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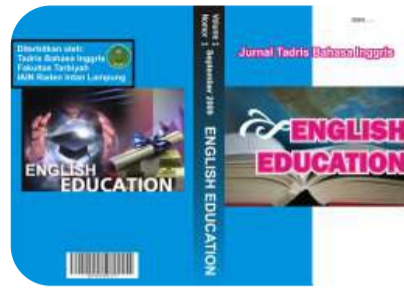


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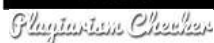
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<https://doi.org/10.24042/ee-jtbi.v16i1.16592>

Mohammad Muhassin, Dewi Ayu Hidayati

### Abstract

Speeches have been analyzed from multiple perspectives, yet the literature reveals gaps in the examination of discursive strategies and speech functions. To address this issue, this study aims to uncover the discursive strategies and speech functions utilized by Dr. Tedros, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), in his speeches on managing Covid-19. This qualitative content analysis employs purposive sampling of speeches from YouTube, specifically speeches given at the onset and conclusion of the pandemic. The findings indicate that Dr. Tedros employed motive, imperative, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and personification language to convey his message. Furthermore, only three speech functions were identified: statements, commands, and offers. This underscores Dr. Tedros's focus on delivering precise and persuasive information regarding Covid-19 management. This study offers implications for future research and discourse analysis

### Full Text:

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## Discursive Strategies of Speeches of The World Health Organization Director-General on Handling Covid-19

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***Abstract.** Speeches have been analyzed from multiple perspectives, yet the literature reveals gaps in the examination of discursive strategies and speech functions. To address this issue, this study aims to uncover the discursive strategies and speech functions utilized by Dr. Tedros, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), in his speeches on managing Covid-19. This qualitative content analysis employs purposive sampling of speeches from YouTube, specifically speeches given at the onset and conclusion of the pandemic. The findings indicate that Dr. Tedros employed emotive, imperative, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and personification language to convey his message. Furthermore, only three speech functions were identified: statements, commands, and offers. This underscores Dr. Tedros's focus on delivering precise and persuasive information regarding Covid-19 management. This study offers implications for future research and discourse analysis.*

**Keywords:** covid-19; discursive strategy; speech function

### A. INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, a new virus called Covid-19 emerged from Wuhan, China and quickly spread across the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) advised countries to be vigilant and recommended steps to improve public health and prevent the spread of the virus. Linguistic contributions have played a role in handling the pandemic, with health messages conveyed through various forms of media. However, misinformation and hoaxes have also circulated, hindering efforts to combat the virus. To counter this, it is important to provide accurate information

through credible sources such as speeches by the WHO Director-General. This study aims to investigate the discursive strategies used in Dr Tedros' speeches on handling Covid-19 and how they function to motivate and guide people in fighting the pandemic.

Speech is a form of communication delivered effectively and efficiently emphasized on oral language skills by using available persuasion tools (Sutrisno & Wiendijarti, 2014). A speech delivered by someone who is competent in their field can certainly be a reference in dealing with a problem because it is powerful and persuasive (Pasaribu, 2016; Jannatussolihah & Triyono, 2020). In the context of this study, the speeches by Dr Tedros, WHO Director-General, on handling Covid-19 is important to observe and examine both their structure and content since the speeches use linguistic elements as a discursive strategy to convey information on the best practices of handling Covid-19. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the types of discursive strategies used by Dr Tedros in his official speeches on dealing with Covid-19 and the purposes of using these discursive strategies in speeches to answer the question: *What discursive strategies were used in the speeches and how do they function in handling Covid-19?*

### ***Previous Studies***

Research on discursive strategies employed in speech discourse regarding the handling of Covid-19 is warranted as it remains a relatively unexplored area. For example, several studies only studied topics such as newspaper reports (Fariza & Syahirah, 2020) and euphemisms (Olimat, 2020a). The findings of Fariza and Syahirah (2020) show that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact, both economically and socially for the Malaysian people. In the study, several collocations were found that illustrate the government's full control over this crisis situation. A different study was conducted by Olimat (2020a) using a

sociolinguistic approach. The results of the study show that euphemism techniques are more dominant in Jordan's daily Covid-19 conversations about Covid-19.

