speeches, aiming to decipher linguistic features of persuasion and embedded communicative goals, as stipulated in the study's scope. However, the intent was to attain data saturation by

employing inductive logic (Saunders et al., 2018:125). According to Smith (2017:56), data saturation using inductive logic ensures that the study's conclusion is rooted in accurate premises.

This study utilised a base of 15 speeches contributed by President Donald Trump (USA), Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa (RSA), and Xi Jinping (China), with each president providing five (5) speeches. Access to President Cyril Ramaphosa's speeches was granted via www.gov.za, while President Xi Jinping's speeches were sourced from www.fmprc.cn, and President Donald Trump's speeches were obtained from www.whitehouse.gov (refer to Annex C for full speeches).

The selection of these presidents was informed by distinctive factors. China's status as the initial country to document a Covid-19 case placed Xi Jinping at the forefront of addressing the pandemic, evoking varied perlocutionary responses (criticism and applause) globally, making his speeches a captivating choice. Similarly, South Africa's pioneering Covid-19 case prompted Cyril Ramaphosa to become the first African president to address the virus, influencing other African leaders. The USA, experiencing high infection rates and casualties due to Covid-19, attracted significant attention as President Donald Trump faced scrutiny for attributing blame to China, rendering his speeches highly pertinent to this study.

The obscure timelines and complexities of these countries (China, RSA & USA) further motivated the comparison of persuasive elements and strategies employed by these three presidents.

The limited availability of relevant speeches by each of the selected presidents constrained the data source (speeches). Adhering to the study's aim, which seeks a comprehensive and multi-layered depiction of relevant political discourse, a base of fifteen speeches was secured. The rationale for selecting these specific speeches rested on their descriptive persuasion attributes and their capacity to provide substantial data pertinent to the study's objectives.

Importantly, it is worth acknowledging that Trump's speeches predominantly appeal to first language (L1) English speakers, Ramaphosa's to primarily second language (L2) English speakers, and Jinping's to Mandarin speakers (translated to English by an L2 speaker who are trained translators). However, this language diversity did not compromise the study's objectives, as selected speeches encompassed essential thematic elements of persuasive communication, irrespective of the language employed.

The speech selection process was thus grounded in a thorough comprehension of persuasion's descriptive properties within mass communication settings, encompassing a broad audience range. The researcher anticipates that each speech encapsulates distinct societal challenges manifested across various persuasion-related dimensions.

This section discussed the data collection and its rationale; the subsequent section addresses the study's population and sampling strategies.

4.2.2.3 Population and sampling

The study's population encompasses the entirety of individuals, objects, and events that the researcher seeks to investigate and draw conclusions about (Babbie, 2010:150). The supposed primary participants of this study are the three selected presidents. Factors that were considered included: the fact that all three speakers are male; are presidents and have the same general goal, namely persuading their country's citizens to comply with restrictive measures. In addition, the different cultural representation allows for more general comparison, although results from this study are not necessarily generalisable.

From each of these 'participants', speeches were purposefully sampled. To derive the population for this study, from the collection of 15 speeches, a process called "discourse segmentation" was employed. This algorithm partitions text into coherent segments based on the coherence formed through a sequence of events, aimed at achieving singular or multiple goals (Chen & Chen, 1995:156). Rather than using automated software, the segmentation was conducted manually, classifying paragraphs within each speech as discourse segments based on a structured algorithm. This process yielded a total of 516 discourse segments, which constituted the entire population of the study.

An exemplar of a discourse segment, extracted from one of President Donald Trump's speeches, is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below:

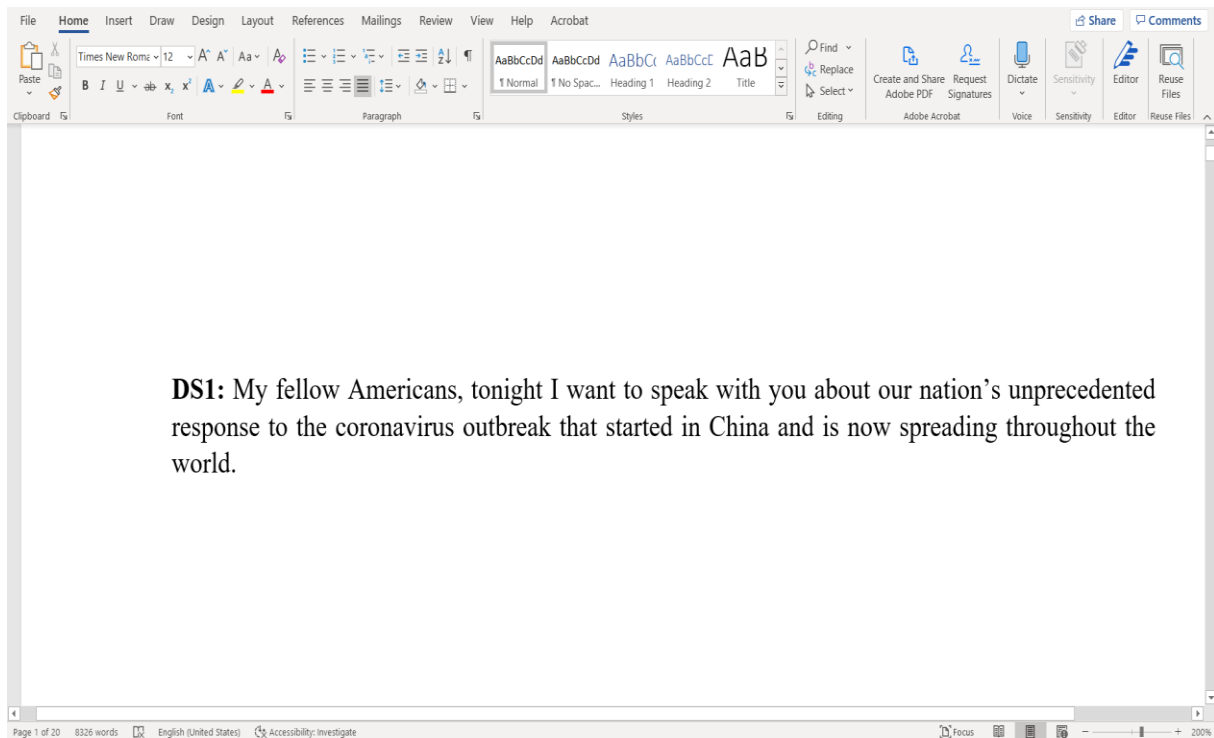


Figure 4. 1: Discourse segment exemplar

This figure exemplifies how a discourse segment appears within the context of this study. From the extensive population (refer to Table 4.1 below), the study's sample was derived using purposive sampling. According to Broens, Huisveld, Vollenbroek-Hutten, Hermens, van Halteren and Nieuwenhuis (2007:303), sampling entails "the process used to select a portion of the population for the study". For this study, a form of purposive sampling, known as homogenous sampling, was applied (Creswell & Creswell, 2005:317). Homogeneous purposive sampling involves selecting a sample based on shared characteristics (Cohen, Leviton, Isaacson, Tallia & Crabtree, 2006:165).

Aligning with the provisional model introduced in Section 3.4, discourse segments exhibiting the most prevalent persuasion-theoretic properties targeting the critical context of Covid-19 were chosen as the sample. This selection aimed to condense the vast population into a manageable sample for data organisation and manual textual analysis. A total of 120 discourse segments constituted the final sample for analysis. Within this sample, President Xi Jinping contributed 40 discourse segments, President Cyril Ramaphosa contributed 40 discourse segments, and President Donald Trump contributed 40 discourse segments. Table 4.1 outlines the sample size, which will undergo qualitative data analysis, as elaborated in Section 4.2.3.4. The table below presents a breakdown of the study's population and sample size:

Table 4. 1: Population and sample size

PRESIDENTS	SPEECHES (S)	Total (DS)	Sampled DS
Donald Trump (PDT)	1. Speaking from the Oval Office, Mr. Trump announced a suspension of travel from Europe for 30 days,	32	10
	2. Press Conference about the Coronavirus (13 March 2020)	22	10
	3. Press Briefing with the Coronavirus Task Force (15 April 2020)	46	10
	4. Trump Announces Plan for 150 million Rapid Coronavirus Tests (28 September 2020)	9	5
	5. Donald Trump Remarks Transcript, Calls Contracting Covid-19 “Blessing from God” October 7 (7 October 2020)	13	5
	Total discourse segments	122	40
Cyril Ramaphosa (PCR)	1. Measures to combat Coronavirus Covid-19 epidemic (15 March 2020)	50	10
	2. Escalation of measures to combat Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic 23 March 2020	66	10
	3. Extension of Coronavirus Covid-19 lockdown to the end of April (07 April 2020)	60	10
	4. Call for a day of prayer on Coronavirus Covid-19 (26 May 2020)	40	5
	5. South Africa’s risk-adjusted strategy to manage spread of Coronavirus Covid-19 (15 August 2020)	42	5
	Total discourse segments	258	40
Xi Jinping (PXJ)	1. Working Together to Defeat the Covid-19 Outbreak 26 March 2020	12	10
	2. Deepening BRICS Cooperation to Combat Covid-19 28 April 2020	38	10
	3. Fighting Covid-19 Through Solidarity and Cooperation: Building a Global Community of Health for All 18 May 2020	20	10
	4. Defeating Covid-19 with Solidarity and Cooperation 18 June 2020	26	5
	5. Stay on the Right Track and Keep Pace with the Times to Ensure the Right Direction for China-US Relations 09 July 2020	40	5
	Total discourse segments	136	40
	Overall discourse segments	Total DS 516	Total Sampled DS for analysis: 120

Table 4.1 comprises four columns. The first column includes the presidents’ names along with their coded references: **PDT** for President Donald Trump, **PCR** for President Cyril Ramaphosa, and **PXJ** for President Xi Jinping. The second column lists the 15 selected speeches for each president, along with their respective titles. The third column outlines the complete population of the study and the overall count of discourse segments for each speech. The fourth column presents the discourse segments selected from each speech, collectively forming the final sample size for the study.

4.2.2.4 Data analysis

As highlighted by O’leary (2004:121), data analysis involves a continuous interplay of binding and mind mapping the collected data, a process inherently intertwined with data collection. In this study, a qualitative analysis approach was embraced, informed by the insights of previous researchers such as Sadiki (2017), Maritz (2019), Al-Khayyat (2020), Olimat (2020), and Obiajulu (2021). What distinguishes this study from its predecessors is the adoption of a discourse-textual analysis methodology, guided by the researcher’s personally devised model (refer to Figure 3.2), derived from the comprehensive literature review outlined in Section 3.4.

This framework encapsulates the study’s core components, including communicative goals, elements, and strategies of persuasion, as well as the theoretical tools embedded within the overarching theoretical framework.

In the pursuit of understanding the nuanced communicative goals, elements, and strategies of persuasion, the researcher particularly examined the discourse segments sampled for analysis. It is important to emphasise that it is not possible to offer a comprehensive analysis in a qualitative study due to its subjective nature. Therefore, the analysis in this study focused on some examples, and possibly not all, depending on the researcher’s scrutiny. Further elaboration on this discourse-textual analysis is presented in Chapter 5. Before delving into the analysis, itself, a preliminary coding process was carried out to ensure clarity and purpose in organising the data, as demonstrated below. Table 4.2, presented here, outlines the manual codes employed during the initial coding phase.

Table 4. 2: Data coding for analysis

Code	Meaning
DS	Discourse segment
P	President
PDT	President Donald Trump
PCR	President Cyril Ramaphosa
PXJ	President Xi Jinping
S	Speech
1-10	Speech number

Below, Figure 4.2 displays the data codes formulated during the manual analysis in this study. In the representation, **DS** signifies discourse segment, **P** signifies president, with **PDT** denoting

President Donald Trump, **PCR** indicating President Cyril Ramaphosa, and **PXJ** representing President Xi Jinping. The letter **S** corresponds to the speech, while numbers 1-10 are utilised to indicate the specific speech number.

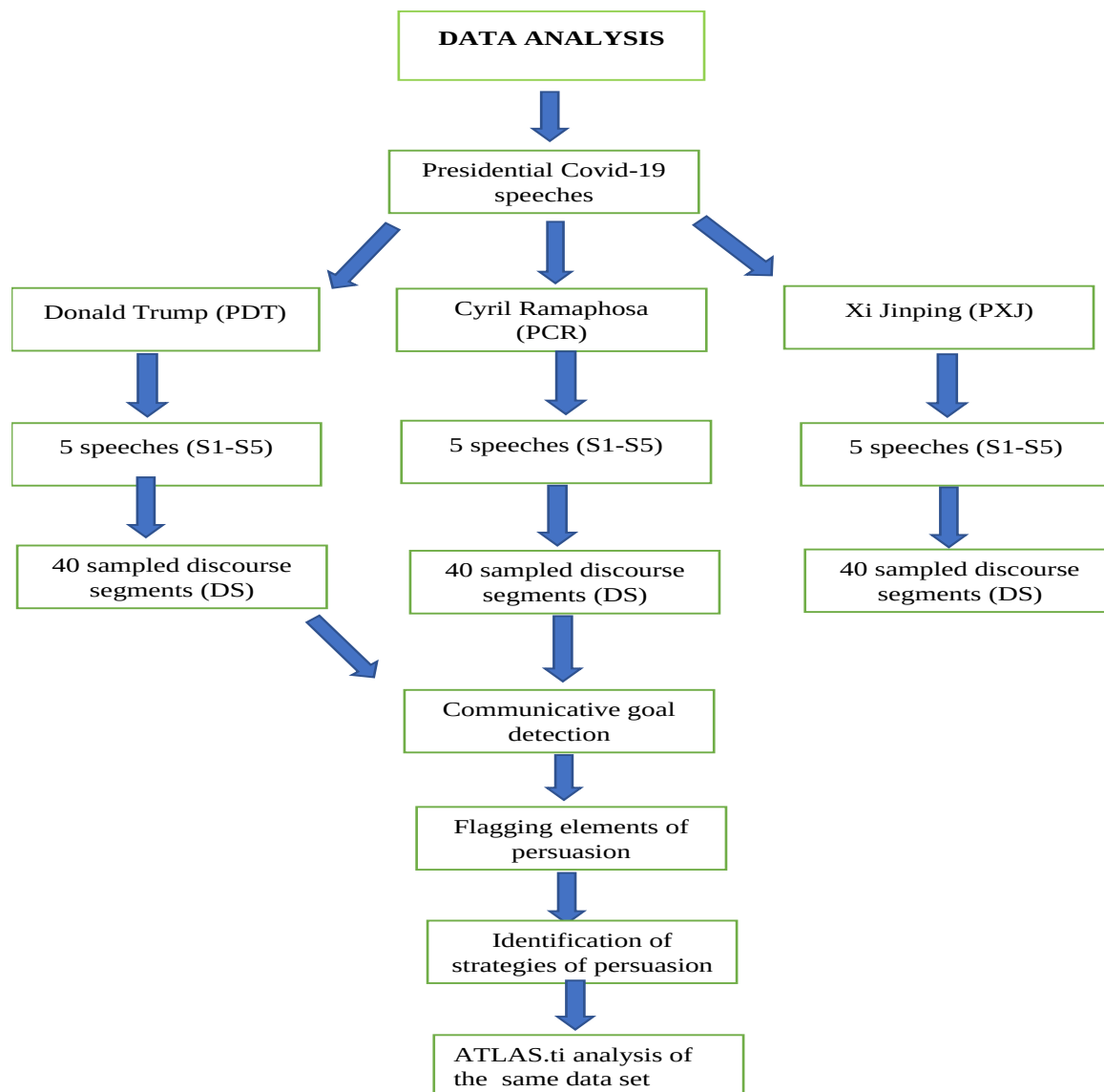


Figure 4. 2: Data analysis process

The data analysis process in this study unfolded through a sequence of distinct stages, as illustrated in Figure 4.2 above. Each stage contributed to the comprehensive examination of the communicative goals, persuasive elements, and strategies present within the sampled discourse segments. The following outlines these sequential stages:

Stage 1: Development of codes: Initiating the analysis, the researcher assigned distinct codes to the text, as detailed in Table 4.2. These codes provided a systematic framework for subsequent evaluation. These codes were informed by the literature review and resembled the elements and strategies outlined in Chapter 3.

Stage 2: Formation of discourse segments: In this stage, the paragraphs within each speech were carefully developed into distinct discourse segments, employing the process of discourse segmentation as outlined in Section 4.2.2.3. This step facilitated focused analysis of specific textual units.

Stage 3: Identification of communicative goals: The researcher then embarked on detecting the overarching communicative goals embedded within the discourse segments. Drawing from the principles of GPA theory (Dillard, 1989), the analysis unveiled a spectrum of primary and secondary goals woven into the sampled segments.

Stage 4: Unveiling elements of persuasion: The subsequent stage delved into the complex fabric of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of persuasion threaded throughout the discourse segments. Guided by the provisional model introduced in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, communicative elements were identified through the lens of GPA theory, and linguistic attributes were informed by Maritz's (2019) LPIM, while pragmatic elements were informed by SAT (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). For instance, linguistic features such as the use of nouns and pronouns, such as the inclusive and exclusive utilisation of the pronoun 'we' (Al-Khayyat, 2020:123), were scrutinised.

Stage 5: Discovery of persuasive strategies: The culmination of the analysis was the identification and elucidation of the strategies of persuasion enmeshed within the sampled discourse segments. Guided by the provisional model (refer to Figure 3.2), this stage unpacked strategies employed to enact persuasive communication. This comprehensive analysis harmoniously combined linguistic and political persuasion perspectives, setting this study apart from others in the field.

In summary, the manual data analysis embarked on a journey of identifying persuasive messages i.e., discourse segments resonating with primary (influence) and secondary (awareness) goals. This was conducted within the context of GPA theory (Dillard, 1989), facilitating an understanding of persuasive message production. The analysis further encompassed a detailed examination of discursive attributes, tracing influence attempt plans, elements, strategies, and persuasive appeals inherent in message sources geared toward

compliance-gaining. Simultaneously, Speech Act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) was employed to pragmatically unravel how goals, power dynamics, ideologies, and salient societal issues were executed within the presidential speeches. Especially, the utilisation of directives and directive requests, characteristic of persuasion (Sadiki, 2017:145), encapsulates the essence of this analysis.

To augment the manual close-reading analysis (refer to Annex A), the same sampled discourse segments underwent analysis by means of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) -refer to Annex B. Specifically, ATLAS.ti version 8.4 was selected to generate a visual semantic representation of the dataset (refer to Chapter 5 for detailed insight). The utilisation of ATLAS.ti aligns with the perspective shared by Gibbs, Clarke et al. (2015:45), who highlight its role in assisting researchers to enhance the analysis process, rather than being the sole method of analysis.

Particularly, ATLAS.ti's application in this study was not primary, as its coding-based approach lacks the nuanced capacity to unearth the underlying meaning of discourse. The initial manual analysis laid the foundation, subsequently enriched by ATLAS.ti's visual semantic representation, following the provisional model introduced in Section 3.4.

This comprehensive approach, incorporating manual close-reading analysis and ATLAS.ti, ensures a thorough exploration of the persuasive dimensions within the discourse segments, substantiating the study's distinctive perspective and robust analytical framework. It enhances the robustness of the analysis, as well as its reliability. Figure 4.3 below show the study's ATLAS.ti analysis folder.

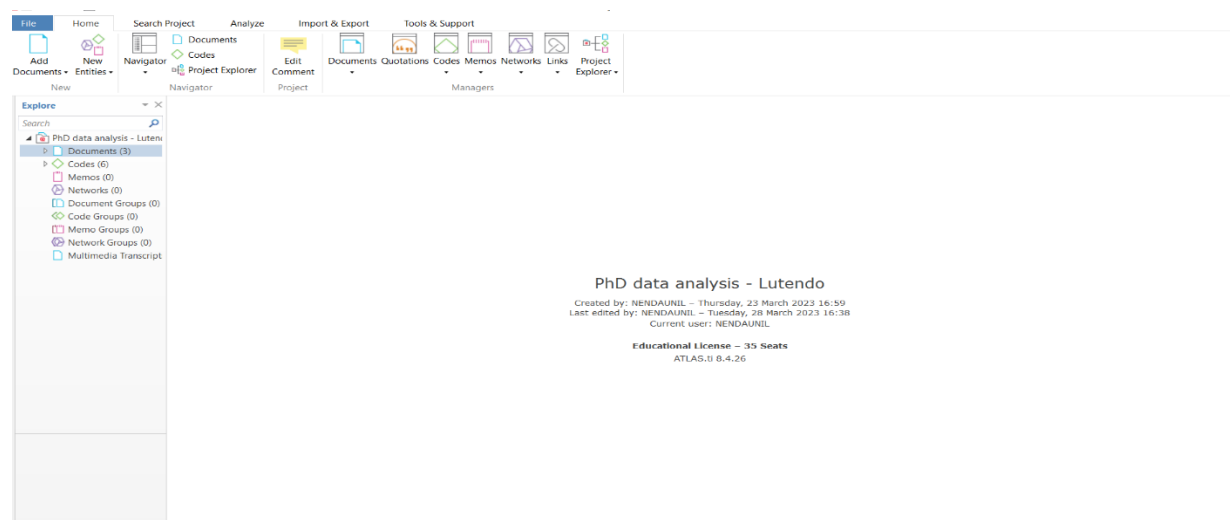


Figure 4. 3: ATLAS.ti project folder acquired from ATLAS.ti

Overall, ATLAS.ti facilitates data processing through four main stages referred to as “managers”: the document manager, quotation manager, code manager, and network manager. The subsequent sub-section discusses the research procedure for conducting the study.

4.2.2.4 Research procedure

To conduct the study, a research procedure was followed in alignment with the research objectives of the study. The following procedure was adopted:

Phase 1: Determining the theoretical gap:

This phase focused on identifying the theoretical points that the study would depart from. The researcher defined persuasion from various theoretical perspectives and devised a working definition of persuasion for this study. The researcher acknowledged existing definitions and approaches to persuasion but redefined persuasion as the “attainment of communicative goals through linguistic elements within a specific context”. During this phase, it became evident that there is a deficiency in studies that merge linguistic, communicative, and political persuasion. To address this gap, the study adopted ‘theory triangulation’, which included GPA theory (Dillard, 1989); SFL (Halliday, 1965); SAT (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969); and Maritz’s (2019) LPIM. The aim was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the goals, plans, and linguistic actions used by selected presidents in their political speeches.

Phase 2: Review of relevant literature:

Since Phase 1 had exposed the theoretical gap in integrating communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements in studying political persuasion, Phase 2 involved conducting a systematic literature review of earlier studies on elements and strategies of persuasion. The researcher synthesised the reviewed literature to devise a provisional model of persuasion. This provisional model served as a temporary structure subject to modification in subsequent phases. The provisional model informed the empirical analysis conducted in Chapter 5.

Phase 3: Data collection, sorting, and analysis:

In this phase, the researcher identified appropriate categories of analysis to inform the empirical research, utilising the discourse-textual analysis design within the triangulation framework. A total of 120 discourse segments from 15 speeches of the three presidents were sampled for analysis in the study. The analysis was carried out chronologically using manual and ATLAS.ti methods. The manual analysis involved qualitative examination of the sampled discourse segments using the provisional model from Chapter 3, Section 3.6, and theoretical tools from Chapter 2.

The provisional model helped identify prevalent goals, elements, and strategies of persuasion, as well as the impact of power in persuasion. Additionally, the same sampled discourse segments were annotated and further analysed using ATLAS.ti, a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, to enhance the comprehension of the findings from the manual textual analysis. The following are the distinct steps within ATLAS.ti's framework:

Step 1: Data import: The initial phase of using ATLAS.ti involves importing all relevant documents into the software for analysis. ATLAS.ti supports a variety of file formats, including text files, PDFs, images, Excel tables, audio, and video files. In this study, which employs a qualitative discourse-textual approach, Microsoft Word documents containing Covid-19-related presidential speeches were uploaded for analysis. A total of fifteen speeches were included.

Step 2: Open coding: The second stage entails the creation of distinct categories through a process known as “open coding”, as described by Shumba, Nyamaruze, Nyambuya, and Meyer-Weitz (2020:276). This method involves continual data comparison, saturating the research process by comparing emerging data with existing cases during data collection (Mori and Cowley, 2004:755). The Code Manager in ATLAS.ti facilitates this process, enabling the grouping of information into codes or interconnected concepts as exemplified in Figure 4.4 below.

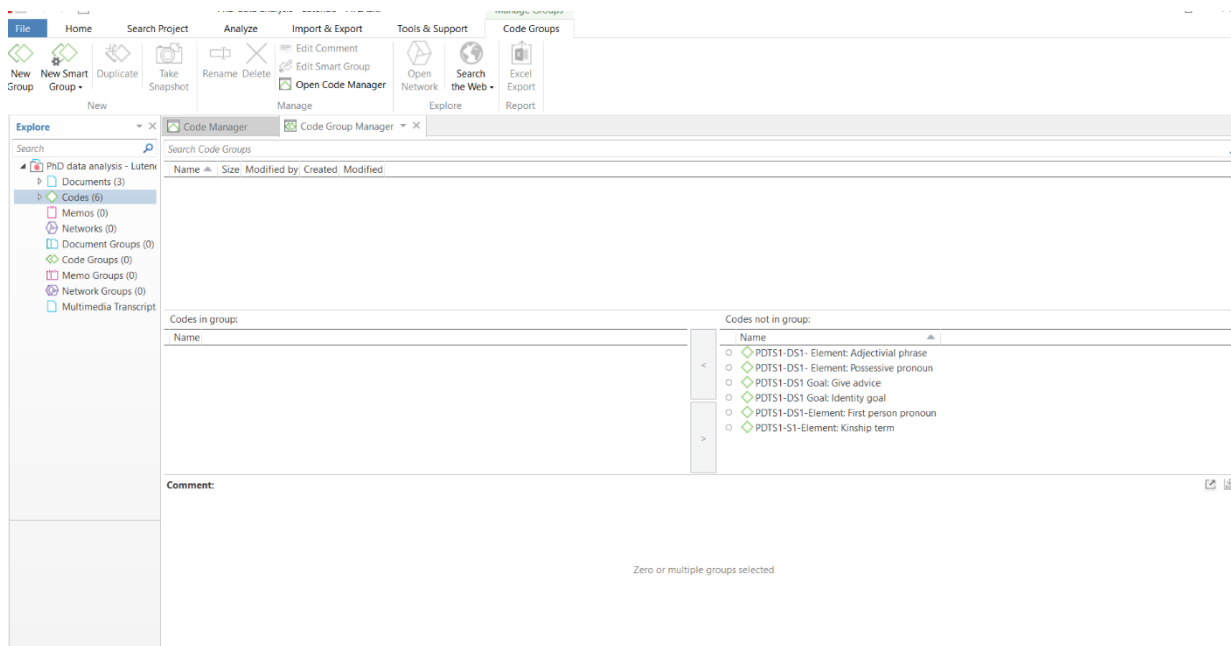


Figure 4. 4: Open coding and comparison in ATLAS.ti

ATLAS.ti offers seven distinct methods for coding, as detailed by Turri (2016:124). Among these, “Free Codes” can be assigned independently of specific phrases, while the most common approach is “open coding”, where codes are assigned to text passages. The “coding by list” option allows for additional text to be assigned to existing codes. “Quick coding” assigns one code to multiple pieces of text, while “Drag and Drop coding” involves assigning codes by dragging them from a list to selected text. Lastly, “Auto-coding” automatically assigns codes to specified text sections.

For this study, manual analysis of speech excerpts was carried out, and these excerpts were then uploaded into ATLAS.ti. The assigned codes mirrored those from the manual analysis to ensure consistency, as informed by the literature review in Chapter 3. This iterative coding process allowed the researcher to generate multiple codes within the primary Document Manager.

Step 3: Core category and selective coding: The third phase involves consolidating multiple codes into groups for further analysis, as depicted in Figure 4.5. Using constant comparison, core codes were established based on imported information (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which serve as overarching categories. This core code formed the basis for selective coding (Mori and Cowley, 2004:754), facilitating more precise data comparison and the generation of refined categories aligned with the core codes.

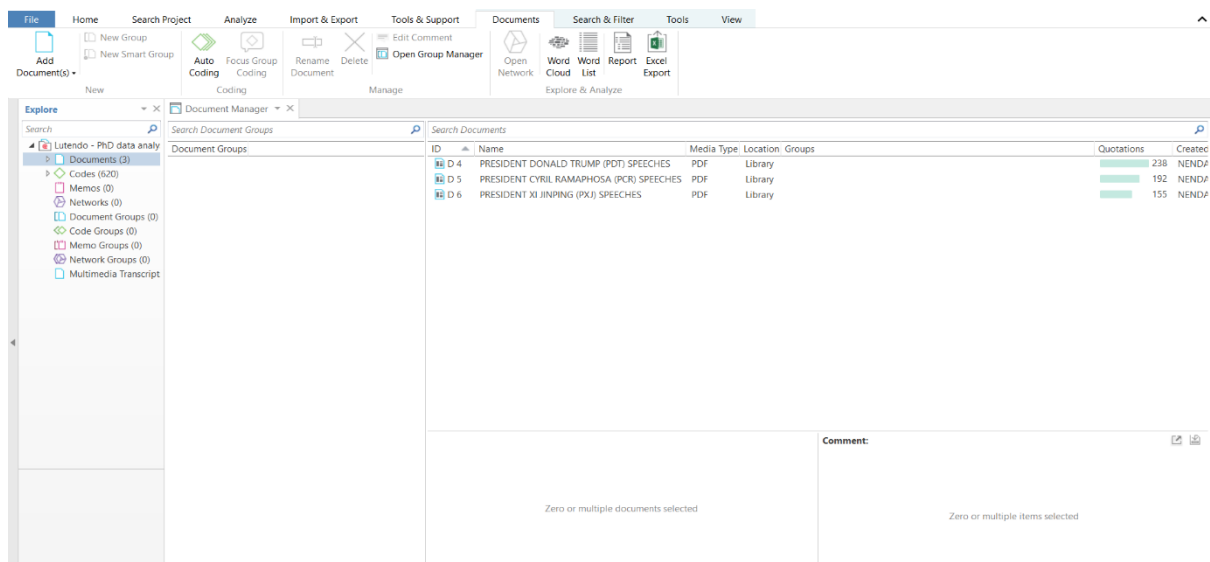


Figure 4. 5: Clustered codes

Step 4: Constructing new theory: In the final stage, improved categories were juxtaposed with concepts to develop a new theory. Theoretical coding considered relationships between categories. Theoretical notes were generated to aid in this process (Mori and Cowley, 2004:754). The theoretical writing marked the culmination of the analysis, leading to a comprehensive conceptual description. This description was employed, along with the provisional model, to create a comprehensive model based on codes and code groups emerging from the conceptual description. This is further elaborated in phase 5 within the research procedure below.

Phase 4: Revision of the provisional model:

This phase involved presenting and evaluating the empirical findings against the provisional model. As stated in Phase 2, the model was subject to modification based on the study's empirical findings. The empirical findings included the identification of primary and secondary communicative goals reflected in the discourse segments, as well as the communicative and linguistic elements and strategies of persuasion. Throughout the analysis, salient theoretical properties of persuasion emerged, not initially accounted for in the provisional model. These properties were classified, and the framework for analysis was revised accordingly.

Phase 5: Consolidation and reconstruction:

Building upon the ‘theory triangulation’ outlined in Section 2.3 and the provisional model developed in Section 3.4, this phase fulfilled the final objective of the study, which was to devise a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion. Based on the empirical analysis findings and theoretical implications, a revised model (Figure 6.2) was presented. The revised model included the most relevant features and potential applications. The study concludes by exploring the limitations of the proposed comprehensive model, noting its relevance not only to presidential goals during Covid-19 but also to various domains where persuasive communication is essential.

4.3 ETHICS

Conducting social research within a societal context is inseparable from ethical considerations (Babbie, 2010:62). Therefore, the integration of ethical considerations from the inception of planning to the culmination of implementation is paramount (Du Plooy, 2002:90). It is vital to note that the study was approved by UPSET’s Committee for Advanced Degrees (CAD) at the North-West University. Further, ethical approval was procured from the NWU Ethics Committee for Language Matters. It is worth emphasizing that this study carries minimal ethical risk as a text-based study.

The utilisation of political speeches extracted from media sources, without specific approval, was underpinned by the fact that presidential speeches reside within the public domain. Consequently, their study does not mandate explicit authorisation, as their interpretative scope is open-ended. Furthermore, given that the research omits human participants, no additional ethical complexities are anticipated.

It is of significance to underscore the integral role of the researcher as the main instrument throughout the data collection and analysis process in a discourse-textual study. In a similar vein, Galdas (2017:2) accentuates that researchers engaging in qualitative research are inevitably woven into the process and the ultimate product, negating the possibility of detachment. Rather, the focus should be on the researcher’s transparency and reflexivity i.e., being critically introspective about their own preconceptions, relationship dynamics, and analytical focus. Transparency emerged as a cornerstone within this study.

Rigorous steps were undertaken such as repeated analysis and moderation by the supervisor to ensure the researcher's potential biases toward any of the presidents did not influence data analysis. The involvement of the study promoter added another layer of vigilance in detecting any inadvertent bias. It is acknowledged that the findings do not warrant generalisation due to the limitation of the study sample's representational scope in the context of all Covid-19 presidential speeches.

To bolster the study's validity and integrity, a comprehensive alignment with similar datasets from related studies was pursued. Challenges confronted during the research journey were diligently discussed with the promoter and subjected to collaborative critique, some of which are elaborated upon in Chapter 7 as study limitations. Importantly, as a gesture of ethical consideration, future researchers are encouraged to extrapolate the proposed model of persuasion to diverse political texts and contexts, thereby substantiating and validating its applicability.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 delineated the methodological framework adopted for this study while also addressing ethical considerations. The chapter thoroughly outlined the data collection process, accompanied by an explication of the subsequent speech analysis procedure. These procedures are encompassed within five distinct phases, encompassing theoretical gap identification, literature review, data collection, sorting and analysis, as well as the validation and refinement of the provisional model of persuasion, ultimately leading to consolidation and reconstruction. The outcomes of each phase are meticulously presented, and their significance is critically assessed. These synthesised findings are poised to be expounded upon in Chapter 6, which focuses on the interpretation of the study's outcomes. The next chapter, which is Chapter 5, presents the empirical findings of the study and their interpretation.

CHAPTER FIVE

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the study's research methods were outlined, shedding light on the decisions and procedures guiding data collection and analysis. Drawing from previous studies such as Sadiki (2017), Maritz (2019), Al-Khayyat (2020), Olimat (2020), and Obiajulu (2021), the data analysis approach followed the clustering of data into discourse segments before the analysis. The current chapter delves into the empirical findings and their interpretation, guided by a dual analytical approach: manual close-reading and ATLAS.ti analyses. The analysis commenced with the close-reading examination of 120 discourse segments extracted from a sample of 15 Covid-19-related presidential speeches (refer to Annex A). The consistently tagged dataset underwent additional analysis using ATLAS.ti version 8.4 (see Annex B), enhancing insights and reinforcing the reliability of the original manual analysis. The analyses were aligned with the research objectives set forth in Chapter 1 and guided by the provisional model of persuasion developed exclusively for this study, which incorporated theoretical tools embedded within the study's theoretical framework (refer to Section 2.3).

With the foundation laid for the analyses in Section 4.2.2.4, this chapter proceeds to present and interpret the empirical findings, providing insights respectively into communicative goals, elements of persuasion, and strategies employed within the presidential speeches concerning Covid-19. Section 5.2 proceeds to present and interprets the findings of the study.

5.2 INTERPRETING THE FINDINGS

Typically, researchers present findings and then interpret them. However, in the context of this study, due to the nature of the presidential speeches and the employed analyses methods, these processes occurred simultaneously. Consequently, the findings are presented and interpreted concurrently. By intertwining the presentation of the findings and interpretation, the chapter fosters a deeper comprehension of observed patterns, trends, and relationships, providing a holistic understanding of the findings' significance.

The goal of this study was to analytically investigate persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches by exploring communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of persuasion that regulate meanings in context to show how language was used amidst the pandemic to influence the behaviour of the public. To accomplish this objective, this chapter presents and interprets its findings based on various aspects including communicative goals, elements of persuasion, strategies of persuasion, and other noteworthy theoretical properties of persuasion that emerged during the analysis. By considering these factors, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion within the context of the 15 examined presidential Covid-19 speeches, but also beyond.

This section encompasses the presentation and interpretation of findings resulting from the analysis of the 15 Covid-19-related speeches. Refer to Section 4.2.2.4 for an in-depth overview of the empirical analytic procedure followed in this study. As mentioned in Section 5.1, the analysis was manually conducted using both close-reading and ATLAS.ti software, creating a comprehensive perspective on the findings.

The upcoming presentation and interpretation of the findings are built upon a collection of 120 discourse segments derived from the analysis of 15 speeches, with each president contributing 5 speeches, totaling 40 discourse segments in all (refer to Table 5.1). These empirical findings serve as the foundation for the forthcoming presentation and analysis. The table below illustrates the codes assigned to the president, speeches, and discourse segments.

Table 5. 1: Assigned codes

Speech coding		Discourse segment
President Cyril Ramaphosa		
PCRS1		DS1-DS10
PCRS2		DS1-DS10
PCRS3		DS1-DS10
PCRS4		DS1-DS5
PCRS5		DS1-DS5
President Donald Trump		
PDT S1		DS1-DS10
PDT S2		DS1-DS10
PDT S3		DS1-DS10
PDT S4		DS1-DS5
PDT S5		DS1-DS5
President Xi Jin Ping		
PXJ S1		DS1-DS10
PXJ S2		DS1-DS10
PXJ S3		DS1-DS10
PXJ S4		DS1-DS5
PXJ S5		DS1-DS5
TOTALS:	Speeches: 15	Discourse segment: 120

In the table, President Donald Trump's speeches are coded as PDTs, President Cyril Ramaphosa's speeches coded as PCRS, while President Xi Jinping, speeches are coded as PXJS. The next sub-section presents and interprets findings on communicative goals.

5.2.1 Communicative goals

The data analysed in this study reveals that the process of persuasion begins with the establishment of precise communicative goals. These goals represent the desired outcomes or changes that presidents aimed to achieve through their communication. However, it is essential to note that these goals exhibited variations, contingent upon the prevailing circumstances and the intentions of the respective presidents. For instance, within this study, the trio of presidents pursued disparate goals driven by distinct motives, such as ensuring public safety, preserving lives, or disseminating information. The researcher identified and contextualised these goals in 15 speeches concerning the Covid-19 pandemic.

The communicative goals discerned from the analysed data encompass the following: *give advice goal* (providing guidance and recommendations); *gain assistance goal* (seeking support or aid from the audience); *share activity goal* (sharing information about actions taken or

plans); *change relationship goal* (altering the targets' perception of the relationship between parties); *change orientation goal* (shifting the targets' perspective or mindset); *obtain permission* (seeking approval for certain actions or measures); *enforce rights and obligations* (emphasizing rights and responsibilities); *identity goal* (expressing and reinforcing a particular identity); *interaction goal* (encouraging engagement and interaction with the audience); *resource goal* (seeking resources, such as funding or materials) and *arousal management goal* (managing emotions or reactions within the audience).

The outcomes of this study underscore that all three presidents harnessed a fusion of primary and secondary communicative goals, albeit to varying proportions. In this regard, the researcher considered the frequency, which refers to the total occurrence of a particular goal in the sampled speeches of a particular president. Additionally, the researcher evaluated the density of these speeches based on word count. In this regard, an increase in word count corresponds to an increased density of speech, while conversely, a decrease in word count results in decreased speech density. To further illustrate the extent to which these communicative goals were pursued in proportion, the researcher computed the relative frequency using the following formula:

$$\text{Relative Frequency (RF)} = \frac{\text{Frequency (F)}}{\text{Total sampled words}} \times 100\%$$

For instance, the 'give advice' goal appeared 15 times in the speeches sampled from President Ramaphosa, which collectively contained 2167 words. Consequently, the relative frequency was determined as following:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Relative Frequency (RF)} &= \frac{15}{2167} \times 100\% \\ &= 32\% \end{aligned}$$

As elucidated earlier, within the context of this study, frequency represents the raw count or the number of instances in which a goal occurs within a given dataset. It offers an absolute measure of occurrence. Conversely, relative frequency served as a standardised version of frequency, expressed as a proportion or percentage relative to the total number of goals in the dataset for each president's sampled speeches. In other words, while frequency provides a count, relative frequency offers a more meaningful basis for comparing different categories (goals/elements/strategies) within a dataset. This makes it a valuable tool for comprehending

the distribution and proportions of data points in each context (i.e., within the speeches of each president), as affirmed by Dean and Illowsky (2010:2).

The formula was also applied in subsequent sections (5.2.2 and 5.2.3) to ascertain the pertinent frequencies of elements and persuasion strategies, as these were also employed to varying extents.

The ensuing subsection provides a detailed explication of communicative goals found during the analyses, commencing with the primary goals followed by the secondary ones.

5.2.1.1 Primary communicative goals

In accordance with Dillard's (1998) typology of primary goals, this study identified seven primary communicative goals: *give advice goal*, *gain assistance goal*, *share activity goal*, *change relationship goal*, *change orientation goal*, *obtain permission goal*, and *enforce rights and obligations goal*. The ensuing subsections expound upon these goals in greater detail.

a) Give advice

The *give advice goal*, as defined by Dillard (2007:41), involves communicators offering guidance, typically concerning health and relationships. The utilisation of the *give advice goal* across the three presidents' speeches were analysed as depicted in Table 5.2, which outlines the frequency of its occurrence using data exported from ATLAS.ti.

Table 5. 2: Frequency of the *give advice* goal

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	15	32%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	12	24%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXX	6	3%

In the first column, the speech codes are listed, with the second column indicating the total sampled words in the sampled speeches. Table 5.2 reveals that Ramaphosa's speeches are denser in terms of the *give advice* goal than the other two speakers' texts. In other words, there are more words associated with *give advice* in Ramaphosa's texts.

Conspicuously, the *give advice* goal is most prominent in Ramaphosa's speeches, as it appears in 15 discourse segments out of 40 discourse segments, followed by Trump with 12, and Jinping with 6. Overall, a total of 33 instances of the *give advice* goal was recorded in the analysed data, making it the most frequently employed goal across the three presidents. This is the most prominent goal in persuasive language as per this study's findings.

The frequency and the relative frequency enabled the researcher to discern patterns and trends, ultimately visualising the coded discourse segments that exhibit the *give advice* goal. Figure 5.1 provides a visual depiction of the overall discourse segments showcasing the 'give advice goal'.

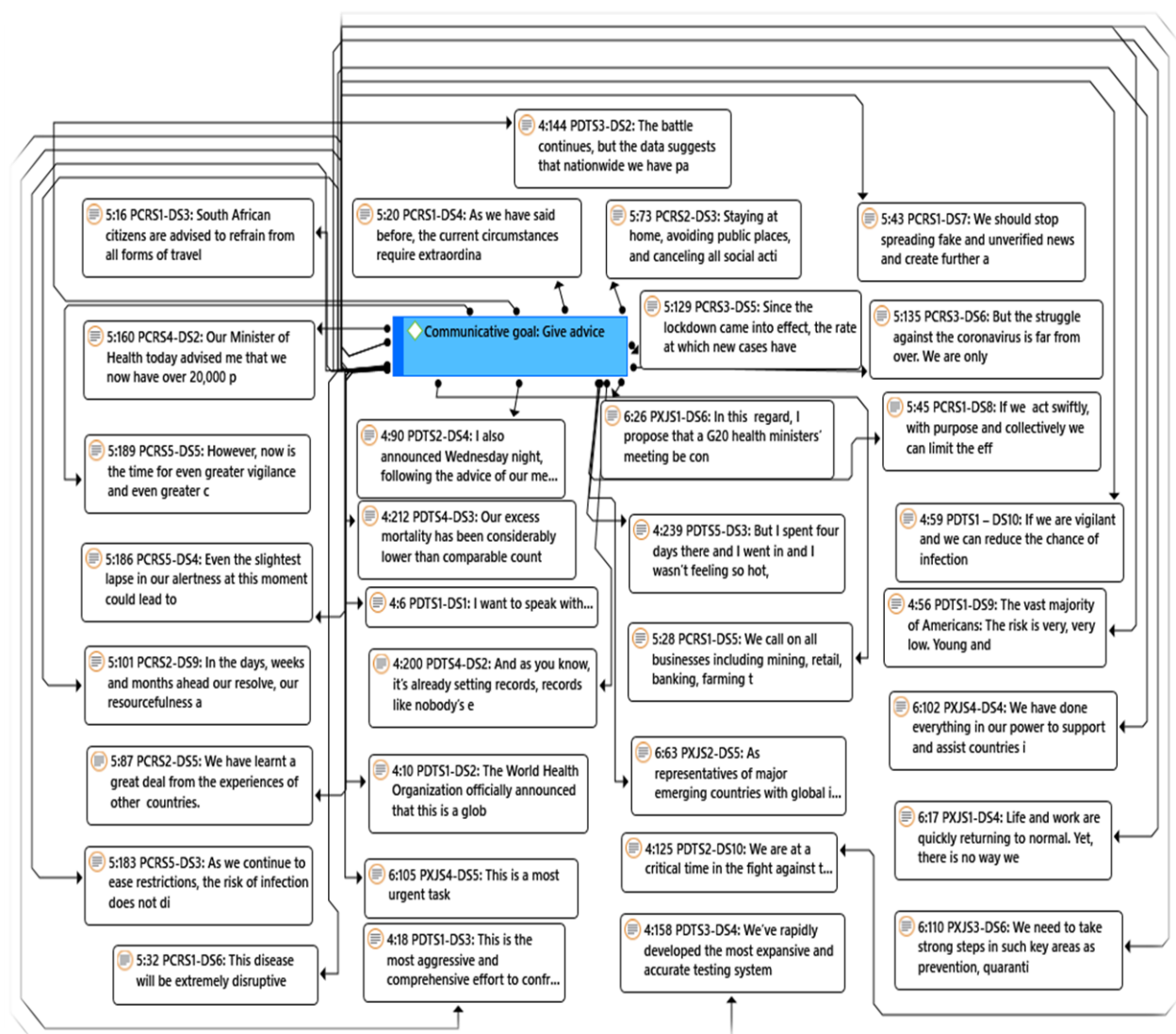


Figure 5. 1: Discourse segments embodying the *give advice* goal as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Figure 5.1 showcases a selection of sampled discourse segments, each encapsulating the *give advice goal* within the scrutinised data. These segments underwent detailed analysis via both manual examination and ATLAS.ti, encompassing portions from all three presidents. As discerned from the figure, Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping employed the *give advice goal* within distinct contexts, aiming to induce alterations in the target's behaviours and lifestyles concerning Covid-19.

To enhance the findings of the study on the *give advice goal*, subsequent tables, specifically Table 5.3, Table 5.4, and Table 5.5, exemplify discourse segments embodying the *give advice goal*, drawing from the analysed speeches of Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping, respectively.

Table 5. 3: Discourse segments embodying the *give advice goal* in Ramaphosa's speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS1-DS3	"South African citizens are advised to refrain from all forms of travel to or through the European Union, United States, United Kingdom and other identified high-risk countries such as China, Iran and South Korea".
PCRS2-DS5	"We have learnt a great deal from the experiences of other countries".
PCRS3-DS6	"We are only at the beginning of a monumental struggle that demands our every resource and our every effort. We cannot relax".
PCRS4-DS2	"Our Minister of Health today advised me that we now have over 20,000 people that have been infected and close to 500 people have lost their lives. This continues to cause distress among all of us as citizens of South Africa. At the same time, we are thankful that more than 11,000 people have recovered from the coronavirus".
PCRS5-DS4	"We have seen this happen in other countries, where stringent restrictions have had to be reimposed at short notice as the rate of infection rises after relaxation".

From the table, in **PCRS1-DS3**, Ramaphosa advises South African citizens to refrain from travelling to or through different high-risk countries with immediate effect. Additionally, in **PCRS2-DS5**, Ramaphosa advises on the importance of adhering to the established regulations to avoid the unpleasant experiences endured by other countries. In **PCRS3-DS6**, Ramaphosa presents negative projections of what lies ahead, urging citizens to remain vigilant and compliant to Covid-19 restrictions. Therefore, the communicative goal evident in this extract is also *give advice*. The president advises the citizens that the battle against the virus is far from over and requires their utmost effort and resources to combat it. Moreover, in **PCRS4-DS2**, Ramaphosa uses advice given to him by an authoritative source (Minister of Health) on the latest statistics regarding Covid-19 with the intention of urging caution to imply that the audience should follow restrictions. In this regard, the advice given to the citizens is implied. The content of his message showcases his logical and analytical abilities through vivid

descriptions of actions expected for persuasion. Lastly, in **PCRS5-DS4**, Ramaphosa gives advice to citizens on the measures to take for the control of the virus.

In short, Ramaphosa achieved the *give advice goal* by offering guidance to citizens on diverse facets of Covid-19, encompassing travel precautions, regulatory compliance, vigilance, statistical awareness, and targeted control measures, all with the intent of shaping their conduct and choices amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The subsequent table illustrates some examples of the *give advice goal* within Trump's speeches. Such comparison gives insight into the ways and reasons that the 'give advice' goal is implemented by different individuals.

Table 5. 4: Discourse segments embodying the *give advice goal* in Trump speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1-DS1	"My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak with you about our nation's unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world".
PDTS1-DS2	"Today, the World Health Organisation officially announced that this is a global pandemic".
PDTS1-DS3	"This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history".
PDTS2-DS1	"Today, I'd like to provide an update to the American people on several decisive new actions we're taking in our very vigilant effort to combat and ultimately defeat the coronavirus".
PDTS3-DS2	"The battle continues, but the data suggests that nationwide we have passed the peak on new cases".

In **PDTS1-DS1**, Trump advises Americans regarding the state's response to Covid-19. Within this discourse segment, Trump pursues the objective of exerting social influence through communication. While giving advice, he also clearly express his intentions to the target audience, consisting of American citizens, which is to "*speak with [them] about [their] nation's unprecedented response*". In **PDTS1-DS2**, Trump employs the *give advice goal* to inform citizens about the recent developments of the virus, specifically the World Health Organisation's declaration of Covid-19 as a pandemic. At the heart of **PDTS1-DS3**, Trump advises the citizens about the intricacies of the "foreign virus" and highlights the vigorous and comprehensive measures his government is implementing to combat the virus. As previously discussed in Section 2.2.2, the objective of the *give advice goal* does not solely entail instructing targets precisely on what actions to take, but it also involves enlightening them to

facilitate a shift in their behaviour. In other words, it implies giving guidance or counsel rather than just issuing directives. For example, in **PDTS2-DS1**, Trump advises citizens on various decisions made by him and his Covid-19 response team. Lastly, in **PDTS3-DS2**, there is an abundance of messages aimed at accomplishing the *give advice goal*. These messages are characterised by a low level of benefit for the source (Trump) but a high level of benefit for the target audience (America citizens). Furthermore, they predominantly occur between individuals with relational connectivity. Trump advises citizens on the progress his government has achieved in mitigating the spread of the virus.

Everything considered, Trump pursued *the give advice goal* by providing guidance to the Americans on matters related to the Covid-19 response, government actions, updates, and the overall progress. His goal was to exert influence while conveying his intentions and concerns.

The subsequent Table 5.5 illustrates instances of the *give advice goal* within Jinping's speeches.

Table 5. 5: Discourse segments embodying the *give advice goal* in Jinping's speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS4	"Major infectious disease is the enemy of all".
PXJS4-DS4	"We have done everything in our power to support and assist countries in need. Even as we meet, the virus is still raging, and more must be done to bring it under control".
PXJS4-DS5	"This is a most urgent task. We must always put the people first, for nothing in the world is more precious than people's lives"
PXJS3-DS6	"We need to take strong steps in such key areas as prevention, quarantine, detection, treatment and tracing".

Drawing from the table, in **PXJS1-DS4**, Jinping acknowledges that life and work are returning to normal as desired by the population. However, he emphasises the importance of maintaining vigilance, as significant diseases pose a threat to everyone. Furthermore, in **PXJS4-DS4**, Jinping expresses his desire to offer guidance on supporting countries in need. Additionally, in **PXJS4-DS5**, Jinping advises government officials to prioritise the well-being of their citizens above all else. Lastly, in **PXJS3-DS6**, Jinping provides advice on precautionary measures that the government should implement to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Briefly, Jinping achieved the *give advice goal* by stressing vigilance against significant diseases, expressing his intent to guide countries in need in, as well as offering advice on precautionary measures.