From the aspect of communication during the Covid-19 pandemic, Eriyanto and Ali (2020) show that the Indonesian government seeks to present discourses to dominate public conversations and make adjustments to mediate conflicting discourses. Another study conducted by Olimat (2020b) analyzed dysphemism in Trump's Covid-19 speech. The findings reveal that US Presidents use more abusive expressions and are prone to insults, displeasure, and discrimination. In addition, the risk of the Covid-19 pandemic can be reduced more effectively if the government communicates information clearly and directs the public to behave rationally and without fear (Kim & Kreps, 2020). Ineffective government communications during the Covid-19 pandemic can cause confusion, misunderstanding and have social impacts on citizens and prolong the pandemic period. Studies by Eriyanto and Ali (2020) and Olimat (2020b) determined that studies on how governments use discursive strategies to inspire their citizens have not been researched, while studies of Kim and Kreps (2020) show that research on the language used by government communications during the Covid pandemic -19 has not yet arrived at the study of discursive strategies.

This study aims to explore the discursive strategies employed by the WHO Director-General in speeches on Covid-19 handling. The study will provide novel insights in language studies that can aid in the pandemic situation. Results can serve as a guide for the public to understand and practice effective Covid-19 measures based on authoritative WHO speeches.

### ***Discursive Strategy***

Discursive strategy refers to planned practices adapted to achieve goals or represent a point of view or ideology (Igwebuikwe, 2018; Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). Discursive

strategy can be understood as an attempt by social actors to manipulate reality in order to achieve goals. A discursive strategy is a linguistic manifestation carried out to help or oppose certain political actions (Küçükali, 2015).

Thus, the basis of discursive strategy analysis is linguistic traits. In the context of this research, discursive strategies are actions taken by the government to encourage resistance, revival, and struggle against Covid-19 (Nartey, 2020). Discursive strategies are used to direct attention, strengthen, and naturalize ideological attitudes towards certain points of view (Kwauk, 2012). Discursive strategies can be realized in discourse in various forms and are empowered in various ways by experts.

Reisigl (2018) and Reisigl and Wodak (2009) identify forms of discursive strategies consisting of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspective, as well as intensification and mitigation. Meanwhile, Trask (2000) argues that when analyzing socio-political discourse, versions of linguistic elements must be presented through emotional, imperative, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and personification language discourse strategies. Trask's (2000) version of the discourse strategy will be used as the main analytical tool in this study because it contains language elements that can be practically applied to convey the intent and purpose of speeches regarding the Covid-19 response.

There were five types of languages than can convey intent. Emotive Language, Imperative, Metaphor, Hyperbole, and Personification. Emotive language is a powerful tool that aims to evoke strong feelings and persuade readers to agree with the writer's viewpoint. It carries an emotional burden and is one of the most effective strategies used to assess a situation or discourse (Wei, 2011; Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Napoli, 2016). It employs emotional words like "terrible," "sensational," and "effective" to engage with the readers' emotions. Imperatives are