In the broader scope of this study, the *give advice goal* is most dominant, boasting a total frequency of 33 instances, surpassing the frequencies of other goals. All three presidents - Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping effectively achieved the *give advice goal* by counselling their respective targets on the disease's significance, its progression, precautionary actions, and context-specific measures. The subsequent subsection reports and elucidates on findings related to the 'gain assistance goal'.

b) Gain assistance

The *gain assistance goal*, a primary or influential goal outlined by Dillard within the Goal Plan Action (GPA) theory (as discussed in Section 2.2.2.2.1), assumes a crucial role in the present data. The findings of this study substantiate Dillard's assertion (1990:44) that seeking or achieving desired goals with the aid or cooperation of others holds significance. The frequency of the *gain assistance goal* within the analysed data is depicted in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5. 6: Frequency of the *gain assistance goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	7	4%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	4	2%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXX	5	3%

Column 1 presents the speech codes, while column 2 signifies the total words in the sampled speeches, revealing a prominent presence of the *gain assistance goal* within Ramaphosa's speeches. The third column showcases the density of this goal, indicating its frequency in each president's speeches. Collectively, the *gain assistance goal* has a total frequency of 16 instances. Notably, Ramaphosa is the primary user with 7 instances, followed by Jinping with 5, and Trump with 4. Figure 5.2 provides a visual depiction of the overall discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* from the analysed data.

Figure 5.2 presents a diverse selection of discourse segments sampled from the analysed data, embodying the ‘gain assistance goal’. These segments were analysed in two iterations (manual close-reading and in ATLAS.ti), encompassing contributions from all three presidents.

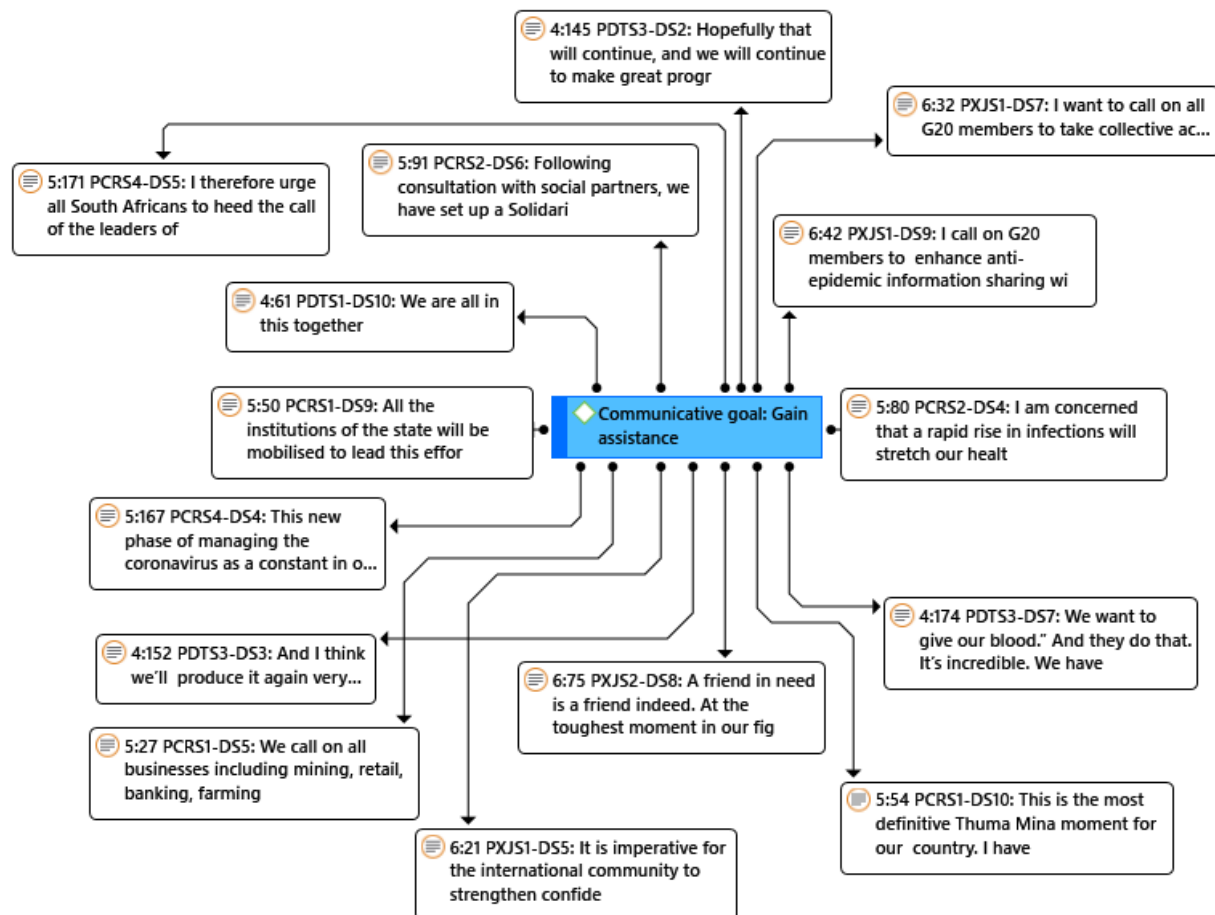


Figure 5. 2: Overall discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping strategically employed the *gain assistance goal* in various contexts, encompassing requests for aid, promotion of collaboration, and encouragement of specific actions. Derived from Figure 5.2, the subsequent tables, specifically Table 5.7, Table 5.8, and Table 5.9 provide specific instances and interpretations of discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* from the analysed speeches of Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping, respectively.

Table 5. 7: Discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS1-DS5	“We call on all businesses including mining, retail, banking, farming to ensure that they take all necessary measures to intensify hygiene control.” We also call on the management of malls, entertainment centres and other places frequented by large numbers of people to bolster their hygiene control”.
PCRS1-DS9	“If we are to succeed, every company, trade union, NGO, university, college, school, religious group and taxi association will need to play its part”.
PCRS1-DS10	“Fellow South Africans, this is the most definitive Thuma Mina moment for our country. I have great trust that our people will respond positively to this call to common action.
PCRS2-DS6	“Following consultation with social partners, we have set up a Solidarity Fund, which South African businesses, organisations and individuals, and members of the international community, can contribute to”.
PCRS4-DS4	“This new phase of managing the coronavirus as a constant in our daily lives will be in many respects more difficult. It demands vigilance and it will continue to demand sacrifices of us all”.
PCRS4-DS5	“I therefore urge all South Africans to heed the call of the leaders of our various faith communities for a National Day of Prayer on Sunday, the 31st of May, when we will once again come together to pray for the healing of our land and the protection of our people”.

With reference to the above table, in **PCRS1-DS5**, Ramaphosa urges managers of various businesses and establishments to enhance hygiene practices within their premises. In **PCRS1-DS9**, Ramaphosa emphasises the crucial roles individuals must play in combatting Covid-19, as it is the sole means of surviving the virus. Additionally, in **PCRS1-DS10**, Ramaphosa persuades citizens to actively participate in assisting and collaborating with the government, thereby supporting his “*Thuma mina*” movement. Moving on to **PCRS2-DS6**, Ramaphosa encourages South Africans to make monetary contributions to the Solidarity Fund, which will be utilised to aid the less fortunate during the Covid-19 period. Moreover, in **PCRS4-DS4**, Ramaphosa acknowledges the upcoming challenging phase in the fight against the virus, and thus calls for vigilance from all government stakeholders, including the citizens. Lastly, in **PCRS4-DS5**, Ramaphosa encourages all South Africans, regardless of their religious beliefs, to come together for a National Day of Prayer on May 31st.

Briefly, Ramaphosa pursued the *gain assistance goal* by emphasising individual roles in Covid-19 combat, urging citizen collaboration and encouraging donations.

Table 5.8 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* from Trump’s speeches.

Table 5. 8: Discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* in Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1-DS10	“The virus will not have a chance against us. We are all in this together”
PDTS3-DS1	“All American society is engaged and mobilized in the war against the invisible enemy. While we must remain vigilant, it is clear that our aggressive strategy is working—and very strongly working, I might add”.
PDTS3-DS2	“Hopefully that will continue, and we will continue to make great progress”.
PDTS3-DS3	“The greatest. There’s never been an economy like what we had produced, but we’ll produce it again. And I think we’ll produce it again very fast”.

In Table 5.8, **PDTS1-DS10** illustrates Trump’s desire for citizens to adhere to strict measures, leading to the *gain assistance goal*, where the source/persuader seeks support in carrying out a task. In **PDTS3-DS1**, the goal formation process aims to achieve the gain assistance goal, which involves obtaining information, favour, and objects. In this discourse segment, Trump utilises presupposition to assume that every American is involved in the battle against Covid-19. Although he knows that not everyone is actively engaged, he implies that those who are not yet involved may feel compelled to participate. Furthermore, in **PDTS3-DS2**, Trump seeks assistance from the American people with the aim of sustaining the significant progress made in controlling the virus. In **PDTS3-DS3**, Trump expresses optimism about the country’s economic recovery, emphasising that for this to happen, every citizen should contribute their part, thus necessitating the goal of gaining assistance.

In brief, Trump pursued the *gain assistance goal* by urging adherence to strict measures, encouraging involvement, and emphasizing citizens’ contributions for economic recovery. Table 5.9 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* in Jinpings’s speeches.

Table 5. 9: Discourse segments embodying the *gain assistance goal* in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS5	“It is imperative for the international community to strengthen confidence, act with unity and work together in a collective response. We must comprehensively step-up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease”.
PXJS1-DS9	“I call on G20 members to enhance anti-epidemic information sharing with the support of WHO and to promote control and treatment protocols that are comprehensive, systematic and effective”.
PXJS3-DS7	“China calls on the international community to increase political and financial support for WHO so as to mobilize resources worldwide to defeat the virus”.

Based on the above findings, in **PXJS1-DS5**, Jinping expresses his desire for leaders of other countries to collaborate and work collectively in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. He emphasises the importance of unity and cooperation in tackling disease. In **PXJS1-DS9**, Jinping affirms China’s support for the World Health Organisation (WHO) and encourages other countries to do the same. He emphasises the need for promoting Covid-19 protocols as advised by the WHO across different nations. Additionally, in **PXJS3-DS7**, Jinping appeals to the international community to assist China in financing the WHO’s efforts in mobilising resources to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. He calls for collective support in providing the necessary funding to aid the WHO’s initiatives.

To sum up, Jinping achieved the *gain assistance goal* through calling for collaboration, unity, and cooperation. He also urges the World Health Organisation to urge other countries to cooperate. His primary focus is therefore less on aiding his own country’s citizens and more on encouraging other countries to assist China and each other.

Overall, the findings on the ‘gain assistance goal’ in this study are multifaceted, encompassing a range of contexts. This encompassed situations where the presidents sought assistance, pursued collaborative efforts, or advocated for specific actions. For example, Jinping employed the ‘gain assistance goal’ to engage with other countries, while Ramaphosa pursued a similar goal aimed at benefiting his South African citizens. In contrast, Trump also pursued the *gain assistance goal*, but his focus was primarily on American citizens and organisations within the United States. Nonetheless, their underlying objective was to effectively persuade the intended audience to offer their support, aid, or cooperation towards obtaining a bigger goal which is to

end Covid-19. The next subsection introduces and elucidates findings related to the *share activity goal*.

c) *Share activity*

The *share activity goal* in message production signifies the intended outcome or purpose of communication. It serves as a guiding principle for communicators, aiding in the formulation and delivery of messages to ensure effective conveyance of ideas or information and the accomplishment of their communicative objectives (Dillard, 2007:41). The three presidents exhibited distinct approaches to achieving the *share activity goal*. Table 5.10 below illustrates the frequency of the *share activity goal*'s occurrence from the analysed data using ATLAS.ti.

Table 5. 10: Frequency of the *share activity goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	6	3%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	5	2%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXX	12	7%

As depicted in the table, the cumulative frequency of the *share activity goal* is 23 instances. Among the presidents, Jinping exhibited the highest frequency, with 12 instances, followed by Ramaphosa with 6, and Trump with the lowest count at 5 instances. Consequently, Ramaphosa's coded data holds greater density due to its higher total number of words in the sampled discourse segments. Figure 5.3 below visually portrays the overall discourse segments that embody the *share activity goal*, as identified using ATLAS.ti.

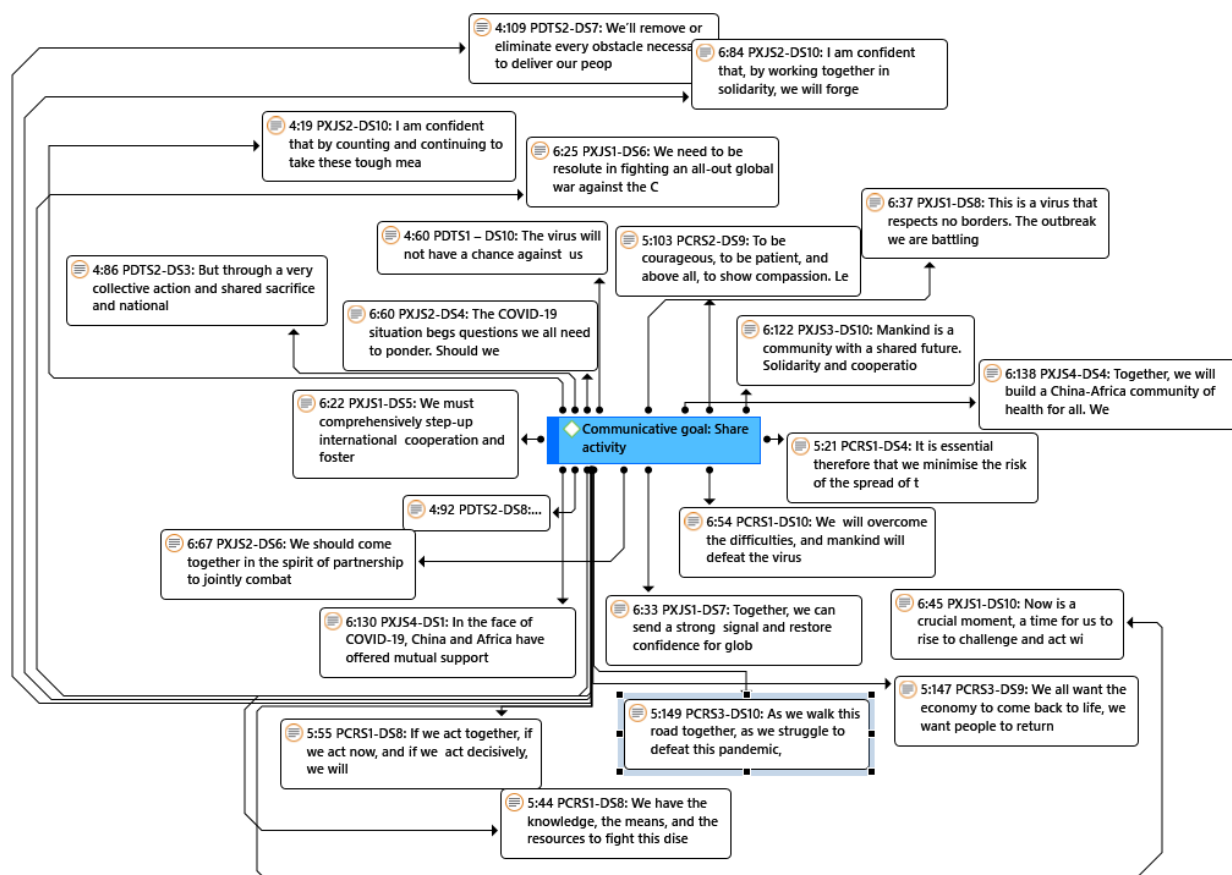


Figure 5. 3: Overall discourse segments embodying the *share activity* goal as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Figure 5.3 showcases an array of sampled discourse segments that manifest the *share activity goal* from the analysed data. These segments underwent thorough manual analysis and examination through ATLAS.ti of contributions from all three presidents.

The study's findings provide compelling evidence that all three presidents harnessed the *share activity goal* by fostering collaboration in combatting Covid-19. This collaborative spirit is exemplified in the subsequent exemplary discourse segments drawn from the analysed data, as illustrated in Table 5.11, Table 5.12, and Table 5.13.

Table 5. 11: Discourse segments embodying the *share activity* goal in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS1- DS8	“If we act swiftly, with purpose and collectively we can limit the effects of the coronavirus on our people and our country. Although we may be limiting physical contact, this epidemic has the potential to bring us closer together”.
PCRS1- DS10	“It is true that we are facing a grave emergency. But if we act together, if we act now, and if we act decisively, we will overcome it”.
PCRS2-DS9	“I call on all of us, one and all, to play our part”.
PCRS3-DS9	“We all want the economy to come back to life, we want people to return to work, we want our children to go back to school, and we all want to be able to move freely again”.
PCRS3- DS10	“As we walk this road together, as we struggle to defeat this pandemic, we remain strong and united and resolved”.

Drawing from the table, it is important to highlight that the *share activity goal* seems to overlap with the *gain assistance goal*, for example in **PCRS1-DS8**, Ramaphosa persuades citizens to join forces with the government to limit the effects of the coronavirus, thereby aligning with the *share activity goal*. Ramaphosa assures citizens that if they act swiftly, purposefully, and collectively, they can limit the spread of the coronavirus. In **PCRS1-DS10**, Ramaphosa persuades citizens to play their role in assisting and sharing activity with the government, encouraging their involvement in his “*Thuma mina* movement” (an IsiZulu phrase that translates to “send me” in English, it represents a call to action, unity, and a sense of responsibility for all South Africans to contribute to the betterment of their nation). Additionally, in **PCRS2-DS9**, Ramaphosa calls on all South Africans to unite in the fight against Covid-19. Similarly, in **PCRS3-DS9**, Ramaphosa urges South African citizens to participate in combating the virus. Lastly, in **PCRS3-DS10**, with less imposition to maintain a positive image and using polite language, the dominant communicative goal reflected in this discourse segment is *share activity goal*. Ramaphosa wants South Africans to join forces and be united in the struggle against Covid-19, emphasising this through involvement and the sharing of responsibilities.

To put it succinctly, Ramaphosa pursued the *share activity goal* to promote collaboration, involvement, unity and sharing responsibilities amongst the South African people. In this regard, his targets are to act together, rather than asked to follow.

Table 5.12 below exemplifies the communicative goal of *share activity* embedded within Trump’s speeches.

Table 5. 12: Discourse segments embodying the *share activity* goal in Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1-DS3	“I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously defeat this virus”.
PDTS1–DS10	“The virus will not have a chance against us. We are all in this together”.
PDTS2-DS4	“.we’re suspending the entry of foreign nationals who have been to Europe”.

In **PDTS1-DS3**, Trump utilises the association of the Covid-19 virus with foreignness to shift the responsibility of combating the global pandemic to the international community, thereby exemplifying the communicative goal of *share activity*. Similarly, in **PDTS1-DS10**, Trump fosters a sense of collectivity and shared responsibility among citizens, which also aligns with the communicative goal of *share activity*. Lastly, in **PDTS2-DS4**, the use of the pronoun “we” (detailed account to be provided in Section 5.3.2) indicates the primary goal of *share activity*, as it signifies that the action of “suspending” was an agreed effort between Trump and the medical professionals, rather than an individual endeavours.

In short, Trump used the *share activity goal* to fosters shared responsibility among citizens, and to shift pandemic responsibility to the international community.

Table 5.13 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying the ‘share activity’ goal found in Jinping’s speeches.

Table 5. 13: Discourse segments embodying the *share activity* goal in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS5	“It is imperative for the international community to strengthen confidence, act with unity and work together in a collective response. We must comprehensively step-up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease”.
PCRS1-DS7	“I want to call on all G20 members to take collective actions - cutting tariffs, removing barriers, and facilitating the unfettered flow of trade. Together, we can send a strong signal and restore confidence for global economic recovery”.
PXJS2-DS3	“We are confident that under the firm stewardship of BRICS leaders, with the united, painstaking efforts of our peoples, and the strong support of the global community, we will overcome the difficulties, and mankind will defeat the virus”.
PXJS3-DS10	“Mankind is a community with a shared future. Solidarity and cooperation are our most powerful weapon for defeating the virus”.
PXJS4-DS4	“Together, we will build a China-Africa community of health for all. We pledge that once the development and deployment of COVID-19 vaccine is completed in China, African countries will be among the first to benefit”.

Based on the findings provided in the table, in **PXJS1-DS5**, Jinping demonstrates awareness of the global controversy surrounding Covid-19 by promoting a sense of collectivity and shared responsibility with other leaders. Similarly, in **PCRS1-DS7**, Jinping persuades all G20 members to collaborate and address trade issues arising from Covid-19 restrictions. In **PXJS2-DS3**, Jinping encourages BRICS leadership to engage in collaborative efforts, emphasising the sharing of activities to combat the virus. Additionally, in **PXJS3-DS10**, Jinping urges both leaders and other countries worldwide to work together, promoting solidarity and cooperation in the fight against Covid-19. This highlights Jinping's belief that unity is crucial for overcoming the virus. Finally, in **PXJS4-DS4**, Jinping calls for the development of a community of practice, where China and Africa can share practices and jointly combat Covid-19.

In brief, Jinping pursued the *share activity goal* by promoting shared responsibility and collaboration between leaders and advocating a practice-sharing community between China and Africa for joint virus to fight against the virus.

Overall, the three presidents strategically pursued the *share activity goal* in various ways, the main aim being to promote collaboration and sharing of responsibilities. Each president seems to have a particular focus as to whose collaboration is requested: the citizens of South Africa; medical staff and ambassadors; other countries and their leaders. This may say something about their strategies in combatting the virus, but also about the message that they want to send to their people.

The next sub-section introduces and elucidates findings related to the *change relationship goal*.

d) Change relationship

In the context of this study, the *change relationship goal* pertains to the specific objective of altering or transforming the existing dynamic between the presidents and their targets. As suggested by Dillard (2007:223), this goal involves shifting the targets' perspective in relation to various social affiliations, encompassing aspects such as law, religion, culture, politics, and economy. Table 5.14 below shows the overall occurrence frequency of the 'change relationship goal' in the analysed data.

Table 5. 14: Frequency of the change relationship goal

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	-	-
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	3	1%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	3	2%

From the table, it is evident that Ramaphosa did not employ the *change relationship goal* in any of his speeches. Arguably, this finding could suggest his consideration of potential risks to relationships, especially given the substantial financial support extended by the Western countries to the global south during the pandemic. In contrast, Trump, and Jinping each employed the *change relationship goal* three times in their sampled speeches, resulting in a cumulative total frequency of six instances. Figure 5.4 visually presents the overall sampled discourse segments exemplifying the manifestation of the *change relationship goal* from the analysed data. These segments underwent thorough manual analysis and scrutiny using ATLAS.ti, encompassing contributions from all three presidents.

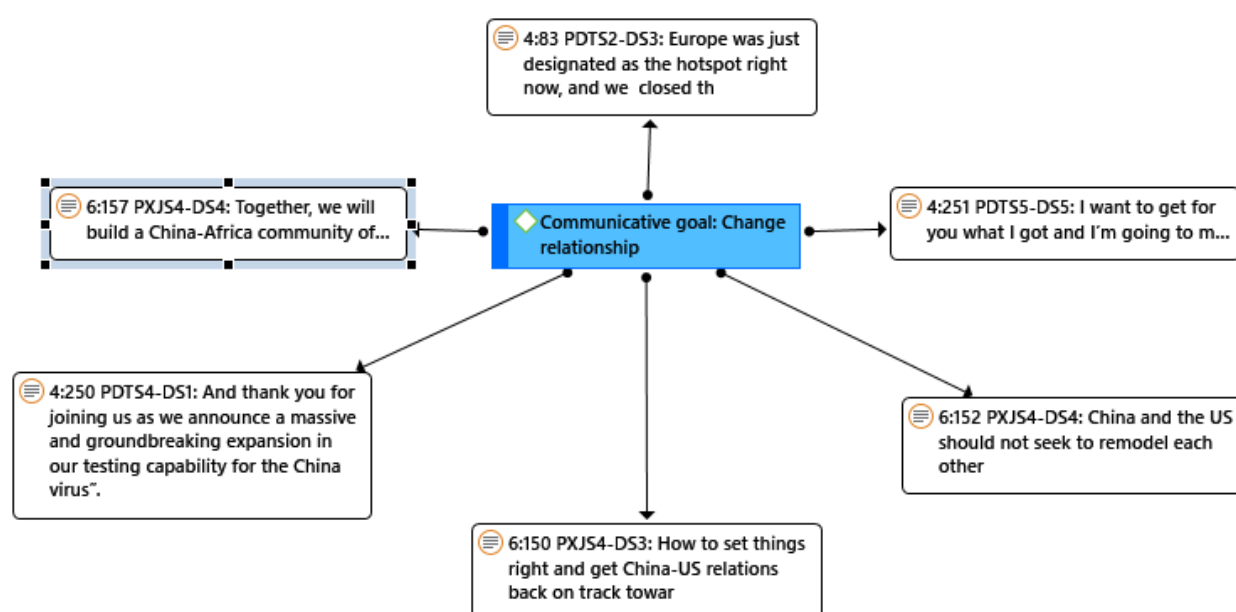


Figure 5. 4: Overall discourse segments embodying the *change relationship goal* as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Drawing from Figure 5.4 Trump employed the *change relationship goal* to confront China over its perceived responsibility for the origin of Covid-19, whereas China adopted the same goal as a defensive strategy against Trump's administration. The subsequent exemplary discourse segments from the analysed data further elucidate this dynamic, as illustrated in Table 5.15 and Table 5.16.

Table 5. 15: Discourse segments embodying the *change relationship goal* in Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS2-DS3	“And, as you know, Europe was just designated as the hotspot right now, and we closed that border a while ago. So that was lucky or through talent or through luck. Call it whatever you want”.
PDTS4-DS1	“And thank you for joining us as we announce a massive and groundbreaking expansion in our testing capability for the China virus”.
PDTS5-DS5	“It wasn’t your fault that this happened. It was China’s fault, and China is going to pay a big price for what they’ve done to this country. China is going to pay a big price for what they’ve done to the world. This was China’s fault, and just remember that”.

From the table, in **PDTS2-DS3**, Trump takes actions to initiate and de-escalate relationships with his targets. He announces the closure of the border for Europe after identifying it as a hotspot for Covid-19. In **PDTS4-DS1**, Trump encourages Americans to view the Covid-19 virus as the “Chinese virus”. He believes that China intentionally sent the virus to other countries with the aim of causing harm. Trump justifies attaching “China” to the virus’s name as a response to a disinformation campaign by Chinese officials, who claimed that the American military was responsible for the outbreak.

A similar study conducted by Chow, Rahnavard, Gomberg-Maitland, Chatterjee, Patodi, Yamane, Levine, Davison, Hawkins, Jackson, and Quintana, (2022:223) supports Trump’s explicit attribution of responsibility to China for its alleged failure to contain and inform the international community about the pandemic threat. Trump insinuates that the virus could be a retaliatory measure against his trade policies benefiting the US and harming the Chinese economy. This viewpoint distances China as a potential ally. Trump also criticises China for making insincere statements, such as blaming US soldiers for spreading the virus, which he uses as a justification for labeling it the “China virus”.

In the findings of the current study, Trump portrays Covid-19 as the “Chinese virus” and holds China accountable for concealing the pandemic’s dangers and inadequate containment efforts. He aims to persuade people to view China as an aspiring authoritative government, potentially causing a sense of betrayal among liberal countries deviating from the shared path towards a democratic world order.

Lastly, in **PDTS5-DS5**, Trump wants Americans to attribute their misfortunes to China, evident in his statement, “it was China’s fault”. This view would also justify his actions in closing the

borders. It is a drastic measure, but by shifting the responsibility in this way, he may persuade the American people that it is the best option. To put it succinctly, Trump achieved the ‘change relationship goal’ by establishing and altering relationships with targets, through closing the EU border and labelling Covid-19 the “Chinese virus”.

Table 5.16 below exemplifies the discourse segments embodying the *change relationship goal* from Jinping’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 16: Discourse segments embodying the *change relationship goal* in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS4-DS2	“Will the giant ship of China-US relations be able to stay on the right course in the future after more than four decades of voyage? The question matters not only to the interests of the Chinese and American peoples, but also to the future of the world and humanity”.
PXJS4-DS3	“How to set things right and get China-US relations back on track toward long-term, sound and steady development? I would like to offer three observations”.
PXJS4-DS4	“China and the US should not seek to remodel each other. No one has the right to rebuff the development path of other countries. And no country will remold its own system to the liking of other countries. After all, it should be the people of the country concerned to adjudicate whether their country's choice of system and path is right or not”.

In **PXJS4-DS2**, Xi Jinping strategically influences African nations to politically maintain their support for China. He draws attention to the historical reciprocity between China and Africa, emphasizing their mutual support. This approach showcases his in-depth understanding of the China-Africa relationship, bolstering his credibility and objectivity. Unlike Trump who intends to close the America borders for other countries, Jinping aims to extend the borders of China and its alliance with other countries more especially African countries. For example, in **PXJS4-DS3**, Xi Jinping advocates for the establishment of a collaborative community of practice. This platform aims to facilitate the exchange of best practices between China and African countries, particularly in the context of combating the Covid-19 pandemic. This proposal reflects Jinping’s commitment to solidarity and joint efforts in addressing global challenges.

Transitioning to **PXJS4-DS4**, Xi Jinping acknowledges the unfortunate stigmatisation that arose with the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China. He strives to reshape the narrative by urging African citizens not to associate the disease solely with China, this is because Jinping does not want to lose the diplomatic ties that China has with African countries because African nations serve as key nodes in China’s network for facilitating trade and connectivity. This also

demonstrates Jinping's awareness of the need for a fair and unbiased perspective, encouraging solidarity and understanding among nations.

In brief, Jinping achieved the *change relationship goal* through strategically influencing African nations to maintain support for China, emphasising reciprocity, by reflecting on his commitment to joint efforts, and through addressing stigmatisation and unbiased perspective towards China because of Covid-19 emanation.

Overall, the *change relationship goal* holds significant sway in persuasive communication, capable of influencing attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and perceptions of audiences. The study's findings reveal distinct patterns in how the presidents employed this goal. Ramaphosa refrained from its use, possibly due to diplomatic concerns and Western financial support to the global south during the pandemic. In contrast, Trump challenged China's accountability for Covid-19 origins, while China defensively responded using the same goal against Trump's administration. These complexities emphasise the change relationship goal's role in shaping international relations, narratives, and global perceptions.

This subsection presented findings on the *change relationship goal*, the next subsection introduces and elucidates findings related to the *change orientation goal*.

e) *Change orientation*

Analogous to the *change relationship goal*, the *change orientation goal* operates by transforming the existing beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours of the intended audience, aiming to engage them on a sociopolitical issue (Dillard, 2007:41). The occurrence of frequencies of the *change orientation goal* within the speeches of the three presidents, as analysed using ATLAS.ti, are displayed in Table 5.17 below.

Table 5. 17: Frequency of the *change orientation goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	5	2%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	10	5%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	4	3%

From the table, Ramaphosa's speeches exhibit a higher density, signifying a greater number of words compared to the other two presidents. Specifically, Trump displays the highest

frequency in terms of the ‘change orientation goal’, with 10 instances, followed by Ramaphosa with 5 instances, and Jinping with the least at 4 instances. In this regard, the overall frequency of the *change orientation goal* amounts to 19 instances across the full sample. Figure 5.5 visually represents a compilation of overall discourse segments embodying the *change orientation goal* from the analysed data. These segments were analysed manually and through ATLAS.ti, encompassing contributions from all three presidents.

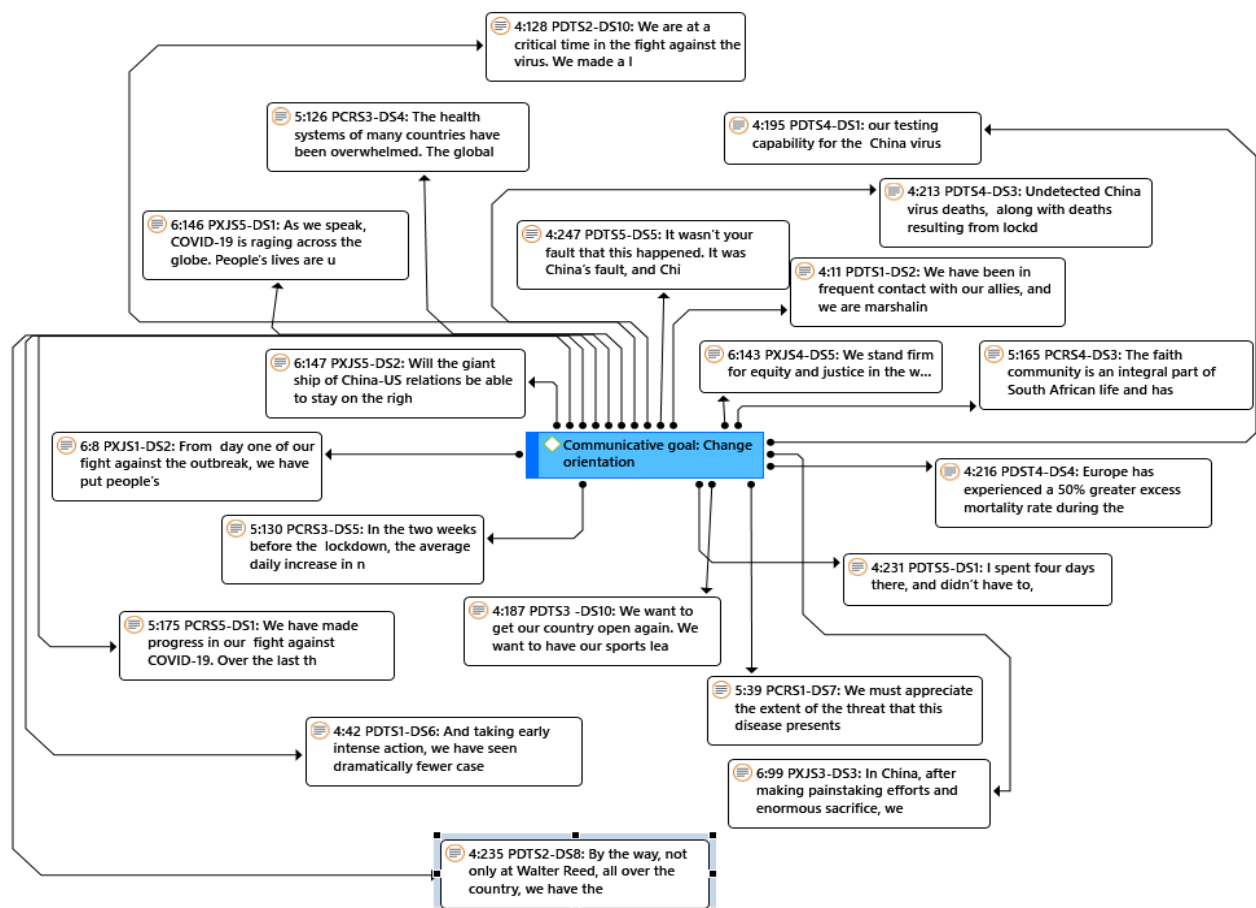


Figure 5. 5: Overall discourse segments embodying the *change orientation goal* as depicted in ATLAS.ti

It is evident from the figure that the three presidents utilised the *change orientation goal* at multiple instances to achieve various outcomes. The findings from the analysed data unveil that all three presidents strategically employed the *change orientation goal* to shift the targets' perspectives or mindsets toward a desired direction. Concrete examples and interpretations of this goal's analysed discourse segments are presented below in Table 5.18, Table 5.19, and Table 5.20.

Table 5. 18: Discourse segments embodying the *change orientation goal* in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS3-DS4	“The health systems of many countries have been overwhelmed. The global evidence is overwhelming. It confirms that our decision to declare a national state of disaster and to institute a nation-wide lockdown was correct and it was timely”.
PCRS3-DS5	“In the two weeks before the lockdown, the average daily increase in new cases was around 42%. Since the start of the lockdown, the average daily increase has been around 4%”.
PCRS4-DS3	“The faith community is an integral part of South African life and has made a great contribution in the fight against the coronavirus”.
PCRS5-DS1	“We have made progress in our fight against Covid-19. Over the last three weeks, the number of new confirmed cases has dropped from a peak of over 12,000 a day to an average over the past week of around 5,000 a day”.

In **PCRS3-DS4**, Ramaphosa acknowledges the existence of citizens who opposed the nationwide lockdown. His objective is to change their perspective and convince them that the decision taken by his government is the best course of action, considering the lessons learned from other countries. Similarly, in **PCRS3-DS5**, the main aim is to demonstrate to South Africans that Ramaphosa’s approach to the lockdown has proven to be effective. This aligns with the *change orientation goal*, as he seeks to change their perception and convince them of the effectiveness of his strategy.

Furthermore, in **PCRS4-DS3**, Ramaphosa endeavours to persuade the targets to recognise the faith community as more than just an ordinary structure, emphasising its significant contribution in the fight against the coronavirus. This represents the *change orientation goal*, as he seeks to alter their perception and highlight the valuable role of the faith community. Lastly, in **PCRS5-DS1**, Ramaphosa manages the public impression of the Covid-19 virus by providing updates on the positive results achieved by his government. This contributes to the *change orientation goal*, as he aims to shape the public’s perception and emphasise the positive outcomes of the government’s actions.

In a few words, Ramaphosa achieved the *change orientation goal* by shifting citizens’ perspectives on the nationwide lockdown’s effectiveness and by altering citizens’ views of the faith community, highlighting its significant role in Covid-19 efforts. He mainly depends on the successes achieved to do this.

Table 5.19 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying the *change orientation goal* from Trump’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 19: Discourse segments embodying the change orientation goal in Trump speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1-DS2	“We have been in frequent contact with our allies, and we are marshaling the full power of the federal government and the private sector to protect the American people”.
PDTS1-DS6	“The European Union failed to take the same precautions and restrict travel from China and other hot spots. As a result, a large number of new clusters in the United States were seeded by travelers from Europe”.
PDTS3 - DS10	“We want to get our country open again. We want to have our sports leagues open. You want to watch sports. It’s important. We miss sports. We miss everything. We want to get back”.
PDST4-DS4	“Europe has experienced a 50% greater excess mortality rate during the virus than the U.S. and their economic contraction has been far more severe. Under Operation Warp Speed, my administrations on track to deliver a safe and effective vaccine in record time. We’re doing very well with the vaccines as most of you know”.

In **PDTS1-DS2**, Trump adopts the *change orientation goal* to reassure citizens and persuade them to believe that, regardless of the severity of the situation, the state and its allies will protect American lives. In **PDTS1-DS6**, Trump engages the targets on socio-political issues by comparing his government’s efforts favourably to those of other countries, which he considers to be worse. The aim is to create a perception of his government’s superiority in handling the crisis. Furthermore, in **PDTS3-DS10**, Trump seeks to influence the country to envision a future reminiscent of the past, where they had unrestricted access to everything without measures such as masks and curfews. He aims to encourage the targets to move past the current difficulties and imagine a better tomorrow.

Lastly, in **PDST4-DS4**, Trump aims to shift Americans’ perceptions of his approach to Covid-19 and portray himself as positively politically inclined. He seeks to instil the belief that his government has outperformed others, emphasising that other countries are not faring as well. This change in perception is intended to shape a more favourably view of his administration’s actions.

In brief, Trump achieved the *change orientation goal* through reassuring citizens of protection and persuading belief in the state and shifting perceptions of his Covid-19 approach to politically positive, aiming to present his administration favourably against other countries’ performance.

Table 5.20 below contains exemplary discourse segments embodying the *change orientation goal* from Jinping’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 20: Discourse segments embodying the *change orientation goal* in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS2	“From day one of our fight against the outbreak, we have put people’s life and health first”.
PXJS3-DS3	“In China, after making painstaking efforts and enormous sacrifice, we have turned the tide on the virus and protected the life and health of our people. All along, we have acted with openness, transparency and responsibility”.
PXJS4-DS5	“We oppose politicisation and stigmatisation of Covid-19, and we oppose racial discrimination and ideological bias. We stand firm for equity and justice in the world”.
PXJS4-DS1	“As we speak, Covid-19 is raging across the globe. People’s lives are under grave threat. Unilateralism and bullying are forcing their way in the world. An international disorder is more possible than ever. More alarmingly, China-US relations, one of the most consequential bilateral relationships in the world, is faced with the most severe challenge since the establishment of diplomatic ties”.

In **PXJS1-DS2**, Jinping aims to communicate that China has prioritised the lives and health of its people since the outbreak of the virus. This is reinforced in **PXJS3-DS3**, where he emphasises that despite the challenges posed by the virus, China has acted with openness, transparency, and responsibility. This is a direct response to the accusations that China concealed information about Covid-19 to protect its trade interests. Jinping asserts the contrary by stating that they have been open and transparent in their actions.

In **PXJS4-DS5**, Jinping acknowledges the stigmatisation surrounding the virus and its association with China since the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan. He wants African citizens to not view it in that way, possibly aiming to combat discrimination and promote understanding. Furthermore, in **PXJS4-DS1**, Jinping wishes to engage the targets in a socio-political issue that extends beyond Covid-19. He reflects on how the USA is using the pandemic to revive existing socio-political issues. This indicates his intent to draw attention to broader political implications and potentially shift the narrative surrounding Covid-19.

To sum up, Jinping achieved the *change orientation goal* through highlighting transparency amidst virus challenges in response to concealment accusations and engaging socio-politically to address broader implications and potentially reshaping the Covid-19 narrative.

In a broader context, the *change orientation goal* served as a common tool harnessed by all three presidents to effectively engage their respective audiences on sociopolitical matters concerning Covid-19. Each of them approaches it from a different angle and with a distinct focus, but in the end they all aim to sway the public’s opinion.

The next subsection introduces and elucidates findings related to the *obtain permission goal*.

f) Obtain permission

In accordance with the GPA theory (Dillard, 1998), the *obtain permission goal* encompasses the objective of seeking or obtaining approval or authorisation from relevant parties to proceed with specific actions or plans. This goal stresses the significance of adhering to boundaries, protocols, as well as legal and ethical considerations when making requests or sharing information. Table 5.21 below shows the frequency occurrence of the *obtain permission goal* in the three presidents from ATLAS.ti.

Table 5. 21: Frequency of the *obtain permission goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	3	1%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	-	-
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	-	-

As presented in the table, only Ramaphosa's speeches feature instances of the *obtain permission goal*, contributing to the total frequency of 3 within the analysed data. Thus, this goal showcases the lowest frequency within this study. Figure 5.6 below provides a visual representation of the overall discourse segments acquired from ATLAS.ti that feature the *obtain permission goal*.

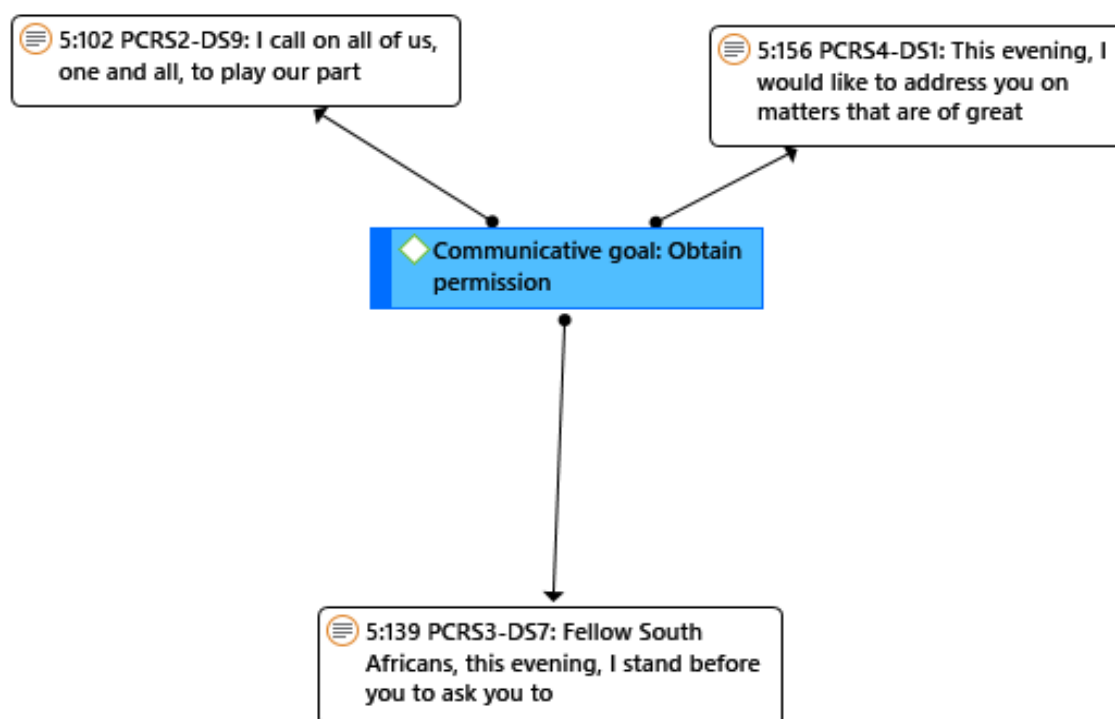


Figure 5. 6: Overall discourse segments embodying the *obtain permission* goal as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Looking at figure 5.6, it is evident that from the analysed data, the *obtain permission goal* is solely utilised by Ramaphosa. However, it is important to acknowledge that these findings cannot be universally extrapolated, given that speeches are inherently context-specific, molded by unique goals. Table 5.22 further illustrates instances of the *obtain permission goal* embedded within Ramaphosa’s speeches.

Table 5. 22: Discourse segments embodying the *obtain permission goal* in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS2-DS9	“In the days, weeks and months ahead our resolve, our resourcefulness and our unity as a nation will be tested as never before. I call on all of us, one and all, to play our part”.
PCRS3-DS7	“Simply put, if we end the lockdown too soon or too abruptly, we risk a massive and uncontrollable resurgence of the disease. We risk reversing the gains we have made over the last few weeks and rendering meaningless the great sacrifices we have all made. Fellow South Africans, this evening, I stand before you to ask you to endure even longer”.
PCRS4-DS1	“This evening, I would like to address you on matters that are of great importance to many people in our country – firstly, the call by religious leaders for a day of prayer as the country unites against the coronavirus pandemic, and, secondly, the decisions of the National Coronavirus Command Council on proposals made by religious leaders on the gradual resumption of certain religious activities”.

In **PCRS2-DS9**, Ramaphosa urges all South Africans to unite in the fight against Covid-19, which aligns with the *obtain permission goal*. Similarly, in **PCRS3-DS7**, the communicative goal reflected in this discourse segment is *obtain permission goal*. This is evident from the use of the verb “ask”, as Ramaphosa requests the public to endure the lockdown for a longer period. He highlights the potential risks of ending it abruptly and seeks their accord in supporting this decision. Furthermore, in **PCRS4-DS1**, Ramaphosa requests citizens to give their consent to the proposals put forth by religious leaders for a day of prayer. This reflects his aim to obtain permission and agreement from the public regarding religious activities during the pandemic.

Drawing from both analyses on this goal, it can be inferred that in the planning stage of communication, if the message necessitates permission or authorisation from external parties, obtaining that consent becomes a distinct and crucial goal. This process involves identifying the relevant individuals or authorities vested with the power (a persuasive linguistic element to be illuminated in impending subsections) to grant permission. Nonetheless, the nature of political discourse, often characterised by assertiveness, might not align with the traditional practice of seeking permission. This trend is particularly evident in the outcomes of this study, for instances, in Trump and Jinping’s speeches, who did not seek permission.

The next subsection introduces and elucidates findings related to the *enforce rights and obligations goal*.

g) Enforce rights and obligations

According to Dillard (2002:22), the purpose of the *enforce rights and obligations goal* in message production is to effectively convey and ensure the targets’ comprehension of the communicator’s legitimate claims and responsibilities. This means that this goal aims to foster an understanding of the rights and duties that both parties, the persuader, and the targets, are expected to uphold. Table 5.23 below shows the frequency usage of the *enforce rights and obligations goal* in the three presidents from ATLAS.ti analysis.

Table 5. 23: Frequency of the *enforce rights and obligations goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	12	6%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	9	4%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	4	2%

Table 5.23 illustrates the total words of the sampled data exported from ATLAS.ti, revealing a greater density in Ramaphosa’s speeches. Column 4 in this table depicts the frequency of the *enforce rights and obligations goal*, reflecting the frequency of its occurrence in each president’s speeches. Conspicuously, this goal holds prominence within Ramaphosa’s speeches, with 12 occurrences, followed by Trump with 9 occurrences, and Jinping with 4 occurrences aligned with the *enforce rights and obligations goal*. The cumulative total frequency for this goal is 25 instances. Below, Figure 5.7 visually represents a compilation of overall discourse segments embodying the *enforce rights and obligations goal* from the analysed data. These segments underwent both iterations of analyses and encompassed contributions from all three presidents.

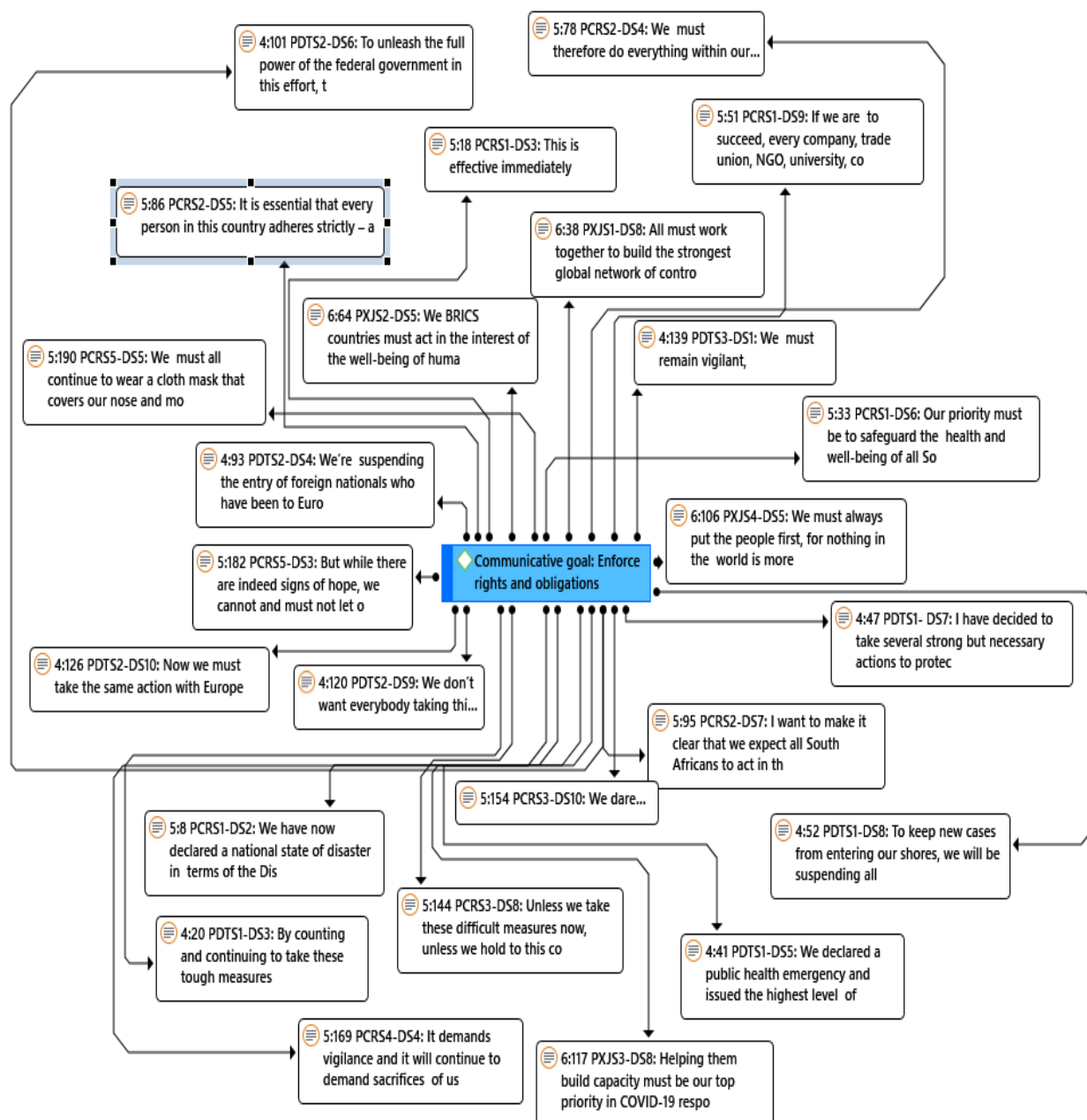


Figure 5. 7: Overall discourse segments embodying the *enforce rights and obligations* goal as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Looking at the figure, it is evident that the aspect of *enforce rights and obligations* within this goal pertained to both the presidents and targets' collective responsibility to fulfil certain duties or obligations to combat the spread of Covid-19. This encompassed adhering to commitments, meeting deadlines, providing accurate information, and upholding ethical standards. This dynamic is further reflected in the subsequent exemplary discourse segments, as outlined in Table 5.24, Table 5.25, and Table 5.26.