verbs that instruct or command people, typically appearing at the beginning of a sentence (Potsdam, 2017). In linguistics, sentences are not only formed by declarative and interrogative clauses with the function of affirming and questioning, but also by imperatives used to order or ask, give advice, express wishes or curses, and grant permission. Metaphor is a type of rhetorical strategy in which the writer uses the literal of the sentence to indicate or refer to something else that has the same purpose but not in the direct sense of the sentence (Aini, 2019). Hyperbole, according to Burgers et al. (2016), is an exaggerated expression that goes beyond the actual reality. This type of expression is characterized by exaggeration, extremity, and excess. It involves a shift between propositional and intended meaning and includes special references. Additionally, Gibbs (2000) considers hyperbole as a sub-type of verbal irony, along with other figures of speech like rhetorical questions and disparaging statements. Personification is the attribution of human qualities and actions to non-human entities such as inanimate objects, animals, social organizations, and abstract ideas (Hamilton, 2002). According to Edgecombe (2017), it involves expressing exaltation by giving these entities the characteristics of living things that can perform actions. Dorst (2011) describes personification as an ontological metaphor that maps across domains, where an object or entity is further defined as a living being or thing. Understanding personification is essential for this study because it is frequently used in speech texts to influence the reader's perspective.

### ***Speech Function***

Language, being an essential medium for expressing ideas and fulfilling interpersonal needs, is inseparable from human beings and facilitates effective communication and interaction, enabling individuals to exchange their thoughts and ideas. Paziraei (2013) states that the interpersonal metafunction shows the way the addressor and the addressee interact and how they use the language to maintain the relations between them. During a conversation the addresser may give something

to the addressee or ask something from the addressee. This metafunction is an exchanging. This exchanging may be an offer, a command, a declarative, or an interrogative.

The interpersonal function is realized at two levels namely at the level of semantics and lexicogrammar which is term mood. At the level of semantic human being perform two roles namely giving and demanding. The commodity exchange may be either information or goods and services. Yipei and Lingling (2013) states that delivering a speech is a typical interpersonal activity, and whether a speech succeeds or not, to a large degree, depends on the way speaker intrudes himself into the interaction. How to arouse audience interest and enthusiasm is the keypoint.

Halliday (1994) points out that when exchanging and expressing ideas, human being perform two roles namely giving and demanding, for the commodity such as information and goods or services. In systemic functional linguistic (SFL), it is named speech function. Speech function is a way of someone delivers ideas in communication to make listeners understand the ideas well. Speech function itself can be divided into four kinds: statement, question, command and offer.

Accordingly, Ye (2006) maintains that speech functions are an action or performance done by language users such as asking, commanding and answering in order to fulfil the intention of the speakers and listeners. Speech functions are used as the medium exchanging experiences in order to fulfil their needs. Further, Sulistyowati (2010) cites that to communicate effectively, we should clearly organize the messages that we want to convey through conversation. The organization of messages involves giving and demanding and this exchange might be more complicated than it seems. If we are demanding something, it means we are inviting to give, and if we are giving something, it means we are inviting to receive. Halliday (1994) postulates that there are four primary types of speech

function; they are statement, offer, question, and command that realized by Mood to perform two roles, they are giving and demanding. When communicate with other people, we are actually trying to do something with our language. It may be either to give information, or demand something.

### *Types of Speech Function*

#### *Statement*

Grolier (1992) points out that statement is a way of giving information by stating or the act of stating in speech and writing. Statement can be positive and negative. Statement usually begins with subject, followed by verb or auxiliary verb and ended by full stop.

Emily likes ice cream.

Subject Verb Object

#### *Question*

A question is an interrogative question which is used to seek confirmation or to ask something or an inquiry that invites or calls for reply (Grolier, 1992). A question begins with auxiliary verb or WH-Question and will be ended with question mark (?)

Do you bring an umbrella?

Aux. Verb Subject Verb Object

#### *Offer*

Grolier (1992) argues that offer as an expression of willingness to give or do something, or to put forward for acceptance, rejection. Offer also can be defined as a way of giving good and service to someone. Offer is usually begun with modal and always ended with a question mark (?).

Would you like some help?

Modal Subject Verb Object



### *Command*

Grolier (1992) emphasizes that command is a way to receive information, good or service by forcing the listener to give them. Command also is a way of demanding good and service in form of imperative statement whether in the form of positive or negative command. In command sentences, the subject is omitted. It is begun with the predicate and it is usually ended with exclamation mark (!).

Open      the door!

Verb      Object

Accordingly, Saragih (2010) maintains that in act interaction, the speech function is initiated by speaker (addresser) and then the listener (addressee) responds to the speech function. Speech function recognize a correlation between the different structure of an initiating move and the structure of a responding move; position and negative responding speech function. The manuscript derived from the result of the research and written in English will be prioritized. The manuscript(s), which discusses the possible development of theories or suggested ideas in English language, is considered to be accepted in this journal.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative content analysis design. Qualitative content analysis has a tendency to describe media content seen from the context and process of source documents so that the results obtained are more in-depth and detailed regarding media content and are able to explain the relationship between media content and the context of social reality that occurs (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In the context of this study, the process of qualitative content analysis is an ideal method to investigate communicative messages and draw conclusions about the meanings and discursive strategies used by Dr Tedros in his speeches on handling Covid-19.

### ***Data and Data Resource***

The data in this study are language elements in the form of words, phrases, sentences that represent discursive strategies in Dr Tedros' speeches on handling Covid-19. The data were collected based on three selected themes, namely the beginning of Covid-19 outbreak, the peak period of the pandemic, and the stage of vaccination as an integral part in handling Covid-19. The data sources are the recordings of selected speeches by Dr Tedros accessed from the Youtube.com.

### ***Techniques of Collecting Data***

The data collection was carried out by observing and note-taking the recordings downloaded from Youtube.com. Using the Transcript program, data in the form of recordings are transcribed into writing. Furthermore, the transcription results are read repeatedly to identify and classify the lingual units of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences based on the discursive strategy developed by Trask (2000). The next step is to translate the data using an interlingual translation technique (Jacobson, 2013), which involves transferring the entire text from English to Indonesian as the target language. In analyzing the data, each explanation of the data sample in English is followed by Indonesian translation.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis will be carried out in three stages, namely identification, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough, 2003). This type of data analysis is used because it is able to reveal the practice of discursive strategies that have an ideological goal, namely to influence the attitudes and opinions of listeners to follow the instructions for handling Covid-19 appropriately as stated in Dr Tedros' speeches. In terms of substance, the data are analyzed using Trask's (2000) discursive strategy framework which includes emotive, imperative, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and personification languages. Meanwhile the second data are

categorized based on Halliday's (1994) theory of speech functions, including statement, offer, question, and command.

### *Schemes of Analysis*

To carry out the discussion of this study, the researcher applies the data analysis procedure designed by Fairclough (2003) which includes three levels of analysis, namely identification, interpretation, and explanation as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Procedures of Data Analysis

Phase	Description	Data	Analysis
1. Identification	The researcher reads the transcription carefully, examines the language elements that indicate discursive strategies and marks those elements. Language elements can be words, phrases, or clauses/sentences with various forms. Key questions: What language elements are used as discursive strategies?	<i>The clock is still ticking on vaccine equity. We have nine days left until we reach the hundredth day of the year and the target of starting vaccine rollout to health workers and those at risk in all countries remains in our grasp.</i>	Identify discursive strategies: the use of metaphor in the clause <i>"The clock is still ticking..."</i>
2. Interpretation	The researcher groups the data based on the theme of discursive strategy (Trask, 2000), explains its linguistic features, and interprets its meaning according to the context of the discourse.		Through the metaphor of <i>"The clock is still ticking"</i> , the discourse maker compares the ticking of the clock with the decreasing time from the target of 100 days for vaccine procurement efforts, especially for health workers. This is like chasing contest between the running time and the predetermined target time.
	The researcher explains the intent and		Dr Tedros as the WHO authority emphasizes the importance of the

3. Explanation	purpose of using the discursive strategies by considering aspects of the situation and context when the speech is delivered and connecting it with the efforts of handling Covid-19 in a pandemic situation.	availability of vaccines in the near future to increase immunity for health workers as those who are at the forefront of handling Covid-19. This is important to put forward considering the increasing number of victims of health workers due to exposure to Covid-19 because they have not received the vaccine.
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## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

From the data collected, it was found that Dr Tedros used several discourse strategies to convince the listeners of the meaning he conveyed in the speech. The results of data analysis show that the use of discursive strategies can be summarized in the use of emotive language, imperative, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification. Here is a more detailed explanation.