Table 5. 24: Discourse segments embodying the *enforce rights and obligations goal* in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS1-DS2	“We have decided to take urgent and drastic measures to manage the disease, protect the people of our country and reduce the impact of the virus on our society and on our economy. We have now declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act”.
PCRS1-DS3	“South African citizens are advised to refrain from all forms of travel to or through the European Union, United States, United Kingdom and other identified high-risk countries such as China, Iran and South Korea. This is effective immediately”.
PCRS1-DS9	“All the institutions of the state will be mobilised to lead this effort, but, if we are to succeed, every company, trade union, NGO, university, college, school, religious group and taxi association will need to play its part”.
PCRS3-DS10	“But we know that this is a matter of survival, and we dare not fail”.

In **PCRS1-DS2**, Ramaphosa declares that the country is in a national state of disaster under the Disaster Management Act. This means that citizens have no choice but to comply with what has been declared, thus evidencing the *enforce rights and obligations goal*. Furthermore, in **PCRS1-DS3**, the adverb “immediately” invokes a sense of urgency in acting, thereby enhancing the persuasiveness of the entire text. This is not presented as a request, but rather as a command from the president, which brings the communicative goal of *enforce rights and obligations* into context (inducing the target to cease harmful behaviour).

Additionally, in **PCRS1-DS9**, Ramaphosa compels targets to play their pivotal roles in the fight against Covid-19, as it is the only way to survive the virus, as indicated by the phrase “if we are to succeed”. In **PCRS3-DS10**, Ramaphosa raises expectations from the audience and convinces them that they must comply, resulting in the communicative goal of *enforce rights and obligations*, as targets are left with no choice but to comply if they want to survive or face doom.

In brief, Ramaphosa used his authority to declare a national state of disaster, employing urgency and persuasion to command citizens to comply with the measures and roles outlined to combat Covid-19 for survival, effectively enforcing rights and obligations while leaving no alternative but compliance. Table 5.25 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying the ‘enforce rights and obligations goal’ from Trump’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 25: Discourse segments embodying the *enforce rights and obligations* goal in Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1-DS3	“I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously defeat this virus”.
PDTS2-DS4	“.we’re suspending the entry of foreign nationals who have been to Europe”.
PDTS2-DS6	“To unleash the full power of the federal government in this effort, today I am officially declaring a national emergency”.
PDTS2-DS10	“We are at a critical time in the fight against the virus. We made a lifesaving move with early action on China. Now we must take the same action with Europe. We will not delay”.

In **PDTS1-DS3**, Trump utilises the possessive pronoun “our” to create a sense of obligation among citizens to adhere to the strict measures the government is about to declare or impose. This serves as an indication of the primary goal of *enforce rights and obligations*, which involves compelling individuals to fulfil their responsibilities, commitments, or cease harmful behaviour (Wilson, 2002:140 cited in Sadiki, 2017:140). The *enforce of rights and obligations goal* is also evident in **PDTS2-DS4**, as foreign nationals are refrained from visiting the USA. Additionally, in **PDTS2-DS6**, Trump conveys the message that if the national state of emergency is not enforced, the government will not fully utilise its power in combating the virus. **PDTS2-DS10** further exemplifies Trump’s reflection of the *enforce rights and obligations goal* by imposing travel restrictions and closing the borders for China to access the USA, due to their high infection rates.

To sum up, Trump employs possessive language, restrictions on foreign nationals, and warnings of limited government intervention to enforce citizens’ obligations, as highlighted using travel restrictions, and the threat of reduced government efforts in combating the virus, in line with the overarching goal of enforcing rights and obligations.

Table 5.26 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying the *enforce rights and obligations* goal in Jinping’s speeches.

Table 5. 26: Discourse segments embodying the *enforce rights and obligations* goal in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS8	“This is a virus that respects no borders. The outbreak we are battling is our common enemy. All must work together to build the strongest global network of control and treatment that the world has ever seen”.
PXJS2-DS5	“As representatives of major emerging countries with global influence, we BRICS countries must act in the interest of the well-being of humankind and stand by justice and equity. We must make the right call and do the right thing. This is us living up to our due responsibilities. It is also what our peoples and the global community expect from us”.
PXJS3-DS8	“Developing countries, African countries in particular, have weaker public health systems. Helping them build capacity must be our top priority in COVID-19 response”.

In the exemplary discourse segment in the table, in **PXJS1-DS8**, Jinping urges all G20 members to collaborate in the fight against Covid-19, employing commanding language that enforces rights and obligations. Similarly, in **PXJS2-DS5**, Jinping commands the BRICS delegates to prioritise the “well-being of humankind” and uphold principles of justice and equity. Lastly, in **PXJS3-DS8**, Jinping commands other world leaders to maximise assistance to developing countries, including Africa, by sharing their resources. In this discourse segment, he utilises the modal verb “must” to emphasise the necessity of implementing his idea, thereby highlighting the communicative goal of *enforce rights and obligations*.

In brief, Jinping employed commanding language to enforce rights and obligations among G20 members, BRICS delegates, and world leaders in addressing Covid-19, emphasising collaboration, well-being prioritisation, and assistance to developing nations.

Overall, from this study’s finding, the “enforce rights” aspect of this goal involves asserting one’s entitlements or privileges within a given context. It includes asserting the right to express one’s opinions, demand fair treatment, or claim ownership or control over certain resources or information. This is applicable across all three presidents.

This subsection presented and interpreted the study’s findings concerning primary communicative goals. Among the seven primary goals identified in the study, the *give advice goal* stood out as the most prevalent, occurring 33 times in the overall sample. Conversely, the *obtain permission goal* was the least utilised, appearing only three times in Cyril Ramaphosa’s communication. This observation suggests that neither Trump nor Jinping frequently employed the *obtain permission goal* in their interactions. The subsequent subsection (5.2.1.2) presents and interprets the secondary communicative goals.

5.2.1.2 Secondary Communicative Goals

As highlighted in Section 2.2.2.2 primary or push goals instigate the influence process, while secondary goals shape it (Berger, 1997:52). In alignment with the GPA theory (Dillard, 1998), this study finds that secondary goals are intermediary objectives that the presidents pursued alongside the primary goal. These goals are designed to enhance the likelihood of achieving the primary goal and they serve as strategic steps or subgoals in the overall persuasive process. Following Schrader and Dillard (1998:30), the secondary goals found in this study include: *identity goal*; *interaction goal*; *resource goal*, and *arousal management goal*, as detailed in the subsequent sub-sections.

a) Identity goal

Identity goals revolve around self-concept, including ethical standards and personal preferences that guide one's conduct, derived from individual moral principles and life values (Dillard & Harden, 1989:21). Remarkably, *identity goal* is consistent thread interwoven throughout the speeches of all three presidents - Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping. Table 5.27 below shows the frequency occurrence of the *identity goal* in the analysed speeches of the three presidents.

Table 5. 27: Frequency of the identity goal

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	7	3%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	16	8%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	6	4%

As evident in the table, Ramaphosa's speeches exhibit greater density, harboring a larger proportion of words within the analysed data. In terms of frequency, the *identity goal* predominantly features in Trump's speeches, with 16 instances. This is trailed by Ramaphosa with 7 instances and Jinping with 6, all of which contribute to achieving the *identity goal*. The collective frequency of the *identity goal* amounts to 29 instances. Figure 5.8 below visually presents the overall discourse segments that vividly showcase the *identity goal* from the analysed data.

Table 5. 28: Discourse segments embodying the *identity goal* in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS1-DS6	“This disease will be extremely disruptive. Our priority must be to safeguard the health and well-being of all South Africans, to minimise the number of infections and to ensure all those infected get proper treatment”.
PCRS2-DS2	“I am heartened that every sector of society has been mobilised and has accepted the role that it needs to play”.
PCRS2-DS4	“I am concerned that a rapid rise in infections will stretch our health services beyond what we can manage, and many people will not be able to access the care they need”.
PCRS3-DS3	“You have also understood that we must do everything in our power to prevent the massive loss of life that would occur if we did not act. For your cooperation, for your commitment and above all for your patience, I wish to thank you personally”.

From the table, in **PCRS1-DS6**, Ramaphosa demonstrates his morals and ethics of care in saving the lives of South Africans and advises citizens to anticipate significant disruptions. He further advises them to refrain from fear and ignorance. Similarly, in **PCRS2-DS2**, Ramaphosa expresses his satisfaction with the response of every sector in fulfilling their role, aligning with the *identity goal* that emphasises ethical and behavioural standards. Ramaphosa also exemplifies the identity goal in **PCRS2-DS4** by reflecting on his ethics of care. Lastly, in **PCRS3-DS3**, Ramaphosa continues to express appreciation to South Africans for adhering to the prescribed regulations.

At length, Ramaphosa achieved the *identity goal* by showcasing his ethics of care through advising citizens on handling disruptions and to appreciate those adhering to Covid-19 regulations. Table 5.29 below presents exemplary discourse segments embodying the *identity goal* from Trump’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 29: Discourse segments embodying the ‘*identity goal*’ from Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1-DS1	“My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak with you about our nation’s unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world”.
PDTS2-DS2	“We’ve been working very hard on this. We’ve made tremendous progress. When you compare what we’ve done to other areas of the world, it’s pretty incredible. A lot of that had to do with the early designation and the closing of the borders”.
PDTS2-DS8	“We have many, many locations behind us, by the way. We cover the, this country in large part. So, the world, by the way, we’re not going to be talking about the world right now. But we cover very, very strongly our country. Stores in virtually every location”.
PDTS2-DS9	“Again, we don’t want everybody taking this test; it’s totally unnecessary. And this will pass. This will pass through, and we’re going to be even stronger for it. We’ve learned a lot. A tremendous amount has been learned”.

From the table, in **PDTS1-DS1**, the reflected communicative goal is the *identity goal*, which pertains to the source’s ethical and personal standards of behaviour. This refers to Trump’s personal preferences guiding his own conduct, as he appears concerned about the impact of Covid-19 on his fellow Americans. Similarly, in **PDTS2-DS2**, Trump expresses a positive view of himself, considering his actions ethically and morally acceptable. In this discourse segment, Trump praises his own government for doing everything within its power to save Americans. In a negative tone, in **PDTS2-DS8**, Trump reveals his selfishness by stating that he will prioritise only Americans and no one else. However, he states this to persuade Americans into believing that he genuinely has their best interests at heart.

Lastly, in **PDTS2-DS9**, Trump persuasively discourages citizens from getting tested for Covid-19, which is ethically questionable, as such data could help the world determine the extent of the virus within its borders. This commentary reflects Trump’s internal standards of behaviour derived from his moral principles, personal conduct, ethical values, and personal standards.

In brief, Trump achieved the *identity goal* by showing his ethical concern for Americans during Covid-19, self-praise for his actions, prioritisation of Americans, and persuasive discouragement of testing, reflecting his personal ethical values and standards.

Table 5.30 below comprises exemplary discourse segments embodying the *identity goal* from Jinping’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 30: Discourse segments embodying the *identity goal* in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS2	“Facing the Covid-19 outbreak that caught us all by surprise, the Chinese government and Chinese people have been undaunted as we took on this formidable task. From day one of our fight against the outbreak, we have put people’s life and health first”.
PXJS2-DS2	“First of all, on behalf of the Chinese side, I wish to pay high tribute to the healthcare workers fighting at the front lines and express deep condolences over the lives lost to the virus. My heartfelt sympathies go to all the patients and their families”.
PXJS3-DS1	“I mourn for every life lost and express condolences to the bereaved families”.
	“In the face of COVID-19, China and Africa have withstood the test of a severe challenge. The Chinese people have put up a fierce fight and made enormous sacrifices to bring the situation in China under control”.
PXJS4-DS3	“Let me reaffirm China’s commitment to its longstanding friendship with Africa. No matter how the international landscape may evolve, China shall never waver in its determination to pursue greater solidarity and cooperation with Africa”.

In **PXJS1-DS2**, Jinping reflects on how China has bravely fought against Covid-19 since its inception. Similarly, in **PXJS2-DS2**, Jinping pays tribute to all healthcare workers and offers condolences to those who have lost loved ones due to the virus. According to a study conducted by David (2018:56), it is asserted that people are more likely to pay attention to requests and advice when their pain is acknowledged. It is widely known that Covid-19 originated from Wuhan, China, and initially, blame and criticism was directed towards China. Hence, it appears crucial for Jinping to change people’s perspectives by actively engaging and acknowledging their suffering. Furthermore, in **PXJS3-DS1**, Jinping expresses his condolences to bereaved families. Lastly, in **PXJS4-DS3**, China commits to maintaining its longstanding relationship with Africa and continuing to cooperate with the continent.

Briefly, Jinping achieved the *identity goal* by acknowledging China’s efforts against Covid-19, paying tribute to healthcare workers, acknowledging pain, shifting perspectives, expressing condolences, and reaffirming China’s commitment to its relationship with Africa across several discourse segments.

Overall, the culmination of this study’s findings underscores the prominent role of *identity goal* as a secondary goal type within compliance-gaining messages of influence attempts. The prevalence of the *identity goal* among secondary goals underscores its potent use by the presidents to leverage personal values for persuasion, suggesting its effectiveness in achieving compliance and providing insights into leaders’ communication strategies during crises like Covid-19.

This section detailed findings on the *identity goal*, the next subsection introduces and elucidates findings related to the *interaction goal*.

b) Interaction goal

As elucidated by Dillard and Harden (1989:22), *interaction goal* revolves around the social appropriateness of actions and the management of public impressions. In essence, it pertains to what the persuader aims to achieve through the act of communication. Table 5.31 below shows the frequency occurrence of the *interaction goal* in the three presidents' analysed speeches from ATLAS.ti.

Table 5. 31: Frequency of the *interaction goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	5	2%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	2	1%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	5	3%

Within the table, it becomes evident that both Ramaphosa and Trump's speeches exhibit a higher number of words, making them denser than Jinping's speeches. However, in terms of frequency, the *interaction goal* features equally in Ramaphosa and Jinping's speeches, each comprising 5 instances. This is trailed by Trump with 2 instances. The cumulative frequency of the *interaction goal* sums up to 12 instances. Figure 5.9 visually represents the overall discourse segments that manifest the *interaction goal* from the sampled data, as analysed through ATLAS.ti.

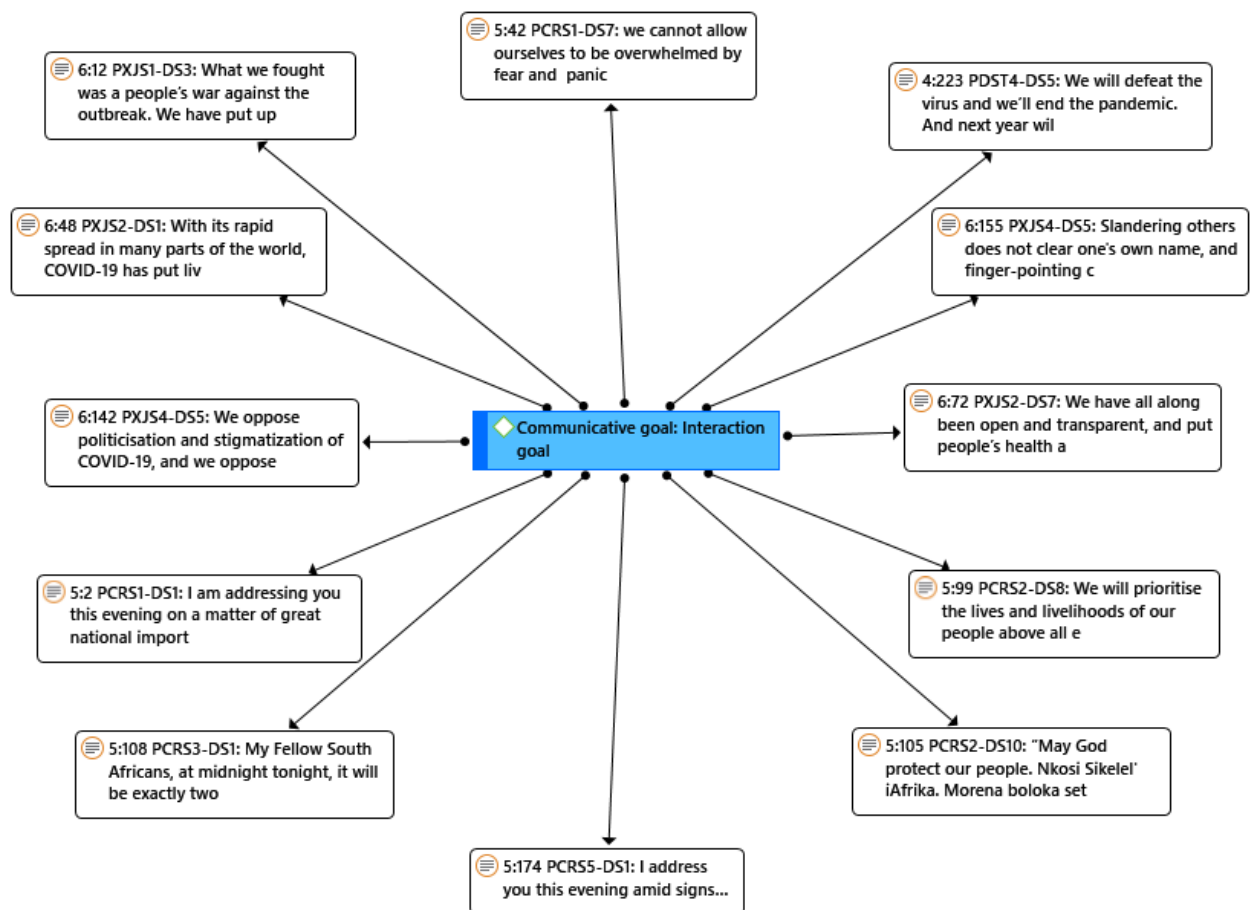


Figure 5. 9: Overall discourse segments embodying the *interaction goal* as depicted in ATLAS.ti

The discourse segments captured in Figure 5.9 collectively convey the communicative intent of each president, reflecting their strategic focus on managing public impressions and ensuring social appropriateness. The study’s findings underscore that the *interaction goal* encompasses the desired outcomes that presidents sought to accomplish through their communicative efforts. This phenomenon is further exemplified in the subsequent discourse segments, as outlined in Table 5.32, Table 5.33, and Table 5.34, each offering concrete instances of interaction goals from the perspectives of the three presidents.

Table 5. 32: Discourse segments embodying the *interaction goal* in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS1-DS1	“Fellow South Africans, I am addressing you this evening on a matter of great national importance. The world is facing a medical emergency far graver than what we have experienced in over a century”.
PCRS1-DS7	“We must appreciate the extent of the threat that this disease presents, we must accept the anxiety that it causes, but we cannot allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by fear and panic. We should stop spreading fake and unverified news and create further apprehension and alarm”.
PCRS2-DS10	“May God protect our people. Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso. God seën Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa. Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika. I thank you”.

From the table, in **PCRS1-DS1**, Ramaphosa provides guidance to South Africans on the latest updates regarding Covid-19. In doing so, he ensures a smooth flow of communication, avoids making threats, and delivers relevant and coherent messages, thereby achieving the *interaction goal*. Similarly, in **PCRS1-DS7**, there is a strong connection between the frustrating situational problem (Covid-19) and the desired outcome (change in orientation), which effectively motivates individuals and contributes to achieving the *interaction goal*. In this discourse segment, Ramaphosa aims to manage the perception surrounding the Covid-19 virus by advising citizens on appropriate behaviour during this period. Also, in **PCRS2-DS10**, the communicative goal evident is the *interaction goal*, revealing Ramaphosa’s compassion and his intention to successfully manage his image, maintain effective communication flow, avoid threats, and deliver relevant and coherent messages.

Everything considered, Ramaphosa achieves the *interaction goal* by providing guidance, maintaining effective communication, avoiding threats, and connecting situational problems to desired outcomes in various discourse segments.

Table 5.33 below exemplifies an instant of ‘interaction goal’ in Trump’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 33: Discourse segment embodying the *interaction goal* in Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDST4-DS5	“We will defeat the virus and we’ll end the pandemic. And next year will be one of the greatest years in our history, and we think it’s going to be a very exciting period of time”.

In this discourse segment, Trump wants to manage the public impression and to avoid fear in the community. It is also evident that Trump’s focus is on economic recovery and reopening businesses during the pandemic, which could have influenced his messaging. The trade-off between public health measures and economic considerations was a challenging issue for leaders worldwide. Table 5.34 below exemplifies instances of *interaction goal* within Jinping’s speeches.

Table 5. 34: Discourse segments embodying the interaction goal in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS3	“What we fought was a people’s war against the outbreak. We have put up a strenuous struggle and made tremendous sacrifices. Now the situation in China is moving steadily in a positive direction”.
PXJS2-DS1	“With its rapid spread in many parts of the world, COVID-19 has put lives and health of people around the world under grave threat, seriously disrupted the flow of people worldwide and the global economy and posed a severe challenge to us BRICS countries”.
PXJS2-DS7	“We have all along been open and transparent, and put people’s health and safety front and center. We reported the infected cases and shared the genetic sequencing of the virus at the earliest possible time”.
PXJS4-DS5	“Slandering others does not clear one’s own name, and finger-pointing cannot resolve any problems. Let me reaffirm that China’s door to dialogue remains open. As long as the US is ready, we can restore and restart the dialogue mechanisms at all levels and in all areas. All issues can be put on the table. And all differences can be addressed properly through dialogue”.

PXJS1-DS3 reflects Jinping’s aspiration to effectively manage his image, maintain a smooth flow of communication, avoid making threats, and deliver relevant and coherent messages regarding China’s fight against Covid-19. Similarly, in **PXJS2-DS1**, Jinping acknowledges the severe disruptions and risks to people’s lives caused by Covid-19. This highlights the negative impact of the virus on people’s lives, emphasising the importance of his subsequent suggestions and serving a persuasive purpose.

In **PXJS2-DS7**, Jinping aims to influence BRICS members to believe that China has been transparent in dealing with Covid-19. This is in response to several newspaper publications such as ‘Guardian’ revealing that China had concealed information related to the virus. Lastly, in **PXJS4-DS5**, Jinping expresses his desire to successfully manage impression, ensure effective communication, avoid threats, and deliver relevant and coherent messages. This is evident when he opposes discrimination and racial biases.

Briefly, Jinping achieves the *interaction goal* by strategically managing his image, ensures smooth communication, avoids threats, and delivers relevant messages about China's fight against Covid-19 while acknowledging the virus's negative impact and countering accusations of non-transparency.

Overall, from this study's findings, the *interaction goal* represents the desired outcome or purpose of a communication interaction. Ramaphosa achieved the *interaction goal* by guiding citizens on Covid-19 updates, ensuring smooth communication, avoiding threats, and connecting problems to outcomes. Similarly, Trump aimed for managing public impression and avoiding fear, while Jinping achieved the goal by maintaining his image, smooth communication, avoiding threats, and addressing Covid-19 impact and transparency concerns in his speeches.

This subsection discussed *interaction goal*, the next subsection introduces and elucidates findings related to the *resource goal*.

c) *Resource goal*

Dillard and Harden's work (1989:22) defines *resource goals* as objectives aimed at augmenting or safeguarding valuable assets, which can be classified as relational, material, or physical. They encapsulate the personal rewards and gratification derived from interactions with specific individuals or groups. Table 5.35 below shows the frequency occurrence of the *resource goal* in the analysed speeches of the three presidents from ATLAS.ti.

Table 5. 35: Frequency of the *resource goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	2	1%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	6	3%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	4	2%

From the table, the *resource goal* predominantly appears in Trump's speeches, with 6 instances. This is followed by Jinping with 4 instances and Ramaphosa with 2 instances aligned with the *resource goal*. The cumulative frequency for the *resource goal* is 12 instances. Figure 5.10 visually presents the overall discourse segments embodying the *resource goal* from the analysed data.

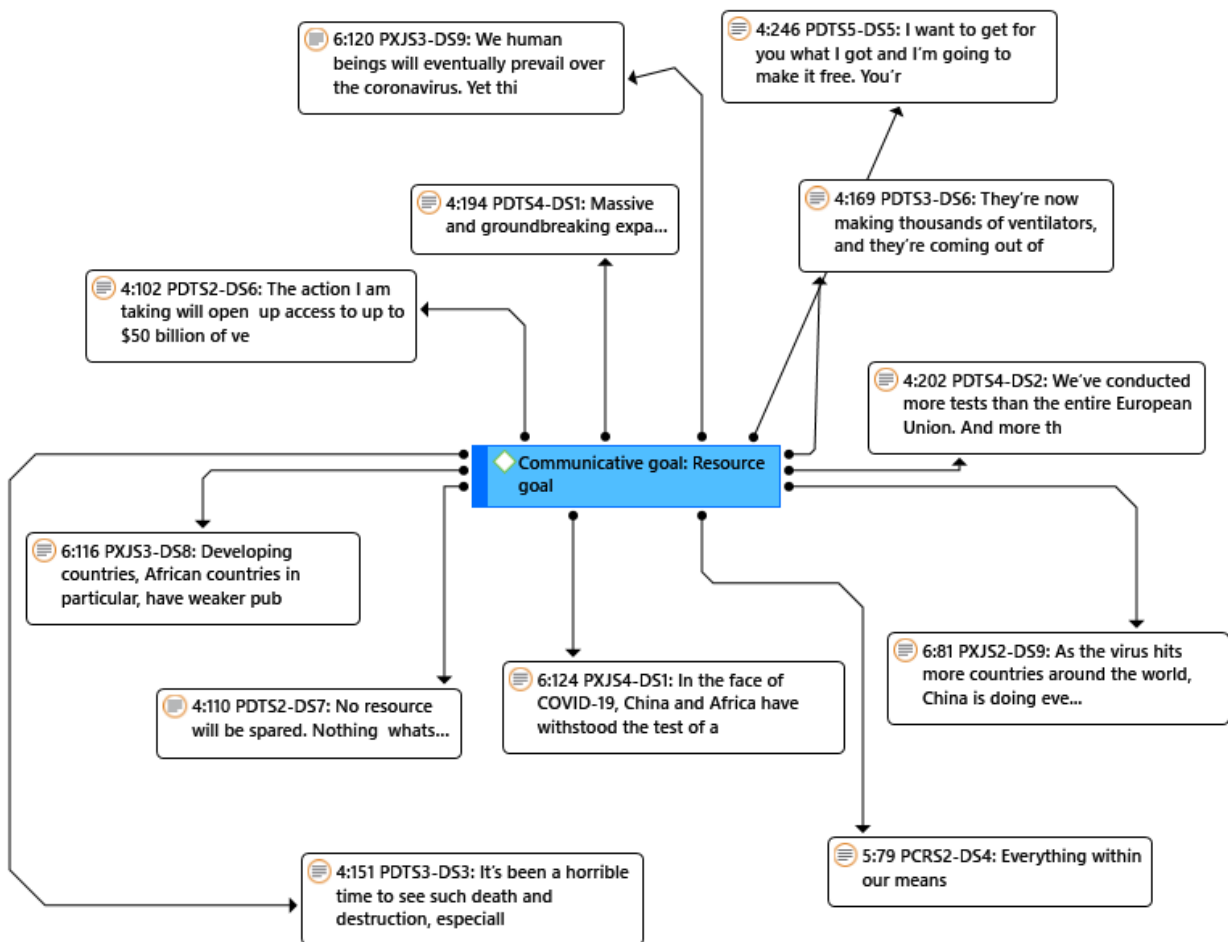


Figure 5. 10: Overall discourse segments embodying the *resource goal* as depicted in ATLAS.ti

These segments displayed in the figure collectively represent the communicative efforts of all three presidents, regarding the *resource goal*. Figure 5.10 illuminates the multifaceted use of resource goals by the presidents, which encompass the acquisition of information, influencing attitudes or behaviours, garnering support, or agreement, and securing tangible resources like funding or assistance. This complex dynamic is further elucidated in the subsequent exemplary discourse segments, as outlined in Table 5.36, Table 5.37, and Table 5.38.

Table 5. 36: Discourse segments embodying *resource goal* in Ramaphosa's speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS2-DS4	"We must therefore do everything within our means to reduce the overall number of infections and to delay the spread of infection over a longer period – what is known as flattening the curve of infections".
PCRS1-DS8	"We have the knowledge, the means, and the resources to fight this disease. If we act swiftly, with purpose and collectively we can limit the effects of the coronavirus on our people and our country".

In **PCRS2-DS4**, the construct “everything within our means” brings into context the *resource goal*, which involves employing available materials, time, and energy to aid the targets. Similarly, in addition, in **PCRS1-DS8**, Ramaphosa expresses that South Africa as a country has resources to fight the disease, provided it act swiftly.

In brief, Ramaphosa achieved the *resource goal* by stating how he planned to use the available resources and government capacity to combat Covid-19. Table 5.37 below exemplifies instances of the *resource goal* from Trump’s analysed speeches.

Table 5. 37: Discourse segments embodying the *resource goal* in Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS2-DS6	“The action I am taking will open up access to up to \$50 billion of very importantly—very important and a large amount of money for states and territories and localities in our shared fight against this disease”.
PDTS2-DS7	“We’ll remove or eliminate every obstacle necessary to deliver our people the care that they need and that they’re entitled to. No resource will be spared. Nothing whatsoever”.
PDTS4-DS2	“And as you know, it’s already setting records, records like nobody’s ever seen before. Last week, we crossed a historic milestone when the United States conducted our 100 millionth test, far more than any other country and not even close actually, second seems to be India with one point five billion people. And the numbers would be probably at least 50 million more tests by us. We’ve conducted more tests than the entire European Union. And more than all of Latin America combined”.

In **PDTS2-DS6**, Trump announces his commitment to allocate 50 billion US dollars towards the fight against Covid-19. This statement highlights the availability of resources within his government, which may not be readily accessible to other governments. In **PDTS2-DS7**, the *resource goal* is also evident on a relational level. By effectively utilising the available resources, Trump aims to derive personal satisfaction from the experience of saving lives, while also ensuring that people benefit from his approach. Additionally, in **PDTS4-DS2**, Trump reveals how access to funds and materials has enabled him to outpace other presidents in managing the Covid-19 situation.

In brief, Trump achieved the *resource goal* through his commitment to allocate substantial resources towards fighting Covid-19 and through efficient resource utilisation for personal satisfaction and public benefit. Table 5.38 below exemplifies instances of *resource goal* in the analysed speeches of Jinping.

Table 5. 38: Discourse segments embodying the *resource* goal in Jinping’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS2-DS9	“In spite of substantial demand at home and growing pressures to meet foreign orders, China has provided a large amount of medical supplies to fellow BRICS countries and facilitated the purchase of such supplies through commercial channels”.
PXJS3-DS8	“Developing countries, African countries in particular, have weaker public health systems. Helping them build capacity must be our top priority in Covid-19 response. The world needs to provide more material, technological and personnel support for African countries”.

In **PXJS2-DS9**, Jinping acknowledges the resources that China has utilised to assist fellow BRICS countries. This reflects China’s efforts in providing support to other nations. Similarly, in **PXJS3-DS8**, Jinping advises other world leaders to maximise their assistance in developing countries, such as Africa, by sharing their resources. This highlights the importance of international cooperation and support in addressing global challenges.

In brief, Jinping achieved the *resource goal* through acknowledging China’s support to fellow BRICS nations through resource utilisation, and by underlining the role of shared resources in addressing global challenges brought by Covid-19.

Overall, all three presidents sought the *resource goal* in a similar manner but to varying degrees and in different context. The next subsection introduces and elucidates findings related to the *arousal management goal*.

d) Arousal management goal

Drawing upon the GPA theory proposed by Dillard in 1998, the concept of arousal management pertains to the objective of regulating and controlling the emotional or physiological arousal level of the audience during the process of communication. This involves a comprehensive understanding of the emotional state of the recipients, their cognitive processing capacity, and their receptiveness to the conveyed message, as illustrated below.

Table 5.39 presents the frequency of occurrence of the *arousal management goal* from the analysed speeches of the three presidents. The outcomes, as provided by ATLAS.ti and displayed in the subsequent table, offer an overview of the instances where the *arousal management goal* is evident.

Table 5. 39: Frequency of the *arousal management goal*

Speech codes	Total words	Density	Frequency	Relative frequency
PCRS	2167	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	2	1%
PDTS	2060	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	3	1%
PXJS	1799	XXXXXXXXXX	1	1%

Upon analysis, it becomes evident that Trump’s speeches are characterised by a higher degree of *arousal management goal* within the examined data. This goal predominates in Trump’s speeches, comprising 3 instances. Ramaphosa follows with 2 instances, and Jinping with 1 instant, all aimed at achieving the *arousal management goal*. The cumulative frequency for this goal stands at 6. Figure 5.11 visually represents the overall discourse segments embodying the *arousal management goal* from the analysed data.

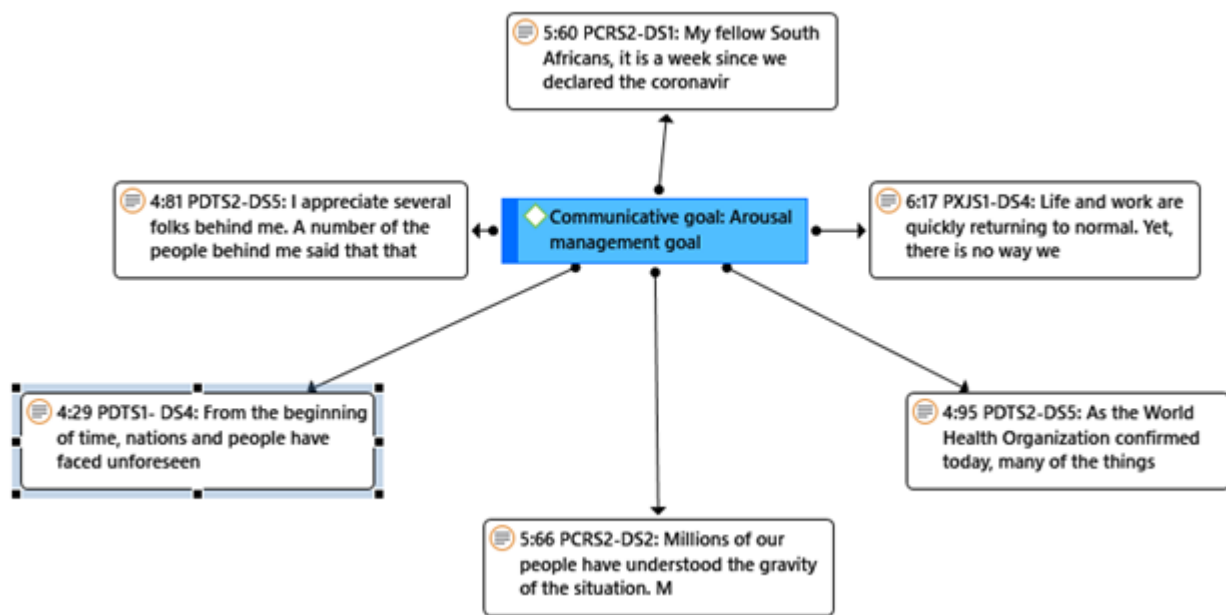


Figure 5. 11: Overall discourse segments exhibiting the *arousal management goal* as depicted in ATLAS.ti

The above figure shows how the three presidents achieved the *arousal management goal* in their persuasive messages embroiled in their speeches. Tables 5.40, 5.41, and 5.42 illustrate examples of discourse segments from the analysed speeches of the three presidents, showcasing the utilisation of the *arousal management goal*.

Table 5. 40: Discourse segments conveying *arousal management goal* in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS2-DS1	“My fellow South Africans, it is a week since we declared the coronavirus pandemic a national disaster and announced a package of extraordinary measures to combat this grave public health emergency. The response of the South African people to this crisis has been remarkable.”
PCRS2-DS2	“Millions of our people have understood the gravity of the situation. Most South Africans have accepted the restrictions that have been placed on their lives and have taken responsibility for changing their behaviour”.

In **PCRS2-DS1**, Ramaphosa aims to keep citizens informed about the latest developments regarding Covid-19 while ensuring their desired level of engagement and attention. Within this context, he expresses pride in the response of South Africans to the virus and encourages them to continue their remarkable efforts. Similarly, in **PCRS2-DS2**, Ramaphosa focuses on managing citizens’ perception of Covid-19 and acknowledges the changes in their behaviour because of the pandemic.

In short, Ramaphosa achieved the *arousal management goal* by informing citizens about Covid-19 developments, maintaining engagement, expressing pride in efforts, managing perception, and acknowledging behaviour changes amidst the pandemic. Table 5.41 below exemplifies the communicative goal of *arousal management* embedded within Trump’s speeches.

Table 5. 41: Discourse segments conveying the *arousal management goal* in Trump speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1- DS4	“From the beginning of time, nations and people have faced unforeseen challenges, including large-scale and very dangerous health threats. This is the way it always was and always will be. It only matters how you respond, and we are responding with great speed and professionalism”.
PDTS2-DS5	“I appreciate several folks behind me. A number of the people behind me said that that saved a lot of lives, that early designation”.

In **PDTS1-DS4**, Trump attempts to regulate citizens’ emotions by persuading them to believe that there have been significant and highly dangerous health threats in the past, which have

come and gone based on the effectiveness of the response. This is meant to provide reassurance and perspective regarding the current situation. Additionally, in **PDTS2-DS5**, Trump discusses aspects of interpersonal interaction, highlighting how people strive to maintain their preferred emotional states by dampening the apprehension that may arise during engagements with others.

In brief, Trump achieved the *arousal management goal* by regulating targets' emotions, and through reassuring citizens by comparing current health threats to past occurrences and effective responses. Table 5.42 below exemplifies instances of *arousal management goal* from Jinping's analysed speeches.

Table 5. 42: Discourse segments embodying the *arousal management goal* in Jinping's speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS4	"Life and work are quickly returning to normal. Yet, there is no way we will lower our guard or relax control". Major infectious disease is the enemy of all".
PXJS3-DS9	"We human beings will eventually prevail over the coronavirus. Yet this may not be the last time a major health emergency comes knocking at our door".
PXJS4-DS1	"In the face of Covid-19, China and Africa have withstood the test of a severe challenge. The Chinese people have put up a fierce fight and made enormous sacrifices to bring the situation in China under control".

In **PXJS1-DS4**, Jinping aims to maintain effective arousal management among individuals regarding the disease. He recognises the importance of keeping people appropriately engaged and informed about Covid-19. In **PXJS3-DS9**, Jinping seeks to convince people that humanity will ultimately triumph and overcome the challenges posed by the virus. He also alludes to the possibility of facing future health pandemics like this one. Lastly, in **PXJS4-DS1**, Jinping reflects on the difficult and unpleasant experiences endured by the Chinese people during the fight against Covid-19. This highlights the resilience and sacrifices made by individuals during that time.

In brief, Jinping achieved the *arousal management goal* by inspiring confidence in humanity's triumph over challenges, and by highlighting Chinese people's resilience and sacrifices during the fight against Covid-19.

Overall, *arousal management goal* was less apparent across all presidents when compared to the other three secondary goals. Though less evident, all the three presidents used it to optimise

the effectiveness of their persuasive messages and to create an appropriate level of stimulation in the targets who aligns with the desired outcome of the message.

Comparable to the findings pertaining to primary goals in Sub-section 5.2.1.1, this sub-section (5.2.1.2) presented and concurrently interpreted the study's findings related to secondary goals. Out of the four secondary goals identified during the analysis, the *Identity goal* stood out as the most prevalent, appearing 29 times in terms of frequency of use. Conversely, the *arousal management goal* was the least utilised, appearing only 6 times across the entire sample. During the manual analysis of the data, it was revealed that there exist persuasive discourse segments that encompass multiple goals. The current researcher deemed it fit to also present findings regarding multiple goals. These findings are subsequently presented and interpreted in detail in the next subsection.

5.2.1.3 Multiple goals

O'Keefe and Delia (1982) cited in Sadiki (2017:90), state that "individuals frequently pursue multiple goals when seeking compliance, and messages employed in the process are chosen and produced with either conversational or cultural constraints". Sadiki (2017:91) states that multiple goals highlight the complexity of influence interactions since primary goals do jeopardise each other. In this study, there are discourse segments entailing multiple primary and secondary goals. The findings of this study are in accord with Sopory and Dillard (2002:144), who assert that communicators define persuasive interactions in terms of primary goals, but they often pursue secondary goals when seeking or resisting compliance. Table 5.43 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying multiple goals found from Ramaphosa's speeches.

Table 5. 43: Discourse segments embodying multiple goal in Ramaphosa’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PCRS1-DS4	“It is essential therefore that we minimise the risk of the spread of this virus by limiting contact amongst groups of people. As we have said before, the current circumstances require extraordinary measures to curb the spread of infections. Countries that have heeded the call to implement these radical measures, have fared much better than those than do not”.
PCRS1-DS6	“This disease will be extremely disruptive. Our priority must be to safeguard the health and well-being of all South Africans, to minimise the number of infections and to ensure all those infected get proper treatment. While we are battling a contagious virus, perhaps the greatest dangers to our country at this time are fear and ignorance”.
PCRS5-DS3	“But while there are indeed signs of hope, we cannot and must not let our guard down. As we continue to ease restrictions, the risk of infection does not diminish. We therefore cannot become complacent or abandon the health precautions that we know we need to take”.

In **PCRS1-DS4**, the communicative goals evident in this discourse segment are “give advice” and “share activity”. The “give advice” goal is evident as Ramaphosa advises citizens on what transpired in countries that did not set and adhere to regulations for curbing the virus. Additionally, Ramaphosa wants to share activities with the citizens, as he wishes for them to minimise the spread together with him. In **PCRS1-DS6**, three goals are exhibited, which entail *identity goal*, *give advice goal*, and *enforce rights and obligations goal*. Ramaphosa subsequently displays his morals and ethics of care in saving the lives of South Africans and advises citizens to expect extreme disruptions. He further advises them to refrain from fear and ignorance.

Lastly, in **PCRS5-DS3**, the level of argument shows that the *give advice goal* maintains a higher order level than the *enforce rights and obligations goal*, although they are complementary. Ramaphosa advises the citizens not to let loose their guards and wants them to continue adhering to the restrictions, even though the government is in the process of easing some.

In brief, Ramaphosa achieved multiple goals in the captured discourse segments through advising and urging collective effort against Covid-19, at the same time making it an obligation, as well as showcasing his care for citizens’ lives.

Additionally, Table 5.44 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying multiple goals evident in Trump’s speeches.

Table 5. 44: Discourse segments embodying the multiple goal in Trump’s speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PDTS1-DS1	“My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak with you about our nation’s unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world”.
PDTS1-DS3	“This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history. I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously defeat this virus”.
PDTS2-DS10	“We are at a critical time in the fight against the virus. We made a lifesaving move with early action on China. Now we must take the same action with Europe. We will not delay. I will never hesitate to take any necessary steps to protect the lives, health, and safety of the American people. I will always put the well-being of America first”.

In **PDTS1-DS1**, the logical reasons presented by Trump demonstrate the necessary strength and quality required to achieve communicative goals, thus yielding persuasion. In this discourse segment, two communicative goals are evident. The first detectable goal is the primary goal, *give advice*, wherein the source pursues a goal of social influence through communication. Not only does he try to induce giving advice, but he also makes clear what he wants from the targets (American citizens). In simple terms, Trump advises Americans on the state’s response to Covid-19. The second communicative goal emanating from this segment is a secondary type of a goal, *identity goal*, which reflects the source’s ethical and personal standards for behaviour. This simply refers to Trump’s personal preferences guiding his own conduct as he appears concerned about the impact of Covid-19 on his fellow Americans.

In **PDTS1-DS3**, multiple primary and secondary goals are evident in this discourse segment, including *give advice* (changing lifestyle, health, and undesirable habits) and *share activity* (high in the source’s benefits while the target acts voluntarily in relation to the source), as well as *enforce rights and obligations* (fulfilling one’s responsibilities). At the core of this segment, Trump advises the citizens about the complexities of the “foreign virus” and the aggressiveness and comprehensive effort his government is adopting to combat the said virus.

Lastly, in **PDTS2-DS10**, communication competence includes appropriateness and effectiveness towards achieving multiple goals of persuasion. Multiple goals exhibited in this discourse segment include *give advice*, *enforce rights and obligations*, *identity goal*, and *change orientation*.

Everything considered, Trump achieved multiple goals through reflecting his ethical standards regarding Covid-19's impact on Americans, advising citizens on the virus and government efforts and enforce restrictions on the targets.

Finally, Table 5.45 below exemplifies discourse segments embodying multiple goals evident in analysed speeches of Jinping.

Table 5. 45: Discourse segments embodying multiple goals in Jinping's speeches

Speech codes	Extracted discourse segments
PXJS1-DS5	"It is imperative for the international community to strengthen confidence, act with unity and work together in a collective response. We must comprehensively step-up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease".
PXJS4-DS5	"We oppose politicisation and stigmatisation of Covid-19, and we oppose racial discrimination and ideological bias. We stand firm for equity and justice in the world".

In **PXJS1-DS5**, there are two communicative goals reflected, which are the *gain assistance goal* and the *share activity goal*. Jinping expresses his wish for other countries' leaders to team up and work together in a collective response. Similarly, in **PXJS4-DS5**, the communicative goals displayed are the *interaction goal*. Jinping reflects on his desire to manage his impression successfully, ensure a good communication flow, avoid threats, and produce relevant and coherent messages. This is evident when he opposes discrimination and racial biases. Another goal reflected here is the *change orientation goal*. Jinping is aware that since the outbreak of Covid-19 in Huwan, China, there has been stigmatisation of the disease and its association with China. Jinping wants African citizens not to perceive it in this way.

In brief, Jinping achieved multiple goals through urging international cooperation, managing his impression, counter discrimination while also aiming to change orientation of his targets. Overall, the three presidents pursued multiple goals to varying degree.

In summary, this section of the study addresses the first objective of the study, which is to examine the prevalent types of communicative goals, reflected in Covid-19 selected presidential speeches. Subsequently, the study progresses to its second objective, aimed at discerning and comparing the communicative, pragmatic, and linguistic elements of persuasion utilised by the selected presidents to achieve their respective communicative goals within their Covid-19 speeches. As such, the following part of the study presents and elucidates the findings

derived from the two iterations of qualitative data analyses, shedding light on the persuasive elements that surfaced.

5.2.2 Elements of persuasion

The study employed a triangulation approach within persuasive communication, encompassing three categories of persuasion elements: communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic. This addresses a gap identified in Chapter 2, integrating these elements to unveil the mechanisms contributing to effective persuasion in presidential speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the following subsections present the key elements of persuasion found from the analysed data.

5.2.2.1 Communicative elements of persuasion

The communicative elements of persuasion can be employed in a variety of combinations based on the context, the targets, and the goals of the persuader (See Section 3.2.1). Table 5.46 presents the communicative elements identified during data analysis and their frequencies across the speeches of the three presidents.

Table 5. 46: Identified communicative elements of persuasion

Elements	Frequency				Relative Frequency		
	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping	Total F	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping
Likability	-	1	1	2	-	1%	1%
Credibility	4	4	6	14	2%	2%	1%
Familiarity	4	3	-	7	2%	2%	-
Humour	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-
Trustworthiness	2	2	-	4	1%	1%	-
Statistics/Numbers	1	1	1	3	1%	1%	1%
Evidentiality	4	3	-	7	2%	2%	-
Blame-shifting	2	-	-	2	1%	-	-
Name-calling	-	2	-	2	-	1%	-
Imaginability	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-
Schadenfreude	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-
Power	4	6	7	15	2%	2%	4%

Table 5.47 offers a comprehensive overview of the communicative elements employed by Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping from their sampled covid-19 related speeches. Within the

analysed speeches, these three presidents employed a variety of communicative elements to adeptly convey their messages and forge connections with their distinct targets. Commencing with *likability*, both Trump and Jinping integrated this aspect to shape favourable public perceptions. *Credibility* emerged as markedly significant for all three presidents. Jinping particularly emphasised credibility more frequently in his speeches, indicating his concerted effort to foster trust with his targets. In this context, Ramaphosa and Trump demonstrated parity, by using credibility 4 times, reflecting their joint endeavours to project dependability and honesty.

Further, *familiarity* emerged as one of the prominent elements in the speeches of Ramaphosa and Trump, with the former employing it 4 times and the latter 3 times. This suggests their shared objective of cultivating a relatable atmosphere in their speeches, likely to resonate more effectively with their intended recipients. Regarding *humour*, only Trump strategically utilised this element, deploying lightheartedness to effectively engage his audience. *Trustworthiness* stood out as a significant element for both Ramaphosa and Trump, each employing it twice. This underscores their commitment to convey sincerity and integrity to their respective audiences.

Statistics, such as reporting percentages, played a role in the speeches of all three presidents, with a cumulative frequency of 3. This underscores their reliance on data and figures to substantiate their arguments and bolster the credibility of their statements. *Evidentiality* was employed by both Ramaphosa and Trump, highlighting their dedication to providing evidence to support their claims. Particularly, Trump employed tactics such as *blame-shifting* and *name-calling* selectively to deflect responsibility and assail opponents.

Furthermore, Trump judiciously employed elements like *imaginability* and *schadenfreude*, indicative of his ability to vividly depict mental imagery and potentially derive satisfaction from specific situations. Finally, the notion of *power* was a recurring element in the speeches of all three leaders. Jinping held the highest usage at 7, followed by Trump with 4, and Ramaphosa with 6. This attests to their collective effort to assert authority and wield influence within their respective roles.

These communicative elements played an instrumental role in shaping the tone and impact of their speeches, ultimately influencing how their audiences perceived them and the overall effectiveness of their messaging. Figure 5.12 below offers a comprehensive visual

representation of the constructs embodying communicative elements of persuasion sourced from ATLAS.ti.