### *Emotive Language*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of emotive language. This is intended so that the message communicated will be more easily understood by listeners with parable or figurative language. Emotive language is one of the most powerful strategies used to gain an assessment of a situation or discourse. It is characterized by the use of words that are full of emotion, such as, terrible, sensational and very effective, in which the writer tries to engage with the emotions of the reader (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Wei, 2011). The use of emotive language is intended to strengthen the message conveyed and try to influence the opinion of the audience, as in the following example:

(1) We are *deeply* concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction.

Kami sangat prihatin dengan tingkat penyebaran dan keparahan tingkat kelambanan penanganan yang mengkhawatirkan.

In excerpt (1) it can be found the clause “We are deeply concerned...”. The clause in the context tries to evoke the listener’s emotions with the use of the word *deeply* which means ‘very intense’. This raises awareness and the importance of our concern for the dangers of the spread of Covid-19, so it is necessary to increase vigilance and alertness in dealing with the impact of the virus.

This finding is supported by Wei’s (2011) argument that the use of emotive language is intended to strengthen the message conveyed and try to influence the opinion of the audience. In this context, Dr Tedros showed deep concern for listeners on the current condition affected by Covid-19. He tries to invite the listeners together to raise awareness in the face of the dangers of Covid-19. The same pattern is shown by the use of emotive words in the following sentences:

(2) Pandemic is not a word to use *lightly or carelessly*.

(3) It is a word that, if misused, can cause *unreasonable* fear, or *unjustified* acceptance that the fight is over, leading to *unnecessary* suffering and death.

(4) We have called every day for countries to take *urgent* and *aggressive* action.

(5) Two of those – China and the Republic of Korea - have *significantly* declining epidemics.

### *Imperatives*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of imperative language. It is expected that the message delivered will be more easily understood by listeners since it shows

an intention. Imperatives are verbs that give instructions or commands to people, and usually appear at the beginning of a sentence (Potsdam, 2017). In addition, imperative are used to give advice, express wishes or curses and even to give permission, as in the following examples:

(6) This is not just a public health crisis, it is a crisis that will touch every sector – so every sector and every individual *must be involved* in the fight.

Ini bukan hanya krisis kesehatan masyarakat, ini adalah krisis yang akan menyentuh setiap sektor – sehingga setiap sektor dan setiap individu harus terlibat dalam perjuangan.

In excerpt (6) it can be found the clause “...every individual must be involved...”. The clause in the context tries to direct listeners to do something in the face of threats of Covid-19 with the use of the expression *must be involved* which means ‘actively concern with’. This statement encourages and invites listeners to join together in efforts to face and overcome the current world Health crisis as the bad excess of the virus.

This corroborates Postdam’s (2017) finding that the use of imperative is intended to give instructions or commands to people. In this context, Dr Tedros orders the listeners to join forces in the fight against the virus. The same pattern is shown by the use of imperatives in the following sentences.

(7) I *remind* all countries that we are calling on you to activate and scale up your emergency response mechanisms.

(8) *Find, isolate, test* and *treat* (MAT) every case and trace every contact.

(9) I also *requested* manufacturers to help ensure that the countries that step up can rapidly donate those doses.

(10) I’m still *hopeful* that some forward looking and enlightened leaders will step up.

### *Metaphors*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of metaphorical elements. This is intended so that the message communicated will be more easily understood by listeners with parable or figurative language. Metaphorical language expresses and elicits more emotions than literal language (Citron & Goldberg, 2014; Mohammad et al., 2016). The use of metaphors is intended to strengthen the message conveyed and try to influence the opinion of the audience, as in the following example:

(11) *The clock is still ticking* on vaccine equity. We have nine days left until we reach the hundredth day of the year and the target of starting vaccine rollout to health workers and those at-risk in all countries remains in our grasp.