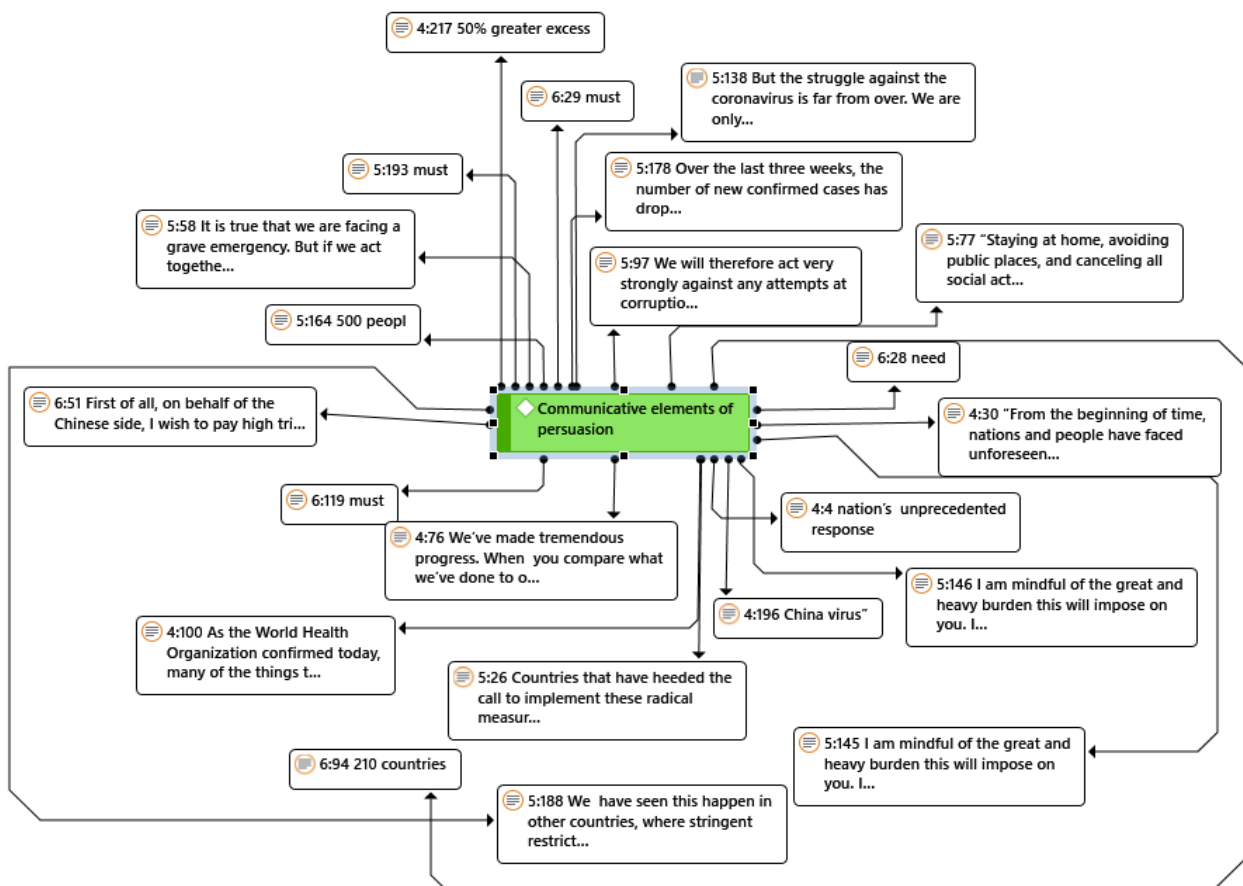


Figure 5. 12: Overall constructs embodying communicative elements as depicted in ATLAS.ti

In the figure, multiple constructs which stems from various discourse segments across the speeches of the three presidents are provided. These constructs were subject to manual analysis to discern the communicative elements employed by each of the presidents. Since Table 5.47 and Figure 5.12 have respectively provided the frequency of communicative elements and constructs encompassing them, the subsequent subsections further elucidate these findings by presenting context-specific discourse segments embodying communicative elements of persuasion, drawing examples from the analysed data.

a) Likability

If an individual is liked, they are more easily persuasive, this element applied to all the presidents, but most sought by Trump as exemplified below.

PDTS3-DS4: “We’ve rapidly developed the most expansive and accurate testing system than anywhere in the world and have completed more than 3.3 million tests”.

Trump strategically utilises the adverb “rapidly” to convey the idea that the testing system was developed faster than anywhere else in the world. By doing so, he aims to generate a positive sentiment and seek liking from his audience, thus making his message more appealing and persuasive.

Likewise, in PXJS1-DS1, Jinping employs the communicative element of likability to persuade the Saudi Arabia president, as demonstrated in the excerpt below.

PXJS1-DS1: “Dear colleagues, it is good to join you. Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to His Majesty King Salman and Saudi Arabia for having done tremendous work of communication and coordination to make this summit possible”.

b) Credibility

A key element that prominently influences success in persuasion is the credibility of the communicator. As described by O’Keefe (1990:133), credibility refers to the judgments made by the audience regarding the communicator’s believability. The element of credibility was evident in the speeches of all three presidents. For example,

PCRS1-DS10: “Fellow South Africans, this is the most definitive Thuma Mina moment for our country. I have great trust that our people will respond positively to this call to common action. It is true that we are facing a grave emergency. But if we act together, if we act now, and if we act decisively, we will overcome it. I thank you”.

PDTS1-DS1: “My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak with you about our nation’s unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world”.

PXJS4-DS5: “This is a most urgent task. We must always put the people first, for nothing in the world is more precious than people’s lives”.

At the beginning of **PCRS1-DS10**, Ramaphosa employs the phrase “fellow South Africans” to establish a sense of closeness and connection with the audience. This approach serves to

acknowledge the listeners and reminds them of their oneness and collective identity. By expressing confidence as a problem solver, he signals dominance and power, leaving a positive impression and enhancing his credibility in the eyes of the audience. Similarly, in **PDTS1-DS1**, Trump uses the adjectival phrase “fellow Americans” to demonstrate inclusivity and to broaden his reach across the entire American population. This fosters a sense of national identity and bolsters his credibility as an objective leader who advocates for all Americans, irrespective of their political affiliations. This approach aims to strengthen his position as a unifying figure and instil trust in his leadership, thus making his speech persuasive.

Lastly, in **PXJS4-DS5**, before proposing a course of action, Jinping reflects on China’s past support and assistance to other countries in need. By mentioning their prior experiences of providing help, he enhances his credibility. This context establishes a positive perception of his suggestions, as he is viewed as someone with proven experience in handling similar matters. This builds trust and receptivity towards his proposed actions, in contrast to someone lacking such prior experience.

c) Familiarity

From the analysed data, familiarity as an element of persuasion was evident in Ramaphosa and Trump speeches as exemplified below.

PCRS2-DS3: “Staying at home, avoiding public places, and canceling all social activities is the preferred best defense against the virus. Over the past week, as we have been implementing these measures, the global crisis has deepened”.

PDTS1-DS1: “My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak with you about our nation’s unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world”.

In **PCRS2-DS3**, Ramaphosa skillfully employs the element of familiarity by referring to past events and developments that have occurred over the past week. This strategic use of temporal references enhances the persuasiveness of his message, as it acknowledges recent happenings and connects his communication with the audience’s current experiences and knowledge. Similarly, in **PDTS1-DS1**, Trump utilises familiarity by using the phrase “nation’s response”, which implies that citizens are already acquainted with the ongoing developments and updates regarding Covid-19. That is, the nation is included in the response. They are part of the solution,

and they are aware of this. This signals that the audience is well-informed and awaiting further guidance or advice from the government or state.

In both cases, the use of familiar terms contributes to the element of persuasion by forging a stronger rapport with the audience and invoking a sense of camaraderie, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of their communication. Therefore, familiarity as an element of persuasion helps in reinforcing both Ramaphosa and Trump's positions as authoritative figures and enhances the overall persuasiveness of their communication.

d) Humour

Humour has diverse effects on persuasion, and its impact may either increase or decrease likability, as noted by Sadiki (2017:46). The findings of this study on humour as an element of persuasion align with Olimat (2020:63), who argues that humour is occasionally used in presidential speeches. In alignment with Table 5.47, humour was only recorded once in Trump's speech, as exemplified below.

PDTS5-DS1: "Hi, perhaps you recognise me? It's your favourite president".

In this discourse segment, Trump employs humor by playfully asking the citizens if they recognise him, even though he is obviously recognisable as their president. By making this jest, he adds a lighthearted touch to his speech, aiming to elicit a chuckle from the audience.

Additionally, he presents himself as their "favorite" president, despite knowing that not everyone may hold the same opinion. This self-deprecating humor allows him to connect with the audience in a more relatable and approachable manner, potentially increasing his likability and creating a more engaging and memorable interaction with the listeners.

e) Trustworthiness

According to Ugande (2001:5), individuals often believe statements made by individuals who hold high ranks, class, or authority because they trust them. Trustworthiness, as a communicative element of persuasion, is closely linked to credibility. The following discourse segments serve as examples of the element of trustworthiness found in the study:

PCRS4-DS2: "Our Minister of Health today advised me that we now have over 20,000 people that have been infected and close to 500 people have lost their lives. This

continues to cause distress among all of us as citizens of South Africa. At the same time, we are thankful that more than 11,000 people have recovered from the coronavirus”.

PDTS2-DS4: “I also announced Wednesday night, following the advice of our medical professionals who are doing a tremendous job and we appreciate it very much that we’re suspending the entry of foreign nationals who have been to Europe in the last 14 days from entering the United States”.

In **PCRS4-DS2**, incorporating statistics and referring to the title ‘Minister of Health’ adds to the persuasiveness of the message. This is because scientific evidence can enhance the communicator’s credibility and trustworthiness, especially when coming from someone in a high-ranking position who is well-informed. The content of the message portrays Ramaphosa’s logical and analytical abilities through vivid descriptions of actions expected in the context of persuasion. By presenting data and statistics, Ramaphosa strengthens his argument and provides factual support for his claims, making him more persuasive to the audience.

Similarly, in **PDTS2-DS4**, Trump ensures credibility and trustworthiness by stating that his recommendation is informed by the advice of the country’s medical professionals. By attributing the recommendation to the expertise of medical experts, he seeks to shift the focus away from himself and his own ideologies. This approach aims to present his message as an objective and well-informed decision based on professional advice, which can enhance trust and credibility among the America citizens.

In both Ramaphosa’s and Trump’s speeches, the use of evidence and expert opinions bolsters the persuasiveness of their messages. By incorporating trustworthiness into their speeches, the presidents sought to enhance their credibility and establish stronger connections with their citizens.

It is, therefore, vital to stress that the element of ‘trustworthiness’ played a crucial role when presidents were persuading the listeners to believe in their covid-19 messages and to follow their regulations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

f) Statistics/Numbers

This element is closely linked to credibility and trustworthiness. From the analysed data, statistics as a communicative element of persuasion was evident in all three presidents as exemplified below.

PCRS5-DS1: “I address you this evening amid signs of hope. We have made progress in our fight against Covid-19. Over the last three weeks, the number of new confirmed cases has dropped from a peak of over 12,000 a day to an average over the past week of around 5,000 a day. The recovery rate from coronavirus has risen from 48% at the time of my last address and now stands at 80%”.

PDTS4-DS4: “Europe has experienced a 50% greater excess mortality rate during the virus than the U.S. and their economic contraction has been far more severe. Under Operation Warp Speed, my administration’s on track to deliver a safe and effective vaccine in record time. We’re doing very well with the vaccines as most of you know”.

PXJS3-DS1: “What we are facing is the most serious global public health emergency since the end of World War II. Catching the world by surprise, Covid-19 has hit over 210 countries and regions, affected more than seven billion people around the world and claimed over 300,000 precious lives. I mourn for every life lost and express condolences to the bereaved families”.

In **PCRS5-DS1**, Ramaphosa strategically employs statistics or numbers to enhance his credibility. By presenting information supported by scientific evidence, he increases the likelihood that people will believe and trust his message, as opposed to merely expressing an opinion. This discourse segment aligns with Berger’s (2010:111) notion that message production and choice play a fundamental role in communication, regardless of the context. Moreover, it demonstrates how cognitive development guides individuals in achieving their communication goals effectively.

Similarly, in **PDTS4-DS4**, Trump uses statistics as an element of persuasion, which aligns with evidentiality, another communicative element of persuasion. By providing statistical data to support his point, he makes his argument more plausible and convincing. This use of evidentiality helps to bolster his message’s credibility and makes it more persuasive to the audience.

Likewise, in **PXJS3-DS1**, Jinping aims to attain credibility in his message by providing statistics on the countries and people affected by Covid-19. This approach enhances the persuasiveness of his speech, as people are more likely to believe information from scientifically proven sources rather than solely relying on one’s opinion.

Basci and Hassan (2020:76) submit that numbers are the only means to get to objective truths, cleansed of subjectivity, personal biases, and values. As the popular saying goes, “you cannot argue with numbers”. In support, Ng (2021:392):

When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind.

This means that when a source or communicator presents numbers to measure what he or she is talking about, they appear knowledgeable and credible which in turn enhances the persuasiveness of their messages. The numbers presented by Ramaphosa, Trump and Jinping show a drastic improvement in the spectrum to curb the spread of the virus, which makes them very influential or persuasive. In all three cases, the use of statistics as a communicative element of persuasion serves to enhance the credibility of the presidents' messages. It is important to note that there seems to be a relationship between 'statistics' and 'evidentiality' which is discussed next due to their provision of proofs to support a claim or assertion made.

g) Evidentiality

Evidentiality emerged as one of the communicative elements of persuasion during the data analysis. Evidentiality can be defined as a functional-conceptual domain that indicates the communicator's cognitive or communicative justification for a judgment (Boye and Harder, 2009:99). In agreement with this, Portner (2009:263) notes that evidentiality involves "the speaker's assessment of the evidence which supports his assertion". The concept of evidentiality has been widely explored in lexical semantics since Boas (1938) first introduced this term to linguistics (Xu, 2022:18).

In this study, evidentiality as a communicative element of persuasion was found evident in the speeches of Ramaphosa and Trump, as exemplified in the discourse segments below:

PCRS3-DS4: "The health systems of many countries have been overwhelmed. The global evidence is overwhelming. It confirms that our decision to declare a national state of disaster and to institute a nation-wide lockdown was correct and it was timely".

PDST4-DS4: "Europe has experienced a 50% greater excess mortality rate during the virus than the U.S. and their economic contraction has been far more severe. Under Operation Warp Speed, my administrations on track to deliver a safe and effective vaccine in record time. We're doing very well with the vaccines as most of you know".

In **PCRS3-DS4**, Ramaphosa strategically employs evidentiality as an element of persuasion in politics by drawing on global evidence as justification and affirmation for the decision his government took two weeks earlier. By referring to global statistics, he aims to appear credible

and reinforce the validity of his government's actions. This use of evidentiality helps to bolster the persuasiveness of his message by presenting objective data to support his claims and decision-making.

Similarly, in **PDST4-DS4**, Trump utilises ideologically loaded discourse to change people's perceptions about his government's response to Covid-19. Despite facing criticism worldwide, he uses evidentiality as an element of persuasion to present his response as the best course of action. By incorporating evidence and justification for his decisions, he seeks to make his point more plausible and to sway the audience's opinion in his favour.

In the context of this study, this means that evidentiality, as a communicative element of persuasion, helped in building trust in the information presented and it was instrumental in influencing people's perceptions and beliefs during political discussions and public responses to Covid-19 pandemic. As highlighted during the discussion on 'statistics', there seems to be a relationship between statistics and evidentiality as communicative elements of persuasion. The data analysed in this study reveals that evidentiality builds credibility, while statistics persuade by emphasizing pandemic seriousness and urgency. In essence, the synergy between evidentiality and statistics in these speeches is essential for effective persuasion, facilitating informed decision-making and public compliance during a public health crisis.

h) Blame-shifting

Blame shifting emerged as one of the communicative elements of persuasion from the findings of this study, particularly in Trump's speeches. An example of blame-shifting in Trump's communication can be seen in the following discourse elements:

PDTS1-DS3: "We have faced numerous challenges in combating the pandemic, but let me be clear, the responsibility lies with others who did not take the necessary actions early on".

PDTS5-DS5: "I want to get for you what I got and I'm going to make it free. You're not going to pay for it. It wasn't your fault that this happened. It was China's fault, and China is going to pay a big price for what they've done to this country. China is going to pay a big price for what they've done to the world. This was China's fault, and just remember that".

In **PDTS1-DS3**, Trump engages in blame-shifting by attributing the challenges in handling the pandemic to others, implying that they are responsible for the delayed actions. By shifting the blame to external factors or individuals, he seeks to deflect criticism and responsibility from

his government's response to the pandemic. This also links to the 'share activity' goal, discussed earlier, Trump wants to shift the responsibility of combating the global pandemic to the international community, thereby exemplifying the communicative goal of 'share activity.'

Similarly, in **PDTS5-DS5**, Trump blames China for the demise that Americans are facing, and he wants China to pay. Trump emphasise that Americans are suffering from Covid-19, yet it is not their fault but China's fault. In summary, blame-shifting is a persuasive element often employed to divert accountability and mitigate negative perceptions. In this study, it is used to create a narrative that places the onus on others, thereby attempting to influence the audience's perception of the situation and protect the communicator's reputation.

i) Name-calling

Interestingly, name-calling emerged as a communicative element of persuasion from the data analysed in this study. Nendauni and Sadiki (2019:85) provide an explication of name-calling as the act of labeling others with derogatory or negative terms to connect a person to a negative symbol or image. In the context of politics, name-calling is a prevalent strategy, as affirmed by Tsai and Wei (2018:356) cited in Nendauni (2020:16), who asserts that politicians often use name-calling to discredit their opponents, bestowing each other with negative labels such as racist and terrorist.

In the context of this study, name-calling was notably found in Trump's speeches, possibly due to his direct and outspoken communication style, in contrast to the speeches of Ramaphosa and Jinping. Trump's use of name-calling is aimed at associating certain negative attributes with specific individuals, groups, or even countries, shaping public perception, and potentially influencing opinions. Below is an example of name-calling in Trump's speech.

PDTS4-DS1: "Thank you very much, thank you. So beautiful out here. And thank you for joining us as we announce a massive and groundbreaking expansion in our testing capability for the China virus".

Trump uses name-calling to label Covid-19 as the "china virus", he does this to influence Americans and the rest of the world to blame China since it is where the Covid-19 outbreak happened. Trump wants Americans to see the Covid-19 virus as the "Chinese virus" because he believes that the virus was sent deliberately to other countries to destroy them (New York Times, 18 March 2020). Trump labels Covid-19 as the Chinese virus and blames China for

hiding the danger of a pandemic and not containing it effectively, he wants to persuade people into believing that China seeks to be the authoritative government, so that liberal countries may feel betrayed because the US leave the shared path towards a democratic world order.

By labelling Covid-19 as the “Chinese virus”, Trump implies that China’s actions reflect a desire for authoritative control, potentially leading to feelings of betrayal among liberal countries. It is crucial to recognise that name-calling as a persuasive element can have significant implications, and it is essential to critically analyse such communication tactics.

j) Imaginability

As highlighted in Table 5.47, imaginability also emerged as a communicative element of persuasion in Trump speeches as exemplified below.

PDTS1- DS4: “From the beginning of time, nations and people have faced unforeseen challenges, including large-scale and very dangerous health threats. This is the way it always was and always will be. It only matters how you respond, and we are responding with great speed and professionalism”.

In this discourse segment, Trump employed imaginability as a linguistic element of persuasion to evoke citizens’ emotions and beliefs. By referring to events from “the beginning of time”, he draws on historical imagery and paints a picture of past challenges and threats that humanity has faced. This approach aims to make the current situation seem familiar and manageable by creating the notion that similar challenges have occurred before and were overcome.

Furthermore, by stating that “it only matters how you respond”, Trump emphasises the importance of the current response to the health threat. He encourages citizens to imagine how past responses to such challenges have influenced outcomes, suggesting that a proactive and professional response is crucial for successfully navigating the current situation. Therefore, by using imaginability in his speech, Trump attempts to manage citizens’ emotions and persuade them into believing that the current health threat is not unique or insurmountable.

Overall, the communicative element of imaginability helps to take the audience back to previous events and historical contexts, reinforcing the notion that challenges have been overcome in the past and can be effectively addressed again.

k) Schadenfreude

Another communicative element of persuasion that also emerged only in Trump's speech is "Schadenfreude", which is joy over some harm or misfortune suffered by another. Schadenfreude is a combination of the German nouns 'Schaden', meaning "damage" or "harm", and 'Freude', meaning "joy" (Olimat, 2020:24). There seems to be a link between name-calling and schadenfreude as distinct psychological phenomena, but they can intersect in various ways. As explained above, name-calling involves using derogatory language to demean or belittle others, while schadenfreude refers to the pleasure derived from the misfortunes of others.

In some cases, name-calling can lead to schadenfreude, as those who insulted someone may feel satisfaction when that person faces setbacks. Conversely, schadenfreude can motivate name-calling when individuals deliberately provoke conflict to derive pleasure from witnessing others' distress. However, these connections may not be universal, as both name-calling and schadenfreude are complex behaviours influenced by personal emotions, social dynamics, and individual traits. In this regard, the researcher submits that encouraging empathy, kindness, and positive communication can help mitigate both name-calling and schadenfreude and foster healthier persuasive communication.

The following discourse segment serves as an example of "schadenfreude" in Trump speech.

PDTS2-DS2: "We've been working very hard on this. We've made tremendous progress. When you compare what we've done to other areas of the world, it's pretty incredible. A lot of that had to do with the early designation and the closing of the borders".

In this discourse segment, Trump seeks to distinguish himself from other presidents by highlighting their perceived shortcomings and praising himself and his government for their perceived superiority. By comparing the progress made under his administration to that of other nations, he implicitly suggests that his response has been more effective and successful.

The use of 'Schadenfreude' in this context is aimed at creating a sense of superiority and triumph in the face of challenges. By downplaying the achievements of others and emphasising his own accomplishments, Trump attempts to bolster his image and persuade the audience of his leadership's efficacy.

It is, therefore, appropriate for the current researcher to claim that Schadenfreude as a communicative element of persuasion can be divisive and may perpetuate an "us versus them"

mentality. This is evident in Trump's speech who tends to focus on 'othering' by seeking collaboration from USA people while demeaning other countries for their failure in the containment of the Covid-19 disease.

1) Power

From the findings of this study, power emerged as one of the most frequently used communicative elements of persuasion across the speeches of the three presidents. This finding aligns with Dillard's (2004:199) claim that behaviour aimed at achieving persuasion is influenced by power dynamics. For example, individuals in positions of authority, such as managers, may not feel the need to offer justifications or explanations when requesting compliance because they believe their position of power lends legitimacy to their requests. This relates to the earlier discussion on the credibility and likability of the communicator, as explored in Section 3.2.1 under communicative elements of persuasion.

Levine and Boster (2001:44) assert that those in positions of authority are generally more persuasive than those who lack it. Burgoon, Dunbar, and Segrin (2012:167) support this view by referring to French and Raven's (1959) identification of five bases of power that communicators can draw upon to influence others: legitimate, expert, referent, coercive, and reward power. Firstly, legitimate power stems from one's formal authority or position within a hierarchy, compelling compliance through the recognition of their role. Expert power relies on an individual's knowledge and proficiency in a specific domain, enabling them to sway opinions by virtue of their expertise. Referent power hinges on personal charisma and likability, attracting followers who seek association with admired individuals. Coercive power, conversely, leverages threats and punishments to enforce compliance through fear of repercussions, while reward power employs incentives and positive outcomes as motivational tools. However, in the context of this study, only expert, legitimate, referent, and reward power were found to be utilised by the presidents, as exemplified below:

Table 5. 47: Examples of discourse segments embodying power as an element of persuasion

Expert power	Legitimate power	Referent power	Reward power
PDTS2-DS3: “As advised <u>by our top medical experts</u> , wearing masks is a crucial step in reducing the spread of the virus”.	PXJS3-DS1: “ <u>As the President of China</u> , I assure you that we will continue to provide support and assistance to countries in need”.	PCRS5-DS2: “ <u>We are all in this together</u> , as fellow South Africans, united in the fight against the virus”.	PDTS1-DS2: “We are working <u>on economic stimulus packages to provide financial relief to businesses and individuals</u> affected by the pandemic”.

In **PDTS2-DS3**, Trump leverages expert power by citing the advice of medical experts, which reinforces the credibility and persuasiveness of his recommendation on wearing masks. In **PXJS3-DS1**, Jinping employs legitimate power by emphasising his position as the President of China to assure the audience of the country’s commitment to providing support during the pandemic. Further, In **PCRS5-DS2**, Ramaphosa utilises referent power by appealing to a sense of unity and shared identity among South Africans, emphasising that they are all in this fight together. Lastly, in **PDTS1-DS2**, Trump employs reward power by promising financial relief to those impacted by the pandemic, using the prospect of rewards to influence their behavior positively.

The use of different power bases in their speeches allows the three presidents to influence and persuade their audiences effectively. Therefore, the communicative element of power played a significant role in shaping perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of targets during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To sum up, the interplay of communicative elements of persuasion such as credibility, likability, familiarity, statistics, evidentiality, name-calling, imaginability, and power contributes to shaping targets perceptions and attitudes, thus results in persuasion. This sub-section presented and interpreted findings on communicative elements of persuasion, the next sub-section presents and interprets findings on linguistic elements of persuasion.

5.2.2.2 Linguistic elements of persuasion

A message’s compelling appeal is inextricably shaped by its linguistic elements (Vivian, Ryan, Boyd, Sarah, Keller, Griffith1, Loggarakis & Medema, 2021:883). Through an inductive

approach, the study intended to reveal the directionality of the relationship between linguistic elements and the persuasiveness of political messages, along with their anticipated communicative goals. For a detailed discussion on linguistic elements of persuasion, refer to Section 3.2.2. The data analysis process yielded various linguistic elements, as evident in Table 5.48.

Table 5. 48: Identified linguistic elements of persuasion

Elements	Frequency				Relative frequency		
	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping	Total F	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping
Personal pronouns and kinship terms	9	18	12	39	4%	9%	7%
Inclusive “we”	23	18	15	56	18%	9%	8%
Exclusive “we”	9	16	8	33	4%	8%	4%
Conjunction	6	13	1	20	4%	6%	1%
Parallelism	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-
Rhetorical questions	-	2	3	5	-	1%	2%
Deferential mode of address	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-
Compounding	3	4	4	11	2%	2%	2%
Subordination	2	2	2	6	2%	1%	1%
Allegory	1	1	3	1	1%	1%	2%
War metaphor	-	2	2	4	-	1%	1%
Lexical repetition	2	9	-	11	1%	4%	-
Concreteness	1	1	1	3	1%	1%	1%
Conclusion explicitness	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Hyperbole	1	5	2	8	1%	2%	1%
Idiom	1	1	3	5	1%	1%	2%
Modal	5	8	7	20	2%	4%	4%
Lexical adjectives	16	5	11	32	12%	2%	6%
Lexical adverb	3	5	4	12	2%	2%	2%
Third-person narration	1	-	1	2	1%	-	-
Religious lexicon and affiliation	2	-	-	2	2%	-	-
Personification	-	-	3	3	-	-	2%
Qualifier	-	4	-	4	-	2%	-

Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping employed various linguistic elements of persuasion to persuade their targets. Looking at the table, it is evident that all three presidents utilised personal pronouns and kinship terms to establish a sense of personal connection and empathy with their targets. Ramaphosa used personal pronouns 9 times, Trump 18 times, and Jinping 12 times, indicating their focus on connecting with their citizens.

Moreover, all three presidents employed inclusive “we” to create a sense of unity and shared responsibility. This pertains to the previous discussion on the share activity goal, wherein Jinping used inclusive “we” to share collaboration with leaders of other countries, and Ramaphosa uses inclusive “we” to foster collaboration amongst South Africans, while Trump uses it to collaborate and engage with the Americans. Ramaphosa used inclusive “we” 23 times, Trump 18 times, and Jinping 15 times, to a total frequency of 56, making it the most used element of persuasion in the context of this study’s findings. Also, the use of exclusive “we” was also prevalent, with Ramaphosa using it 9 times, Trump 16 times, and Jinping 8 times.

Trump stood out in his usage of hyperbole, employing it 5 times to exaggerate certain points for effect, while Ramaphosa and Jinping used it more sparingly. Additionally, Trump used lexical repetition extensively, with 9 instances, which may be an attempt to reinforce his key messages. Further, both Trump and Jinping employed war metaphors to underscore their points, with both Trump and Jinping using them twice. These linguistic elements are discussed in detail and exemplified in the subsequent sections. It is worth noting that this linguistic choice can be interpreted as an attempt to frame their messages in a context of struggle posed by Covid-19, aiming to inspire their citizens to action.

Rhetorical questions were used more frequently by Jinping, with 3 instances, as compared to Trump’s 2. This technique can engage the audience by prompting them to think deeply about the issues being raised. In terms of modals, Jinping utilised them 7 times, indicating a strong use of persuasion and authority. Trump also used modals frequently with 8 instances, while Ramaphosa used them 5 times. Modals can convey a sense of certainty and conviction, which can be compelling for the targets.

Overall, each president adopted a unique mix of linguistic elements of persuasion to appeal to their respective targets. While Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping shared some common elements, such as personal pronouns and inclusive “we”, they also displayed distinct linguistic preferences and patterns that reflected their individual communication styles and the specific political and cultural contexts in which they were delivering their speeches. Another interesting observation from the findings is that the same goal may be employed for different purposes through varying elements of persuasion. Figure 5.13 below presents an overview of constructs entailing linguistic elements of persuasion.

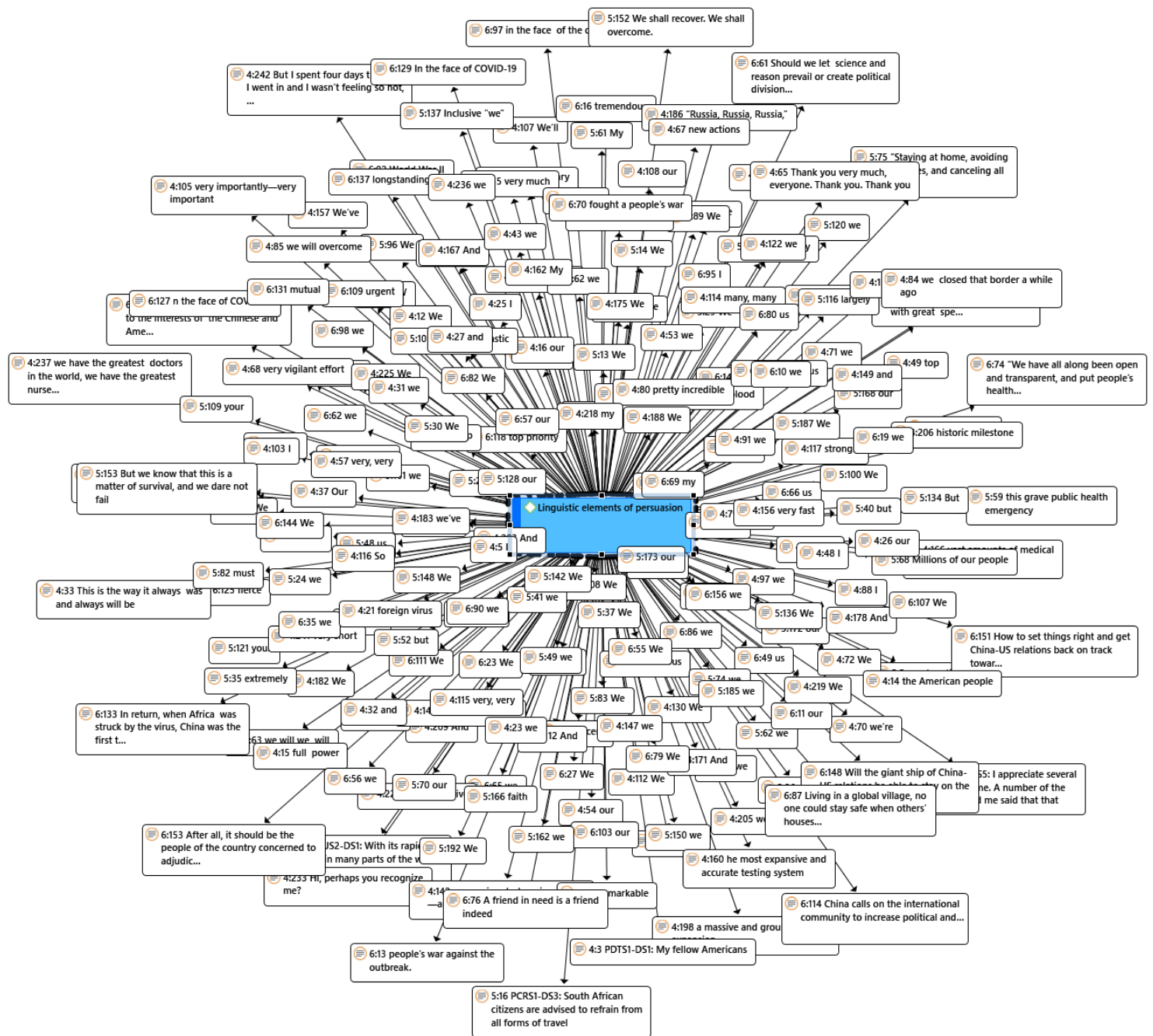


Figure 5. 13: Overall constructs embodying linguistics elements of persuasion as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Figure 5.13 exhibit constructs extracted from sampled discourse segments of the three presidents. A total of 226 linguistic elements of persuasion were recorded across the 15 speeches. These constructs were analysed to identify the linguistic elements listed in table 5.48. To further make the findings comprehensive, the following subsections elucidate key linguistic elements of persuasion that emerged from the study's finding by drawing examples from the analysed data.

a) Personal pronouns and kinship terms

Personal pronouns play a significant role in political speeches as they provide insights into whom the speaker identifies with (Gustafsson, Hommerberg and Sandgren, 2020:270). The study findings indicate the presence of three types of personal pronouns: subjective pronouns, objective pronouns, and possessive pronouns. These pronoun types are exemplified in Table 5.49, Table 5.50, and Table 5.51, respectively.

Table 5. 49: Examples of subjective pronouns

Extracted discourse segments	Pronouns
PCRS1-DS1: “Fellow South Africans, <u>I</u> am addressing you this evening on a matter of great national importance. The world is facing a medical emergency far graver than what we have experienced in over a century”.	I
PDTS1-DS1: “My fellow Americans, tonight <u>I</u> want to speak with <u>you</u> about our nation’s unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world”.	I, You
PXJS1-DS3: “What <u>we</u> fought was a people’s war against the outbreak. <u>We</u> have put up a strenuous struggle and made tremendous sacrifices. Now the situation in China is moving steadily in a positive direction”.	We

In **PCRS1-DS**, Ramaphosa strategically employs the first-person pronoun “I” to assert authority and ownership, portraying himself as an individual with commendable qualities and accomplishments. This approach enhances his persuasive impact. Conversely, in **PDTS1-DS1**, Trump utilises the second-person pronoun “you” inclusively, drawing citizens into the core of his message and capturing their attention effectively. Moving on to PXJS1-DS3, Jinping adopts the subjective pronoun “we”, wherein “we” refers to China’s citizens and their government. This usage subtly persuades other leaders to take greater responsibility alongside their government stakeholders, particularly their citizens.

Conspicuously, the findings reveal the presence of objective pronouns solely in Trump’s speeches. Table 5.37 below provides examples of objective pronouns found in the analysed presidential speeches.

Table 5. 50: Examples of objective pronouns

Extracted discourse segments	pronouns
PDTS2-DS7: “We’ll remove or eliminate every obstacle necessary to deliver our people the care that <u>they</u> need and that they’re entitled to. No resource will be spared. Nothing whatsoever”.	They
PCRS3-DS2: “...And yet, faced with such daunting challenges, <u>you</u> , the people of South Africa, have responded with remarkable patience and courage. <u>You</u> have respected the lockdown and largely observed the regulations”.	You

In **PDTS2-DS7**, the Trump employs the object pronoun “they” to emphasise a sense of indebtedness, implying that the speaker should comply with fulfilling the favor of being elected as the country’s leader. On the other hand, in **PCRS3-DS2**, Ramaphosa uses the second-person pronoun “you” to refer to both him and the other South African citizens. It is essential to note that the pronoun “you” serves multiple functions, including acting as an indefinite or generic pronoun. The indefinite “you” can replace “I” and include the speaker as part of a category. According to Allen (2006:13), the indefinite “you” is not used to discuss actual experiences but rather to refer to “conventional wisdom”. This usage of “you” can sometimes lead to ambiguity regarding the specific referents. The speaker utilises the indefinite “you” to convey common sense or admitted truths, with the expectation of gaining agreement from the audience (Allen, 2006:13). Whether the audience view themselves as part of that group or not depends on their interpretation of the speaker’s intention.

Finally, Table 5.51 below provides examples of possessive pronouns found in the analysed data.

Table 5. 51: Examples of possessive pronouns

Extracted discourse segments	Pronouns
PCRS2-DS1: “ <u>My</u> fellow South Africans, it is a week since we declared the coronavirus pandemic a national disaster and announced a package of extraordinary measures to combat this grave public health emergency”.	My
PDTS1-DS1: “ <u>My</u> fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak with you about <u>our</u> nation’s unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world”.	My, our

In **PCRS2-DS1**, the use of the possessive pronoun “my” signifies the president’s highest authority and legitimate power, emphasising his dominance and setting him apart from others. This presentation tends to portray the president in a positive light, enhancing his persuasive

impact. However, it is essential to recognise that highlighting one's higher authority than others can be perceived negatively as it may create a sense of inequality, suggesting the speaker views others as inferior (Beard, 2000:45).

Similarly, in **PDTS1-DS1**, Trump uses the possessive pronoun “my”, implying a sense of ownership over the American people. Collins (1990:32) supports this idea, stating that using a possessive pronoun indicates association or ownership. Furthermore, Trump utilises the possessive pronoun “our” when referring to America as a country or a nation. This usage fosters a sense of togetherness and blurs the divide between the source (Trump) and the targets (the American people), promoting agreement and yielding positive compliance. According to Brynjarsdottir, Håkansson, Pierce, Baumer, DiSalvo and Sengers (2012:952), politicians deliberately employ the possessive pronoun “our” to make people feel obliged to comply. Thus, it is reasonable to assert that Trump uses the possessive pronoun “our” to make American citizens feel obligated to listen to his advice regarding Covid-19, thereby achieving his persuasive goal.

b) Inclusive “we”

According to Muhlhausler and Harre (1990:175), the use of inclusive “we” diminishes the responsibilities of the speaker or communicator, as it portrays them as collaborative with the target audience. Inclusive “we” includes both the speaker and the addressee, especially when the speaker is one person asking another about something, they both share or would like to do, as highlighted by Marmaridou (2000:23). All three presidents made use of inclusive “we” extensively. The following discourse segments serves as examples of inclusive “we” from the analysed data:

PCRS2-DS3: “Staying at home, avoiding public places, and canceling all social activities is the preferred best defense against the virus. Over the past week, as we have been implementing these measures, the global crisis has deepened”.

PDTS1-DS3: “This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history. I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously defeat this virus”.

PXJS1-DS8: “This is a virus that respects no borders. The outbreak we are battling is our common enemy. All must work together to build the strongest global network of control and

treatment that the world has ever seen. China has set up its online Covid-19 knowledge center that is open to all countries”.

In **PCRS2-DS3**, Ramaphosa strategically employs inclusive “we” to avoid sounding like a dictator and instead make the issue about collective involvement. This approach fosters a sense of agreement among South Africans. If the implemented measures prove ineffective, Ramaphosa avoids taking sole blame, as the responsibility is shared by the entire country. Karapetjana (2011:43) supports this notion, stating that politicians use inclusive “we” in controversial decisions to gain support and avoid shouldering the blame alone.

Similarly, in **PDTs1-DS3**, Trump utilises inclusive “we” as a linguistic element of persuasion, linking the Covid-19 virus with foreignness to externalise the responsibility of fighting the global pandemic to the international community. This aligns with the primary communicative goal of ‘share activity’. Likewise, in **PXJS1-DS8**, Jinping uses inclusive “we” as a linguistic element of persuasion to foster an organisational culture and share responsibility with G20 members. Jinping also incorporates the possessive pronoun “our” to make the G20 members feel obligated to comply with his persuasive message.

Marmaridou’s (2000:23) study distinguishes between inclusive “we” and exclusive “we”. Inclusive “we” includes both the speaker and the addressee when the speaker refers to something, they both share or would like to do. On the other hand, exclusive “we” excludes the speaker from the reference (Marmaridou, 2000:26). The findings regarding exclusive “we” as a linguistic element of persuasion are presented in subsequent section.

c) Exclusive “we”

All three presidents utilised exclusive “we” as a linguistic element of persuasion in their speeches, as exemplified below.

PCRS1-DS4: “It is essential therefore that we minimise the risk of the spread of this virus by limiting contact amongst groups of people. As we have said before, the current circumstances require extraordinary measures to curb the spread of infections. Countries that have heeded the call to implement these radical measures, have fared much better than those than do not”.

PDTs1- DS4: “From the beginning of time, nations and people have faced unforeseen challenges, including large-scale and very dangerous health threats. This is the way it always was and always will be. It only matters how you respond, and we are responding with great speed and professionalism”.

PXJS4-DS2: “In the face of Covid-19, China and Africa have offered mutual support and fought shoulder to shoulder with each other. We shall always remember the invaluable support Africa gave us at the height of our battle with the coronavirus. In return, when Africa was struck by the virus, China was the first to rush in with assistance and has since stood firm with the African people”.

In **PCRS1-DS4**, Ramaphosa employs exclusive “we” as an element of persuasion, where he refers specifically to his government and does not include the targets (the citizens) in the statement. The use of exclusive “we” in this context emphasises the actions and responsibilities of his government in minimising the risk of virus spread and implementing extraordinary measures. In **PDTS1-DS4**, Trump also uses exclusive “we” in his speech, deliberately excluding the person being addressed (the citizens). He utilises this exclusive “we” to persuade the targets (the audience) that his government is responding to challenges with great speed and professionalism. By using exclusive “we”, Trump highlights the actions and efforts of his government without directly involving the audience.

Lastly, in **PXJS4-DS2**, Jinping employs exclusive “we” that, in this context, is inclusive of himself and his fellow Chinese citizens. He uses this exclusive “we” to create a group where multiple people are involved, rather than specifically referring to the targets (the audience). Jinping expresses gratitude on behalf of all Chinese citizens to Africa for the mutual support and assistance provided during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Overall, the use of exclusive “we” in these speeches serves to emphasise specific groups or entities without directly involving the audience, thereby contributing to the persuasive effect of the messages.

d) Conjunctions

In Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1965), conjunctions serve as a sub-system of cohesion, connecting words to words and paragraphs to paragraphs. In political speeches, conjunctions play a crucial role, helping speakers clarify their points and enabling listeners to uncover hidden meanings (Zhou, 2021:77). All three presidents’ speeches analysed in this study contained conjunctions, which were categorised into four types: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal, each performing different persuasive functions.

Additive conjunctions, as described by Zhou (2021:77), typically connect parallel sentences, indicating that there is additional information to be included. Trump, among the three

presidents, extensively uses additive conjunctions to enhance the persuasiveness of his statements. For instance,

PDTS1-DS3: “This is the most aggressive and comprehensive effort to confront a foreign virus in modern history. I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously defeat this virus”.

Trump uses the additive conjunction “and” to advise the citizens that if they adopt the tough measures, they will ultimately defeat the virus, this signals the adoption of promise (the quality of potential excellence) as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion.

Presidents also made use of *adversative conjunctions*, which according to Halliday and Hason (2001:123) follow a situation that is contrary to expectations. For example, in

PCRS1-DS9: “All the institutions of the state will be mobilised to lead this effort, but, if we are to succeed, every company, trade union, NGO, university, college, school, religious group and taxi association will need to play its part”.

In this discourse segment, Ramaphosa uses an adversative conjunction “but” to signal an important turning point. Further, from the analysed data there is evidence of causal conjunctions, which connect two sentences of cause and effect (Halliday, 2001), as exemplified in the discourse segment below.

PDTS2-DS8: “We have many, many locations behind us, by the way. We cover the, this country in large part. So, the world, by the way, we’re not going to be talking about the world right now. But we cover very, very strongly our country. Stores in virtually every location”.

Trump uses the causal conjunction “so” to show that he will only priorities the Americans and no one else. However, he states this to persuade the Americans into believing that he only has their best interests at heart and no one else. The other type of conjunction found in this study is temporal conjunctions. All the three presidents used temporal conjunction to show the temporal relation between two adjacent sentences, as exemplified in the discourse segment below.

PXJS1-DS3: “What we fought was a people’s war against the outbreak. We have put up a strenuous struggle and made tremendous sacrifices. Now, the situation in China is moving steadily in a positive direction”.

In this example, Jinping uses the temporal adjective “now” to show the relation between the hard work his government has invested in the fight against Covid-19 and the results of such hard work.

The presidents naturally adopt four conjunction types to make their speeches coherent, fluent, and appealing, which targets the audience to grasp the conveyed meaning. Based on Halliday’s classifications of conjunction types, this study’s findings provide a comprehensive understanding of political discourse and verify the practicability of systemic-functional grammar theory in analysing persuasion. Therefore, in public speaking, it is necessary to use various conjunctions in a speech and sometimes, it is more effective. In this regard, SFL (Halliday, 1975) helped to explore the hidden information in the discourse and showed how presidents convey their views to the audience through linguistic choices, which provides a new approach to the interpretation of political discourse.

e) Parallelism

This study also identified the presence of parallelism as a linguistic element of persuasion. According to Al-Faki (2014:34), politicians often utilise parallelism to draw attention to specific parts of their message and make them stand out from the rest of the speech. An example of parallelism can be seen in the extract below:

PDTS3 -DS10: “We want to get our country open again. We want to have our sports leagues open. You want to watch sports. It’s important. We miss sports. We miss everything. We want to get back”.

In this discourse segment, Trump employs parallelism to repeatedly highlight what he presumes the American citizens want, proposing that compliance with his plans will result in the reward of regaining their freedom. It is noteworthy that parallelism was only evident in Trump’s speech and not in the speeches of the other two presidents.

Parallelism serves as an effective rhetorical device to emphasise key points and evoke a sense of unity and agreement among the audience. By repeating similar structures, politicians can drive their message home and make it more memorable, thus enhancing the persuasive impact of their speeches.

f) Interrogative mood/Rhetorical questions

In the context of this study, rhetorical questions were utilised to capture the attention of the targets. Both Trump and Jinping's speeches featured rhetorical questions, as exemplified below.

PDTS5-DS1: "Hi, perhaps you recognize me? It's your favorite president. And I'm standing in front of the Oval Office at the White House, which is always an exciting place to be".

PXJS4-DS2: "Will the giant ship of China-US relations be able to stay on the right course in the future after more than four decades of voyage? The question matters not only to the interests of the Chinese and American peoples, but also to the future of the world and humanity".

In **PDTS5-DS1**, Trump begins his message by posing a rhetorical question, asking if Americans recognise him. He does this to immediately grab the citizens' attention and set the stage for his persuasive message. Similarly, in **PXJS4-DS2**, Jinping uses a rhetorical question that does not require an actual answer but prompts the audience to reflect on the four decades of the relationship between China and the US. By emphasising that this question holds significance not only for the Chinese and American people but also for the future of the world and humanity, Jinping underscores the importance of his point.

This study, therefore, submits that rhetorical questions serve as a powerful tool in public speaking, allowing speakers to engage the audience and create a sense of involvement. By prompting reflection and curiosity, rhetorical questions enhance the persuasive impact of the speaker's message. Both Trump and Jinping skillfully employ rhetorical questions to draw attention and reinforce their respective persuasive goals in their speeches.

g) Compounding/Compound statements

Compounding is a syntactic element achieved by combining two or more independent clauses of equal rank using coordinating conjunctions (Al-Faki, 2014:34). From the findings of this study, all three presidents employed compounding to enhance the persuasiveness of their messages. Below are some examples:

PCRS4-DS1: "This evening, I would like to address you on matters that are of great importance to many people in our country – firstly, the call by religious leaders for a day of prayer as the country unites against the coronavirus pandemic, and, secondly, the decisions of the National Coronavirus Command Council on proposals made by religious leaders on the gradual resumption of certain religious activities".

PDTS3-DS6: “They’re now making thousands of ventilators, and they’re coming out of the factory very rapidly, at a clip that nobody can even believe. But we’ll have them for stockpiles, and very importantly, we’re going to have them for other countries because nobody is able to do things like we can do. And we’re going to be able to help other countries that are having tremendous problems, to put it mildly”.

PXJS1-DS4: “Life and work are quickly returning to normal. And there is no way we will lower our guard or relax control”. Major infectious disease is the enemy of all”.

In **PDTS3-DS6**, Trump utilises compounding to enhance the persuasiveness of his message by emphasising the collective efforts and capabilities of the country. By expressing the willingness to help other countries in need, Trump appeals to the emotions of the citizens, creating a sense of solidarity and care, which enhances his credibility and effectiveness in persuading the audience.

In **PXJS1-DS4**, the coordinating conjunction “and” serves an important persuasive role, indicating compounding of ideas. By presenting ideas in quick succession, Jinping emphasises the importance of remaining vigilant and resolute in the face of infectious diseases, appealing to a collective sense of responsibility and unity.

Compounding in these examples allows the presidents to package their messages concisely and effectively, highlighting key points and conveying a sense of urgency and importance to the audience. This use of compounding contributes to the overall persuasive impact of their speeches.

This analysis suggests that there is an intersection between compounding and conjunctions as linguistic elements of persuasion. The interplay between compound statements and conjunctions in persuasion involves harnessing conjunctions to connect and organise ideas. Through this connection, conjunctions craft compound statements that present persuasive arguments with clarity, underscore essential points, and adeptly steer the audience through the message, resulting in a more persuasive and compelling discourse.

h) Subordination

In their study on stylistic features of persuasion, Sharndama and Mgbemena (2015:22) explain that subordination occurs when a subordinate clause extends or complements the meaning of an independent clause. The following are some examples of discourse segments showing subordination from the analysed data:

PCRS1-DS2: “This situation calls for an extraordinary response; there can be no half measures. Cabinet held a special meeting earlier today. After which, due to the serious measures we are going to announce, I have consulted the premiers”.

PDTS1- DS7: “After consulting with our top government health professionals, I have decided to take several strong but necessary actions to protect the health and well-being of all Americans”.

PXJS4-DS4: “No one has the right to rebuff the development path of other countries. And no country will remold its own system to the liking of other countries. After all, it should be the people of the country concerned to adjudicate whether their country's choice of system and path is right or not”.

In **PCRS1-DS2**, Ramaphosa justifies the declaration of the national state of disaster by citing the current wave of the virus as the reason. The subordinate clause “After which, due to the serious measures we are going to announce” clarifies the context and timing of the consultation with the premiers. In **PDTS1-DS7**, Trump justifies his strong actions by referring to the consultation he had with top government health professionals. The subordinate clause “After consulting with our top government health professionals” provides the rationale behind his decision-making process.

In **PXJS4-DS4**, Jinping warns both China and the USA to refrain from remolding each other's systems, even though it is the USA that has been doing so. The subordinate clause “After all, it should be the people of the country concerned to adjudicate whether their country’s choice of system and path is right or not” reinforces the idea that each country should have the autonomy to decide its development path.

In this study, subordination served to provide additional context, justification, or clarification, enhancing the persuasiveness of the presidents’ messages. By utilising subordination, the presidents strengthened their arguments and presented their ideas in a more compelling manner, appealing to the audience’s logic and reasoning.

i) Allegory/ extended metaphor

Metaphors found in this study were identified as effective elements of persuasion, which aligns with the argument presented by Lakoff and Johnson (2003:5), who suggest that metaphors are likely to produce greater attitude change. Extended metaphor/allegory was observed exclusively in Ramaphosa’s speeches, as exemplified below:

PCRS2-DS1: “My fellow South Africans, it is a week since we declared the coronavirus pandemic a national disaster and announced a package of extraordinary measures to combat this grave public health emergency. The response of the South African people to this crisis has been remarkable”.

In this example, Ramaphosa employs an extended metaphor or allegory, comparing Covid-19 to a public emergency or crisis. By doing so, he activates the audience’s imagination and evokes specific mental representations related to dealing with a crisis. This use of allegory serves the secondary communicative goal of ‘arousal management’. Ramaphosa aims to maintain the desired level of arousal among citizens regarding updates on Covid-19. Moreover, he expresses his pride in South Africans’ response to the virus and encourages them to continue displaying remarkable behaviour.

By utilising allegory in his speech, Ramaphosa effectively engages the emotions and perceptions of the audience, enhancing the persuasiveness of his message. The use of vivid and relatable imagery allows him to communicate the gravity of the situation and evoke a sense of unity and resilience among the citizens. This example showcases the persuasive power of allegory in political discourse and its potential to influence attitudes and behaviour.

j) War metaphor/ militaristic metaphor

This study identified evidence of war or militaristic metaphors in Trump and Jinping’s speeches, which aligns with the findings of Sexas (2021:2). War metaphors were observed as important linguistic tools within the context of Covid-19, serving various functions such as preparing the population for difficult times, showing compassion and empathy, persuading citizens to change their behaviour, accepting extraordinary rules and sacrifices, boosting national sentiments and resilience, as well as constructing enemies and shifting responsibility. According to Alexandrescu (2014) and Coleman (2013), war metaphors in political texts primarily function to evoke a sense of fear.

The following discourse segments serve as examples of war metaphor from the analysed speeches in the context of this study.

PDTS3-DS2: “The battle continues, but the data suggests that nationwide we have passed the peak on new cases. Hopefully, that will continue, and we will continue to make great progress”.