*Jam terus berdetak* pada ekuitas vaksin. Kami memiliki sembilan hari tersisa hingga mencapai hari keseratus dalam setahun dan target untuk memulai *peluncuran* vaksin kepada petugas kesehatan dan mereka yang berisiko di semua negara tetap dalam genggaman kami.

In excerpt (11) it can be found the clause “The clock is ticking...”. The clause in the context of this sentence does not refer to ‘the form of a clock that has a ticking clockwise’, but rather as a figurative expression maintaining that the availability of vaccines must be rushed in view of the nine more days of the deadline for procuring vaccines for health workers. This is based on findings in the field that many health workers died as victims of Covid-19 transmission from patients while carrying out their duties to treat patients. Thus, the availability of vaccines in a short time becomes an urgent matter to reduce the risk of more victims.

This finding is in accordance with Cabot et al., (2020) who claim that the metaphorical use in news discourse is a strategy to make a strong interpretation of what you want to describe. From this data, it can be seen that the use of metaphorical expressions emphasizes Dr Tedros’s messages of the urgency of the vaccine

availability for health workers in a shorter time. The same pattern is shown by the use of metaphors in the following sentences:

(12) We have rung *the alarm bell* loud and clear.

(13) Even those countries with community transmission or large clusters can turn *the tide* on this virus.

(14) Health and care workers are (REL-CIRC) at the *forefront* of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

(15) We're not in a *race* against each other, we're in a race against the virus and over the last year.

### *Hyperboles*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of hyperbole expressions. The word hyperbole is referred to a figure of speech that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis (Burgers et al., 2016). It is the opposite of understatement.

(16) In the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased 13-fold and the number of affected countries has *tripled*. Dalam dua minggu terakhir, jumlah kasus COVID-19 di luar China telah meningkat 13 kali lipat dan jumlah negara yang terkena dampak meningkat tiga kali lipat.

In excerpt (16) it can be found the clause "...the number of affected countries has tripled...". The clause in the context tries to convince listeners that the threat of Covid-19 is very big that is infecting all countries in the world. This is conveyed by the use of words that contain excessive meaning, namely has tripled which means 'three times'. This statement shows Dr. Tedros's concern about the dangers and threats of the virus which is already visible in front of his eyes so that it has a bad impact on human life, often with more and more victims dying.



This statement is in line with Burgers's et al (2016) citing that the use of hyperbola is intended to give emphasize the meaning of the message conveyed. In this context, Dr Tedros reassured listeners of the great and real threat of the spread of Covid-19.

### *Personification*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of personification. This is intended so that the message communicated will be more easily understood by listeners with parable or figurative language. Personification is an expression of exaltation in which inanimate objects are given the characteristics of living things that can perform actions (Edgecombe, 2017), in which an object or entity is further defined as a living being or thing (Hamilton, 2002; Dosrt, 2011). Personification occurs when animals, objects, social organizations, and abstract ideas are given the qualities of a person, as in the following example:

- (17) In the days and weeks ahead, we expect to see the number of cases, the number of deaths, and the number of affected countries *climb* even higher. Dalam beberapa hari dan minggu ke depan, kami berharap untuk melihat jumlah kasus, jumlah kematian, dan jumlah negara yang terkena dampak naik lebih tinggi.

In excerpt (17) it can be found the clause "...the number of affected countries climb...". The clause in the context tries to convince listeners that the threat of Covid-19 is very big that is infecting all countries in the world. This is conveyed by the use of words that contain personification, namely climb which means 'go or come up', that is something that a living thing does. This statement shows Dr. Tedros's concern about the dangers and threats of the virus in which the number of cases affected by the virus is increasing day by day.