PXJS1-DS8: “This is a virus that respects no borders. The outbreak we are batling is our common enemy. All must work together to build the strongest global network of control and

treatment that the world has ever seen. China has set up its online Covid-19 knowledge center that is open to all countries”.

In **PDTs3-DS2**, Trump uses a militaristic or war metaphor by likening the fight against Covid-19 to a battle. By invoking the imagery of a battle, which is an intense armed conflict with significant impact on people’s lives, Trump effectively commands attention and emphasises the seriousness of the situation. This choice of metaphor aligns well with the substance of his argument.

In **PXJS1-DS8**, Jinping also employs war metaphors to call for global cooperation in fighting the pandemic. By referring to the virus as a common enemy and advocating for collaboration to build a strong global network, Jinping highlights the need for united efforts in battling the crisis.

In a nutshell, war metaphors have long been used in health crisis in political and media communicative practices, namely in relation to former epidemics, such as the severe acute respiratory syndrome - SARS (Chiang and Duann, 2007:587–597; Joye, 2010:594; Koteyko et al., 2008: 247–259) and the Avian flu (De la Rosa, 2008:91–94), also regarding cancer and AIDS.

k) Lexical repetition

Regarding this element, the study findings show that Ramaphosa and Trump make use of lexical repetition to earn credibility and emphasise the truthfulness of their statements. This finding aligns with De Wet (2010:121), who claims that repeating words and phrases may convince targets that what is being said is true, even if it is not. Targets tend to take repetition as a social cue and are inclined to accept it as true.

The discourse segments below serve as examples of lexical repetition in Ramaphosa and Trump’s speeches:

PCRS4-DS5: “I therefore urge all South Africans to heed the call of the leaders of our various faith communities for a National Day of Prayer on Sunday, the 31st of May, when we will once again come together to pray for the healing of our land and the protection of our people. Whether you are a person of faith or not, there is one belief that unites us, and that is our belief in South Africa, in its people, in their courage and in their ability to overcome even the greatest of tribulations”.

PDTS1-DS9: “The vast majority of Americans: The risk is very, very low. Young and healthy people can expect to recover fully and quickly if they should get the virus. The highest risk is for elderly population with underlying health conditions. The elderly population must be very, very careful”.

In **PCRS4-DS5**, the lexical repetition of the possessive pronoun “our” is significant as Ramaphosa seeks to make it the audience’s duty to attend the prayer to save their “own” country, invoking a sense of patriotism. By emphasising “our” belief in South Africa and its people, Ramaphosa aims to unite the nation and instil a sense of collective responsibility.

In **PDTS1-DS9**, Trump employs lexical repetition with the adverb “very” to enhance the persuasiveness of his advice to the nation. By emphasising that the risk is “very, very low” and that the elderly population must be “very, very careful”, Trump aims to drive home the importance of the message and create a sense of urgency among the audience.

Both Ramaphosa and Trump utilise the element of lexical repetition to add emphasis to their messages and enhance the persuasiveness of their arguments. By repeating certain words and phrases, they aim to make their statements more memorable and convincing, thereby influencing the attitudes and behaviours of their audience.

From the findings of this study, it is important to highlight that there seems to be an overlap between previously discussed parallelism and repetition. This finding is supported by Sharndama and Mgbemena (2015:22) who argue that these two elements often intersect, as repetition can incorporate parallel structures, and parallelism itself can be a form of repetition.

l) Concreteness

Concreteness was also found to be a linguistic element of persuasion in the analysed data as exemplified below.

PCRS1-DS1: “Fellow South Africans, I am addressing you this evening on a matter of great national importance. The world is facing a medical emergency far graver than what we have experienced in over a century”.

PXJS1-DS2: “Facing the Covid-19 outbreak that caught us all by surprise, the Chinese government and Chinese people have been undaunted as we took on this formidable task. From day one of our fight against the outbreak, we have put people’s life and health first”.

In both examples, the use of concreteness enhances the persuasiveness of the messages. Ramaphosa and Jinping employ concise and clear language, making their statements easily understandable and relatable to their targets. By using specific and tangible terms, they provide a clear picture of the situation and its significance, leaving little room for ambiguity or misunderstanding.

In **PCRS1-DS1**, Ramaphosa addresses the South African population and emphasises the gravity of the medical emergency by comparing it to events in history, making it more concrete and impactful. Similarly, in **PXJS1-DS2**, Jinping discusses the Covid-19 outbreak and emphasises the Chinese government's commitment to putting people's life and health first, conveying a sense of responsibility and action.

By maintaining logic and using concrete language in their utterances, both Ramaphosa and Jinping effectively engage the audience and present their messages in a persuasive manner. Concreteness helps to build credibility and trust, as it allows the audience to clearly grasp the message being conveyed and strengthens the overall persuasiveness of the discourse segments.

m) Conclusion explicitness

From the findings of this study, a linguistic element of persuasion called conclusion explicitness emerged in Trump's speeches. An example of this can be seen in the following discourse segment:

PDTS1- DS4: "From the beginning of time, nations and people have faced unforeseen challenges, including large-scale and very dangerous health threats. This is the way it always was and always will be. It only matters how you respond, and we are responding with great speed and professionalism".

In this example, Trump uses conclusion explicitness to persuade the targets. He explicitly states that Covid-19 will come and pass just like other deadly viruses in the past. By drawing a clear conclusion, he seeks to reassure the audience that the current crisis is not unprecedented, and that the nation's response will lead to a positive outcome.

For this study, the current researcher defines conclusion explicitness as a persuasive element that involves stating a direct and definite conclusion or takeaway (See Section 3.2.2). In this case, Trump's explicit conclusion aims to instil confidence and a sense of control over the

situation, reassuring the public that the nation is capable of effectively responding to the health threat.

By utilising conclusion explicitness, Trump emphasises a key message and seeks to influence the audience's perception and response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The element of conclusion explicitness adds to the overall persuasiveness of his speech, as it allows the audience to clearly understand his position and intentions.

n) Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration or overstatement. Hyperbole was found across all the presidents' speeches though mostly used by Trump (refer to Table 5.48). Below are examples of hyperbole.

PCRS2-DS2: "Millions of our people have understood the gravity of the situation. Most South Africans have accepted the restrictions that have been placed on their lives and have taken responsibility for changing their behaviour. I am heartened that every sector of society has been mobilised and has accepted the role that it needs to play".

PDTS4-DS1: "Thank you very much, thank you. So beautiful out here. And thank you for joining us as we announce a massive and groundbreaking expansion in our testing capability for the China virus".

In **PCRS2-DS2**, the use of the word "millions" to describe the number of people who have understood the gravity of the situation is hyperbole. It is a deliberate exaggeration to emphasise the widespread awareness and acceptance of restrictions among the population. Similarly, the use of "every sector of society" to describe the level of mobilisation is also a hyperbolic statement, meant to underscore the broad support and involvement of different sectors in the country's response.

In **PDTS4-DS1**, Trump employs hyperbole by using the adjectival construction "a massive and groundbreaking expansion" to describe the scale and significance of the announced testing capability. The use of "massive" and "groundbreaking" is a deliberate exaggeration meant to highlight the magnitude and importance of the testing expansion.

Both examples demonstrate the use of hyperbole as a linguistic element of persuasion. By employing hyperbole, the presidents aimed to make their statements more memorable, impactful, and emotionally compelling to the audience. Hyperbole enhanced the

persuasiveness of their message by creating a sense of urgency, importance, or excitement, thus capturing the audiences' attention, and influencing their perception on Covid-19 regulations and restrictions.

o) Idioms/idiomatic expressions

An idiom is an expression or phrase whose meaning does not relate to the literal meaning of its words. All three presidents made use of idioms/idiomatic expression to persuade their citizens as exemplified below.

PCRS3-DS10: "As we walk this road together, as we struggle to defeat this pandemic, we remain strong and united and resolved. Much is being asked of you, far more than should ever be asked. But we know that this is a matter of survival, and we dare not fail. We shall recover. We shall overcome. May God bless South Africa and protect her people. I thank you".

PDTS3-DS7: "We have a lot of patients who recover, and they're so happy to have recovered that the first thing they do is say, "We want to give our blood." And they do that. It's incredible. We have thousands of people that are doing that. They recover and they feel they have an obligation because they've gotten such great care. And a lot of them didn't think they were going to make it".

PXJS2-DS10 "I am confident that, by working together in solidarity, we will forge an ironclad shield against the virus. Living in a global village, no one could stay safe when others' houses catch fire. Likewise, in fighting Covid-19, victory can only be secured when the virus is brought under control in all countries".

In **PCRS3-DS10**, Ramaphosa uses the idiomatic expression "walk this road together" to emphasise unity, cooperation, and collective effort in combating the pandemic. This idiomatic expression creates a sense of togetherness and shared responsibility, reinforcing the idea that everyone is in the challenge together. Similarly, In **PDTS3-DS7**, Trump uses the idiomatic expression "give our blood" to convey a sense of willingness to help and support others in need. While it does not refer to literal blood donation, the idiom represents a strong desire to aid and care for those who have recovered from the virus. This idiomatic expression appeals to the audience's sense of compassion and encourages them to support each other during challenging times.

Also, in **PXJS2-DS10**, Jinping uses the idiomatic expression "living in a global village" to emphasise the interconnectedness of nations and the need for global cooperation in fighting the

pandemic. This idiomatic expression highlights the idea that actions in one country can impact others, reinforcing the importance of collective efforts to control and overcome the virus.

By incorporating idiomatic expressions, the presidents add depth and emotional resonance to their speeches, making them more relatable and memorable to the audience. Idioms appeal to shared cultural knowledge and can evoke strong emotions and associations, making them effective tools in persuasion.

p) Modals

All three presidents made use of various types of modals to enhance the persuasiveness of their messages as evident in Table 5.51. The following Table 5.52 exemplifies some of the common modal extracted from the analysed data.

Table 5. 52: Examples of common modals

Can	Must	Should	Might
PDTS1 – DS10: “If we are vigilant and we <u>can</u> reduce the chance of infection, we will significantly impede the transmission of the virus. The virus will not have a chance against us. We are all in this together”	PXJS4-DS5: “This is a most urgent task. We <u>must</u> always put the people first, for nothing in the world is more precious than people’s lives”.	PCRS1-DS7: “We <u>should</u> stop spreading fake and unverified news and create further apprehension and alarm”.	PDTS3-DS1: “Thank you very much. Please. Thank you. A big day today at the White House. All American society is engaged and mobilized in the war against the invisible enemy. While we must remain vigilant, it is clear that our aggressive strategy is working—and very strongly working, I <u>might</u> add”.

In **PDTS1 – DS10**, Trump uses the modal “can” to persuade the citizens into believing that they could impede the transmission of the virus. By using “can”, Trump instils a sense of empowerment and encourages people to take action to protect themselves and others. The use

of “can” suggests that individuals have control over their actions and can make a difference in controlling the spread of the virus.

In **PXJS4-DS5**, Jinping uses the modal “must” to command his government officials to prioritise the well-being of the people. The use of “must” indicates a strong sense of obligation and responsibility, conveying that the government has a duty to protect and care for its citizens. This use of “must” enhances Jinping’s credibility and portrays him as a leader who takes decisive actions for the benefit of the people.

In **PCRS1-DS7**, Ramaphosa uses the modal “should”, which is more friendly and suggestive than “must”. By using “should”, Ramaphosa offers a suggestion to the citizens rather than imposing a strict requirement. This approach acknowledges the emotional toll of the situation and seeks to encourage cooperation and compliance without being overly forceful.

In **PDTS3-DS1**, “might” is used to discuss something that has a slight possibility of happening. In this context, the use of “might” indicates uncertainty or a potential outcome with a lower probability. It could be used to temper expectations or acknowledge that certain actions or results are not guaranteed.

The use of modals in this study served different persuasive goals, such as empowerment, enforcement, suggestion, or expressing possibilities. The choice of modals can significantly impact how the targets perceive the message and the persuasiveness of the speech. Each president strategically selected modals to align with their communicative goals and to connect with their respective citizens.

The findings in terms of modals further show that the utilisation of modality plays a crucial role in shaping both deontic and epistemic meanings, thereby influencing the interpersonal tenor of the discourse. Deontic modals, such as *must*, *should*, and *ought to*, are employed to convey a sense of obligation or necessity, often emphasising the imperative nature of recommended actions to combat the pandemic. These expressions not only underscore the government’s commitment to public welfare but also serve to persuade citizens to adhere to prescribed guidelines. Conversely, epistemic modals such as *may*, *might*, and *could* are strategically employed to convey possibilities and probabilities associated with the efficacy of proposed measures.

This use of modality contributes to the persuasive tenor by framing governmental recommendations not as absolute certainties but as informed suggestions, which in turn fosters

a sense of cooperation and shared responsibility in the collective effort against the ongoing crisis i.e., gain assistance and share responsibility goals. The nuanced deployment of modals in Covid-19 presidential speeches reflects a deliberate linguistic strategy aimed at influencing public perception and behavior during a critical and uncertain period.

q) Lexical adjectives/Adjectival phrases

In the analysed data, adjectives were extremely useful to add rich descriptions to presidents' words and sentences, thus enhancing persuasion. All three presidents made use of vast adjectives, as exemplified below.

PCRS1-DS1: "Fellow South Africans, I am addressing you this evening on a matter of great national importance. The world is facing a medical emergency far graver than what we have experienced in over a century".

PDTS1-DS2: "Today, the World Health Organisation officially announced that this is a global pandemic. We have been in frequent contact with our allies, and we are marshaling the full power of the federal government and the private sector to protect the American people".

PXJS1-DS3: "What we fought was a people's war against the outbreak. We have put up a strenuous struggle and made tremendous sacrifices. Now the situation in China is moving steadily in a positive direction".

In **PCRS1-DS1**, Ramaphosa uses the lexical adjectives "great" and "national" to add emphasis and richness to his message. The adjective "great" serves to intensify the importance of the matter being addressed, while "national" emphasise the scope and relevance of the issue to the entire country. By using these adjectives, Ramaphosa seeks to persuade the audience that the situation is of utmost significance and requires their attention and cooperation.

In **PDTS1-DS2**, Trump employs the adjectival phrase "the American people" to personalise his message and make the citizens feel valued and important. By using the adjective "American", he creates a sense of belonging and identity among the audience, which can enhance the persuasiveness of his call to action. Additionally, the adjectival phrase "full power" conveys a sense of determination and authority, suggesting that the government is taking decisive and comprehensive measures to protect the people.

In **PXJS1-DS3**, Jinping uses the adjectives "strenuous" and "tremendous" to highlight the level of effort and sacrifices made by China during the fight against the outbreak. These adjectives

emphasise the magnitude of the actions taken and their significance, which can contribute to persuading the audience that the country's response was dedicated and effective.

Overall, the use of lexical adjectives and adjectival phrases in this study enhanced the persuasiveness of the speeches by adding vivid descriptions, evoking emotions, and conveying a sense of urgency and importance. Adjectives played a crucial role in shaping the tone and impact of the messages, influencing how the targets perceive and respond to the speeches.

r) Lexical adverb/Adverbial phrases

Adverbs as verb modifiers were found to be persistent and used persuasively in the sampled presidents' speeches. The following are some examples of persuasive adverbs from the analysis.

PCRS1-DS3: "South African citizens are advised to refrain from all forms of travel to or through the European Union, United States, United Kingdom and other identified high-risk countries such as China, Iran and South Korea. This is effective immediately".

PDTS3-DS4: "We've rapidly developed the most expensive and accurate testing system than anywhere in the world and have completed more than 3.3 million tests. To date, we have authorised 48 separate coronavirus tests, and the FDA is working with 300 companies and labs to widen our capacity still further".

PXJS1-DS4: "Life and work are quickly returning to normal., there is no way we will lower our guard or relax control". Major infectious disease is the enemy of all".

In **PCRS1-DS3**, the adverb "immediately" adds a sense of urgency and authority to the president's message. By using this adverb, Ramaphosa is commanding the citizens to take immediate action and refrain from travel to high-risk countries. This enhances the persuasiveness of the message by conveying the seriousness of the situation and the need for immediate compliance with the government's directives.

In **PDTS3-DS4**, Trump uses the adverb "rapidly" to highlight the speed and efficiency with which the testing system was developed. By emphasising the quick progress made in testing, Trump aims to persuade the audience that his administration is taking effective and decisive actions to combat the pandemic. This adverb enhances the persuasiveness of his message by showcasing the government's accomplishments in handling the crisis.

In **PXJS1-DS4**, Jinping uses the adverb “quickly” to emphasise the swift return to normalcy in life and work. By using this adverb, he seeks to alleviate frustrations and concerns among the citizens and assure them that the situation is improving rapidly. This adverb contributes to the persuasiveness of his message by instilling hope and confidence in the audience.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the use of adverbs as modifiers in presidential speeches enhance the persuasiveness of the speeches by conveying a sense of urgency, efficiency, and progress.

s) Third-person narration

It was found, from the analysed data, that Ramaphosa and Jinping often employed third-person narration to remain objective thus enhancing the persuasiveness of their messages. However, this was not the case for Trump because he preferred being direct. The following are examples of third-person narration in Ramaphosa and Jinping speeches.

PCRS1-DS3: “South African citizens are advised to refrain from all forms of travel to or through the European Union, United States, United Kingdom and other identified high-risk countries such as China, Iran and South Korea. This is effective immediately”.

PXJS4-DS1: “In the face of Covid-19, China and Africa have withstood the test of a severe challenge. The Chinese people have put up a fierce fight and made enormous sacrifices to bring the situation in China under control”.

In **PCRS1-DS3**, Ramaphosa’s use of third-person narration, such as “South African citizens are advised”, contributes to the objectivity and formality of his speech. This choice of narration aligns with the persuasive strategy of maintaining a formal tone, which is more likely to be effective in persuading the targets. By using third-person narration, Ramaphosa avoids making the speech sound like a personal request or command and instead presents the advice as a collective decision made by experts and stakeholders. This fosters a sense of collectivism and shared responsibility among the citizens, which enhances the persuasiveness of his message.

Similarly, in **PXJS4-DS1**, Jinping’s use of third-person narration with the present tense, such as “China and Africa have withstood the test”, also contributes to the objectivity and authority of his speech. By using the third person, he presents the information as factual and indisputable, showcasing his knowledge and understanding of the situation in both countries. This use of third-person narration adds credibility to his message and enhances its persuasiveness.

Contrary to Ramaphosa and Jinping, as noted in the analysis, Trump's speeches were characterised by direct and first-person narration, where he mostly used "I" and "we" to directly address the targets and present his views and actions. Unlike Ramaphosa and Jinping's use of third-person narration for objectivity, Trump's direct approach aimed to establish a personal connection with the audience and portray himself as a strong and decisive leader. This direct approach may have been effective in some contexts, but it also carries the risk of appearing less objective and more subjective in his persuasive efforts.

Overall, the use of third-person narration in Ramaphosa and Jinping's speeches adds objectivity, formality, and credibility to their messages, enhancing their persuasiveness among the audience.

t) Religious lexicon and affiliation

Religion has "power to affect, in myriad ways, people to behave and think in a certain way to cope with life's demands" (Donahue & Nielsen, 2005:121). In support, Alkhawaldeh, (2021:288) claims that the use of religious texts plays a pivotal role in convincing followers to do what is right and avoid what is wrong (ethics). Politicians often weaponise religion for their own selfish gain, fomenting bigotry, fears and suspicions based on the faith, religion or spiritual practices of their political opponents. From this study findings, Ramaphosa was found to be fond of employing religious lexicon to persuade citizens in his speeches. For example,

PCRS2-DS10: "May God protect our people. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso. God seën Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa. Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika. I thank you".

PCRS4-DS3: "The faith community is an integral part of South African life and has made a great contribution in the fight against the coronavirus".

In the first example, **PCRS2-DS10**, Ramaphosa concludes his speech with a series of religious expressions and blessings from different languages and cultures found in South Africa. By incorporating phrases such as "May God protect our people", "God bless South Africa", and "*Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika*", Ramaphosa aims to invoke a sense of divine protection and guidance. This use of religious lexicon can be persuasive as it resonates with the spiritual beliefs and values of the diverse South African population.

Similarly, in **PCRS4-DS3**, Ramaphosa acknowledges and praises the role of the faith community in the fight against the coronavirus. By recognising the contributions of religious groups, Ramaphosa not only shows appreciation but also appeals to the sense of duty and responsibility that people may feel towards their faith and community. This use of religious rhetoric can be persuasive as it fosters a sense of unity and shared purpose among the citizens.

As Elsa (2013) points out that ideologies, religious beliefs, and myths are powerful persuasive frameworks that political leaders often use to shape public opinion and garner support. By incorporating religious language and themes into his speeches, Ramaphosa taps into the emotional and spiritual aspects of his targets, which can lead to a deeper connection and stronger influence over their decisions and actions.

However, it is essential to note that the use of religious rhetoric in politics can be controversial, as it may also lead to divisions and biases based on faith and religion. Therefore, this study submits that responsible and respectful use of religious rhetoric is essential to ensure a positive and inclusive political discourse.

u) Personification

Personification, as a linguistic element of persuasion, is also a powerful tool that political leaders use to evoke emotions and create a deeper connection with their audience. In the context of this study, personification was evident only in Jinping speeches, as exemplified below.

PXJS3-DS2: “The virus does not respect borders. Nor is race or nationality relevant in the face of the disease.”

In the example provided from Jinping’s speech, the use of personification is evident in the phrase “the face of the disease”. By attributing human-like qualities to the virus, Jinping aims to emphasise the seriousness and impact of the disease on human lives. The personification of the virus as having a “face” suggests that it is not just an abstract concept but a tangible threat that can affect people directly. This anthropomorphic portrayal humanises the virus, making it easier for the audience to relate to and understand the gravity of the situation. It also creates a vivid and memorable image in the minds of the targets, enhancing the persuasiveness of the message.

By stating that the virus “does not respect borders” and that “race or nationality” is not relevant, Jinping further reinforces the idea of the virus as a formidable, indiscriminate force affecting

everyone regardless of their background. This use of personification serves to evoke empathy and solidarity among the audience, as they can now perceive the virus as a common enemy that requires collective action and cooperation to combat.

Overall, personification is a linguistic element of persuasion that Jinping employs effectively in his speeches to make his messages more relatable, emotionally impactful, and memorable for the audience. It humanises the abstract concept of the virus, making it more tangible and urgent in the minds of the listeners, thus strengthening the call for global unity and cooperation in the fight against Covid-19.

Within this sub-section, the findings concerning linguistic elements of persuasion, such as pronouns, conjunctions, metaphors, idioms, lexical repetition, modals, and personification, were presented and elucidated. These elements assume a pivotal role in molding the persuasiveness of political discourse. Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping used various persuasion elements, including personal pronouns and inclusive/exclusive “we” to connect with their audiences. Trump used hyperbole and lexical repetition, while Jinping employed rhetorical questions and modals more frequently. Each had a unique style, reflecting their context and goals. The three presidents adeptly utilised these linguistic elements to forge emotional bonds, cultivate a feeling of collective identity, and sway attitudes and actions within their respective citizens. The subsequent section proceeds to unveil and expound upon the findings pertaining to pragmatic elements of persuasion.

5.2.2.3 Pragmatic elements of persuasion

Pragmatic elements center around the influence of social circumstances on language use in interactions and communication. For a detailed explanation on pragmatic elements of persuasion refer to Section 3.2.3. Table 5.53, presented below, illustrates the pragmatic elements of persuasion identified through analysis, along with their corresponding frequencies.

Table 5. 53: Identified pragmatic elements of persuasion

Elements	Frequency				Relative Frequency		
	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping	Total F	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping
Presupposition	1	1	-	2	1%	1%	-
Politeness	2	1	1	4	1%	1%	1%
Self-referencing	1	3	-	4	1%	2%	-

Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping employed various pragmatic elements of persuasion to effectively communicate their messages. From the data embedded in Table 5.53, Ramaphosa utilised presupposition in one instance, subtly assuming certain information to be true without explicitly stating it. This approach engages the targets' thoughts and encourages them to infer the intended message. Trump, on the other hand, employed a significant amount of self-referencing, mentioning himself three times. This tactic establishes a personal connection between the speaker and the targets, aiming to establish credibility and align his statements with his persona.

Trump employed politeness strategies once, which can help soften his message and maintain a level of civility even when discussing contentious issues. In contrast, Jinping made use of both politeness and self-referencing once each. By employing politeness, Jinping aimed to maintain a respectful and harmonious tone, possibly reflecting the diplomatic nature of his discourse. Further, his single instance of self-referencing may have been intended to establish his personal stake regarding Covid-19, enhancing his ethos (moral nature).

Overall, while these three presidents used various pragmatic elements of persuasion in their speeches, their individual styles and purposes shaped how they combined these elements to connect with and persuade their respective citizens. Figure 5.13 below presents an overview of constructs embodying the pragmatic elements of persuasion.

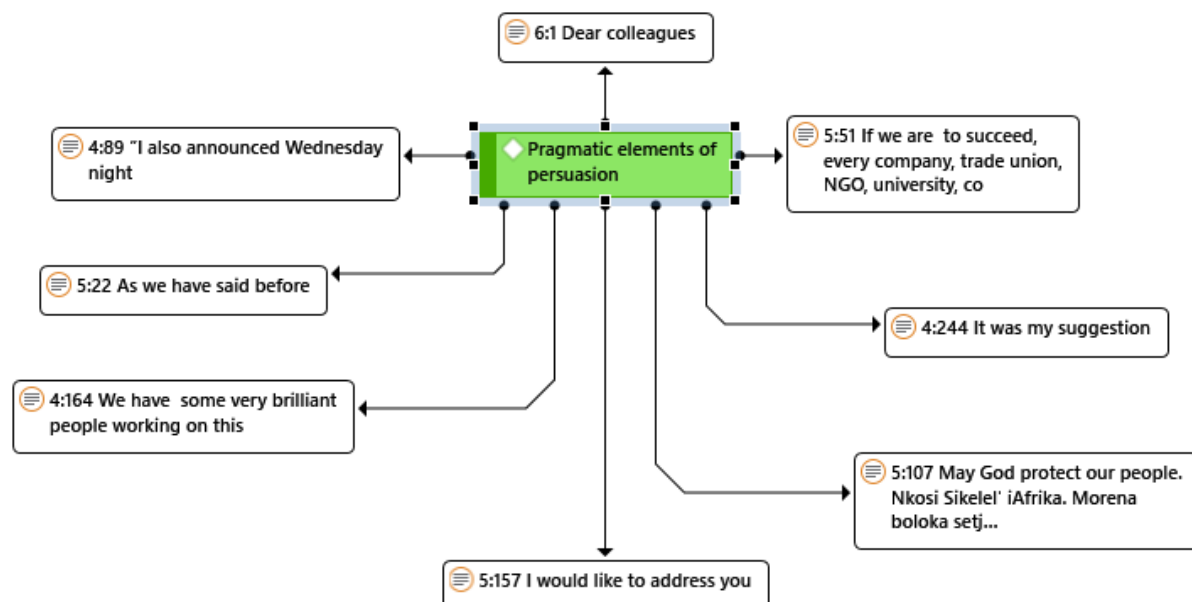


Figure 5. 14: Overall constructs embodying communicative elements of persuasion as depicted in ATLAS.ti

The constructs evidence in Figure 5.14 carries various pragmatic elements of persuasion that emerged upon analysis as highlighted in Table 5.53. The subsequent sections further present and interpret discourse segments embodying these constructs which carry pragmatic elements of persuasion, with examples from the analysed data.

a) Presupposition

In the context of this study, presuppositions emerged as a pragmatic element of persuasion in the speeches of both Ramaphosa and Trump. Presuppositions are implicit assumptions or background beliefs that speakers assume their audience already accepts as true. By employing presuppositions in their discourse, the speakers can enhance the persuasiveness of their messages, as they build on shared beliefs and create a sense of common ground with their audience (Sadiki, 2017:92). The following are examples of presupposition extracted from the analysed data.

PCRS2-DS1: “It is a week since we declared the coronavirus pandemic a national disaster and announced a package of extraordinary measures to combat this grave public health emergency”.

PDTS4-DS2: “And as you know, it’s already setting records, records like nobody’s ever seen before. Last week, we crossed a historic milestone when the United States conducted our 100 millionth test”.

In the discourse segment **PCRS2-DS1**, Ramaphosa presupposes that the audience is already aware of the declaration of the coronavirus pandemic as a national disaster and the package of extraordinary measures announced to combat the public health emergency. By doing so, Ramaphosa assumes that his audience is on the same page as him, which can lead to increased trust and credibility in his message.

Similarly, in **PDTS4-DS2**, Trump uses the presupposition “as you know” to assume that his audience is already informed about the situation he is referring to, namely the setting of records in Covid-19 testing. By using this presupposition, Trump frames his statement as an update or reminder rather than new information. This can create a sense of inclusion and engagement with the audience, as they are more likely to pay attention to something, they are already familiar with.

By leveraging presuppositions, both Ramaphosa and Trump strategically employ a persuasive linguistic element that relies on shared beliefs and common understanding with their audience. The next subsection elucidates politeness.

b) Politeness

Drawing from Brown and Levinson's (1987), using the right politeness elements yield persuasion. In the context of this study, politeness emerged as a pragmatic element of persuasion in the speeches of all three presidents. Politeness, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), involves using linguistic strategies to maintain social harmony and positive interactions with others. By employing politeness elements in their discourse, the presidents aimed to create a sense of respect, likability, and positive rapport with their targets, which can ultimately enhance the persuasiveness of their messages. Below are examples.

PCRS2-DS10: "May God protect our people. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso. God seën Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa. Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika. I thank you".

PDTS4-DS1: "Thank you very much, thank you. So beautiful out here. And thank you for joining us as we announce a massive and groundbreaking expansion in our testing capability for the China virus".

PXJS1-DS1: "Dear colleagues, it is good to join you. Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to His Majesty King Salman and Saudi Arabia for having done tremendous work of communication and coordination to make this summit possible".

In the discourse segment **PCRS2-DS10**, Ramaphosa uses positive politeness strategies by invoking religious phrases and blessings, addressing the diverse South African population in different languages, and expressing gratitude with "I thank you". Positive politeness strategies appeal to an individual's sense of belonging and their need to be recognised as part of the social entity. By incorporating religious blessings and using multiple languages, Ramaphosa acknowledges the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of his audience, demonstrating respect and inclusivity. In other words, although people are so different, they are all included. He recognises the value of each. Additionally, expressing gratitude at the end further reinforces politeness, as it shows appreciation for the audience's attention and participation.

In **PDTS4-DS1**, Trump's use of positive politeness is evident through the expression of gratitude, "Thank you very much, thank you". By thanking the audience, Trump shows

politeness and acknowledges their presence and support. This fosters a positive atmosphere and sets the stage for a persuasive message by optimising the principle of reciprocity, where the audience may feel more inclined to reciprocate gratitude by being receptive to Trump's message. It is interesting to note, however that Trump thanks others for joining "us", whereas Ramaphosa thanks others for letting him join them. This places the speaker in a different kind of relation to the audience, whereas Trump emphasises his leadership, Ramaphosa seems to focus on the audience as the most important body.

In **PXJS1-DS1**, Jinping's positive politeness is displayed through the salutation, "Dear colleagues". By addressing other country leaders as "dear colleagues", Jinping establishes a sense of camaraderie and equality among them. This use of positive politeness fosters a positive relationship and increases his likability (discussed earlier in Section 5.2.2 as a communicative element of persuasion, this shows the connectivity and synergies between these various elements), which can contribute to the persuasiveness of his communication. There is an element of negative politeness in PXJS1-DS1 recognising the hard work and time spent by Saudi Arabia in organising the summit, this is noted when he says, "having done tremendous work of communication and coordination to make this summit possible". Negative politeness focusses on the individual's need to be recognised and respected as an individual (Brown and Levinson, 1987:65).

Overall, the use of politeness as a pragmatic element of persuasion in the speeches of all three presidents demonstrates their awareness of the importance of maintaining positive social interactions and rapport with their targets. By employing politeness strategies, the presidents aimed to create a favourable and respectful atmosphere, which can enhance the effectiveness of their persuasive messages (Hobjila, 2012:216).

The severity of certain face-threatening acts (FTAs) is addressed through the judicious use of politeness strategies. Ramaphosa's positive politeness aims to create a favourable and respectful atmosphere, enhancing the persuasiveness of his messages. Trump's gratitude not only acknowledges support but also aligns with his leadership emphasis. Jinping's positive politeness and recognition of hard work contribute to a positive relationship. The findings align with research indicating the interrelationship between politeness strategies and speech acts in persuasion (Brown, 2015:13). By employing politeness alongside persuasive speech acts, communicators can mitigate threats to face, enhance credibility, and create a conducive environment for persuasion (Hogan, 2016: 89).

In this regard, SAT played a pivotal role in deciphering linguistic expressions within discourse segments or excerpts from presidential speeches. However, SAT's primary emphasis lay in the examination of the explicit speech acts employed by the selected presidents and the analysis of the illocutionary force underlying these speech acts. SAT analysis, which primarily centred on speech act categories such as *representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives*, and *declarations*. These categories provided insights into how the presidents utilised these diverse speech acts strategically to persuade their audience, aligning with their communicative goals.

The analysed data shows that all three presidents used different the speech acts to effect persuasion. Moreover, the proportion of the speech acts differs. The following are speech acts and examples extracted from the analysed data.

i) Representatives

This category of speech acts involves the speaker committing themselves to varying degrees of truth regarding the expressed proposition (Obeng, 2020:87). It includes acts such as asserting, claiming, saying, reporting, doubting, denying, concluding, and similar expressions. Notably, all three presidents used *representatives* in their respective speeches. Table 5.54 provides examples of *representatives* in the speeches of Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping.

Table 5. 54: Examples of *representative* speech acts

Discourse segments
PCRS1-DS1: "The world is facing a medical emergency far graver than what we have experienced in over a century".
PDTS1-DS1: "My fellow Americans, tonight I want to speak with you about our nation's unprecedented response to the coronavirus outbreak that started in China and is now spreading throughout the world".
PXJS1-DS1: "Dear colleagues, it is good to join you. Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to His Majesty King Salman and Saudi Arabia for having done tremendous work of communication and coordination to make this summit possible".

Through these statements, the presidents share their own views and beliefs with their audiences. These views are offered as truths as they are the reality as from the perspectives of the individual presidents. However, these statements remain beliefs, claims and reports. They represent some form of the truth, but the statements are still representative of a truth, rather

than the full picture necessarily. Representatives such as these ones, spoken by people in power, are likely to affect the audience's perceptions of a situation (Hogan, 2016:66).

In **PCRS1-DS1** the Covid pandemic is made out to be the worst thing to affect people on earth over the past decade. In stating this, Ramaphosa is saying that challenges posed by Covid-19 are far greater than that posed by illnesses such as the influenza outbreaks (i.e., Spanish, Asian and Swine flus) in the past decades. This also disregards the medical emergencies experienced during World War II, for example. In modern times, people may experience it as the worst medical emergency, but that does not necessarily make it so.

President Trump employs a representative in **PDTs1-DS1**, claiming that the virus is from China and that it is spreading through the world. From the discussion of the strategies above, it has become clear that Trump regards China as 'the other.' By employing such representatives, he is actively imposing his belief onto the audience. This serves to persuade the audience.

Finally, Jinping (**PXJS1-DS1**) employs a representative in acknowledging the arduous work of others. He is stating his perception that they have worked hard and recognises this as a fact. As discussed above, this representative serves a politeness purpose as well, which strengthens the persuasive force. The next speech acts evident in the analysed data are *directives*.

ii) Directives

Directives are speech acts in which the speaker aims to persuade or prompt the addressee to take specific actions (Obeng, 2020:99). These actions can be in the form of requests, suggestions, commands, and other similar expressions. Table 5.55 provides examples of directive speech acts to illustrate their usage by the presidents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 5. 55: Examples of *directive* speech acts

Discourse segments
PCRS1-DS2: "There can be no half measures... We have decided to take urgent and drastic measures to manage the disease, protect the people of our country and reduce the impact of the virus on our society and on our economy. We have now declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act".
PDTs3 -DS10: "We want to get our country open again. We want to have our sports leagues open. You want to watch sports. It's important. We miss sports. We miss everything. We want to get back".
PXJS1-DS6: "We need to be resolute in fighting an all-out global war against the Covid-19 outbreak. The community of nations must move swiftly to stem the spread of the virus".

Looking at the directive speech acts delivered by three presidents in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, distinct patterns were evident regarding the kinds of orders implied or given to their respective audiences. Ramaphosa (**PCRS1-DS2**) employs direct language, issuing clear and unequivocal orders to address the crisis. This includes the directive to implement urgent and drastic measures for disease management, the protection of citizens, and the reduction of the virus's societal and economic impact, culminating in the declaration of a national state of disaster. In contrast, Trump (**PDTS3-DS10**) adopts a more indirect approach, focusing on expressing desires and wants rather than issuing specific orders. This approach appeals to the sentiments of the audience without providing explicit directives (Safwat, 2015:701). Jinping (**PXJS1-DS6**), in alignment with Ramaphosa, employs direct language to underscore the imperative of resolute action in the global fight against the pandemic. This entails a clear directive to swiftly stem the spread of the virus, indicating the need for decisive international cooperation.

Overall, the findings of this study reveal a spectrum of directive speech acts used by the presidents, ranging from direct and explicit orders to indirect expressions of desires, each tailored to the specific communicative context and goals of the presidents during the pandemic response.

iii) Commissives

Commissive speech acts are expressions that bind the speaker to undertake a future course of action, such as promising, threatening, or offering (Kissine, 2013: 153). These acts indicate the speaker's commitment to follow through with their stated intentions. Table 5.52 presents examples of commissive speech acts found in the analysed speeches of the presidents during the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting instances where they made promises, issued threats, or extended offers to address the situation.

Table 5. 56: Examples of *commissive* speech acts

Discourse segments
PCRS2-DS7: “I have directed that special units of the NPA be put together to act immediately and arrest those against whom we find evidence of corruption”.
PDTS2-DS7: “We’ll remove or eliminate every obstacle necessary to deliver our people the care that they need and that they’re entitled to. No resource will be spared. Nothing whatsoever”.
PDTS2-DS10: “I will never hesitate to take any necessary steps to protect the lives, health, and safety of the American people. I will always put the well-being of America first”.
PXJS1-DS7: “I want to call on all G20 members to take collective actions - cutting tariffs, removing barriers, and facilitating the unfettered flow of trade. Together, we can send a strong signal and restore confidence for global economic recovery”.

In **PCRS2-DS7**, the president commits to immediate action against corruption, emphasising their dedication to addressing this issue. He indicates that he has already given the order to ‘act immediately’ and ‘arrest those’ who are corrupt. This commissive speech act aims to persuade the audience by demonstrating a strong stance against corruption, which aligns with the audience’s desire for accountability and justice. Furthermore, it is not only a promise, but something that has been done already. In **PDTS2-DS7**, the president pledges to eliminate any obstacles hindering the delivery of necessary care to the people, promising that no resource will be spared. This commissive speech act seeks to reassure the audience that the government is fully committed to providing essential healthcare services, aiming to gain their trust and support.

PDTS2-DS10 contains a commitment to prioritise the well-being and safety of the American people more than anything else. This commissive speech act is intended to persuade the audience by conveying a sense of responsibility and dedication to protecting the citizens, which can resonate strongly with the audience’s concerns for their safety and health.

In **PXJS1-DS7**, the president calls on G20 members to take collective actions for global economic recovery, committing to a collaborative approach. This commissive speech act aims to persuade by highlighting the president’s dedication to international cooperation and economic stability, appealing to the audience’s desire for a strong global economy.

To sum up, the presidents use commissive speech acts strategically to persuade the audience by making specific commitments and promises, which can foster trust, confidence, and

alignment with the audience's expectations and values. The next section elaborates on *expressives*.

iv) Expressives

Expressive speech acts involve the expression of the speaker's psychological states, such as feelings or attitudes regarding certain situations or events. This category includes various forms of communication, such as thanking, apologising, welcoming, congratulating, deploring, regretting, and more (Ogiermann, and Bella,2021:3). Table 5.57 provides examples of expressive speech acts found in the speeches of the presidents, highlighting instances where they conveyed their emotions, attitudes, and reactions to different matters, particularly during significant events or occurrences.

Table 5. 57: Examples of expressive speech acts

Discourse segments
PCRS2-DS4: "I am concerned that a rapid rise in infections will stretch our health services beyond what we can manage, and many people will not be able to access the care they need".
PDTS1-DS3: "I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously defeat this virus".
PXJS2-DS10: "I am confident that, by working together in solidarity, we will forge an ironclad shield against the virus".

In **PDTS1-DS3**, the president conveys confidence in the effectiveness of the measures being taken to combat the virus. This expression of confidence is aimed at instilling hope and reassurance in the audience, providing them with a positive outlook and a belief in the government's ability to address the crisis. It encourages the audience to trust and support the proposed actions.

In **PXJS2-DS10**, the president again expresses confidence, but this time in the collective efforts of the people working together in solidarity. This expression of unity and shared purpose is intended to inspire a sense of community and shared responsibility among the audience. It fosters a belief that by working together, they can create a strong defence against the virus, strengthening the persuasive message by appealing to a collective sense of agency and responsibility.

Overall, these expressive speech acts in the presidents’ discourses are strategically employed to connect with the emotions and beliefs of the audience, building trust, instilling hope, and fostering a sense of unity. These emotional and psychological elements play a vital role in persuading the audience to support the proposed actions and measures.

v) *Declaratives*

Like Austin’s performatives, declarative speech acts bring about immediate changes in the institutional situation and often rely on well-established extra-linguistic conventions (Mohammed, 2019:50). These acts encompass actions like excommunicating, christening, firing from employment, and others that have significant real-world consequences. Table 5.58 provides examples of declarative speech acts derived from the analysed data, illustrating instances where the presidents employed these acts to effect authoritative and impactful changes in their respective domains.

Table 5. 58: Examples of *declarative* speech acts

Discourse segments
PCRS1-DS2: “We have now declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act”.
PDTS2-DS6: “To unleash the full power of the federal government in this effort, today I am officially declaring a national emergency”.

In both **PCRS1-DS2** and **PDTS2-DS6**, the discourse segments function as declarative speech acts that play a crucial role in persuading the audience. These declarations, made by two different presidents on separate occasions, serve to establish authority and invoke a sense of urgency. By stating, “We have now declared a national state of disaster” and “I am officially declaring a national emergency”, Ramaphosa and Trump are not merely conveying information but are also exercising their executive power to address pressing issues.

These declarative speech acts aim to persuade the audience by framing the situation as a matter of national concern that requires immediate attention and action (Mohammed, 2019:49). They emphasise the gravity of the circumstances and position the presidents as decisive leaders taking significant steps to mitigate the identified threats.

Through such declarations, the presidents seek to rally public support, elicit cooperation, and underscore the seriousness of the situation, thereby persuading the audience to endorse and

participate in the proposed measures to address the crisis. Table 5.58 presents clear examples from the speeches of Ramaphosa and Trump, indicating that, based on the data analysed in this study, Jinping did not use declarative speech acts.

In summary, the analysis demonstrates that the three presidents employed a range of speech acts to achieve their communicative objectives. To provide a collective overview of the speech acts identified in the analysed data, Table 5.59 is presented below. This table offers a quantified representation of the frequency and distribution of various speech acts used by the presidents during their speeches.

Table 5. 59: Speech acts frequency

Speech acts	Ramaphosa (PCR)		Trump (PDT)		Jinping (PJX)	
	Frequency	Relative Frequency	Frequency	Relative frequency	Frequency	Relative frequency
Representatives	7	6%	17	8%	22	12%
Directives	5	4%	6	3%	6	3%
Commissives	3	2%	7	4%	2	1%
Expressives	5	4%	7	4%	7	4%
Declaratives	5	4%	6	3%	-	-
TOTAL	25		43		37	

Upon analysing the speeches delivered by the three presidents, it becomes evident that they employed varying quantities of diverse speech acts. Donald Trump emerged as the most prolific user of speech acts through his use of *representatives*, followed by Xi Jinping, while Cyril Ramaphosa employed the fewest. In Ramaphosa's case, his employment of speech acts demonstrates a more even distribution, with a predilection for *representatives* and a lesser reliance on *commissives*. Conversely, Trump's speeches exhibit a less uniform distribution, with *representatives* taking precedence, followed by *expressives* and *commissives*, which suggests an aggressive approach.

The prevalence of *representatives* and *expressives* within Trump's speeches bestows a heightened emotional resonance, consequently augmenting the potential for persuasion. Overall, Donald Trum's speeches feature assertive speech acts, characterised by declarative statements, information dissemination, and opinion expression. Furthermore, instances of directive speech act manifest where he issues commands or *directives*. Representative speech acts also find prominence, as he provides evidence and substantiation for his assertions.

Jinping's speeches, on the other hand, rely more on representatives, expressives, and directives, with a low occurrence of commissives. Additionally, Jinping employs consecutive questions, akin to philosophical questions, to provoke the listeners to ponder the presented issues, creating an illusion of false communication, thus constituting in more usage of indirect acts.

Analysing the representatives' speech acts in Trump and Jinping's speeches reveals the use of imperative speech acts that prompt the audience to think or focus on specific pieces of information. This persuasive function encourages the targets to take certain actions. While Ramaphosa also uses this approach, his speeches reflect more requests, which are delivered with stronger appeals, making them more persuasive.

Through a strategic combination of speech acts, Ramaphosa aims to foster public trust, inspire national solidarity, and encourage compliance with necessary restrictions and measures to effectively combat the pandemic. His speeches are meticulously crafted to underscore the gravity of the situation, to instil a sense of collective responsibility, and to persuade citizens to act in the best interest of the country's well-being.

Likewise, Jinping effectively persuades citizens to comply with Covid-19 regulations by employing a combination of speech acts in his speeches. He uses representatives to provide information about the seriousness of the pandemic and the efforts undertaken by the Chinese government to combat it. *Expressives* convey his heartfelt sympathies for those affected and appreciation for the sacrifices made. Through *commissives*, he commits the government to continue supporting the people and other countries in need. Jinping also utilised representatives to highlight the success of implemented measures, encouraging citizens to continue their efforts. Overall, with skilful use of speech acts, Jinping rallied citizens to unite in the fight against Covid-19 and adhere to necessary regulations for the well-being of the nation and humanity.

The findings of this study submit that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the three presidents used *declaratives* to emphasise the importance of implemented measures and the positive impact of citizens' compliance to Covid-19 restrictions. *Expressives* were used to appeal to citizens' emotions, acknowledging their anxieties and concerns while urging them not to succumb to fear and panic. Also, *commissives* were employed to commit to taking swift and drastic actions to address pandemic challenges, while *directives* stressed the significance of adhering to regulations and provide guidance on actions to take, such as refraining from travel and intensifying hygiene control.

This section discussed politeness as a pragmatic element of persuasion and further linked politeness to speech acts, various speech acts were detailed. The next section elucidates findings on self-referencing as a pragmatic element of persuasion.

c) Self-referencing/self-proclaiming

The last pragmatic strategy that was evident in the analysed data is “self-referencing”, wherein presidents refer to what they had assert earlier as a way of adding emphasis to goal pursued (See Section 3.2.2 for detailed explanation on this element). Self- referencing was mostly evident in Trump’s speeches and an example is provided below.

PDTS3-DS5: “My administration is also distributing vast amounts of medical supplies to states across the country through Project Air Bridge, which has been an amazing success. We have some very brilliant people working on this. It’s logistically incredible what they’ve done. And these people have been the genius of all of them together, it has been incredible to watch”.

In the discourse segment **PDTS3-DS5**, Trump employs self-referencing as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion. Self-referencing involves referring to one’s own previous statements or actions to add emphasis or credibility to the current message. In this case, Trump refers to his administration’s efforts in distributing medical supplies through Project Air Bridge and praises the work of his team.

By using self-referencing, Trump aims to influence the audience to believe that his administration is making significant efforts and achieving success in handling the distribution of medical supplies. The use of phrases such as “amazing success”, “very brilliant people”, and “logistically incredible” serves to highlight the effectiveness and competence of his team. This pragmatic element links with the likability and credibility which were discussed earlier as communicative elements of persuasion. It hinges on the idea that leaders employ self-referencing to enhance their likability and project an aura of credibility.

Self-referencing is often used by leaders to bolster their credibility and enhance the persuasiveness of their messages (Sadiki, 2017:123). By referring to his administration’s accomplishments and praising the efforts of his team, Trump seeks to gain the trust and confidence of the targets, leading them to be more receptive to his message and more likely to believe in the effectiveness of his actions.

Overall, the use of self-referencing as a pragmatic element of persuasion in Trump's speech showcases his efforts to emphasise the positive outcomes achieved by his administration and portray a sense of competence and success. This can contribute to the targets' perception of his leadership and increase the persuasiveness of his communication.

The speeches of Presidents Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping contained several pragmatic elements of persuasion that play a vital role in influencing and persuading their respective audiences. Elements are often combined, and these elements contribute to the effectiveness of their persuasive communication.

This section of Chapter 5 elucidates the findings derived from the analysis of persuasive elements encompassing communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic dimensions. This section corresponds to the fulfilment of the study's second research objective.

As discussed in Section 3.3, there exists a nuanced relationship between the elements and strategies of persuasion. In the reviewed literature, scholars often use these terms interchangeably, while others extract elements from strategies. Consequently, it is not surprising to observe certain elements of persuasion overlapping with strategies of persuasion. These elements are intricately woven into specific strategies, and to thoroughly examine these strategies, the elements must be clearly discerned (Clancy, 2022:1).

The connection between elements of persuasion and strategies of persuasion in communication research is of paramount importance. Elements of persuasion serve as the foundational building blocks upon which strategies of persuasion are constructed, facilitating effective influence in communication. Considering this, the third objective of this study was directed towards identifying and elucidating the array of communicative, pragmatic, and linguistic strategies employed by the three presidents in their Covid-19 related speeches to achieve their communicative goals effectively. Therefore, the following section provides a comprehensive elucidation and interpretation of the persuasion strategies that were found from the analysed dataset.

5.2.3 Strategies of persuasion

As highlighted in Section 3.3, for the purpose of this study, the strategies of persuasion were categorised into communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic categories to align with their respective persuasive elements. This section presents findings on such strategies.

5.2.3.1 Communicative strategies of persuasion

Building upon the communicative elements outlined in Section 5.2.2.1, this section presents and elucidates findings on communicative strategies of persuasion. These strategies have been identified through the data analysis process and are elaborated upon in Table 5.60 below.

Table 5. 60: Established communicative strategies of persuasion

Strategies	Frequency				Relative frequency		
	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping	Total F	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping
Propaganda	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-
Manipulation	2	3	7	12	2%	2%	4%
Fear appeal	7	-	-	7	6%	-	-
Coercion	2	1	-	3	2%	1%	-
Assertion	1	-	3	4	1%	-	2%
Audience-use	2	1	1	4	2%	1%	1%
Authority appeal	1	1	1	3	1%	1%	1%
Bargaining	-	-	1	1	-	-	1%
Benefit (Other)	1	3	6	10	1%	2%	2%
Punishing activity	1	-	-	1	1%	-	-
Expertise	1	2	1	3	1%	1%	1%
Activation of impersonal commitments	3	4	-	7	2%	2%	-
Predicational strategy	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-

During the analysis of communicative strategies employed by Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping in their respective speeches, a nuanced picture emerges. Drawing from Table 5.60, Jinping appears to adopt a strategic combination of manipulation, assertion, and benefit, possibly aiming to maintain a tightly controlled narrative while highlighting positive outcomes. This aligns with the leadership's emphasis on ideological cohesion and national progress (Pontos, 2020:34).

In contrast, Ramaphosa employs fear appeal and manipulation extensively, perhaps reflecting a commitment to motivating societal action through a heightened sense of urgency. His occasional utilisation of coercion and activation of impersonal commitments underscores a leadership style seeking both compliance and shared values.

Trump's approach centres on manipulation and expertise, an indication of his propensity for asserting authority and leveraging his perceived knowledge. His reliance on benefits, coupled with predication strategy, suggests a focus on future outcomes, thus being persuasive. The observed variations in these strategies are indicative of the distinct leadership contexts, communication goals, and cultural nuances underlying their speeches. Figure 5.15 below presents an overview of constructs embodying communicative strategies of persuasion.

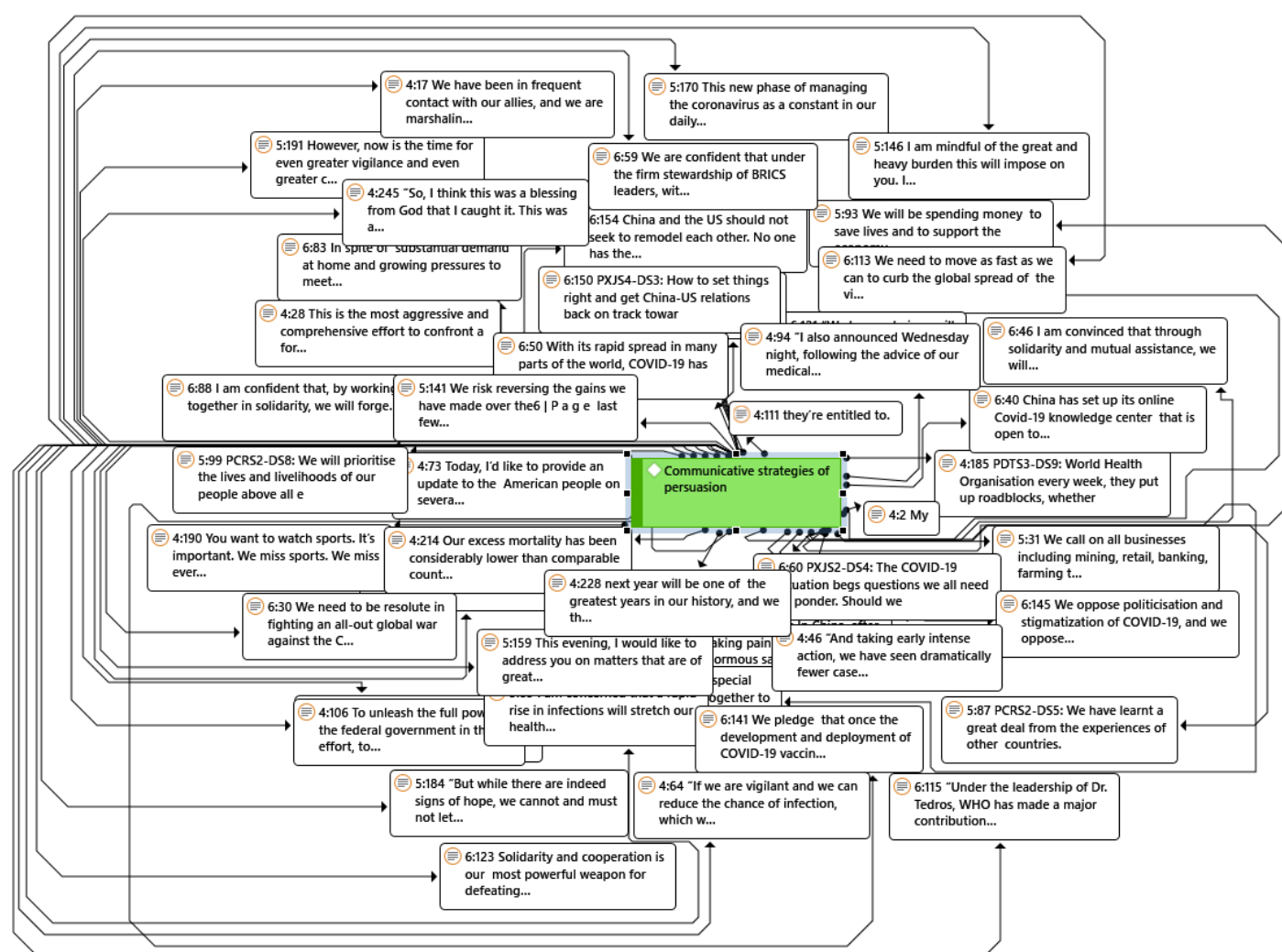


Figure 5. 15: Overall constructs embodying communicative strategies of persuasion as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Having presented the established communicative strategies of persuasion in Table 5.50 and the overall constructs entailing them in Figure 5.15, to present a comprehensive finding, the subsequent sections further present and interpret findings on communicative strategies of persuasion, with examples from the analysed discourse segments.

a) Propaganda

The findings of this study reveal the use of propaganda as a communicative strategy of persuasion, as evident in **PDTS2-DS5**:

“As the World Health Organisation confirmed today, many of the things that we said were 100 percent correct, including our designation, before them, of Europe. Like our earlier, very aggressive actions with China, this measure will save countless lives. I appreciate several folks behind me. A few of the people behind me said that saved a lot of lives, that early designation”.

In this discourse segment, Trump employs testimonial as a technique of propaganda to enhance his persuasive strategy. The use of testimonials is aimed at making information more believable, as people are more likely to trust information that has been evaluated and endorsed by credible sources, such as the World Health Organisation in this case.

Trump strategically emphasises that his actions were evaluated by the WHO and deemed effective, thereby influencing the audience’s perception positively. This finding aligns with De Wet (2010:89), who identifies ‘testimonial’ as one of the techniques of propaganda.

b) Manipulation

The findings of this study also reveal manipulation as one of the communicative strategies of persuasion, for example, in **PCRS3-DS7**:

“Simply put, if we end the lockdown too soon or too abruptly, we risk a massive and uncontrollable resurgence of the disease. We risk reversing the gains we have made over the last few weeks and rendering meaningless the great sacrifices we have all made. Fellow South Africans, this evening, I stand before you to ask you to endure even longer”.

In this discourse segment, Ramaphosa employs manipulation to persuade the targets to support the continuation of the lockdown. By highlighting the potential dire consequences of ending the lockdown too soon or abruptly, he appeals to the targets’ emotional and mental sides, aiming to influence them into accepting the need to endure the lockdown further. Similarly, in **PDTS1-DS6**:

“And taking early intense action, we have seen dramatically fewer cases of the virus in the United States than are now present in Europe. The European Union failed to take the same precautions and restrict travel from China and other hot spots. As a result, a large number of new clusters in the United States were seeded by travelers from Europe”.

Trump uses manipulation as a persuasive strategy to position his government favourably against the European Union. By speaking negatively about the European Union's handling of the virus and emphasising the effectiveness of his own actions, Trump attempts to sway the audience's perception in his favour. This finding aligns with Gregory (2020:19), who asserts that manipulation is a prominent strategy in Donald Trump's speeches. However, it is essential to recognise that manipulation can be a psychologically and ethically damaging process, as stated by Cialdini (1993:13). Although this study extends beyond Trump's speeches, it is discovered that other presidents - Ramaphosa and Jinping, also employ manipulation in their speeches. For instance, Jinping extensively utilised manipulation in his speeches, as evident in **PXJS4-DS2**:

"In the face of Covid-19, China and Africa have offered mutual support and fought shoulder to shoulder with each other. China shall always remember the invaluable support Africa gave us at the height of our battle with the coronavirus. In return, when Africa was struck by the virus, China was the first to rush in with assistance and has since stood firm with the African people".

Jinping employs manipulation to present China as the primary supporter of Africa during the Covid-19 pandemic. While initially stating mutual support, Jinping emphasises China's role as the saviour of Africa, attempting to create a favourable image and influence the Africans' perception. According to Cialdini (1993:13), most of the time, the systematic use of manipulation as a persuasive strategy ultimately becomes a psychological and targets-damaging process.

In this study, it was found that manipulation is not only limited to Trump, but it is utilised by all three presidents. The strategic use of manipulation in their speeches aimed to sway public opinion and elicit support for their respective Covid-19 agendas. Understanding the presence and effects of manipulation in persuasive discourse can shed light on the communication tactics employed by political leaders to influence their audiences.

c) Fear appeal

In this study, there was evidence of fear appeal as a communicative strategy of persuasion. For example, in **PCRS1-DS4**:

"As we have said before, the current circumstances require extraordinary measures to curb the spread of infections. Countries that have heeded the call to implement these radical measures, have fared much better than those than do not".

In this discourse segment, Ramaphosa employs fear appeal as a persuasive strategy by emphasising the consequences suffered by countries that failed to exercise caution. Additionally, Ramaphosa utilises fear appeal to persuade citizens by warning them about potential consequences if they fail to comply, as evident in **PCRS3-DS8**.

“Unless we take these difficult measures now, unless we hold to this course for a little longer, the coronavirus pandemic will engulf.”

Interestingly, the data analysed in this study did not provide evidence of fear appeal in the speeches of Trump and Jinping. However, this does not imply that these two presidents do not evoke fear. For instance, Americans perceive Trump’s speeches as creating a dystopian hellscape because he often emphasises both real and imagined issues that he claims his policies will resolve. Times (2017) supports this observation by stating that “no president has ever spread fear like Donald Trump” (<https://time.com/4665755/donald-trump-fear/>). Therefore, it is important to note that this finding may not be applicable in all contexts, as it is specific to the analysed data in this study.

d) Coercion

Perloff (2003:12-13) and Moorosi (2009:16) propose that coercion involves the use of force and define it as a technique employed to compel individuals to act in a manner desired by the coercer, irrespective of their preferences (refer to Section 3.3.1.4 for a comprehensive explanation). Based on the findings of this study, there was evidence of coercion in the speeches of Ramaphosa and Trump. For instance, in **PCRS2-DS7** and **PCRS3-DS8**, respectively:

PCRS2-DS7: “We will therefore act very strongly against any attempts at corruption and profiteering from this crisis. I have directed that special units of the NPA be put together to act immediately and arrest those against who we find evidence of corruption”.

PCRS3-DS8: “But I know, as you do, that unless we take these difficult measures now, unless we hold to this course for a little longer, the coronavirus pandemic will engulf, and ultimately consume, our country”.

In **PCRS2-DS7**, Ramaphosa employs coercion as a persuasive strategy by declaring that individuals involved in corrupt activities will face physical arrest. Similarly, in **PCRS3-DS8**, Ramaphosa indicates the presence of coercion by highlighting the potential consequences that citizens may face if they fail to comply.

e) Assertion

Like coercion, assertion is a persuasion strategy used to forcefully gain compliance from the target. The findings of this study reveal the utilisation of assertion in Ramaphosa's speeches, as exemplified in **PCRS5-DS5**.

“However, now is the time for even greater vigilance and even greater care. We must all continue to wear a cloth mask that covers our nose and mouth every time we leave home. We must protect the elderly and those with underlying conditions from exposure to the virus. We must continue to practice social distancing and ensure proper ventilation indoors”.

In this discourse segment, Ramaphosa employs forceful persuasion techniques to compel the targets to comply with the measures he outlined. By using assertive language, he emphasises the necessity of following specific actions to combat the pandemic effectively.

It is not surprising to observe Ramaphosa utilising assertion, given his use of fear appeal and coercion as well. These three strategies, as argued by Minoo et al. (2018:234), are deemed indispensable in persuasive communication.

The presence of assertion in Ramaphosa's speeches, along with fear appeal and coercion, indicates the variety of persuasive strategies he employs to effectively communicate his messages and influence public behaviour during the pandemic. By utilising a combination of these techniques, Ramaphosa aims to mobilise public compliance and address the challenges posed by the Covid-19 crisis in South Africa.

f) Audience-use

A persuasive strategy in which the communicator tries to gain compliance by asking the target in front of the public. From the findings of this study, “audience-use” is evident across all the three presidents. For example, in **PCRS1-DS5**:

“We call on all businesses including mining, retail, banking, farming to ensure that they take all necessary measures to intensify hygiene control. We also call on the management of malls, entertainment centres and other places frequented by large numbers of people to bolster their hygiene control”.

Ramaphosa applied audience-use as a persuasion strategy when he calls on businesses, malls, and other establishments to intensify hygiene control. He makes this request publicly on

national TV, without first seeking a private meeting with them. By doing so, he aims to gain compliance from the target audience through direct public appeal. Similarly, in **PDTS2-DS4**:

“I also announced Wednesday night, following the advice of our medical professionals who are doing a tremendous job and we appreciate it very much that we’re suspending the entry of foreign nationals who have been to Europe in the last 14 days from entering the United States”.

Trump used audience-use as a persuasive strategy by announcing the suspension of entry for foreign nationals who have been to Europe in the last 14 days. He attributes this decision to the advice of medical professionals and publicly emphasises the measure to gain compliance from the target audience. Like the other two presidents, Jinping also employed audience-use as a communicative strategy of persuasion. For example, in **PXJS1-DS9**:

“I call on G20 members to enhance anti-epidemic information sharing with the support of WHO and to promote control and treatment protocols that are comprehensive, systematic and effective”.

Jinping calls on G20 members to enhance anti-epidemic information sharing and promote comprehensive, systematic, and effective control and treatment protocols. By making this request publicly, he aims to influence the target audience’s actions.

g) Authority appeal

Appeal to authority is a persuasive strategy that also emerged in the findings of this study as a strategy used when the persuader gains compliance based on the power vested upon them (Dillard, 1998:24). The utilisation of authority appeal is exemplified in the following discourse segments:

PXJS3-DS3: “In China, after making painstaking efforts and enormous sacrifice, we have turned the tide on the virus and protected the life and health of our people. All along, we have acted with openness, transparency, and responsibility”.

In **PXJS3-DS3**, Jinping employs authority appeal by speaking as the chairman in the BRICS setup. By doing so, he invokes his position of power and authority within the BRICS organisation to strengthen his persuasive message. Jinping emphasises China’s efforts in combating the virus and portrays the country’s actions as being conducted with openness, transparency, and responsibility, thus leveraging his authority to persuade the audience. Also, in Ramaphosa’ speeches, for instance, in **PCRS2-DS8**:

“We will prioritise the lives and livelihoods of our people above all else and will use all of the measures that are within our power to protect them from the economic consequences of this pandemic”.

Ramaphosa employs authority appeal to gain compliance. As the President of South Africa, Ramaphosa speaks from his vested power and assures citizens that their livelihoods will be protected from the economic consequences of the pandemic. By emphasising the measures that his government will take, Ramaphosa leverages his position of authority to reassure and persuade the public.

h) Bargaining

In this strategy, the persuader tries to gain compliance by bargaining a deal wherein both parties will benefit. This strategy is evident in Jinping’s speeches, for instance in **PXJS1-DS5**:

“We must comprehensively step-up international cooperation and foster greater synergy so that humanity as one could win the battle against such a major infectious disease”.

In this discourse segment, Jinping adopts a bargaining approach as a strategy of persuasion. By proposing the need for comprehensive international cooperation and greater synergy, he presents it as a mutual deal where all parties involved will benefit. Jinping emphasises that by working together, as one humanity, they can successfully combat the major infectious disease (Covid-19).

The evidence of obligational and epistemic modality in his speech reflects the degree of certainty and commitment to this proposal. By utilising this persuasive strategy, Jinping aims to encourage cooperation and collaboration among nations to tackle the global challenge of the pandemic effectively.

The bargaining strategy demonstrates Jinping’s ability to present a persuasive proposition that offers mutual benefits and encourages collective action, making it a crucial aspect of his communication during the Covid-19 crisis.

i) Benefit (other)

Findings on this strategy shows that presidents use benefit strategy to persuade citizens to comply by telling them that if they comply, they will benefit. For instance, in **PCRS2-DS6**:

“We will be spending money to save lives and to support the economy”.

Ramaphosa employed the benefit strategy by highlighting the benefits of spending money on life-saving measures and economic support. In this regard, the president seeks to persuade citizens to support and comply with the proposed actions. Similarly, **PDTS1-DS3** exemplifies benefit in Trump’s speeches:

“I am confident that by counting and continuing to take these tough measures, we will significantly reduce the threat to our citizens, and we will ultimately and expeditiously defeat this virus”.

Trump utilises the benefit strategy as a communicative technique by expressing confidence that taking tough measures will significantly reduce the threat to citizens and ultimately defeat the virus. By promising positive outcomes, such as reduced threats and victory over the virus, Trump aims to encourage compliance from the public. The strategy of benefit is also evident in Jinping’s speech as exemplified in **PXJS1-DS10**:

“I am convinced that through solidarity and mutual assistance, we will prevail over this outbreak and we all will embrace a brighter future for mankind!”

Jinping employs the benefit strategy by stating, “I am convinced that through solidarity and mutual assistance, we will prevail over this outbreak, and we all will embrace a brighter future for mankind!” By emphasising the benefits of solidarity and mutual assistance, Jinping seeks to persuade G20 members to cooperate and overcome the outbreak together.

Overall, the findings of this study reveal that all three presidents utilised the benefit strategy to seek compliance from their respective citizens in an active and positive manner. By highlighting the positive results and advantages of adhering to Covid-19 regulations, they aimed to motivate the public and other nations to cooperate and support their initiatives. The benefit strategy played a significant role in their persuasive communication, as it appeals to the citizens’ self-interest and desire for positive outcomes during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

j) Punishing activity

Like fear appeals, this strategy entails seeking compliance in an explicitly negative way. From the findings of this study, punishing activity is evident in Ramaphosa’s speeches as exemplified in **PCRS2-DS4** below:

“I am concerned that a rapid rise in infections will stretch our health services beyond what we can manage, and many people will not be able to access the care they need. We must therefore do everything within our means to reduce the overall number of infections and to delay the spread of infection over a longer period – what is known as flattening the curve of infections.”

In this discourse segment, Ramaphosa employs punishing activity as a strategy of persuasion. He does this by highlighting the negative consequences that will result if the infection rate is not reduced. Using expressive speech act, he emphasises that a rapid rise in infections will strain the country’s health services, leading to a situation where many people will be unable to access the necessary care. By painting this negative scenario, Ramaphosa aims to persuade the audience to act and cooperate in reducing the infection rate.

The use of punishing activity as a persuasive strategy is evident in Ramaphosa's communication, as he emphasises the potential negative outcomes of not adhering to the proposed measures. This approach can be effective in motivating the public to comply with guidelines and take necessary actions to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the healthcare system and the well-being of the citizens.

k) Expertise

From the findings of this study, all three presidents used the expertise strategy as exemplified in the below discourse segments.

PCRS2-DS6: “The Fund will be administered by a reputable team of people, drawn from financial institutions, accounting firms and government”.

PDTS1-DS2: “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 marshaling the full power of the federal government and the private sector to protect the American people”.

PXJS3-DS7: “Under the leadership of Dr. Tedros, WHO has made a major contribution in leading and advancing the global response to Covid-19”.

In **PCRS2-DS6**, Ramaphosa emphasises that the decision regarding the administration of the Fund involves a reputable team of individuals drawn from financial institutions, accounting firms, and the government. By mentioning the involvement of experts from different sectors, Ramaphosa enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the decision, making it a persuasive argument.

In **PDTS1-DS2**, Trump employs the expertise strategy by positioning himself and his administration as more knowledgeable and strategic in handling the pandemic than the target audience. He highlights frequent contact with allies and collaboration with the private sector, further increasing trustworthiness in his message and presenting himself as a reliable source of information and leadership.

Similarly, in **PXJS3-DS7**, Jinping refers to Dr. Tedros, the leader of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and acknowledges the organisation's significant contribution in leading and advancing the global response to Covid-19. By mentioning an expert like Dr. Tedros, Jinping establishes an attachment to authoritative expertise, further enhancing the persuasive impact of his speech.

All three presidents effectively employ the expertise strategy in their communication. By emphasising the involvement of reputable individuals, presenting themselves as knowledgeable leaders, or referring to credible experts, they enhance their credibility and appeal to the expertise of those involved in decision-making and response efforts. This approach is essential in persuading the public during the Covid-19 pandemic, as it fosters trust and confidence in the leadership's actions and decisions.

l) Activation of impersonal commitments

This strategy involved attempts to appeal to a target's internalised commitments. From the findings of this study, this strategy is evident in Ramaphosa and Trump speeches, as exemplified below.

PCRS2-DS5: "It is essential that every person in this country adheres strictly – and without exception – to the regulations that have already been put in place and to the measures that I am going to announce this evening. We have learnt a great deal from the experiences of other countries. Those countries that have acted swiftly and dramatically have been far more effective in controlling the spread of the disease".

PDTS2-DS6: "To unleash the full power of the federal government in this effort, today I am officially declaring a national emergency. Two very big words. The action I am taking will open up access to up to \$50 billion of very importantly-very important and a large amount of money for states and territories and localities in our shared fight against this disease".

Using directive and representative speech acts, in **PCRS2-DS5**, Ramaphosa employs the activation of impersonal commitments as a persuasive strategy. He emphasises the importance

of adhering strictly and without exception to the regulations already in place and the new measures he is announcing. By stating that countries that have acted swiftly and dramatically have been more effective in controlling the spread of the disease, Ramaphosa appeals to the audience's internalised commitment to protect themselves and others by following these measures.

In **PDTS2-DS6**, Trump utilises the activation of impersonal commitments by declaring a national emergency and unlocking access to significant funds for the fight against the disease. By doing so, he appeals to citizens' internalised commitment to their country and highlights the shared responsibility in combating the pandemic.

Both Ramaphosa and Trump effectively employ the activation of impersonal commitments in their speeches. By appealing to the audience's sense of responsibility and commitment to collective well-being, they aim to mobilise public cooperation and support in the fight against Covid-19. This approach acknowledges the importance of individual actions in a broader context and encourages the public to take personal responsibility for adhering to guidelines and contributing to the overall efforts to control the pandemic.

m) *Predicational strategy*

During the analysis of the data, a persuasive strategy termed "predicational strategy" emerged in one of Trump speeches. Predicational strategy is a common strategy propagated by politicians in which they present other political leaders or competing nations as the cause of a problem. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2009:87), such strategies are used to attribute various qualities which are usually negative or discriminatory to social actors in political discourse. For example,

PDTS4-DS3: "Our excess mortality has been considerably lower than comparable countries. Excess mortality compares total deaths during a pandemic to what we would be expected in a normal year. This is a critical measurement because it includes undetected China virus deaths, along with deaths resulting from lockdowns, and lockdowns can be very harmful".

Trump employed the predicational strategy by discussing excess mortality and comparing it to other countries. He emphasises that the USA's excess mortality has been considerably lower than comparable countries. Trump then positions China at the core of all causes of Covid-19 by referring to it as the "China virus". By using this term, he attributed the virus's origin and,

potentially, its consequences to China, implying that it has played a significant role in the pandemic's impact on the USA.

By employing the predication strategy in this discourse segment, Trump aims to shift blame or responsibility away from his administration and to China. This approach can be a way to deflect criticism or justify the USA's response to the pandemic by presenting China as the primary source of the problem.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that there is an influence of lexical items, demonstrating a close relationship between communicative strategies of persuasion and linguistic strategies of persuasion, which are discussed in the next section. The identified communicative strategies of persuasion include propaganda, manipulation, fear appeal, coercion, assertion, audience-use, authority appeal, bargaining, benefits (others), punishing activity, expertise, and activation of impersonal commitments. This sub-section presented and interpreted the findings on communicative strategies of persuasion, while the next subsection (5.2.3.2) presents and interprets the findings on linguistic strategies of persuasion.

5.2.3.2 Linguistic strategies of persuasion

Drawing on the foundational linguistic elements of persuasion as detailed in Section 5.2.2.2, this section delves into the discovered linguistic strategies. Through the analysis of data, it becomes apparent that linguistic strategies were prevalent in the speeches of all three presidents. By strategically employing these linguistic strategies of persuasion, the presidents sought to shape public perceptions, garner support, and encourage compliance with their proposed actions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Table 5.61 below showcases the linguistic strategies that were established during the analysis of data.

Table 5.61: Established linguistic strategies of persuasion

Strategies	Frequency				Relative Frequency		
	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping	Total F	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping
Presentational strategy	2	1	-	3	1%	1%	-
Analogy	4	5	1	10	2%	2%	1%
Symbolism	-	1	-	1	-	1%	-
Shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world	2	4	-	6	1%	2%	-

In Table 5.61, it is evident that Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping each employed distinct linguistic strategies of persuasion in their speeches, thereby appealing to their respective targets. For instance, the presentational strategy was utilised by Ramaphosa twice, Trump once, and was absent in Jinping's speeches. This strategy involves vividly describing events, scenarios, or images to evoke emotions and create a compelling mental picture for the audience (Johnstone, 1989:145). Ramaphosa's utilisation of this strategy suggests his attempt to connect emotionally with his listeners, painting a relatable picture of his message. Trump's limited use of this strategy indicates a lesser focus on evoking imagery in his speeches.

The strategy of analogy was a notable choice for all three presidents. Ramaphosa employed this technique 4 times, Trump used it 5 times, and Jinping employed it once. Analogies help simplify complex ideas by drawing parallels between familiar concepts and the topic at hand (Smith, 2009:57). Ramaphosa's frequent use of this strategy suggests a strong effort to make his message accessible and relatable. Also, Trump's substantial employment of analogy might reflect his inclination towards straightforward communication. While Jinping's limited use implies a more reserved application of the technique, potentially indicating a preference for more direct language.

Symbolism, on the other hand, appeared only in Trump's speech, suggesting a specific intention to evoke certain emotions or associations in his targets. Symbolism relies on using images, words, or phrases to represent abstract ideas, often evoking deep cultural or emotional meanings (Adeyinka, 2012:90). Its presence in Trump's speeches points toward his ability to appeal to the targets' sentiments through powerful imagery.

Shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world were employed by Ramaphosa twice and Trump 4 times. This strategy involves referencing commonly accepted facts, beliefs, or ideas to establish a sense of common ground with the audience (Leech, 1983:66). Both presidents' utilisation of this technique indicates their effort to create a rapport with their listeners, fostering a sense of unity based on shared understandings.

Overall, the linguistic strategies of persuasion utilised by Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping vary in frequency and style. Ramaphosa appears to prioritise emotionally engaging presentational strategies and accessible analogies to connect with his citizens. Trump leans heavily on analogies and shared knowledge to communicate directly and foster a sense of connection. While Jinping, though using analogies sparingly, demonstrates a preference for more reserved communication, employing fewer emotional or vivid strategies. Figure 5.16 below presents an overview of constructs carrying embodying strategies of persuasion.

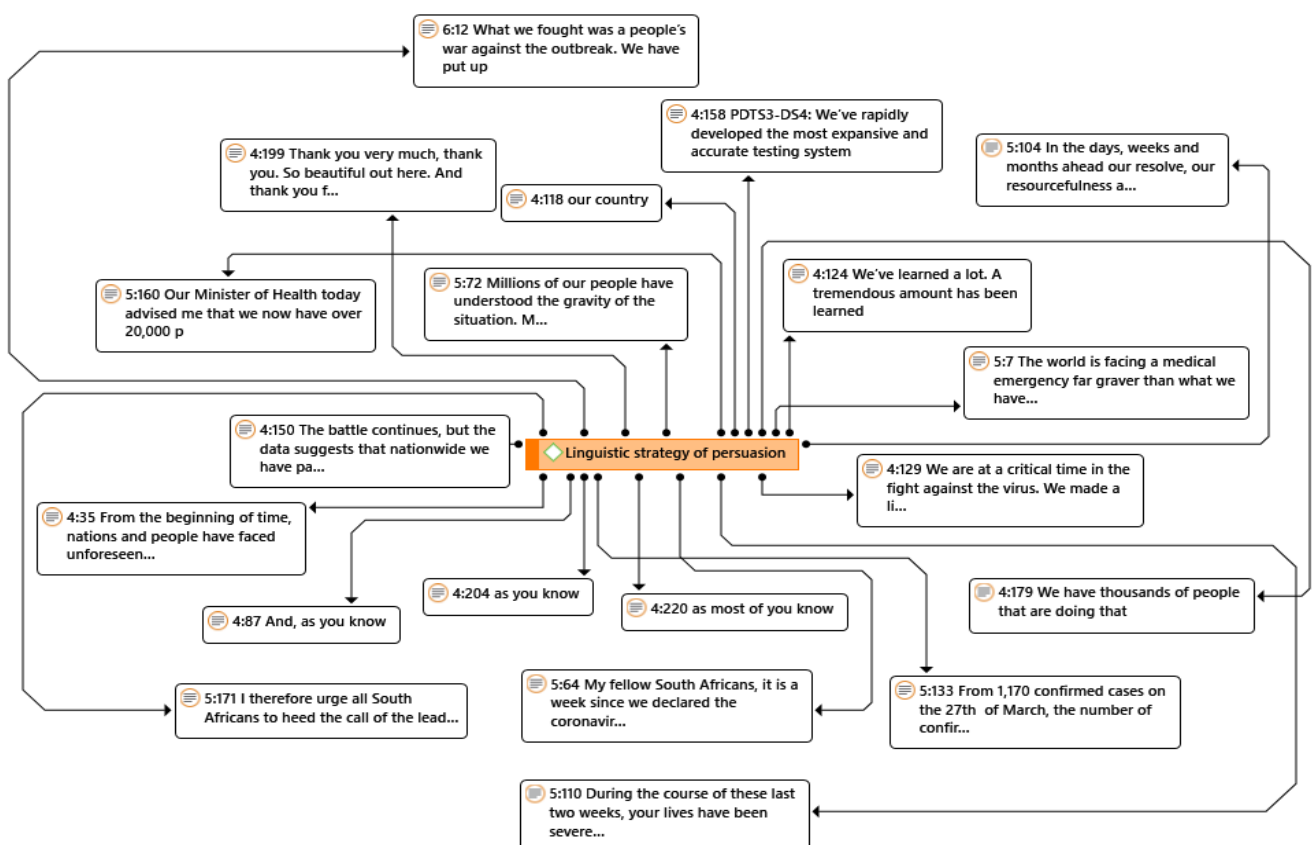


Figure 5. 16: Construct embodying linguistic strategies of persuasion as depicted in ATLAS.ti

Having presented the established linguistic strategies of persuasion in Table 5.51 and the overall constructs entailing them in Figure 5.16, to present comprehensive results, the subsequent sections further present and interpret findings on linguistic strategies of persuasion, with examples from the analysed discourse segments.

a) Presentational strategy

Johnstone (1989:145) regards presentational strategy as being swept along by the rhythmic flow of words and sounds, aiming to captivate the audience through the power of presentation. This persuasive strategy was evident in the speeches of both Ramaphosa and Trump, as exemplified below:

PCRS2-DS9: “In the days, weeks and months ahead our resolve, our resourcefulness and our unity as a nation will be tested as never before. I call on all of us, one and all, to play our part”.

PDTS4-DS1: “Thank you very much, thank you. So beautiful out here. And thank you for joining us as we announce a massive and groundbreaking expansion in our testing capability for the China virus”.

Using directive speech act, in **PCRS2-DS9**, Ramaphosa effectively employed the presentational strategy to enhance the persuasiveness of his speech. The rhythmic flow of his words and the use of repetition in phrases such as “days, weeks, and months ahead” and “our resolve, our resourcefulness, and our unity” create a captivating and memorable effect on the audience. The call to action, urging everyone to “play our part”, is delivered with a persuasive tone, drawing the audience into a shared sense of responsibility.

Similarly, in **PDTS4-DS1**, Trump utilised the presentational strategy to engage the audience during his announcement. The use of phrases like “thank you very much” and “so beautiful out here” establishes a conversational and personable tone, while the rhythmic flow of words captures the audience’s attention. By referring to a “massive and groundbreaking expansion” in testing capabilities for the “China virus”, Trump highlights a sense of accomplishment and progress, further emphasising the significance of the announcement.

In both instances, the presentational strategy served to create a compelling and captivating presentation, enhancing the persuasiveness of the speeches. The rhythmic flow of words and engaging language drew the audience in, making the messages more memorable and impactful. This approach showcases the importance of presentational strategies in political communication, as they can effectively resonate with the audience and amplify the persuasive power of the spoken words.

b) Analogy

From the findings of this study, it is evident that the presidents used “analogy” as a persuasive strategy by making comparisons between current issues and past events. Analogy was found in the speeches of all three presidents, as exemplified in the following discourse segments:

PCRS2-DS2: “Millions of our people have understood the gravity of the situation. Most South Africans have accepted the restrictions that have been placed on their lives and have taken responsibility for changing their behaviour. I am heartened that every sector of society has been mobilised and has accepted the role that it needs to play”.

PDTS2-DS10: “We are at a critical time in the fight against the virus. We made a lifesaving move with early action on China. Now we must take the same action with Europe. We will not delay. I will never hesitate to take any necessary steps to protect the lives, health, and safety of the American people. I will always put the well-being of America first”.

PXJS1-DS3: “What we fought was a people’s war against the outbreak. We have put up a strenuous struggle and made tremendous sacrifices. Now the situation in China is moving steadily in a positive direction”.

In **PCRS2-DS2**, Ramaphosa employs analogy as a persuasive strategy by drawing a comparison between the current response to the virus and previous proposals. He highlights how millions of people have understood the gravity of the situation and accepted the restrictions on their lives, showcasing a parallel between what was previously proposed and how the targets are now responding to it. This use of analogy aims to emphasise the effectiveness of the measures and rally public support by showing a connection between past proposals and present actions.

Similarly, in **PDTS2-DS10**, Trump strategically uses analogy by alternating between the present tense and the future tense in his speech. By making the analogy between the early action taken on China and the need to take the same action with Europe, he emphasises the critical time in the fight against the virus. This comparison between past actions and the urgency of future actions serves to persuade the audience to support his decision to protect the lives and well-being of the American people.

Likewise, in **PXJS1-DS3**, Jinping employs analogy as a persuasive strategy by using the past tense to present past events and then switching to the present tense to show the influence of those past events on the current positive outcomes. He characterises the fight against the outbreak as a people's war, and by stating that China is now moving steadily in a positive

direction, he draws an analogy between past struggles and present progress. This comparison aims to bolster public confidence in China's response to the pandemic.

To sum up, the findings of this study show that analogy serves as a powerful persuasive strategy by creating connections and associations between current situations and past experiences. This approach allowed the presidents to appeal to the audience's sense of continuity, progress, and shared history, ultimately seeking to garner support and reinforce their messages during the Covid-19 pandemic. The skillful use of analogy in political communication showcases the effectiveness of drawing parallels between past and present events to shape public perceptions and responses.

c) Symbolism

Symbolism is only evident in Trump speech, as exemplified in **PDTS2-DS8**, below.

“We have many, many locations behind us, by the way. We cover the, this country in large part. So, the world, by the way, we're not going to be talking about the world right now. But we cover very, very strongly our country. Stores in virtually every location”.

Here, Trump strategically employs the term “our country” as a symbol to effect persuasion. By using the word “country” to refer to Americans, he taps into a sense of nationalism and patriotism. The term “our country” creates an inclusive and emotional connection to the audience, fostering a sense of unity and belonging among Americans.

Through symbolism, Trump reinforces the idea that his administration prioritises the well-being and interests of the American people. The use of the word “country” as a symbol evokes strong emotions and a sense of collective identity, encouraging support and loyalty from the audience.

This study submits that symbolism in political communication is a powerful tool, as it appeals to deeper emotions and values within the audience. By employing symbols that resonate with the target group, political leaders can enhance the persuasiveness of their messages and foster a stronger sense of connection and commitment among their supporters. In this case, Trump strategically uses the symbol of “our country” to invoke feelings of pride, loyalty, and patriotism, seeking to influence public perception and garner support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

d) Shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world

Like presupposition, which is a pragmatic element of persuasion, the linguistic strategy of “Shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world” involves referring to commonly accepted information and assumptions to enhance persuasiveness. This strategy was evident in the speeches of both Ramaphosa and Trump, as exemplified below:

PCRS2-DS1: “My fellow South Africans, it is a week since we declared the coronavirus pandemic a national disaster and announced a package of extraordinary measures to combat this grave public health emergency”.

PDTS2-DS9: “Again, we don’t want everybody taking this test; it’s totally unnecessary. And this will pass. This will pass through, and we’re going to be even stronger for it. We’ve learned a lot. A tremendous amount has been learned”.

In **PCRS2-DS1**, Ramaphosa strategically employs shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world as a linguistic strategy of persuasion. By stating, “My fellow South Africans, it is a week since we declared the coronavirus pandemic a national disaster and announced a package of extraordinary measures to combat this grave public health emergency”, he assumes that the targets are aware of the previous briefing and its content. This reference to past information creates a sense of continuity and shared understanding, making his current message more relevant and persuasive to the audience.

Similarly, in **PDTS2-DS9**, Trump relies on shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world to reassure the American people. By stating, “Again, we don’t want everybody taking this test; it’s totally unnecessary. And this will pass. This will pass through, and we’re going to be even stronger for it. We’ve learned a lot. A tremendous amount has been learned”, Trump draws upon the shared knowledge that pandemics are temporary and lessons are learned from such crises. He appeals to the audience’s awareness of past experiences, fostering a sense of confidence and reassurance in their ability to overcome the current challenges.

In both instances, Ramaphosa and Trump strategically leverage shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world to make their messages more persuasive and relevant to their respective audiences. By tapping into the audience’s existing understanding and assumptions, they establish a stronger connection and encourage support for their responses to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study submits that using shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world as a linguistic strategy of persuasion can be highly effective. By relying on information that is

commonly understood and accepted by the audience, speakers can establish a connection with the listeners and reinforce their credibility. It helps create a sense of familiarity and shared experience, allowing the audience to relate to the message more easily and be more receptive to the speaker's arguments.

This sub-section presented findings on linguistic strategies of persuasion emanating from the analysed data. The linguistic strategies found are categorised into syntactic strategies (i.e., presentational strategy & analogy), rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies (i.e., symbolism), and verbal strategies (i.e., shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world). The next sub-section presents and interprets findings on the pragmatic strategies of persuasion.

5.2.3.3 Pragmatic strategies of persuasion

In this study, pragmatic strategies of persuasion refer to the appropriateness of language in its social context and the function of language used to achieve communicative goals, specifically related to persuasion. Table 5.58 presents the pragmatic strategies of persuasion that were established during data analysis.

Table 5. 62: Established pragmatic strategies of persuasion

Strategies	Frequency				Relative Frequency		
	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping	Total F	Ramaphosa	Trump	Jinping
Praising	5	6	7	18	4%	3%	4%
Emotional blackmail	1	2	2	5	1%	1%	1%
Justification	3	2	-	5	2%	1%	-
Appeal to Justice	-	-	1	1	-	-	1%
Conditioning	8	3	1	12	6%	1%	1%
Promise	3	4	6	13	2%	2%	3%

Table 5.62 provides an interesting comparison of how Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping, utilised different pragmatic strategies of persuasion in their covid-19 related speeches. These strategies serve as tools to influence and sway their targets' opinions, often catering to their specific contexts and communicative goals.

Ramaphosa appears to favour a balanced approach, employing a variety of pragmatic strategies in his speeches. He frequently employs praise as a technique, recognising accomplishments and positive traits. This indicates his intention to create a positive image and build rapport with

his targets. Moreover, his reliance on conditioning indicates a strategic use of conditional statements to emphasise certain actions or outcomes, possibly to encourage cooperation or support. Additionally, his use of promises suggests his commitment to achieving certain goals, thereby fostering trust and optimism among his citizens.

On the other hand, Trump's approach seems to be more assertive and emotionally charged. He significantly employs praise, possibly to highlight his achievements in dealing with Covid-19 and portray a sense of success. His repeated use of emotional blackmail, though limited in frequency, indicates a tendency to manipulate emotions for effect. This approach aims to engage targets on a more personal level and potentially evoke stronger reactions. Trump's use of promises aligns with his image as a strong leader, emphasising his intentions to take concrete actions.

In contrast, Jinping's strategy appears to lean towards a more reserved and diplomatic tone. He frequently utilises praising to acknowledge positive aspects, possibly to enhance diplomatic relations and maintain harmony despite the Covid-19 pandemic. His sparing use of emotional blackmail suggests a preference for maintaining a more controlled emotional atmosphere in his speeches. Jinping's employment of justification is absent in the table, potentially indicating a focus on avoiding contentious issues or arguments. His appeal to justice aligns with his position as a leader of a major global power, emphasising principles of fairness and international cooperation.

Overall, Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping each adopt distinct pragmatic strategies to suit their respective communication styles and communicative goals. Ramaphosa balances a variety of techniques to build rapport and trust, Trump employs assertive emotional appeals to rally his base, and Jinping adopts a more diplomatic and reserved approach that emphasises harmony and international cooperation. This is more explicit in Figure 5.17 below, which presents an overview of constructs embodying pragmatic strategies of persuasion from ATLAS.ti.

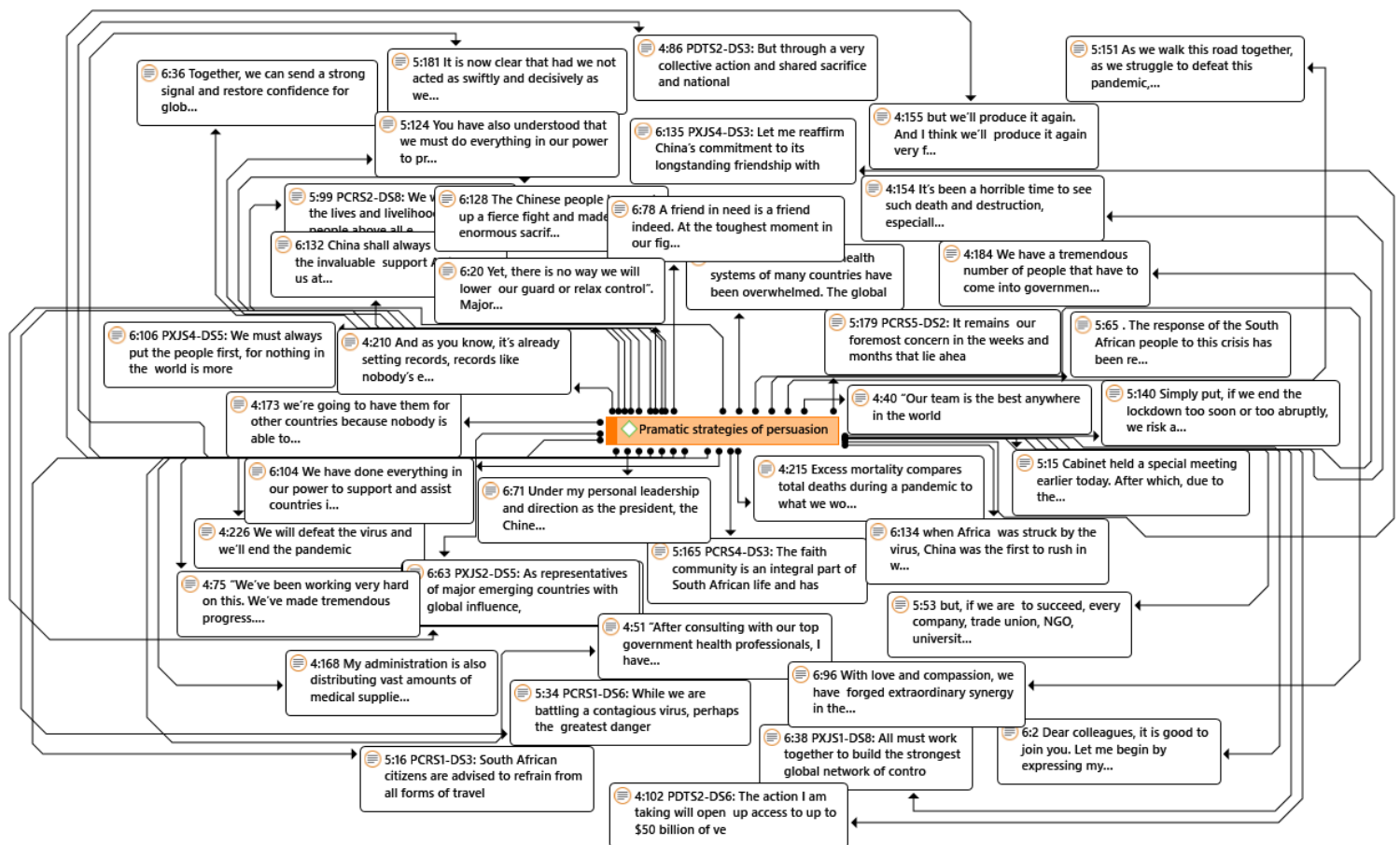


Figure 5. 17: Overall discourse segments pragmatic strategies of persuasion

After introducing the established pragmatic strategies of persuasion outlined in Table 5.52, alongside their encompassing constructs depicted in Figure 5.17, this study takes the endeavor a step further to provide a comprehensive depiction. The upcoming sections delve deeper into an exhaustive presentation and analysis of the identified pragmatic strategies of persuasion. This examination includes relevant examples extracted from the scrutinised discourse segments, enhancing the comprehension of the topic at hand.

a) Praising

This is one of the most used strategies in the context of this study. All the three presidents used to 'praise' as a strategy to give credit to self (i.e., self-praising enhances one's credibility thus enhancing persuasion) and to the targets (people are more likely to comply and respond positively to persuasive seeking messages if they are praised). The following discourse segments exemplifies how the three presidents used praising as a persuasive strategy.

PCRS4-DS3: “The faith community is an integral part of South African life and has made a great contribution in the fight against the coronavirus”.

PDTS2-DS2: “We’ve been working very hard on this. We’ve made tremendous progress. When you compare what we’ve done to other areas of the world, it’s pretty incredible. A lot of that had to do with the early designation and the closing of the borders”.

PXJS4-DS1: “In the face of Covid-19, China and Africa have withstood the test of a severe challenge. The Chinese people have put up a fierce fight and made enormous sacrifices to bring the situation in China under control”.

In **PCRS4-DS3**, Ramaphosa strategically employs praising as a persuasive strategy by giving credit to the faith community, emphasising their integral role in the fight against the coronavirus. By praising the faith community’s contributions, he seeks to persuade them to continue their efforts, particularly in offering prayers to combat the virus. This approach aims to foster a sense of appreciation and importance, motivating the faith community to further engage in actions aligned with the government’s response to the pandemic.

Similarly, in **PDTS2-DS2**, Trump uses self-praising as a persuasive strategy by highlighting the hard work and tremendous progress made by his government in comparison to other regions. By praising his administration’s early designation and the closing of borders, he seeks to enhance his government’s credibility and effectiveness in handling the pandemic. This self-praising tactic aims to instill confidence in the audience and encourage their support for his response strategies.

Likewise, in **PXJS4-DS1**, Jinping employs praising as a persuasive strategy by commending the Chinese people for their tenacious fight against Covid-19 and the sacrifices they made to bring the situation under control. However, he does not mention the sacrifices made by African people, which highlights his intent to focus on praising the Chinese people for their accomplishments. This selective praising reinforces the second hierarchy goal of “arousal management”, wherein Jinping aims to create a sense of pride and determination among the Chinese people while subtly signaling China’s ability to handle the pandemic effectively.

Overall, the findings of this study submit that praising proved to be a powerful pragmatic strategy of persuasion for the three presidents. By giving credit to both them and the target audience, they sought to bolster credibility, evoke positive emotions, and encourage compliance with their respective responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. This use of praising strategically aligns with their communication goals, fostering a favourable reception of their messages and garnering support from the public during this challenging time.

b) Emotional blackmail/ appeal

Emotional blackmail, also known as appealing to emotions, emerged as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion in the speeches of both Trump, Ramaphosa and Jinping, as exemplified below:

PDTS3 -DS10: “We want to get our country open again. We want to have our sports leagues open. You want to watch sports. It’s important. We miss sports. We miss everything. We want to get back”.

PCRS1-DS6: “Our priority must be to safeguard the health and well-being of all South Africans, to minimise the number of infections and to ensure all those infected get proper treatment. While we are battling a contagious virus, perhaps the greatest dangers to our country at this time are fear and ignorance”.

In **PDTS3-DS10**, Trump strategically employs emotional blackmail as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion. By appealing to people’s emotions and sense of longing for normalcy, he emphasises the desire to reopen the country, resume sports, and return to their daily lives. He knows that people miss these activities, and that this emotional attachment can influence their compliance with the strict measures necessary to control the pandemic. This tactic aims to tap into people’s emotions and desires, compelling them to adhere to the measures in hopes of a swift return to their cherished routines.

Similarly, in **PCRS1-DS6**, Ramaphosa utilises emotional blackmail as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion. By emphasising that the priority must be to safeguard the health and well-being of all South Africans and minimise infections, he appeals to the audience’s emotions and sense of responsibility. This pertains to representative as a speech act category since it implies accusation and conditional. Ramaphosa also warns against the dangers of fear and ignorance, subtly pressuring the citizens to comply with the measures to avoid setbacks in the fight against Covid-19. This tactic plays on people’s emotions, invoking a sense of duty and collective responsibility, motivating them to act in the interest of the country’s well-being.

To sum up, the study submits that the presidents understudied, skillfully employed emotional blackmail to evoke strong emotional responses from their audiences, leveraging their desires, fears, and sense of duty. By tapping into these emotions, they aimed to influence public behaviour, garner support for their responses to the pandemic, and encourage compliance with the measures implemented to control its spread. Emotional blackmail proved to be a potent pragmatic strategy of persuasion, leveraging human emotions to advance their communication goals during this unprecedented global health crisis.

c) Justification

Justification was also established as a prominent pragmatic strategy of persuasion in the speeches of both Trump and Ramaphosa, as exemplified below:

PDTS2-DS6: “To unleash the full power of the federal government in this effort, today I am officially declaring a national emergency. Two very big words. The action I am taking will open up access to up to \$50 billion of very importantly - very important and a large amount of money for states and territories and localities in our shared fight against this disease”.

PCRS1-DS2: “This situation calls for an extraordinary response; there can be no half measures. Cabinet held a special meeting earlier today. After which, due to the serious measures we are going to announce, I have consulted the premiers. We have decided to take urgent and drastic measures to manage the disease, protect the people of our country and reduce the impact of the virus on our society and on our economy. We have now declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act”.

In **PDTS2-DS6**, Trump strategically employs justification as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion. By declaring a national emergency, he justifies this decision to unleash the full power of the federal government in the fight against the disease. He emphasises the significance of the term “national emergency” to underscore the gravity of the situation and the need for a swift and comprehensive response. By providing a concrete reason for the declaration, Trump aims to legitimise his actions and reassure the public that the government is taking necessary and impactful measures to combat the pandemic effectively. Linking this to the discussion in Section 5.2.2.3, Trump has in this segment (**PDTS2-D6**) applied a declarative speech act, with an intent to change the status quo of the world.

Similarly, in **PCRS1-DS2**, Ramaphosa employs justification as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion when declaring a national state of disaster. He presents the situation as requiring an extraordinary response and emphasises that there can be no half measures. By consulting with premiers and cabinet members and considering the serious measures to be announced, he justifies the urgency and drastic nature of the decision. This justification serves to reinforce the severity of the situation and the need for immediate action to manage the disease, protect the people, and mitigate the impact on society and the economy.

The findings of this study reveal that presidents skillfully used justification as a pragmatic strategy to bolster the credibility of their decisions and actions in response to the pandemic. By providing logical reasoning and concrete explanations for their measures, they aimed to persuade the public that their responses are based on careful consideration and are essential to

address the challenges posed by Covid-19. In this regard, justification served as a persuasive tool to build trust, garner support, and legitimises the governments' actions during this critical time of crisis.

d) Appeal to justice

The appeal to justice is a persuasion strategy often employed in presidential speeches. It involves framing issues, policies, or actions in terms of fairness, equality, and ethical considerations. By invoking concepts of justice and fairness, a president seeks to resonate with the values and sense of morality of the audience, aiming to gain their support for proposed policies or actions. This strategy emanates from Jinping speech as exemplified in PXJS2-DS5:

“As representatives of major emerging countries with global influence, we BRICS countries must act in the interest of the well-being of humankind and stand by justice and equity. We must make the right call and do the right thing. This is us living up to our due responsibilities. It is also what our peoples and the global community expect from us”.

In this discourse segment, President Xi Jinping employs the appeal to justice as a persuasion strategy by emphasizing the moral responsibility of BRICS countries, as representatives of influential emerging nations, to uphold justice, equity, and the well-being of humankind. He emphasises the importance of making morally right decisions and fulfilling expectations from both their own citizens and the global community, positioning their actions as guided by ethical principles and shared values.

e) Conditioning

Conditioning emerged as a significant pragmatic strategy of persuasion in the speeches of all three presidents, allowing them to appeal to the current happenings and negotiate conditions to achieve their persuasive goals. The following discourse segments exemplify how each president utilised conditioning as a persuasive strategy:

PCRS1-DS9: “All the institutions of the state will be mobilised to lead this effort, but, if we are to succeed, every company, trade union, NGO, university, college, school, religious group and taxi association will need to play its part”.

PDTS1-DS8: “To keep new cases from entering our shores, we will be suspending all travel from Europe to the United States for the next 30 days. The new rules will go into effect Friday at midnight. These restrictions will be adjusted subject to conditions on the ground”.

PXJS1-DS4: “Life and work are quickly returning to normal. Yet, there is no way we will lower our guard or relax control”. Major infectious disease is the enemy of all”.

In **PCRS1-DS9**, Ramaphosa skillfully applies conditioning as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion. By emphasising that the success of the nation’s efforts to combat the virus requires the mobilisation and cooperation of all sectors, he conditions the support and involvement of various institutions, companies, and groups on their active participation. This discourse segment carries significant implications in the persuasion process, highlighting the interconnectedness of various stakeholders and their roles in the collective fight against Covid-19. Ramaphosa effectively conditions the country’s success on the collaborative efforts of all segments of society, appealing to their sense of responsibility and importance in the national response.

Similarly, in **PDTS1-DS8**, Trump employs conditioning as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion by announcing travel restrictions from Europe to the United States for the next 30 days. He conditions the easing or adjustment of these restrictions on the evolving conditions on the ground, such as the number of new cases and the spread of the virus. This tactic aims to emphasise the direct correlation between the measures taken and the potential impact on containing the virus. By conditioning the restrictions based on the changing situation, Trump seeks to reassure the public that the government is closely monitoring the developments and adapting its response accordingly.

Likewise, in **PXJS1-DS4**, Jinping uses conditioning as a strategy of persuasion when he asserts that life and work are returning to normal, but China will not lower its guard or relax control. He conditions the future approach to the virus on the current happenings, reinforcing the idea that vigilance and control measures must continue to prevent a resurgence of the virus. This tactic aims to instil a sense of caution and preparedness among the Chinese people while acknowledging the positive developments achieved in managing the pandemic.

Overall, conditioning proves to be an effective pragmatic strategy of persuasion for all three presidents, allowing them to tailor their messages to the current circumstances and negotiate conditions to achieve their persuasive goals. By connecting specific actions or responses to the

prevailing situation, they aim to influence public behaviour and secure support for their respective strategies in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

f) Promise

Based on the findings of this study, it becomes evident that ‘promise’ is closely linked to conditioning, albeit in a milder form. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that ‘promise’ is a speech act, more specifically a type of ‘commissive’, as elucidated in Section 5.2.2.3, as it entails a commitment by the persuader to undertake specific actions. The utilisation of ‘promise’ as a persuasive strategy is notably prevalent across the speeches of all three presidents. The segments below show examples of ‘promise’ in presidents’ speeches.

PCRS5-DS2: “It is now clear that had we not acted as swiftly and decisively as we did – and had we not taken the threat as seriously as we did – far more lives would have been lost. It remains our foremost concern in the weeks and months that lie ahead to continue to save lives”.

PDTS2-DS3: “And, as you know, Europe was just designated as the hotspot right now, and we closed that border a while ago. So that was lucky or through talent or through luck. Call it whatever you want. But through a very collective action and shared sacrifice and national determination, we will overcome the threat of the virus”.

PXJS1-DS7: “I want to call on all G20 members to take collective actions - cutting tariffs, removing barriers, and facilitating the unfettered flow of trade. Together, we can send a strong signal and restore confidence for global economic recovery”.

In **PCRS5-DS2**, Ramaphosa employs the strategy of “promise” to assure citizens of his government's commitment in the weeks and months ahead. By stating that their foremost concern is to continue saving lives, Ramaphosa seeks to instil confidence in the public that the government will remain steadfast in its efforts to protect the well-being of the population. The promise of ongoing dedication to the cause aims to foster trust and support from the citizens, enhancing the persuasive impact of his message.

Similarly, in **PDTS2-DS3**, Trump uses the pragmatic strategy of “promise”, which is akin to the conditioning strategy discussed earlier. By emphasising collective action, shared sacrifice, and national determination, Trump promises that together they will overcome the threat of the virus. This optimistic outlook and promise of success aim to motivate the public and rally them behind the government’s efforts to combat the pandemic. The promise of a positive outcome,

contingent on collaboration, served as a persuasive tool to inspire cooperation and compliance among the people.

Likewise, in **PXJS1-DS7**, Jinping employs “promise” as a strategy of persuasion by calling on all G20 members to take collective actions to promote economic recovery. The promise of restored confidence for global economic recovery is presented as the potential outcome of their joint efforts to cut tariffs, remove barriers, and facilitate trade. By offering the promise of positive results, Jinping seeks to encourage G20 members to come together and take the suggested actions. The persuasive power of this promise lies in its appeal to their shared interests and aspirations for economic growth and stability.

This study submits that, “promise” emerges as a persuasive strategy utilised by all three presidents to convey their commitment to specific actions or outcomes. By making assurances and offering positive outcomes, they sought to motivate and gain the support of their respective targets. The use of “promise” as a persuasive tool was effective in inspiring confidence, encouraging cooperation, and rallying public support in the collective fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated challenges.

In this sub-section, the study expounded upon and elucidated the findings concerning pragmatic strategies of persuasion, effectively fulfilling the third objective of the research. The subsequent section proceeds to elucidate the findings related to significant theoretical aspects of persuasion that surfaced during the analysis but were not initially encompassed within the provisional model.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In culmination, this chapter was designed to illuminate the emerged findings from data analysis, encompassing a spectrum of communication facets, persuasion dynamics, and linguistic strategies employed by the trio of presidents in their speeches. These findings encompass the delineation of primary and secondary communicative goals as well as the elements and strategies of persuasion, both communicative and linguistic in nature. In addition to the elements and strategies of persuasion that were initially part of the provisional model (as discussed in Section 3.4), other salient theoretical properties of persuasion emerged during the analysis. These properties were not previously accounted for in the provisional model but were brought to the surface through the thorough examination of the presidents’ speeches.

Moving forward, the next chapter synthesise the findings presented in this chapter and provide a comprehensive picture of the study. It then constructs a comprehensive model of persuasion, incorporating both the provisional model (Section 3.3) and the additional findings from this current chapter. This synthesis will offer a deeper understanding of the persuasive techniques employed by the three presidents, shedding light on their communication strategies and linguistic choices. By integrating the provisional model and the new insights from the findings in this chapter, the comprehensive model of persuasion will offer a more complete and nuanced understanding of how political leaders effectively communicate their messages and attempt to persuade their respective targets. Lastly, the comprehensive model will provide valuable insights into the dynamics of persuasive discourse in political contexts and contribute to the broader field of communication and persuasion studies.

CHAPTER SIX

SYNTHESIS AND RECONSTRUCTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented and interpreted the study's findings concerning communicative goals, elements of persuasion, and strategies of persuasion. Building upon the study's theory triangulation outlined in Section 2.3 and the provisional model developed in Section 3.4, along with the empirical findings presented in Chapter 5, this chapter aims to fulfil the final objective of the study: to devise a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion. The chapter is divided into four sections: the first revisits the provisional model, the second section discusses the empirical findings, the third highlights the theoretical implications of the study, and the final section revises the provisional model. Ultimately, a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion is constructed. The chapter concludes by exploring the potential applications and limitations of the proposed comprehensive model.

6.2 REVISITING THE PROVISIONAL MODEL

Drawing from the literature review conducted in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, a conspicuous void emerged pertaining to the harmonious integration of linguistic, pragmatic, and communicative elements within the context of political persuasion. Chapter 3's exhaustive literature review adeptly mapped the landscape of elements and strategies of persuasion, unveiling a rich tapestry of research contributions. This systematic exploration methodically showcased prior inquiries that dissected the facets of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements, alongside strategies of persuasion.

Synthesising the insights garnered from the comprehensive review in Chapter 2 and the intricate dissection in Chapter 3, the researcher undertook the task of constructing a provisional model of persuasion. This model, born from rigorous scholarly investigation, established a structured framework for unraveling the complex interplay between elements and strategies in political persuasion. The purpose underlying the creation of this provisional model of persuasion was clear and unambiguous to bridge the gap identified in the current literature and offer a more sophisticated perspective for understanding the intricate domain of political

persuasive communication. The accompanying visual representation embodies these endeavours:

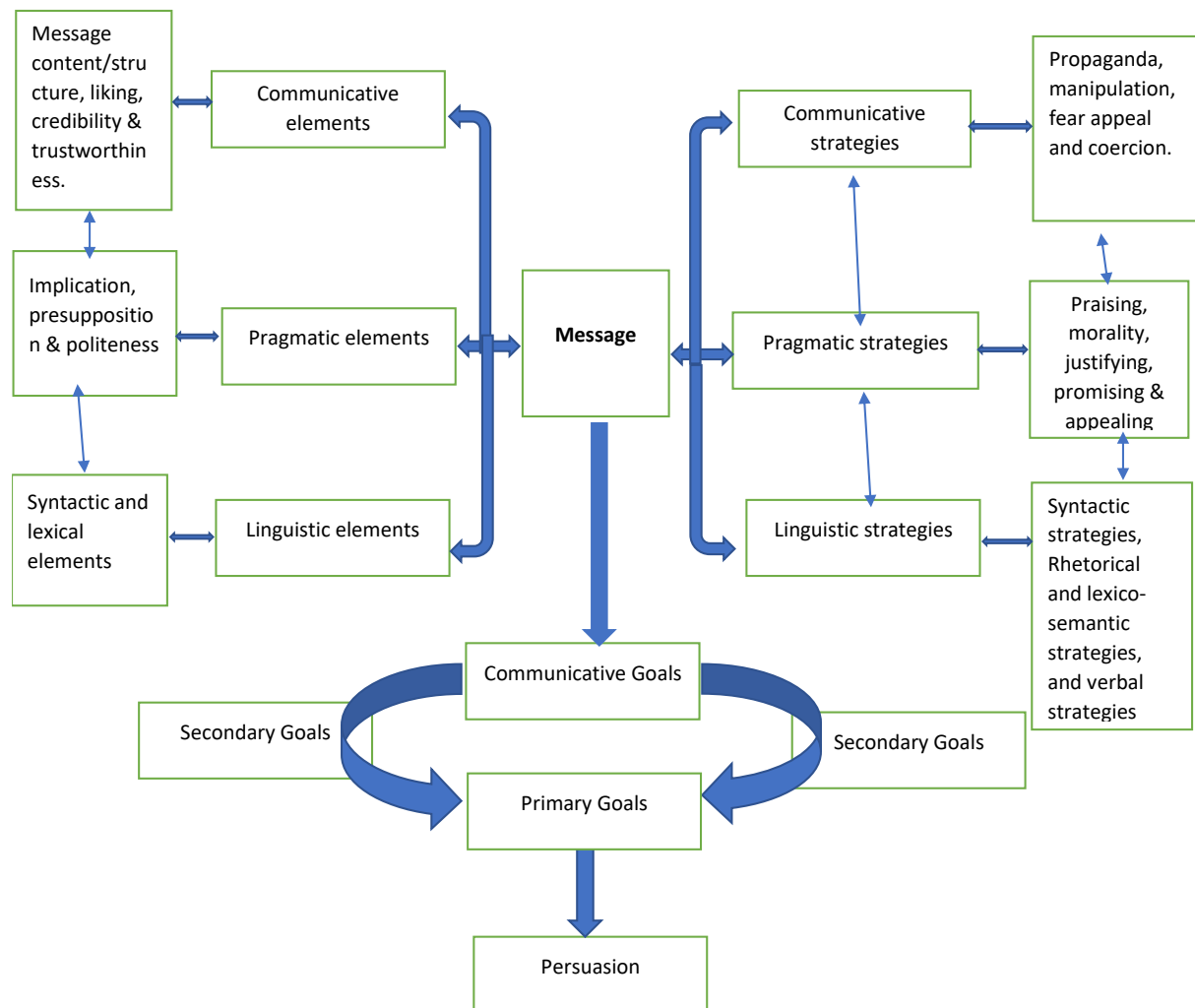


Figure 6. 1: The provisional model of persuasion

The provisional model presented in this section has proven invaluable in the analysis of presidential speeches. This model, originally introduced in Section 3.4, encompasses four main categories: message (referring to the content of what is uttered), communicative goals (indicating the intended purpose), elements of persuasion (highlighting linguistic choices), and strategies of persuasion (describing the manner of execution). The subsequent sections offer a thorough exposition of each category's nuances.

6.2.1 Message

The provisional model underlines how persuaders possess specific intentions that they aim to convey through persuasive communication. These intentions manifest through linguistic tools of persuasion, encompassing strategies and elements embedded within the message. The model designates the message as pivotal, serving as the primary conduit for persuasion. Given its influence on audience attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, the message is the core of this model. All strategies, goals, and elements of persuasion derive from the message's essence, underscoring its fundamental significance. In the absence of the message, communicative goals, elements, and strategies would be rendered non-existent.

The central aim of persuasive communication is to induce others to adopt a specific perspective, act in a particular manner, or revise existing viewpoints. In this regard, the message functions as the vehicle facilitating this persuasion, as it carries arguments, evidence, and appeals necessary to sway the targeted audience. Therefore, analysing the persuader's message unveils their choices, techniques, and rhetorical tools, thus revealing the mechanics of persuasion. The provisional model positions the message as central, functioning as a conduit encapsulating communicative goals, strategies, and elements. It serves as a foundation for understanding the theoretical nuances of persuasive communication.

6.2.2 Communicative goals

Communicators engage in communication with specific goals in mind. In the provisional model, communicators engage in purposeful communication, with explicit or implicit goals driving their discourse. These communicative goals mirror the persuader intentions and desired outcomes through their messages. The provisional model discerns two goal types: primary and secondary goals.

Primary goals encapsulate core objectives that communicators aim to achieve. These typically involve altering targets' attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours in line with desired outcomes. They signify the ultimate persuasion aims. In contrast, secondary goals encompass subsidiary objectives, strategically supporting primary goal attainment. Secondary goals enhance message persuasiveness by nurturing credibility, rapport, empathy, understanding, or counteracting potential objections. The proficient combination of both primary and secondary goals enhances the impact of persuasive communication.

6.2.3 Elements of persuasion

The provisional model categorises persuasion elements into three clusters: communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements (refer to Section 3.2). This categorisation is informed by the literature review and means to encompass different theoretical frameworks.

- **Communicative elements** encompass facets associated with communication. These include *message structure*, *content*, *communicator likability*, *credibility*, and *trustworthiness*. Message structure pertains to how information is organised to convey persuasive intent, while communicator likability reflects audience connection and appeal. Credibility and trustworthiness establish the persuader's reliability.
- **Linguistic elements** focus on language choices in persuasion, spanning syntactic and lexical dimensions. *Syntactic elements* involve sentence and phrase arrangement to convey persuasion, while *lexical elements* encompass word and phrase selection for persuasive impact. The provisional model postulates linguistic elements as significant shapers of persuasive impact.
- **Pragmatic elements** address implicit contextual persuasion aspects, comprising *implication*, *presupposition*, and *politeness*. Implication refers to indirectly conveyed meaning in a form of speech acts, presupposition assumes shared background knowledge, and politeness leverages language for positive social interaction. The model underscores pragmatic elements' role in adding depth and nuance to persuasive messages, influencing targets perception and interpretation.

The provisional model acknowledges political persuasion's multifaceted nature, transcending mere information conveyance to mold attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. By recognising and unraveling the interplay of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements, the study aims to bridge gaps and forge connections among these elements. The objective is to comprehend their harmonious integration in achieving communicative goals within the context of political persuasion. These elements were shown to play a pivotal role in shaping message persuasive impact and effectiveness during the manual analysis as demonstrated in Chapter 5.

6.2.4 Strategies of persuasion

Like elements, within the provisional model, persuasion strategies are categorised into three dimensions: communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic strategies, as discussed below.

- **Communicative strategies** spotlight communicative aspects utilised for audience persuasion. They encompass *propaganda*, *manipulation*, *fear appeal*, and *coercion*. Propaganda disseminates biased or misleading information to influence public opinion. Manipulation employs deceptive tactics for influence. Fear appeal incites fear or anxiety for specific responses. Coercion deploys force or threats for compliance. These strategies shape overall persuasive approaches and influence message delivery.
- **Linguistic strategies** orbit around specific language choices and techniques in persuasion. They encompass *syntactic strategies*, *rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies*, and *verbal strategies*. Syntactic strategies manipulate sentence and phrase structure for heightened impact. Rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies employ *metaphors*, *analogies*, and *emotionally charged words*, while verbal strategies utilise *repetition*, *rhetorical questions*, and *vivid storytelling*. These strategies harness language's potency for effective persuasion.
- **Pragmatic strategies** zoom in on implicit and contextual persuasion facets, featuring *praising*, *morality appeals*, *justification*, *promises*, and *shared values appeal*. Praising enhances persuasion. Moral appeals evoke ethical principles. Justification bolsters the persuader's position. Promises offer incentives for compliance. Shared values appeal taps into audience beliefs for persuasion. This implies that speech acts are performed, either directly or indirectly, with the intention of achieving both primary and secondary objectives. Further, the model underscores pragmatic strategies' consideration of social and situational influences on persuasive outcomes.

By comprehending and scrutinising these communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic persuasion strategies, the study aims to provide insights into presidents' techniques for influencing citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In summary, Figure 6.1 depicts the provisional model's four categories devised in Section 3.2. Informed by Chapter 2 and Chapter 3's literature review, these categories form the foundation for the forthcoming synthesis, amalgamating reviewed literature with study findings. This ensuing discussion provides a holistic understanding of the political context, illuminating the

interplay of communicative, linguistic and pragmatic elements, and strategies to attain persuasive communication goals.

6.3 DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

By discussing the empirical findings, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of persuasion, offering valuable insights and implications for future studies and practical applications. The aim of this study is to analytically investigate persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches by exploring communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of persuasion that regulate meanings in context to show how language was used amidst the pandemic to influence the behaviour of the public. In this regard, the goal was to model the linguistic and pragmatic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion in selected presidential Covid-19 related speeches. To achieve the purpose of the study, the key findings of this study are discussed below with reference to communicative goals, elements of persuasion and strategies of persuasion.

6.3.1 Communicative goals

The first objective of this study is to examine the prevalent types of communicative goals, reflected in Covid-19 selected presidential speeches. The findings of the study reveal that all three presidents employed both primary and secondary communicative goals in their persuasive messages. Throughout the sampled presidential speeches, it is evident that the messages were crafted with specific goals in mind, aiming to achieve persuasive outcomes. The subsequent Table 6.1 provides a summary of both primary and secondary communicative goals prevalent in the study's findings.

Table 6. 1: Summary of prevalent communicative goals

Primary goals	Secondary goals
Give advice goal	Identity goal
Gain assistance goal	Interaction goal
Share activity goal	Resource goal
Change relationship goal	Arousal management goal
Change orientation goal	
Obtain permission	
Enforce rights and obligations	

As illustrated in Table 6.1, a total of 11 communicative goals emerged in the findings of this study. The community's social structures, residential clustering, and relational connectivity influenced the communicative goals achieved by the three presidents. The sampled speeches analysed for the purpose of this study were rich in messages intended to accomplish goals such as *give advice* and *gain assistance*. Drawing from SAT, pragmatic strategies such as requests, directives, and commands within the sampled speeches predominantly covered goals related to *give advice*, *gain assistance*, *share activity*, and *enforce rights and obligations*. The specific goals addressed in each speech depended on the elements and strategies employed by the respective president. For example, Trump often emphasised goals related to *enforce rights and obligations* due to his commanding nature. This finding aligns with Otieno (2017:29) who argues that Trump uses command language to get his way.

Further, all three presidents - Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping - carefully constructed and selected their messages to convey their judgment of the situation and measures to adopt. Their main goals revolved around (i) changing the orientation of citizens by altering their attitudes and perspectives regarding compliance with Covid-19 regulations and protocols within their respective countries; and (ii) changing relationships between their own countries and others. For instance, Trump's labelling of Covid-19 as the "China virus" in **PDTS4-DS1** has a social impact on the relationship between the United States of America and People's Republic of China. It is also vital to express that while Trump aimed to diminish the US-China relationship, Jinping pursued the expansion of alliances with Africa.

The messages of the presidents were carefully crafted and selected to effectively persuade targets (mostly citizens) to comply. Overall, the study highlights the deliberate efforts made by the three presidents to utilise persuasive communication strategies to achieve specific goals. By analysing their messages, the study provides insights into the strategies employed by these leaders in their pursuit of their communicative goals. All three presidents aimed to persuade for the same purpose, which was compliance with Covid-19 regulations. This suggests that their different and/or similar applications of the elements and strategies could be studied more meaningfully.

In alignment with the discussion in Section 2.2.2.2 in Chapter 2, the findings of this study indicate that primary goals serve as guiding mechanisms that facilitate the realignment and integration of various cognitive processes involved in encoding and retrieving information. Subsequently, it suffices to say that primary goals serve to initiate and maintain social action

while secondary goals act as a set of boundaries which delimit verbal choices available to sources (Dillard, 1989:320). During the delivery of presidential speeches, the message source (presidents) sought to modify the target (mostly citizens) behaviour, which constitutes the primary goal.

Additionally, presidents also pursued secondary goals, which are recurrent motivations that shape and constrain their attempts to elicit compliance from the citizens. For instance, in his speeches, Jinping often begins with the primary goal of *give advice* and then transitions to the secondary goal of *arousal management*. An example of this can be seen in **PXJS1-DS4**, where Jinping gives advice to citizens on current happenings, leading to the secondary goal of *arousal management*. However, Jinping's approach is not the same for all presidents, the three presidents evoke different secondary goals to achieve the main goal.

The above finding is consistent with the argument made by Sadiki (2017:79), who suggests that when pursuing a primary goal, considerations arise regarding how influence can be exerted (through advice or warning) without instilling excessive fear that goes beyond the intended goal. Secondary goals, therefore, encompass the concerns that arise in relation to adopting a primary goal. According to Dillard (2004:188), the primary goal establishes the contextual framework, while secondary goals emerge subsequently. The findings of this study support this claim, as shown in Section 5.2.1.3 in Chapter 5.

Moreover, this study demonstrates that presidents employ secondary goals as a strategy to effectively pursue primary goals while minimising the likelihood of rejection, particularly when the primary goal involves initiating a relationship. For example, in **PDTS2-DS3**, Trump used the *arousal management goal* to escalate or de-escalate the relationship with the target audience, ultimately allowing him to sustain his primary goal of *share activity*. This finding aligns with the assertion by Dillard (2004:188) that secondary goals arise due to individuals' perceptions of the task of interpersonal influence, as they encompass multiple objectives during interactions.

In alignment with the GPA theory, the relationship between primary and secondary goals is crucial for understanding the processes of planning and action. For example, in **PDTS1-DS1**, Trump not only gave advice to Americans regarding the state's response to Covid-19, but also clearly expressed his intentions to the target audience, resulting in the *identity goal*, which is secondary. This reveals that primary goals serve as guiding mechanisms for cognitive processes, while secondary goals arise as recurrent motivations to shape the pursuit of primary

goals. Therefore, this study submits that presidents strategically employed secondary goals to ensure the successful attainment of primary goals while navigating potential rejection to their Covid-19 proposed measures by citizens.

Additionally, this study reveals that the four secondary goals identified in the GPA model are associated with self-concept, principles, ethical conduct, personal standards, and arousal management. These secondary goals reflect the presidents' concerns regarding their own identity, principles, ethical behaviour, as well as the management of conversations and resources. These goals then influence how the messages are constructed and delivered (which is exemplified with reference to the elements and strategies of persuasion as discussed below in subsequent section).

All presidents employed secondary goals, particularly the *identity goal*, to express their perspectives on Covid-19 and to shape and constrain their behaviours to persuade citizens' attitudes and actions towards the disease. For example, in **PXJS4-DS3**, Jinping proposed solutions to shape the behaviours of Chinese and Americans during their Covid-19 battles. Contrary to secondary goals, the primary goals were utilised to urge citizens to take specific actions. For instance, in **PCRS1-DS5**, Ramaphosa called on managers of different businesses and facilities to boost hygiene in their vicinities. This finding aligns with the notion that primary goals shape the situation, and secondary goals subsequently follow, as proposed by Dillard (2004:188).

Moreover, the study shows that secondary goals including the *identity goal*, were employed by all presidents to express their opinions on Covid-19 and shape their behaviours to persuade citizens. For example, in **PCRS1-DS6**, Ramaphosa subsequently displayed his morals and ethics of care in saving the lives of South Africans and advises citizens to expect extreme disruptions while refraining from fear and ignorance. As highlighted above, this proves the hierarchical relationship between primary and secondary goals, with primary goals defining the initial situation and secondary goals emerging in response to their adoption.

This study also submits that goals vary depending on the context and the persuasion factors i.e., goal influence factors. Table 6.2 below provides a detailed account of goal influence factor that surfaced during the data analysis in this study.

Table 6. 2: Emerged goal influence factors

Goal influence factors	Explication	Examples
Provision of information	Presidents strived to provide precise and current Covid-19 details, including its transmission, countermeasures, testing/vaccine progress, and health/safety advice.	In PCRS4-DS2 , Ramaphosa advises the citizens on the latest statistics regarding Covid-19 with the intention of making them cautious.
Ensuring public safety	Presidents stressed public safety, promoting distancing, masks, hygiene, and outlining lockdowns, travel limits, and regulations to curb virus spread.	In PDTS2-DS3 , Trump advises Americans to wear their mask as advised by medical experts.
Building trust and confidence	Presidents aimed to foster trust by showcasing expertise, competence, and crisis management skills. They reassured citizens about government dedication to tackling the pandemic, resource allocation, and collaboration with health experts.	In PDTS2-DS7 , Trump refer to the obligation that he has with his alliance to the citizens. He assures them that he will utilise all the available resources to help the citizens.
Providing reassurance and emotional support	Presidents acknowledged pandemic-related anxieties, offering empathetic reassurance. They recognized hardships, showing solidarity and promoting collective resilience, aligning with identity goals.	In PXJS1-DS8 , Jinping persuades all G20 members to work together in the fight against Covid-19.
Encouraging cooperation and unity	Presidents urged national unity to conquer pandemic challenges. They stressed cooperation, supporting each other, and following guidelines for solidarity in crisis response.	In PCRS2-DS6 , Ramaphosa persuades South Africans to donate money on the Solidarity Fund, which is to be utilised to aid the needy during Covid-19 period
Mobilising resources	Presidents shared government efforts, mobilising resources like medical gear, tests, vaccines. They emphasised global collaborations with nations, organizations, and private sectors for an efficient pandemic response.	In PXJS2-DS9 , Jinping reflects on the resources China has utilised to help fellow BRICS countries.
Outlining policy measures	Presidents detailed policies to lessen health, social, economic pandemic effects. They covered aid packages, industry support, job security, and economic stimulus steps.	In PDTS2-DS6 , Trump mentions that he will open 50 billion US dollars to fight against Covid-19, this is a commentary on the availability of the resources his government has in place.

This study submits that goal influence factors affect presidents' primary and secondary communicative goals, which in turn, shape the elements and strategies of persuasion. Ultimately, goals, elements and strategies form a network of relations aimed at inducing persuasion.

In brief, the discussion in this section, reveals that all three presidents utilised both primary and secondary communicative goals in their speeches. The speeches were carefully crafted with specific goals in mind, aimed at achieving persuasive outcomes. The presidents' speeches were

influenced by their countries' social structures, residential clustering, and relational connectivity. The main goals of the speeches were centred around changing citizens' attitudes and perspectives regarding compliance with Covid-19 regulations and protocols, and influencing relationships between their own countries and others. Overall, the specific goals addressed in each speech depended on the elements and strategies used by the respective president, which are discussed next.

6.3.2 Elements of persuasion

The second objective of this study is to identify and contrast communicative, pragmatic, and linguistic elements of persuasion employed by selected presidents to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches. The findings of this study reveal that all three presidents utilised communicative, linguistic and pragmatic strategies of persuasion in pursuit of their communicative goals as evident in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6. 3: Summary of elements of persuasion utilised by the three presidents

Elements of persuasion		
Communicative elements	Linguistic elements	Pragmatic elements
Likability	Personal pronouns and kinship terms	Presupposition
Credibility	Inclusive "we"	Politeness
Familiarity	Exclusive "we"	Self-referencing
Humour	Conjunction	
Trustworthiness	Parallelism	
Statistics/Numbers	Rhetorical questions	
Evidentiality	Deferential mode of address	
Blame-shifting	Compounding	
Name-calling	Subordination	
Imaginability	Allegory	
Schadenfreude	War metaphor	
Power	Lexical repetition	
	Concreteness	
	Conclusion explicitness	
	Hyperbole	
	Idiom	
	Modal	
	Lexical adjectives	
	Lexical adverb	
	Third-person narration	
	Religious lexicon and affiliation	
	Personification	
	Qualifier	

Table 6.3 presents an extensive array of pivotal elements of persuasion, encompassing communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic facets. These elements of persuasion do not operate independently; instead, they exhibit interdependence and mutual interaction, thereby influencing the efficacy of the persuasive strategies employed by the presidents. Proficiently harmonising these elements facilitates the establishment of connections with their respective targets, the cultivation of trust, and the proficient conveyance of their persuasive messages.

When examining the three presidents' linguistic choices in relation to Covid-19, Ramaphosa demonstrates ethics of care in his approach, while Jinping adopts a formal yet appealing style. On the other hand, Trump employs a mixture of a professional and simplistic manner in presenting the content, often accompanied by an offensive tone when attacking other leaders, such as his labeling of Covid-19 as the Chinese virus. Previous studies support these findings, suggesting that Trump utilises unconventional communication methods (Kreis, 2017), characterised by negative and direct language (Ross & Rivers, 2020) within his social discourse. Additionally, his communication style incorporates elements of political incorrectness (Schäfer, 2022). In contrast, Ramaphosa and Jinping employed a more professional, formal, and neutral tone.

Also, Ramaphosa and Jinping used words such as “respond”, while Trump uses “win” about the Covid-19. This highlights the intersection between linguistic choices and communicative elements, as Trump's language is influenced by his communication style.

It is also vital to note that the speeches examined in this study differed in length. The speeches by Ramaphosa and Trump were lengthy and elaborate, with several paragraphs adequately developed and justified by supporting details. In contrast, Jinping's speech appeared shorter and less developed, with paragraphs lacking sufficient elaboration. Furthermore, at the lexical level, appropriate registers were employed, and language choices reflected the dimensions of field, tenor, and mode. Despite the variations observed, the selected speeches contained thematic components relevant to persuasive communication, ensuring a comprehensive analysis within the mass communication context.

This difference in style can be attributed to the fact that unlike Trump and Ramaphosa, Jinping usually addresses his people in Mandarin, which is then translated to English by a second language (L2) speaker. It is important to also note that Trump's speeches primarily target first language (L1) English speakers, while Ramaphosa's speeches cater more to second language (L2) English speakers. Therefore, these presidents employ different elements of persuasion

based on their target audience and other varying contextual factors. However, these variations in language and audience did not hinder the findings of the study, as the selected speeches contained thematic components relevant to persuasive communication, regardless of the language used. The selection of these speeches was based on the researcher's thorough understanding of the descriptive properties of persuasion in a mass communication setting.

Markedly, from the sampled speeches examined in this study, it is imperative to accentuate that the utilisation of linguistic elements of persuasion surpassed that of communicative elements, with pragmatic elements constituting the final tier. These findings are elaborated upon in the subsequent sections (6.3.2.1 - 6.3.2.3) for a more comprehensive understanding.

6.3.2.1. Findings on communicative elements of persuasion

Several communicative elements of persuasion emerged including *credibility*, *likability*, *familiarity*, *statistics*, *evidentiality*, *name-calling*, *imaginability*, and *power*.

In terms of *credibility*, the findings from this study align with previous research that emphasises the importance of credibility in persuasive communication (Okeefe, 1990). All three presidents used various strategies to enhance their credibility, such as referring to experts' advice or providing statistical evidence. For example, in **PXJS4-DS5**, Jinping reflected on China's past support and assistance to other countries in need, which bolsters his credibility.

The presence of *likability* as a communicative element of persuasion in the speeches of Ramaphosa and Trump resonates with prior research on the impact of emotions and personal appeal in persuasive messages, as demonstrated by Cacioppo et al. (1993). All presidents used expressions to connect with their audiences and evoke emotional responses. For example, in **PDTS3-DS4**, Trump emphasised (i.e., primary goal) that the testing system in his country was developed faster than anywhere else in the world, aiming to generate a positive sentiment and seek liking from his audience, thus making his message more appealing and persuasive.

Further, the utilisation of *familiarity* as a communicative element of persuasion in Ramaphosa and Trump's speeches is consistent with Reber, Winkielman and Schwarz (1998), who argue that familiarity can enhance message reception and comprehension. By referencing past events or experiences, Ramaphosa and Trump create a sense of connection with their audiences. For example, in **PCRS2-DS3**, Ramaphosa skillfully employed the element of familiarity by

referring to past events and developments that have occurred over the past week, enhancing the persuasiveness of his message.

Moreover, the use of *statistics* as a communicative element of persuasion in the speeches of all three presidents reflects the power of evidence-based information in political persuasion, as noted by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). For instance, in **PXJS3-DS1**, Jinping aimed to attain credibility in his message by providing statistics on the countries and people affected by Covid-19.

Similarly, the presence of *evidentiality* in the speeches of Ramaphosa and Trump resonates with a previous study that highlights the importance of providing evidence and justification for claims in persuasive communication (Byrne & Hart, 2009). By referring to research, expert advice, or historical events, the presidents sought to enhance the credibility of their messages. For example, in **PDST4-DS4**, Trump used evidentiality as an element of persuasion to present his response as the best course of action.

Furthermore, the emergence of *name-calling* as a communicative element of persuasion in Trump's speeches is consistent with a study on negative campaigning and the use of derogatory language in political communication (Nendauni, Sadiki & Baloyi, 2021). Trump employed name-calling to criticise China. For instance, in **PDTS4-DS1**, Trump referred to Covid-19 as the 'China virus' to sway both Americans and the global community into assigning blame to China, as it was the epicenter of the Covid-19 outbreak. The other two presidents did not employ name-calling in the sampled speeches examined in this study. This could be attributed to their greater caution in avoiding the elicitation of negative emotions among certain individuals, instead prioritising the cultivation of alliances.

Additionally, the use of *imaginability* as a communicative element of persuasion in Trump's speech reflects the persuasive power of evoking mental images and connecting with the audience's experiences (Smith & Shaffer, 2000). By referring to historical events and familiar situations, Trump aimed to make his message more relatable and understandable. For example, in **PDTS1-DS4**, Trump utilised imaginability as a linguistic element of persuasion to evoke citizens' emotions and beliefs.

Lastly, the findings on *power* as a communicative element of persuasion across the speeches of all three presidents align with a previous study on the influence of authority and power dynamics in persuasive communication (Dillard, 2004). The presidents used different forms of power, such as expert, legitimate, referent, and reward power, to influence their audiences. For

instance, in **PXJS3-DS1**, Jinping employs legitimate power by emphasizing his position as the President of China to assure the audience of the country's commitment to providing support during the pandemic.

In summary, the interplay of *credibility*, *likability*, *familiarity*, *statistics*, *evidentiality*, *name-calling*, *imaginability*, and *power* contributes to shaping public perceptions and attitudes. These communicative elements play a crucial role in the success of political persuasion by effectively influencing and engaging the targets. The more favourable the view of the president; the more easily people may be persuaded. Furthermore, the discussion in this section reflects that whilst Trump is focused on popularity amongst the American citizens in opposition of China, Ramaphosa and Jinping are more focused on influencing their people to consider a global community in combatting the virus.

The next subsection discusses findings on linguistic elements of persuasion, which are a means through which communicative elements are realised in communication. For example, using personal pronouns such as “we” or “I” can create a sense of inclusivity or personal connection (communicative element) and is a linguistic element. Likewise, employing humour or storytelling (communicative elements) involves selecting specific linguistic elements such as allegories, idioms, or metaphors to convey the humour or narrative effectively.

6.3.2.2. Findings on linguistic elements of persuasion

The findings of this study on linguistic elements of persuasion in the analysed speeches of Presidents Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping provide valuable insights into how these leaders utilised language to influence and persuade their audiences. Linguistic elements guide perceptions about the communicative elements associated with each president (as discussed in Section. 6.3.3.1). For instance, the study reveals that all three presidents employed pronouns strategically to enhance persuasion. Ramaphosa for example, used *inclusive* “we” to create a sense of unity and collective responsibility among citizens. On the other hand, Trump used *inclusive* “we” to involve the audience in his government's actions, while Jinping used *exclusive* “we” to show solidarity with Africa on behalf of all Chinese citizens. This finding aligns with previous research on pronoun usage in political discourse, where pronouns are often employed to foster a sense of shared identity, responsibility, and unity (e.g., Halliday, 1975).

Insights gained from the findings of this study indicate that the use of the first-person pronoun ‘I’ and its plural form ‘we’ holds significant implications for the source’s positioning in relation to the targets. The plural form is more dominant in the speeches, indicating inclusiveness, collectiveness, or a sense of togetherness between the source and the targets.

A previous study in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1965) has also explored the role of *conjunctions* in creating cohesion and coherence in political discourse, as well as their persuasive functions in connecting ideas and clarifying points. This study also identified the use of various types of conjunctions in the analysed sampled speeches, such as additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunctions. For example, in **PDTS1-DS3**, Trump used the additive conjunction “and” to advise the citizens that if they adopt the tough measures, they will ultimately defeat the virus.

Like *imaginability* discussed under communicative elements, *metaphors* and *idioms* were also found to be powerful linguistic elements of persuasion in the presidents’ speeches. Ramaphosa used metaphors to activate the audience’s imagination and emotions, for example, in **PCRS2-DS1**, Ramaphosa employed an extended metaphor or allegory, comparing Covid-19 to a public emergency or crisis.

Similarly, Trump and Jinping employed *militaristic/war metaphors* to evoke a sense of fear and urgency. This relates to the discussion in Section 5.2.2 on linguistic elements of persuasion and it ties with *symbolism* as a communicative element of persuasion as discussed specifically in Section 5.2.2.1. For example, in **PXJS1-DS8**, Trump used a militaristic metaphor by likening the fight against Covid-19 to a battle. This finding concurs with Blankshain, Glick and Lupton (2023) who report that within the context of Covid-19, war metaphors were important in “preparing the population for hard times; showing compassion, concern and empathy; persuading the citizens to change their behaviour, ensuring their acceptance of extraordinary rules, sacrifices; boosting national sentiments and resilience, as well as in constructing enemies and shifting responsibility”.

Additionally, all three presidents used *idiomatic expressions/idioms* to create a stronger emotional impact and appeal to cultural and shared values. For example, in **PDTS3-DS7**, Trump used the idiomatic expression “give our blood” to convey a sense of willingness to help and support others in need. This pertains to the earlier discussion on *inclusive “we”* which creates a sense of unity and shared responsibility. Also, this in turn ties with the *share activity goal* as discussed in Section 5.2.1.1. This shows that goals, elements and strategies, all form

network system of persuasion, this will be explicit in the section to follow. Previous studies on the use of metaphors and idioms in political discourse have highlighted their persuasive potential in evoking emotions and influencing attitudes (Charteris-Black, 2013; Charteris-Black & Musolff, 2003).

This study finds that Ramaphosa and Trump used *lexical repetition* to add emphasis and credibility to their messages. In this regard, *credibility*, as a crucial aspect of persuasive communication, complements lexical repetition, a linguistic element of persuasion. This is because credibility enhances the emphasis and truthfulness of the president's statements, ultimately rendering them more convincing and thereby facilitating the persuasive process. For example, in **PDTS1-DS9**, Trump employed lexical repetition with the adverb "very" to enhance the persuasiveness of his advice to the nation. Repetition is a well-known rhetorical device used by political leaders to reinforce key points and make their messages more memorable and persuasive (Charteris-Black, 2006).

Similarly, the study reveals the use of *modal verbs* like "can", "must", and "should" by the presidents to express possibilities, obligations, and suggestions. From the analysed data, modals were used differently to achieve different primary goals such as *change orientation* (mostly to model citizens behaviour towards Covid-9) and secondary goal such as *identity goal*, which expresses the ability of the persuader (presidents). For example, **PXJS4-DS5**, Jinping used the modal "must" to command his government officials to prioritise the well-being of the people. Modal verbs play a crucial role in persuasion by indicating the source's stance and influencing the targets' perception of the likelihood and necessity of certain actions (Holmes & Stubbe, 2015).

This study also finds *personification* to be a persuasive linguistic element used only by Jinping in the analysed data. Personification humanises abstract concepts, like the virus, and can evoke emotions and empathy among the audience. A previous study on figurative language and persuasion has shown the effectiveness of personification in creating emotional connections and enhancing the persuasiveness of messages (Chen, Chen, Azman, Deng, Sun, Zhao, Zheng, Chen, Lu, Zhuang & Yang, 2021:602).

Overall, the findings of the study demonstrate that linguistic elements, such as *pronouns*, *conjunctions*, *metaphors*, *idioms*, *lexical repetition*, *modals*, and *personification*, play a crucial role in shaping the persuasiveness of political speeches. These linguistic elements were used by presidents to create emotional connections, foster a sense of shared identity, and influence

attitudes and behaviours among their citizens. In addition, the connection between linguistic and communicative elements of persuasion has become clear. Lastly, the next subsection discusses the findings on pragmatic elements of persuasion.

6.3.2.3. Findings on pragmatic elements of persuasion

Several pragmatic elements of persuasion were identified in the findings of this study. These pragmatic elements play a crucial role in influencing and persuading the targets to comply with Covid-19 protocols.

The use of *presuppositions* in Ramaphosa and Trumps speeches as a pragmatic element of persuasion present certain ideas as already accepted or true. For example, in **PDTS4-DS2**, Trump uses the presupposition “as you know” to assume that his audience is already informed about the situation he is referring to, namely the setting of records in Covid-19 testing. By using this presupposition, Trump frames his statement as an update or reminder rather than new information, this relates to the *give advice goal* as discussed on Section 5.2.1.1. This can influence the citizens’ perception and make them more likely to accept the presented information. The study’s findings align with Sadiki (2017), who argues that presuppositions increase the persuasiveness of discourse by implying notions that the audience must accept as true. It is vital to note that presupposition as a pragmatic element of persuasion is related to ‘*shared knowledge and presuppositions*’ which is a linguistic strategy of persuasion, as they both rely on preexisting, shared information.

Also, the presidents’ use of *politeness* as a pragmatic element of persuasion in their speeches, as observed in Ramaphosa’s religious references, Trump’s expressions of gratitude, and Jinping’s salutation to other leaders, is consistent with Garcia (2005) who highlights the significance of politeness in persuasion. For example, in **PCRS2-DS10**, Ramaphosa used politeness by invoking religious phrases and blessings, addressing the diverse South African population in different languages, and expressing gratitude with “I thank you”. It is important to highlight that both positive and negative politeness strategies are employed to show that the presidents respect the audience. The focus, however, is more positive because the presidents want the targets to stand together. Politeness can enhance *likability*, which is a communicative element of persuasion (refer to Section 6.3.2.1) and positively influences the audience’s perception of the speaker, leading to increased persuasiveness.

Lastly, Trump's use of *self-referencing* in his speech adds emphasis to the accomplishments of his administration and bolsters his credibility (a communicative element of persuasion previously discussed in Section 6.3.2.1) as a leader. Credibility also allows for a collaborative community of practice, which results in the *gain assistance goal* and the *share activity goal*. For example, in **PDTS3-DS5**, Trump referred to his administration's efforts in distributing medical supplies through Project Air Bridge and praises the work of his team. This pragmatic element aligns with studies that emphasise the importance of self-referencing to enhance persuasiveness and credibility (Smith & Brehm, 1981).

In brief, this study uncovered various pragmatic elements of persuasion within the speeches of leaders concerning Covid-19 protocols. These elements encompassed the utilisation of *presuppositions* to frame information as pre-accepted, the employment of *politeness* to augment likability and demonstrate respect towards the audience, and the implementation of *self-referencing* to reinforce the leaders' credibility. These persuasive elements are observed to be efficacious in shaping compliance behaviours and augmenting the persuasive efficacy of the leaders' rhetorical communication.

To sum up, this overall section discussed findings on communicative, linguistic and pragmatic elements of persuasion supplemented by examples from the analysed data and reviewed literature to enhance the discussion. Also, there were variations in the presidents' usage of elements of persuasion. Trump's communication approach involves elements of persuasion through argumentation, attacks, and negative terminology whereas Ramaphosa and Jinping focus on unity and finding solutions. These findings shed light on the different elements employed by the presidents in addressing the Covid-19 pandemic and its implications.

The speeches delivered by the three presidents exhibited various syntactic elements, including pronominal reference, parallelism, compounding, subordination, interrogative sentences, declaration sentences, and syntactic inversions. While these elements were prevalent in the speeches of Ramaphosa and Trump, they were more abundant in Ramaphosa's speech. This difference can be attributed to the fact that Ramaphosa's speeches are lengthier and more elaborative compared to those of Trump and Jinping. Jinping's speeches, on the other hand, contain more parallel structures and interrogatives, possibly due to his inclination towards rhetorical questions. However, he does seem to have a strong preference for employing rich vocabulary and imagery. This may also be a characteristic that reflects the cultural context of the different countries.

In all 15 speeches, the presidents employed salutations to create a sense of familiarity, particularly when emphasising information that the audience already knew about the virus. Additionally, all presidents employed elements of persuasion to actively engage the targets in the discussion of the subject matter (Covid-19 protocols compliance). Ramaphosa and Jinping's direct engagement with the audience is appropriately balanced and proportional, while Trump's engagement appears commanding and unbalanced due to his forceful nature. The direct appeal in his speeches also has a persuasive effect, making his listeners believe in the promises presented on stage.

This study also finds that Trump utilised elements of persuasion by engaging in argumentation, attacks, and assigning blame regarding the topic of the virus. This approach fails to contribute to raising awareness and providing necessary support and information in a vast nation like the United States, which, as suggested by Baker and Oneal (2001), could benefit from effective leadership. Furthermore, Trump employed name-calling as a linguistic element and used negative terminology such as "loser", "worst", and "wrong" to depict his adversaries and other countries that he believed were responsible for the spread of Covid-19.

Having discussed findings on elements of persuasion, the upcoming section delves into the discussion of the findings related to communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic strategies of persuasion. Contrary to the perspective of Adeyinka (2012:98), who argues that the line between elements and strategies of persuasion is narrow, this study's findings present a different viewpoint, as it reveals that strategies are derived from elements of persuasion. This finding is consistent with the research of scholars such as Komar (2015), Chua (2015) and Kilner (2015).

This study submits that there is a clear and significant distinction between elements and strategies of persuasion. From the findings of this study (refer to Section 5.2.2.3), elements of persuasion form the fundamental building blocks that underpin the effectiveness of persuasive communication, drawing upon psychological principles that can be applied across diverse persuasive situations. On the other hand, strategies of persuasion refer to specific techniques or approaches employed with the intent to achieve communicative goals. Strategies often involve the intentional and coordinated application of multiple elements to enhance persuasive outcomes. Therefore, this study submits that elements serve as the foundational components while strategies represent the deliberate methods used to wield persuasive influence effectively. In simple terms, elements of persuasion provide the raw materials or tools, while strategies of

persuasion are the methods or tactics used to craft and deliver persuasive messages (refer to Section 3.3 for detailed explication). This distinction is evident in the discussion below.

6.3.3 Strategies of persuasion

The findings of this study show that the three presidents employed various strategies of persuasion to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of their targets. These strategies draw upon psychological principles and persuasive techniques. Table 6.4 below provides a summary of the strategies of persuasion found in this study.

Table 6. 4: Summary of strategies of persuasion utilised by the three presidents

Strategies of persuasion		
Communicative strategies	Linguistic strategies	Pragmatic strategies
Propaganda	Presentation strategy	Praising
Manipulation	Analogy	Emotional blackmail
Fear appeal	Symbolism	Justification
Coercion	Shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world	Appeal to Justice
Assertion		Conditioning
Audience-use		Promise
Authority appeal		
Bargaining		
Benefit (Other)		
Punishing activity		
Expertise		
Activation of impersonal commitments		
Predicational strategy		

As apparent from Table 6.4, presidents employed a range of persuasion strategies, wherein communicative strategies took precedence, succeeded by pragmatic strategies, while linguistic strategies were employed to a lesser extent. These findings are elaborated upon in the subsequent sections for a more in-depth exploration.

6.3.3.1 Findings on communicative strategies of persuasion

The findings on communicative strategies of persuasion reveal a range of strategies used to gain compliance and support for the presidents' respective responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. One prevalent communicative strategy of persuasion found in the study is *coercion*,

which involves employing threats or force to compel compliance. In some instances, Ramaphosa and Trump's speeches demonstrated elements of coercion, using strong language to emphasise the consequences of not adhering to certain measures, thus creating an integration of communicative strategies of persuasion and linguistic elements of persuasion. For example, in **PCRS2-DS7**, Ramaphosa employed coercion as a persuasive strategy by declaring that individuals involved in corrupt activities will face physical arrest. In this regard, coercion was employed to achieve the goal of *enforce rights and obligations*. However, earlier researchers such as Perloff (2003:12-13) and Moorosi (2009:16) indicate that while coercion might yield short-term results, it often leads to resistance and negative reactions from the audience, limiting its long-term effectiveness. Conspicuously, Jinping did not show usage of coercion, while Ramaphosa and Trump did.

Overlapping with coercion, *fear appeal* emerged as another significant communicative strategy of persuasion used by Ramaphosa. Fear appeal aims to evoke fear in the targets by emphasising the negative consequences of not complying with proposed actions. Ramaphosa utilised fear appeal in his speeches to highlight the potential risks of not following the prescribed Covid-19 guidelines. For example, in **PCRS1-DS4**, Ramaphosa employed fear appeal as a persuasive strategy by emphasising the consequences suffered by countries that failed to exercise caution. Additionally, he induces fear appeal by warning citizens about the potential consequences if they fail to comply. Previous studies have shown that fear appeals can be effective if the audience perceives the threat as personally relevant and believes that the proposed actions can mitigate it, thus achieving compliance (Ralarala, 2010; Sadiki, 2017:45). According to Boshoff (2021) fear appeals are powerful motivators in attempt to persuade people to change their attitude and behaviours.

Appeal to authority and *expertise* strategies were also evident in the presidents' speeches. By leveraging their positions of power and presenting credible experts, they sought to enhance the credibility of their messages thus achieving the *gain assistance goal*. For example, In **PXJS3-DS3**, Jinping employed authority appeal by speaking as the chairman in the BRICS setup. Also, in **PXJS3-DS7**, Jinping established an attachment to authoritative expertise by mentioning an expert like Dr. Tedros, the leader of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Research has shown that appeals to authority (Miller & Charney, 2009) and expertise (Burgoon, Dunbar & Segrin, 2004:168-169) can increase the persuasiveness of messages, especially when the targets perceive the communicator or the expert as knowledgeable and trustworthy.

The *benefit strategy* was employed by all three presidents to emphasise the positive outcomes that would result from complying with their proposed measures. For example, in **PDTS1-DS3**, Trump utilised the benefit strategy as a communicative technique by expressing confidence that taking tough measures will significantly reduce the threat to citizens and ultimately defeat the virus. By promising positive outcomes, such as reduced threats and victory over the virus, Trump aims to encourage compliance from the public. This strategy aims to tap into individuals' self-interest and desire for positive outcomes, increasing the likelihood of compliance. Earlier study supports the effectiveness of framing messages in terms of benefits to promote behaviour change (Dillard, 1998:24).

Additionally, the *audience-use* strategy was observed, with all presidents making public appeals to their respective target audiences. For example, in **PXJS1-DS9**, Jinping called on G20 members to enhance anti-epidemic information sharing and promote comprehensive, systematic, and effective control and treatment protocols. This strategy aligns with earlier studies, which have shown the impact of public appeals in influencing behaviour (Perloff, 2003:12-13). This study submits that audience-use can create social pressure and foster a sense of collective responsibility, encouraging compliance with the proposed actions.

Furthermore, some speeches also revealed elements of *manipulation*, where deceptive tactics were used to influence the targets' beliefs and actions. For example, in **PCRS3-DS7**, Ramaphosa employed manipulation to persuade the audience to support the continuation of the lockdown. By highlighting the potentially dire consequences of ending the lockdown too soon or abruptly, he appeals to the audience's emotional and mental concerns, aiming to influence them into accepting the need to endure the lockdown further. In this regard, Ramaphosa sought to achieve the *obtain permission goal*, this is evident through the adoption of the verb "ask", as Ramaphosa requests the public to endure the lockdown for a longer period. Manipulation in persuasive communication can lead to a loss of trust and undesirable outcomes. This study, therefore, submits that it is essential to consider the ethical implications of using manipulation as a persuasive strategy.

Lastly, the *predicational strategy* also emerged as a communicative strategy of persuasion in one of Trump's speeches, attributing negative qualities or blame to other actors, specifically China. The point in case is of **PDTS4-DS3**, wherein Trump aimed to shift blame or responsibility away from his administration to China. Predicational strategy is common in

political discourse and aims to shift blame or responsibility away from oneself. However, such a strategy can perpetuate negative stereotypes and create a divisive narrative.

The discussion in this section presented findings on communicative strategies of persuasion employed by Presidents Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping in their sampled speeches pertaining to covid-19 pandemic. The study reveals a range of communicative strategies used to gain compliance and support for their respective responses. Notably, *coercion, fear appeal, appeal to authority, expertise, benefit, audience-use, manipulation, and predication strategy*. These strategies were applied with varying degrees of effectiveness and ethical considerations. This study submits that there is a correlation between the communicative strategies and the goals pursued by the three presidents. For instance, *fear appeal*, employed predominantly by Ramaphosa, aimed to induce fear in the audience aligning with his goal of change orientation (to ensure adherence to Covid-19 guidelines).

The findings also demonstrate that the use of *appeal to authority* and *expertise* strategies enhanced message credibility to attain assistance from audiences, thus allowing the presidents to achieve their primary and secondary goals. The *benefit strategy*, utilised by all presidents, emphasised positive outcomes to boost compliance, more especially when they pursue the *resource goal* (secondary goal). Public appeals to target audiences demonstrated the *audience-use* strategy, fostering collective responsibility. *Manipulation*, seen in some speeches, raised ethical concerns as it aimed to influence beliefs deceptively.

In summary, these presidents' communicative strategies closely aligned with their goals, reflecting a nuanced relationship. The next subsection discusses findings on linguistic strategies of persuasion.

6.3.3.2 Findings on linguistic strategies of persuasion

The linguistic strategies of persuasion employed by Presidents Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping in their speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic were diverse and skillfully utilised to influence public perception and response. By employing linguistic strategies of persuasion such as *presentational strategy, analogy, symbolism, shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world*, they sought to engage the emotions and intellect of the citizens. These linguistic strategies played a crucial role in gathering public support, encouraging compliance, instilling confidence, and fostering a united response to the global health crisis. As the world navigated

the challenges of the pandemic, the effective use of language by these presidents became a vital tool in shaping the course of their respective nations' responses and actions during this unprecedented time.

President Ramaphosa and Trump used *presentational strategy* to persuade citizens to comply. For example, in **PCRS2-DS9**, Ramaphosa effectively employed the presentational strategy to enhance the persuasiveness of his speech. The rhythmic flow of his words and the use of repetition in phrases such as “days, weeks, and months ahead” and “our resolve, our resourcefulness, and our unity” create a captivating and memorable effect on the audience. This combination of rhetorical devices and emotional appeals is particularly effective in capturing the attention and engaging the emotions of the targets, driving home key messages related to the pandemic. The findings of this study in Section 5.2.2.2 demonstrate that repetition makes the uttered statement earn credibility and emphasise the truthfulness of their statements.

Also, the presidents (Ramaphosa, Trump & Jinping) made use of *analogy* as a linguistic strategy of persuasion. For example, in **PDTS2-DS10**, Trump strategically used analogy by alternating between the present and the future in his speech. By making the analogy between the prompt action taken on China and the need to take the same action with Europe, Trump emphasised the critical time in the fight against the virus. This comparison between past actions and the urgency of future actions serves to persuade the audience to support his decision to protect the lives and well-being of the American people.

Symbolism is one of the linguistic strategies of persuasion that was also evident in Trump's speeches. For example, in **PDTS2-DS8**, Trump strategically employed the term “our country” as a symbol to effect persuasion. By using the word “country” to refer to Americans, he taps into a sense of nationalism and patriotism. Drawing from earlier discussion on communication and linguistic elements of persuasion in preceding sections, it is relevant to submit that there is a similarity among symbols, personification and metaphor because they are all forms of figurative language used to convey meaning beyond literal interpretation.

Like the above discussed communicative strategies of persuasion in Section 6.3.3.1, from a negative orientation, strong and assertive language was strategically used to emphasise authority and leadership. This use of power language conveyed confidence and asserted the legitimacy of proposed actions. Like presupposition in pragmatic elements of persuasion, presidents also used ‘shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world’ to enhance persuasiveness. Similarly, Ramaphosa appeals to *shared knowledge and presupposition about*

the world in **PCRS1-DS9**, assuming that his audience is aware of the gravity of the situation. This linguistic strategy aligns with Johnstone's (1989) notion of the rhythmic flow of words and the appropriation of shared rules for interpretation to achieve communicative goals. By referring to commonly accepted information and assumptions, presidents created a sense of continuity and shared understanding, making their messages more relevant and persuasive to the audience.

The discussion in this section covered findings on linguistic strategies of persuasion employed by the three presidents during the Covid-19 pandemic. Linguistic strategies discussed in this section include *presentational strategy*, *analogy*, *symbolism*, *shared knowledge* and *presuppositions about the world*. These strategies were used to influence public perception, gather support, and foster a united response. The next section discusses findings on the pragmatic strategies of persuasion.

6.3.3.3 Findings on pragmatic strategies of persuasion

The speeches of Trump, Ramaphosa, and Jinping during the Covid-19 pandemic provided valuable insights into the pragmatic strategies of persuasion employed by presidents to mobilise public support and shape behaviour. For instance, the presidents adeptly utilised *emotional appeals* to resonate with their targets' feelings and values. In **PDTS3-DS10**, for example, Trump employed emotional appeal to achieve the *gain assistance goal*, capitalising on the public's longing for normalcy and sports by promising the restoration of these cherished aspects of life once strict measures are followed. In this regard, Trump has adopted directive speech acts to appeals to the sentiments of the targets. Similarly, Ramaphosa utilised emotional appeals in **PCRS1-DS6**, warning that fear and ignorance pose a greater danger to the country than the virus itself. By evoking emotions related to health and security, the presidents aimed to persuade their citizens to comply with the prescribed measures.

The speeches of Trump and Ramaphosa featured *justifications* as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion to explain their decisions and actions. For, example, Trump justified his imposition of a national emergency in **PDTS2-DS6** to unleash the full power of the federal government and secure funds for combating the disease. This entails a clear directive to swiftly stem the spread of the virus, indicating the need for decisive international cooperation. It is, therefore, an example of directive speech acts, that was uttered to achieve one of the primary goals known as *enforce rights and obligations*. Similarly, Ramaphosa justified the declaration of a state of

disaster in **PCRS1-DS2** based on the severity of the current wave of the virus. These justifications align with a previous study that highlights the importance of providing reasons and rationale to enhance the persuasiveness of political communication (Chong & Druckman, 2012).

The pragmatic strategy of *conditioning* was also evident in the speeches of all three presidents. Conditionals as a syntactic structure are often employed to formulate a speech act of promising or threat (Maguire, 2021). For example, in **PCRS1-DS9**, Ramaphosa conditions the success of the fight against the virus on the active participation of various sectors. Trump employed mild conditioning in **PDTS1-DS8**, indicating that travel restrictions will be adjusted based on the prevailing conditions. Likewise, in **PXJS1-DS4**, Jinping used conditioning as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion when he asserts that life and work are returning to normal, but China will not lower its guard or relax control. This finding on conditioning aligns with Levinson and Toribio (2015) who emphasise the role of conditional language in shaping behaviour.

Promise emerged as a widely used pragmatic strategy of persuasion across the speeches of all three presidents. For example, in **PCRS5-DS2**, Ramaphosa promised to continue saving lives in the coming weeks and months. Similarly, Trump promises a positive outcome through collective action in **PDTS2-DS3**, and Jinping promised restored global economic confidence in **PXJS1-DS7**. According to Springston, Avery and Sallot (2010:34), a promise is an effective persuasive tool, known to motivate action and create expectations.

Furthermore, all three presidents utilised *praise* as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion to enhance their credibility and motivate their citizens. For example, Ramaphosa praised the faith community in **PCRS4-DS3**, Trump lauded the efforts of his administration in **PDTS2-DS2**, and Jinping praises the Chinese people in **PXJS4-DS1** for their sacrifice in fighting the virus. This finding aligns with Li, Guo, Wang and Zhang (2016), who report that praise is a persuasive tool that fosters positive attitudes and cooperation.

This section discussed the pragmatic strategies of persuasion drawn from the findings of the study, including *emotional appeals*, *justifications*, *conditioning*, *praise*, and *promises*, all aimed at mobilising public support and shaping behaviours of the targets in their respective nations. The presidents effectively harnessed *emotional appeals* through *directive speech acts* to establish a connection with the emotions and values of their constituents. Moreover, they strategically utilised *justifications* to elucidate the rationale behind their decisions, thereby augmenting the persuasiveness of their discourse. The deployment of *conditioning*, manifested

using *conditionals*, served to link commitments and potential consequences to specific circumstances, thereby exerting influence on behavioural patterns. Furthermore, they utilised expressions of *praise* to enhance their *credibility* and inspire their targets, cultivating positive attitudes and cooperative tendencies. Notably, *promise* emerged as a prevailing and influential pragmatic strategy, stimulating proactive engagement and fostering the formation of expectations.

Drawing from the overall discussion in this section, this study reveals various communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic strategies utilised by the presidents to gain compliance and support for their responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings reveal that while elements of persuasion serve as foundational components contributing to the effectiveness of persuasive communication, strategies of persuasion encompass specific techniques or approaches employed to achieve persuasive goals.

The study's findings demonstrate that presidents utilised a variety of communicative strategies to influence the audience's beliefs, emotions, and attitudes, thereby increasing the likelihood of gaining compliance and support during the pandemic. Linguistic strategies were employed to make persuasive communication more impactful using various linguistic tools. Moreover, pragmatic strategies were utilised to bolster their persuasive efforts. The next section delves into the implications of 'theory triangulation' in this study.

6.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theories are essential in guiding researchers in achieving their research objectives and understanding various aspects of social life (Blaikie & Priest, 2017). A well-constructed theoretical framework is crucial as it links all aspects of the research and generates academically plausible findings that have the potential to advance new knowledge. In this study, the researcher asserts that the adopted theories were relevant and applicable to the subject under investigation. The study employed a 'theory triangulation' approach, incorporating multiple theoretical lenses within the SFL framework to gain a comprehensive understanding of persuasion in the political context. The study utilised theoretical tools including Goals-Plans-Actions theory by Dilliard (1989), Linguistic Propaganda Identification model by Maritz (2019), and the Speech Act theory by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969).

To explore persuasion within the broader SFL framework, the researcher adopted Maritz's (2019) Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (LPIM), which focuses on propaganda as a form of persuasion, to analyse the systematic use of language in creating persuasive narratives, establishing credibility, evoking emotional responses, and controlling the narrative to achieve communicative goals. LPIM contained linguistic elements of propaganda, another form of persuasion, making it relevant to this study. As a product of SFL, LPIM, illustrated how persuasion operated linguistically. However, although it provided valuable insights into language manipulation, it had limitations in fully addressing the interface between communicative goals, plans, and actions.

SAT, which emphasises the performative nature of language, where utterances are not solely descriptive but also aimed at accomplishing specific goals or performing actions, was then incorporated into the framework. SAT aligns with SFL but focuses on pragmatics. In this context, SAT examined the meaning and intention of language in fulfilling a specific purpose, acknowledging that linguistic forms could convey more than what was on the surface, making goals not always explicit. For instance, various speech acts, such as assertions, directives, representatives, and requests, were strategically employed by the presidents to achieve their communicative goals, including influencing citizens' behaviour change regarding Covid-19.

The researcher employed linguistic forms from LPIM and pragmatic frames from SAT to examine how goals, plans, and actions manifested through language. Since LPIM and SAT do not account for plans, goals and actions, the researcher incorporated the Goals Plans Action theory (Dillard, 1989), which posits that communication is strategic, motivated, and purposive, and that message production results from a goal-driven process. However, while GPA provided insights into communicative goals, it did not fully account for the micro-level linguistic features embodying these goals, creating a linguistic gap. Therefore, the adoption of LPIM and SAT helped uncover hidden discourses in persuasive texts (presidential speeches) and allowed for the analysis of language choices shaping and reflecting social relations and presidents' communicative goals.

The study aims to shed light on how linguistic choices, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure, are strategically employed to achieve specific communicative goals in political speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic. The SFL framework allowed for the analysis of language choices that shape and reflect social relations and presidents' communicative goals, such as identifying additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunctions in their speeches,

Additionally, the role of registers, influenced by field, tenor, and mode (Bowcher, 2009), was considered. At the lexical level, appropriate registers were incorporated by the presidents to address various Covid-19 related topics and establish their identity and authority when giving directives and suggestions. Overall, these theoretical lenses complemented each other, resulting in a comprehensive analysis of goal-oriented political speeches and their persuasive elements, providing a deeper understanding of how linguistic choices, speech acts, communicative goals, and persuasion elements interacted in shaping the effectiveness of presidential communication during the crisis.

By employing multiple theoretical perspectives and frameworks, the study enhanced the robustness of its findings and conclusions. Theory triangulation allowed for a comprehensive examination of the data, providing a more holistic understanding of the communicative goals, elements, and strategies of persuasion utilised by the presidents during Covid-19 pandemic. This theoretical approach strengthens the validity and reliability of this study's findings, and it offers valuable insights for future research in the field of persuasive communication.

6.5 REVISED COMPREHENSIVE MODEL

As mentioned in Section 6.2 the provisional model served as a temporary structure subject to further development, refinement, or modification. Building upon the findings of this study and the theoretical implications discussed in Section 6.4, this section presents a revised model (Figure 6.2). The revised model is compiled based on the empirical findings and includes the most relevant features.

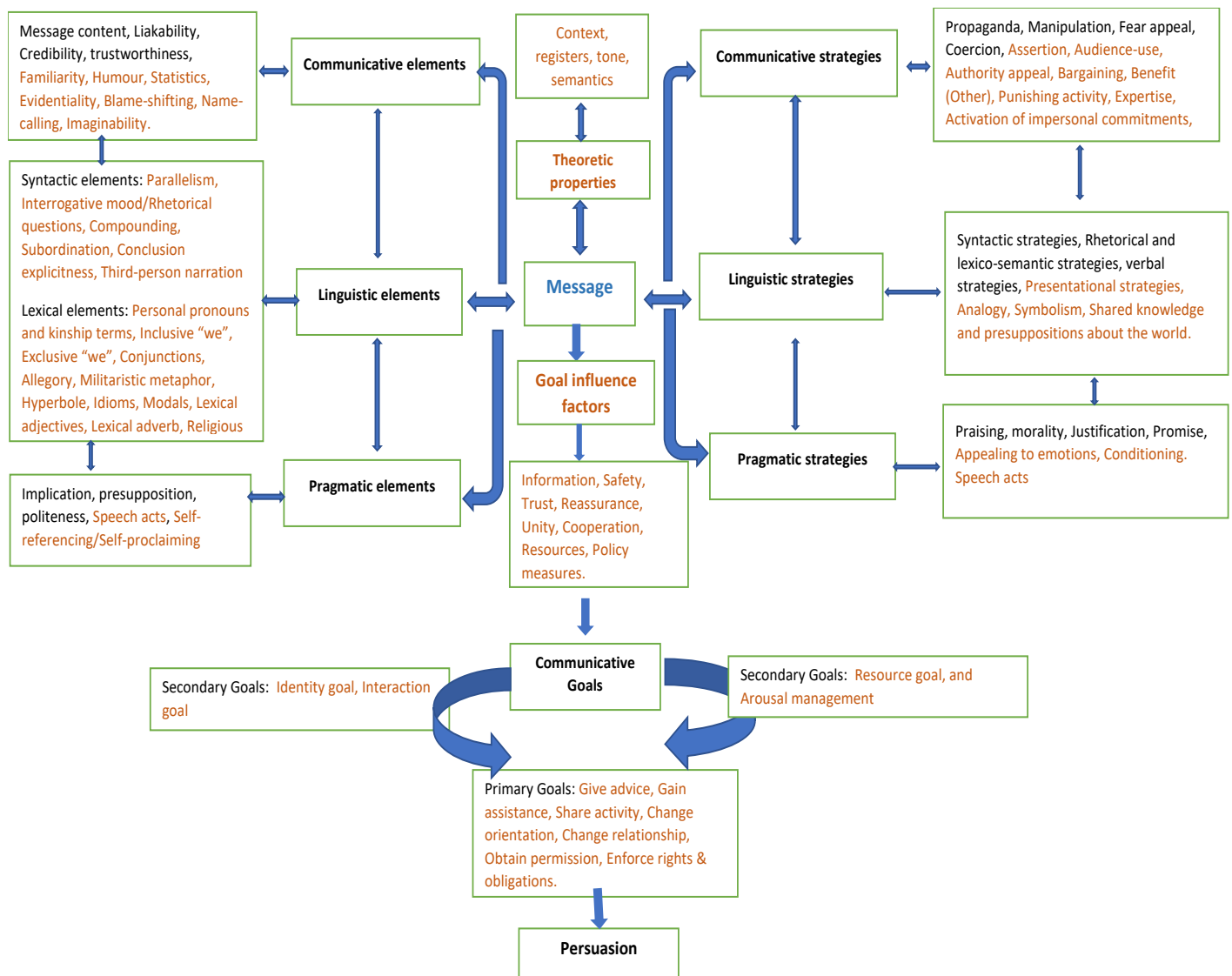


Figure 6. 2: Revised comprehensive model of persuasion

In contrast to the provisional model, the revised model comprises a total of six categories. The original four categories, namely *message*, *communicative goals*, *elements of persuasion*, and *strategies of persuasion*, have been retained, while two new categories have been incorporated: *goal influence factors* and *theoretic properties of persuasion*. Each of these six categories plays

a vital role in understanding how communicative goals are pursued through linguistic choices in the context of political persuasion, and they are discussed in detail in the subsequent sections below.

6.5.1 Message

In the revised model, the first major category, *message*, remains unchanged from the provisional model and plays a central and crucial role. Within the model, sources, particularly presidents delivering Covid-19 related speeches, express their specific goals through linguistic tools of persuasion within the message. The message serves as the primary means of persuasion, wielding the power to influence the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of the targets. Without a compelling message, the act of persuasion becomes ineffective, rendering the other five categories irrelevant.

The overarching objective of the message is to persuade others by skillfully presenting arguments, evidence, and emotional appeals related to the Covid-19 situation. By analysing the content of the message, the current researcher uncovered the elements and strategies of persuasion employed by the presidents, providing valuable insights into the mechanisms of persuasion at work in their speeches.

In summary, the message serves as the conduit for persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches, encompassing the model's essential aspects. It holds a pivotal position within the revised model, acting as the cornerstone upon which the other categories build. Now, the discussion delves into the second major category that was adopted from the provisional model, the 'elements of persuasion', which has undergone modifications.

6.5.2 Elements of persuasion

The revised model presents an insightful interplay between communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements in the context of political persuasion, demonstrating their harmonious clustering to achieve communicative goals in presidential Covid-19 related speeches. Conspicuously, the communicative elements of persuasion from the provisional model, encompassing *message content*, *likability*, *credibility*, and *trustworthiness*, remain integral to the revised model due to their significance in influencing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in politics.

However, in the revised model, additional communicative elements have been included, such as *familiarity, humour, statistics, evidentiality, blame-shifting, name-calling, imaginability, schadenfreude, and power*. These elements were predominantly employed by Trump, Ramaphosa, and Jinping in their pursuit of communicative goals. The use of ‘power’ as a communicative element of persuasion is evident across all the analysed speeches. For instance, Trump strengthens his recommendation on wearing masks in **PDTS2-DS3** by citing the advice of medical experts, leveraging expert power for increased credibility and persuasiveness. Also, Jinping emphasised his position as the President of China in **PXJS3-DS1**, utilising legitimate power to assure the audience of the country’s commitment to providing support during the pandemic. Similarly, Ramaphosa tapped into referent power in **PCRS5-DS2**, appealing to a sense of unity and shared identity among South Africans, highlighting their collective fight against the pandemic.

Moving on to linguistic elements of persuasion, in the provisional model, these elements were classified into two groups: *syntactic* and *lexical* elements, though not explicitly articulated. In the revised model, the linguistic elements of persuasion have been scrupulously classified based on empirical findings and reviewed literature. Syntactic elements now include *parallelism, interrogative mood/rhetorical questions, compounding, subordination, conclusion explicitness, and third-person narration*. Meanwhile, lexical elements encompass *personal pronouns and kinship terms, inclusive “we”, exclusive “we”, conjunctions, allegory, militaristic metaphor, hyperbole, idioms, modals, lexical adjectives, lexical adverbs, and religious lexicon*.

Furthermore, pragmatic elements of persuasion add depth and nuance to the persuasive message, influencing its perception and interpretation by the targets. In the provisional model, pragmatic elements captured include *implication, presupposition, and politeness*. In the revised model, a new pragmatic element, ‘*self-referencing/self-proclaiming*’, has been added. For example, Trump used self-praising as an element of persuasion in **PDTS2-DS2**, highlighting the hard work and tremendous progress made by his government in comparison to other countries’ governments.

These modifications in the revised model based on the findings of the study provide a more comprehensive and refined framework for understanding the intricacies of political persuasion in the context of presidential Covid-19 related speeches.

6.5.3 Strategies of persuasion

In the revised model, as in the provisional model, the strategies of persuasion are categorised into three groups: communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic strategies. The communicative strategies of persuasion from the provisional model, including *propaganda*, *manipulation*, *fear appeal*, and *coercion*, were indeed evident in the analysed speeches and continue to be part of the revised model. Additionally, the following strategies have been added to the revised model: *assertion*, *audience-use*, *authority appeal*, *bargaining*, *benefit (other)*, *punishing activity*, *expertise*, *activation of impersonal commitments*, and *predicational strategy*. These new strategies emerged in the findings of this study, and they enhance the comprehensiveness of the revised model.

With pertinent to linguistic strategies of persuasion, the revised model introduces several new additions, including the following: *presentational strategy*, *analogy*, *symbolism*, *shared knowledge and presuppositions about the world*. These linguistic strategies are now explicitly categorised under three main headings: *syntactic strategies*, *rhetorical and lexico-semantic strategies*, and *verbal strategies*. This enhanced categorisation in the revised model offers a clearer and more detailed understanding of how linguistic elements are skillfully utilised to achieve persuasive effects in presidential speeches related to Covid-19.

Further, in the revised model, the pragmatic strategies of persuasion retain those from the provisional model, as they were evident in the analysed speeches. Additionally, two more strategies have been included: *appeal to emotions* and *conditioning*. Emotional appeals play a crucial role in political persuasion, as demonstrated by President Ramaphosa, Trump, and Jinping in their Covid-19 related speeches. They skillfully used various emotions, such as fear, anger, hope, empathy, and pride, to establish a deeper connection with their targets.

Further, the findings from this study indicate that the three presidents employed *conditioning* as a pragmatic strategy of persuasion. Conditioning through direct and indirect speech acts involves associating certain stimuli with specific responses. For example, in **PCRS1-DS9**, Ramaphosa strategically applied conditioning by emphasizing that the nation's success in combating the virus requires the active participation of various institutions, companies, and groups. By doing so, he conditions their support and involvement in the fight against Covid-19.

Overall, the revised model provides a comprehensive and refined framework that elucidates the interplay of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic strategies of persuasion in

presidential Covid-19 related speeches. These strategies serve as vital tools for effectively conveying messages, influencing attitudes, and achieving communicative goals in the political domain.

6.5.4 Theoretical properties of persuasion

In the revised model, theoretical properties of persuasion have been introduced, which emerged from the findings of this study as evident in Section 5.2. These properties are *context*, *registers*, and *semantics*, and they play a crucial role in shaping the language and communication strategies used in political persuasion.

Context as the first property, highlights how the presidents tailored their Covid-19 messages to address the priorities and concerns of their target audiences, making their communication responsive to the prevailing context. This adaptability allowed them to connect more effectively with the public and resonate with their specific needs and circumstances. In the SFL strata, context shows the interface between field, tenor and mode (Dinh, 2021).

The second property, *registers*, refers to the different styles or varieties of language used in different social situations. Each register has its own set of linguistic features, tone, and formality level. From the findings of this study, it is evident that all three presidents employed distinct language styles to demonstrate competency and credibility. The careful selection of registers contributed to shaping their public image and reinforcing their persuasive messages.

Lastly, from the findings of the study, it is apparent that the presidents used specific *semantics* to frame Covid-19 in ways that elicited emotional responses and encouraged compliance from their target audiences. Semantics refers to the study of meaning in language, including how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning and how meaning is interpreted in different contexts. By strategically employing language with emotional connotations and impactful phrasing, they effectively connected with people's feelings and fostered a stronger sense of urgency and shared responsibility in managing the pandemic.

In brief, these theoretic properties provide valuable insights into the language and communication strategies used in political persuasion. By understanding the context, selecting appropriate registers, employing speech acts effectively, and carefully considering semantics, politicians can enhance their ability to connect with the public and effectively convey their messages. This revised comprehensive model therefore serves as a valuable tool for

understanding the complexities of political communication and persuasion in the context of Covid-19 related speeches.

6.5.5 Goal influence factors

In the revised model, a new category called *goal-influence factors* is introduced, which was not present in the provisional model. This category encompasses factors which emerged from the findings of this study and shed light on the various elements that impact presidents' communicative goals in the context of Covid-19 related speeches. The study's findings reveal that there are several goal-influence factors that significantly affect how presidents shape their communicative goals during the pandemic. These goal-influence factors include *information provision, ensuring public safety, building trust and confidence, providing reassurance and emotional support, encouraging cooperation and unity, mobilising resources, and outlining policy measures*.

For detailed explanations and examples of these goal-influence factors based on the analysed data, refer to Section 6.2.1 of the study. The inclusion of this new category enriches the model by considering the external factors that influence and shape presidents' communicative goals in their Covid-19 related speeches. Understanding these goal-influence factors is essential for comprehending the broader context and motivations behind the presidents' persuasive strategies during the pandemic.

6.5.6 Communicative goals

In the provisional model, communicative goals were divided into primary and secondary categories without clear articulation. In the revised model, these goals are carefully classified to provide a more structured understanding. Primary goals encompass fundamental and overarching objectives that establish the initial situation or desired outcome. They include *give advice, gain assistance, share activity, change orientation, change relationship, obtain permission*, as well as the *enforce rights and obligations*.

On the other hand, secondary goals arise as a response to the adoption and pursuit of these primary goals. They include *identity goals, interaction goals, resource goals, and arousal management*.

This clearer classification of communicative goals in the revised model provides a comprehensive account of the persuasive strategies employed by presidents, and how they adapt their speeches based on these primary and secondary goals.

In summary, the revised model represents a significant enhancement in understanding the linguistic execution of communicative goals in presidential speeches addressing the Covid-19 pandemic. The amendments made to the provisional model (Fig. 6.1) were discussed, and the revised comprehensive model (Fig. 6.2) was presented. The facets of the revised comprehensive model of persuasion, as depicted in Figure 6.2, function synergistically to unravel the complex dynamics of political persuasion in the context of presidential Covid-19 related speeches.

However, it should be noted that this model is context-dependent, based on the analysed data and the three selected presidents whose speeches were studied. Therefore, the proposed revised model might not be universally applicable in all contexts but can serve as a guiding framework. It is essential to present the limitations of the proposed model to acknowledge its context-specific nature and potential constraints when applied to other political contexts or different communicators. The next section, therefore, discusses the limitations of the proposed comprehensive model.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

As highlighted in Section 2.2.3.1, to the best of the current researcher's knowledge, there is currently no model that exists to directly relate linguistic elements of persuasion and the communicative nature of political discourse. Therefore, this proposed model serves as a pioneering framework for future researchers, and it is important to recognise and present some presumed limitations.

Firstly, human behaviour and decision-making are highly intricate, influenced by numerous factors beyond linguistic persuasion. Social, cultural, economic, and historical contexts can all play significant roles in shaping individual and collective beliefs and actions. Consequently, the proposed model may not encompass the full extent of historical and cultural factors that can impact political persuasion. However, the model is adaptable and subject to refinement as political landscapes evolve, and new research and insights emerge in the fields of linguistics

and political communication. Future researchers should apply the model in diverse contexts using different samples to test its generalisability.

Another limitation to consider is that persuasion can have unintended consequences, particularly if messages are oversimplified or lack nuance. Relying solely on this model to assess political persuasion may not fully account for the complexity of the issues at hand, as other influencing factors beyond linguistic elements could come into play. Additionally, while emotional appeals can be powerful, an overemphasis on emotions might overshadow the rational aspects of an issue. This could lead to decisions based solely on feelings rather than careful consideration of evidence and facts. Future researchers should be mindful of these potential pitfalls when applying the model.

Furthermore, the model may not fully account for emerging communication platforms and trends. As technology and social media continue to evolve, the most effective methods of political persuasion may also change. The model should be revisited and updated periodically to incorporate new communication dynamics.

Lastly, while tailoring messages to specific targets is essential, creating a one-size-fits-all approach is challenging due to the diversity of people's values, beliefs, and backgrounds. Different individuals might respond differently to the same persuasive goals, elements, and strategies, further highlighting the need for nuance and context-awareness in political communication.

In inference, the proposed model represents a significant advancement in understanding linguistic elements of persuasion and their role in political discourse. However, it is essential to acknowledge the presumed limitations mentioned above to ensure future researchers approach its application with a critical and comprehensive perspective. As the field of linguistics and political communication continues to evolve, the model will undoubtedly undergo refinement and adaptation to address these limitations and enhance its practical utility.

6.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher took a comprehensive approach to fulfil the final objective of the study: devising a model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion. The chapter was built upon the study's 'theory triangulation' framework, integrating the communicative goals, elements, and strategies of persuasion, along with the

theoretical properties that emerged from the analysis. The first section of the chapter involved revisiting the provisional model developed in Section 3.4. The researcher re-evaluated and refined its components, ensuring a solid foundation on which to build a comprehensive framework. In the second section, an in-depth discussion of the empirical findings presented in Section 5.2 took place. The insights gained from the analysis of these findings enriched the researcher with understanding of the linguistic elements and strategies that effectively influence targets in political persuasion.

Moving on to the third section, the researcher delved into the theoretical implications of the study. Examining how linguistic elements interacted with emotional, social, and cultural factors enabled the researcher to fine-tune the model, providing a more nuanced and context-sensitive perspective on political persuasion. The culmination of the efforts can be witnessed in the final section of the chapter, where the provisional model is revised, expanded, and perfected. The comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion now stands as an invaluable tool for examining persuasion in political discourse.

As the chapter concludes, the potential applications and limitations of the proposed comprehensive model were explored. The model is not only relevant to presidential goals during Covid-19 but can be extended to various domains where persuasive communication is essential. Nevertheless, the researcher acknowledges the complexity of human behaviour and the ever-changing landscape of politics and communication. Thus, continuous adaptation and refinement of the model will be necessary to remain relevant and effective in shaping political discourse. The next chapter provides reflections and concludes the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to analytically investigate persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches by exploring communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies of persuasion that regulate meanings in context to show how language was used amidst the pandemic to influence the behaviour of the public. The goal was to develop a comprehensive model that bridges the gap between the linguistic, communicative, and pragmatic elements of persuasion, as well as the intricacies of political discourse within the context of Covid-19. This study was motivated by the examination of persuasive elements present in presidential speeches during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As the Covid-19 pandemic emerged in late 2019 and spread globally, nations around the world implemented various measures to mitigate its transmission. Different leaders adopted distinct approaches, some proactively enacting measures and effectively communicating the gravity of the crisis, while others faced obstacles, delays, and public resistance when imposing necessary restrictions. The pandemic underscored the critical importance of effective leadership, proactive decision-making, and transparent communication in managing global health crises. Political leaders employed a range of persuasive techniques to encourage compliance with safety measures, leveraging their significant political authority to influence public perceptions. To achieve the purpose of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

- What are the prevalent types of communicative goals, reflected in selected Covid-19 presidential speeches?
- Which communicative, linguistic and pragmatic elements of persuasion do selected presidents employ to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches?
- Which communicative, linguistic and pragmatic strategies of persuasion do selected presidents employ to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches?
- How can the communicative goals of political persuasion be modelled linguistically?

To answer the above research questions, the following interrelated research objectives were also formulated in the introductory chapter of this study (refer to Chapter 1).

- To examine the prevalent types of communicative goals, reflected in Covid-19 selected presidential speeches.
- To identify and contrast communicative, pragmatic and linguistic elements of persuasion employed by selected presidents to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches.
- To establish communicative, pragmatic and linguistic strategies of persuasion employed by selected presidents to execute communicative goals evident in their Covid-19 related speeches.
- To devise a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion.

7.2 EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 presented the layout of the study, stated and motivated the research questions and aim, and introduced the concept of persuasion. It also provided profiles of the selected presidents and presented the demarcations of the study.

Chapter 2 critically considered a plethora of persuasion definitions and coined a working definition informed by the review for the purpose of this study. The researcher re-defined persuasion as the ‘attainment of communicative goals through linguistic elements within a specific context’. Additionally, this chapter revealed that the interface between communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements of persuasion remains unaddressed, to the knowledge of the researcher. To address this, a triangulation theoretical framework was adopted. The theoretical framework was grounded in Halliday’s (1965) Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) as the broader framework for the study and operationalised through Dillard’s (1989) Goals Plans Actions theory (GPA), Maritz’s (2019) Linguistic Propaganda Identification model (LPIM), and Austin (1962) and Searles’ (1969) Speech Act theory (SAT). These theoretical lenses within the SFL framework provided an overlapping theoretical network that informed the researcher’s approach to the persuasive speeches in question. Also, Chapter 2 allowed the researcher to explore primary and secondary communicative goals that communicators seek to achieve, this served as a build-up to answering research question 1, which was later answered in detail in Chapter 5, upon analysis of this study’s data.

Chapter 3 provided an extensive review of the literature pertaining to the constituent elements and strategies employed in persuasion. It presented a wide array of elements and strategies of persuasion. Additionally, the researcher conducted a meticulous and systematic evaluation and critique of the existing body of literature concerning the elements (communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic) and strategies (communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic) employed in persuasion. Based on this critical synthesis, the researcher identified a notable gap in the integration of communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and their corresponding strategies within the framework of persuasive communication. Accordingly, the researcher developed a preliminary model of persuasion. This provisional model encompassed four major categories, namely, message, communicative goals, elements, and strategies. These categories laid the foundation for the empirical analysis in the current research. Chapter 3 served as a buildup in answering research questions 2 and 3, because it provided a plethora of available elements and strategies of persuasion. These elements and strategies were further contextualised and subject to modification in Chapter 5 and 6 when revising the provisional model and its element to construct the comprehensive model, thus responding to research questions 2 and 3, fully.

Chapter 4 delineated the methodology adopted for this study and addressed ethical considerations related to professionalism. The study utilised a qualitative research approach rooted in the interpretivist paradigm to examine persuasion in presidential speeches concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. The chosen research method comprised two principal components: an exhaustive literature review encompassing topics such as communicative, linguistic, and political persuasion, elements of persuasion, and strategies of persuasion, followed by a qualitative empirical analysis.

The selected research design was qualitative discourse-textual analysis. Chapter 4 also explained the data collection process and the subsequent textual analysis methods employed. A sample of 15 speeches was gathered, with contributions from Presidents Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa (South Africa), Donald Trump (United States), and Xi Jinping (China), each contributing five speeches. The selection of these specific speeches was grounded in both theoretical considerations related to persuasive properties and practical considerations concerning the data's richness, aligning with the study's objectives.

The data analysis in this study was two-staged: close-reading examination and the use of ATLAS.ti software. Manual close-reading analysis involved scrutinising 120 discourse

segments from the set of 15 presidential speeches related to Covid-19. Additionally, ATLAS.ti version 8.4 was employed to visually explore the semantic repertoire of the dataset, which had been previously analysed. This analytical procedure was delineated in five phases, namely:

- Determining the theoretical gap
- Literature review
- Data collection, organisation, and analysis
- Revision of the provisional model of persuasion
- Consolidation and reconstruction

This procedural framework guided the necessary empirical steps taken by the researcher to conduct the study and derive meaningful findings.

Chapter 5 presented the empirical findings regarding the communicative goals evident in the persuasive discourse segments of the three presidents (study objective 1). It also identified the elements of persuasion present in these discourse segments (study objective 2) and established the strategies of persuasion employed within them (study objective 3). Additionally, this chapter presented findings on salient theoretical aspects or categories of persuasion that were initially excluded from the provisional model (refer to Section 3.3) but surfaced during the analysis. Since objectives are aligned with research questions, this implies that Chapter 5 answered in detail research questions 1, 2 and 3.

Chapter 5 further revealed that all three presidents employed both primary and secondary communicative goals in their persuasive messages. Among primary goals, the *give advice* goal emerged as the most prominent, while the “identity” goal was the most prominent secondary goal (refer to Section 5.2.1.1). This chapter also illuminated that primary goals set the contextual framework, with secondary goals emerging subsequently. Moreover, the chapter unveiled that factors influencing goals have an impact on the primary and secondary communicative goals of presidents, subsequently shaping the elements and strategies of persuasion. In essence, goals, elements, and strategies form an interconnected network aimed at inducing persuasion.

Furthermore, Chapter 5 revealed that all three presidents employed communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic strategies of persuasion in pursuit of their communicative goals (refer to Section 5.2.2), although communicative elements were more pronounced. Likewise, communicative strategies of persuasion were particularly prominent, followed by pragmatic and linguistic

strategies of persuasion (refer to Section 5.2.3). In summary, this chapter was designed to illuminate the empirical findings from data analysis, encompassing a spectrum of communication facets, persuasion dynamics, and linguistic strategies employed by the trio of presidents in their speeches.

Chapter 6 fulfilled the final objective of the study, which was to formulate a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion. This answers research question 4, which reads: How can the communicative goals of political persuasion be modelled linguistically? This chapter comprised four phases: re-presenting the provisional model, synthesizing the findings, highlighting the theoretical implications, and revising the provisional model. Ultimately, a comprehensive model for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political persuasion was developed.

The comprehensive model proposed is depicted below in Figure 7.1, it is a replica of Figure 6.2.

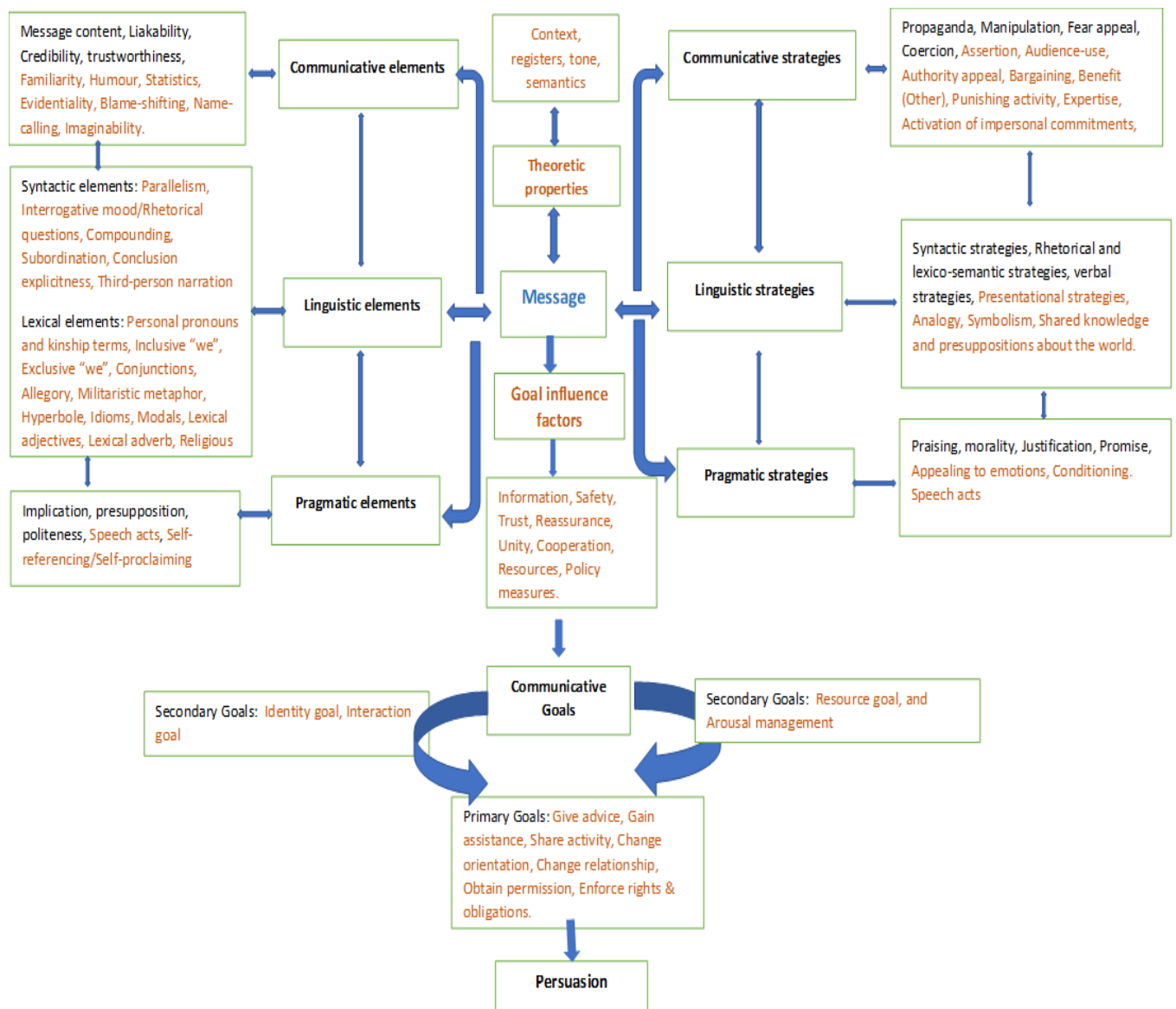


Figure 7. 1: Proposed comprehensive model of persuasion

In contrast to the provisional model (Figure 3.2 / Figure 6.1), the revised model now consists of a total of six categories. The original four categories, which include *message*, *communicative goals*, *elements of persuasion*, and *strategies of persuasion*, have been retained. In addition, two new categories have been introduced: *goal influence factors* and *theoretical properties of persuasion*. Each of these six categories plays a crucial role in comprehending how

communicative goals are realised through linguistic choices within the context of political persuasion.

In a nutshell, the proposed comprehensive model represents a significant advancement in the understanding of the linguistic execution of communicative goals in presidential speeches addressing the Covid-19 pandemic. The amendments made to the provisional model (Figure 3.2 / Figure 6.1) were thoroughly discussed, and the revised comprehensive model (Figure 6.2) was presented in the discussion. This discussion underscored the interconnectedness of the six main categories within the revised model.

By incorporating these six categories, the revised model provides a comprehensive framework for analysing the linguistic execution of communicative goals in presidential speeches related to the pandemic. Each category offers valuable insights into the persuasive strategies employed, the underlying theories at play, and the factors influencing the effectiveness of these speeches in achieving their intended goals. At its core, the model is a tapestry of six interwoven categories: message, elements of persuasion, strategies of persuasion, theoretical properties of persuasion, goal influence factors, and communicative goals. The message serves as the cornerstone, laying the foundation for persuasion and carrying the weight of presidential intent. Elements of persuasion, encompassing communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements, form the nuanced threads that intricately weave through the message, enhancing its persuasive power.

Strategies of persuasion categorised into communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic, act as the skilled hands that deftly manipulate these threads, crafting a persuasive narrative. Theoretical properties of persuasion, with a focus on context, registers, and semantics, provide the intellectual framework guiding the crafting of messages and strategies. While the goal influence factors introduce an external dimension, revealing the external forces shaping communicative goals. Finally, communicative goals, both primary and secondary, emerge as the grand design, the ultimate purpose dictating the selection and interplay of other facets.

Together, these facets create a comprehensive and refined model that not only elucidates the complexity of political communication during a pandemic but also serves as a valuable tool for understanding and analysing the persuasive strategies employed by presidents. The model's contextual nature is acknowledged, emphasising its role as a guiding framework rather than a universally applicable blueprint. This updated model is a valuable tool for gaining a deeper

understanding of the intricate dynamics at play in presidential communication during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This proposed comprehensive model serves as a valuable tool for gaining a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in presidential communication during the Covid-19 pandemic. The chapter concluded by delving into the potential applications and practicality of the proposed comprehensive model.

Chapter 7 finally reflects on the research questions and objectives of the study, restrictions of the study, its significance in the body of knowledge, and avenues for future studies, as well as providing concluding thoughts.

7.3 STUDY RESTRICTIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This section highlights some limitations of the study and provides recommendations for future researchers.

Firstly, the study's sample size was limited to only 15 speeches from three presidents, with each contributing five speeches. This small sample size restricts the generalisability of the findings to a broader population of political speeches. However, in this case, the sample size was deliberately restricted to allow for in-depth consideration of persuasive communication from different theoretical viewpoints. To enhance the study's robustness, future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies that analyse how persuasive language evolves over time during a crisis. This approach can help identify changes in communication strategies as the situation develops and determine how the presidents influence public's behaviour.

Secondly, the study focused on how language was used to influence public behaviour during the Covid-19 pandemic. For this study, the selected speeches provided ideal data, because the discourse from different influential persons who are in the same position of power and spoke on the exact same crisis during the same period. As such, various factors such as topic, social standing of the speaker etc., were controlled and the discourse situations were comparable. However, the public's behaviour during this time could have been influenced by various factors beyond political speeches, such as scientific information, media coverage, and local regulations. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, future researchers may conduct comparative analyses that compare persuasive language used during different types of crises,

such as health crises, economic crises, and natural disasters, to identify common and distinct elements in communication strategies.

Furthermore, as the study solely examined presidential Covid-19 related speeches, the findings may not be directly applicable to other communication contexts or political settings since social standing and power relations impact persuasive strategies as well as linguistic choices. Future studies could draw from this study and investigate the same phenomenon in different contexts unrelated to Covid-19.

Also, the study was limited to a strictly qualitative approach. To gain a deeper understanding of persuasion in political speeches, future researchers should consider combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative analysis can identify patterns and trends, while qualitative analysis can provide detailed insights into linguistic and communicative elements.

It is also important to emphasise that, as a qualitative study focused on demonstrating the layered nature of persuasion from a triangulation standpoint, it becomes challenging to provide an exhaustive analysis. It might be beneficial for future researchers to employ corpus analytic techniques for further research purposes.

Given the subjective nature of this qualitative study, this study's emphasis was on capturing the nuanced layers of meaning within the text. This leaves a gap in frequency counts, yet the analysis extends to the broader context and interpretation of the discourse. Therefore, not identifying all adverbs and adjectives is not a significant oversight that could impact the aims of this study.

As a qualitative study concentrated on comprehending the phenomenon of persuasion rather than enumerating persuasive features, it was impossible to address all the microlinguistic features due to the study's demarcation. To address this limitation, future researchers should consider adopting alternative analytical methods beyond those employed in this study.

Additionally, persuasion is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors, including individual beliefs, cognitive biases, and emotional responses. It can be challenging to isolate the influence of language alone from these other factors. Analysing persuasion in political speeches is inherently subjective and prone to researcher bias, as different researchers may interpret linguistic elements and communicative strategies differently, potentially leading to discrepancies in the findings. Therefore, it is crucial for future researchers to be transparent

about the study's scope and potential limitations to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings.

As a result of the analysis conducted in this study, which encompassed multiple theoretical perspectives, it becomes challenging to explore all features at a micro level. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers consider the discourse motivations behind the use of these features, particularly in the context of eliciting specific emotional responses and persuading audiences.

Finally, it is essential to acknowledge that this model's applicability is context-dependent, primarily rooted in the analysed data and the specific presidential speeches of the three selected presidents who were subject to scrutiny. Consequently, the proposed revised model may not possess universal applicability across all conceivable contexts. Instead, it should be regarded as a guiding framework, offering valuable insights into the studied context. It is imperative for future research endeavours to apply this model in various situations to assess its adaptability and effectiveness in divergent communicative contexts.

By following these research recommendations and exploring other avenues related to persuasion in political communication during crises, future researchers can contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the role of language in influencing public behaviour and decision-making during critical times. Such research can inform better crisis communication strategies, governance practices, and policies to effectively address societal challenges.

7.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The contribution of this study lies in its exploration of presidential speeches as a valuable source of linguistic data from a constructivist perspective. By examining real-life contexts of different citizens and how they process messages from their political leaders to fulfil social goals, the study offers insights into the art of effective communication, political influence, leadership, policy advocacy and historical analysis.

The findings of this study provide a deeper understanding of persuasion and communication during a critical and unprecedented global event i.e., the Covid-19 pandemic. This understanding can inform better crisis communication practices, contributing to the fields of linguistics and political communication. By analysing Covid-19 related presidential speeches,

the study sheds light on how language was used as a persuasive tool to encourage compliance with social distancing measures. This insight can be applied in crafting effective messages during public health crises and other situations that require behaviour change.

The analysis of communicative and linguistic strategies employed by presidents offers valuable insights into persuasive techniques in crisis communication. This knowledge can be applicable in various contexts, including public health campaigns, marketing, and political communication.

Also, the study's consideration of pragmatic perspectives in the speeches reveals how context and social factors influence persuasive messages, leading to more nuanced and culturally sensitive communication strategies. This aspect contributes to understanding the pragmatic aspects of persuasion and their role in effective communication.

Furthermore, the study's focus on persuasive language during the pandemic contributes to the broader field of linguistics and communication studies. By providing a real-world context for investigating the relationship between language, communication, and behaviour change, the research enhances readers understanding of the interplay between language and public response.

In examining the use of persuasive language to enforce strict measures that may be considered unreasonable or unconstitutional, the study raises important ethical questions about the boundaries of political communication and the balance between public health measures and individual rights. This critical perspective on the ethical implications of political persuasion adds depth to the discourse on crisis communication and governance.

The major contribution of this study is the developed comprehensive model of persuasion for the linguistic execution of communicative goals in political context. This study has bridged the gap between communicative, linguistic and pragmatic perspectives of persuasion by creating a network of persuasion components.

Overall, this study's significance lies in its potential to advance knowledge in various fields, inform crisis communication strategies, and shape more effective public health policies and strategies for the future.

7.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, this study delved into persuasion within the context of presidential Covid-19 related speeches, focusing on the communicative, linguistic, and pragmatic elements and strategies that regulated meanings in these messages. The Covid-19 pandemic prompted political leaders to disseminate a significant volume of messages aimed at persuading the public to adhere to stringent social distancing measures, which could be perceived as unreasonable and potentially unconstitutional.

Throughout the study, the researcher uncovered how language was strategically employed during the pandemic to influence the behaviour of the public. Through an analysis of the communicative strategies, linguistic devices, and pragmatic approaches used by presidents in their Covid-19 related speeches, valuable insights were gained into the elements and strategies employed to sway public opinion and elicit compliance with social distancing measures.

The study findings indicate that presidents utilised persuasion in their speeches, employing a range of persuasive elements and language patterns to create compelling arguments for the necessity of social distancing measures. These persuasive elements and strategies played a crucial role in overcoming potential resistance and skepticism among the public, particularly when faced with measures that challenged personal freedoms and societal norms.

The study has proposed a comprehensive model on the linguistic execution of communicative goals of political persuasion in presidential Covid-19 related speeches. This model provides groundbreaking contributions by creating a network of persuasion which encapsulates linguistic, communication and pragmatics components.

In essence, this study sheds light on the intricacies of persuasion during a public health crisis and highlights the critical role language plays in shaping collective behaviour. Understanding the communicative and linguistic elements that underpin persuasive messages from political leaders can contribute to more effective communication strategies in future health crises, promoting better public adherence to necessary measures without compromising individual rights and liberties.

Looking ahead, policymakers, and communicators should be cognisant of these persuasive tactics and find a balance between public health imperatives and the preservation of civil liberties. Effective and ethical communication will play a pivotal role in successfully navigating future challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic. By learning from the lessons of this

study, society can be better equipped to respond to crises with clarity, transparency, and sensitivity, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and resilience in times of adversity.

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