This statement is in accordance with Dorst's (2011) argument that the use of personification is intended to give emphasize the meaning of the message

conveyed. In this context, Dr Tedros reassured listeners of the great and real threat of the massive spread of Covid-19.

### ***Discussion***

Having analyzed the data, the researchers tried to answer the second research question on the functions of the speeches delivered by Dr Tedros on handling Covid-19. The presentation of the finding can be summarized on Table 2:

Table 2. Distribution of Speech Functions

No	Types of Speech Function	Number (F)	Percentage % (X)
1	Statement	86	87,75%
2	Question	0	0%
3	Command	10	10,20%
4	Offer	2	2,04%
<b>Total</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the finding on the table 2, it can be known that there were 98 sentences found in Dr. Tedros's speeches on handling Covid-19. In addition, the sentences comprises 4 functions of the speeches, i.e. there were 86 Statements (87,75%), no question (0%), 10 Commands (10,20%), and 2 Offers (2,04%). The speech function dominantly used was Statement (87,75%), followed by Command (10,20%), and Offer (2,04%), and no case of Question found. The highest proportion in the use of speech functions due to the fact that speech deals with give information to the audience. Statement is giving information to the audience/listener, in terms of inviting listeners to receive information. When the speaker said something in the form of statement, it means that the speaker expected the audience to receive the information.

From the analysis it can be recognized that Dr. Tedros gave more information than goods or services. He tried to influence people to receive what he wanted to say and how people did something regarding the handling of Covid-19.

Accordingly, following the theory of speech functions of Halliday (1994), the data were classified based on the four types of speech functions from all sentences in the speeches of Dr. Tedros. From the data, there were 98 sentences containing speech functions. Here are some examples of representative data based on the types of speech function:

#### *Statement*

There are 86 statements found in the speech transcripts. The statements occur when the speaker gives information to the hearer. The examples of statement can be seen as follows.

(18) *We have therefore made* the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic.

(19) Last week, *I made* an urgent request to countries, with doses of vaccines that have WHO Emergency Use Listing, to share 10 million doses immediately with COVAX.

Sentence (18) is classified as a statement as it begins with subject *We* followed by auxiliary and verb *have made*. The same pattern occurs in sentence (19), subject *I* is followed by verb *made*. Both were classified into statement since they function to share Dr Tedros's information to the audience on the early assessment of Covid-19 as pandemic (18) and an urgent request upon the vaccines (19).

#### *Command*

As a speech function, command has the purpose to demand goods and services in a conversation. We can say that command function is to ask someone to do something. The commodity exchange in a command is goods and services. In the

speech transcripts, the researchers find 10 commands as the speech function. The example of command are as follows.

(20) *Find, isolate, test and treat every case and trace every contact!*

(21) *Protect and train your health workers!*

The speech function found in the examples above is command. It is started by verbs find, isolate, test and treat (20) and protect and train (21) and is ended by exclamation marks. The examples above were classified into command since Dr Tedros as the speaker demands for the actions from the audience.

### *Offer*

In the conversation, offer is a kind of basic speech function move initiated only by the speaker. It indicates that the speaker has a role as giving goods or service to the other speakers. There are 2 offers found in the speech transcripts. The examples of offer can be seen as follows.

(22) Dr. Koca the floor is yours.

(23) My friend, Carl, the floor is yours

The above examples show that the speaker is giving goods and service to the hearer by using the speech function of offer. The utterance Dr. Koca the floor is yours. in (22) means that Dr Tedros offers Dr Koca an opportunity of delivering a speech. The same pattern occurs in (23) as Dr Tedros offers Carl a turn of speaking. The function describes that Dr Tedros is giving or providing goods and service and he invites his opposite speaker to receive that goods and service. The title of this section should be written in capital letter, 12pt, and bold. This section is organized systematically, and only the related results or information of the research should be discussed here.

## **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### ***Conclusions***

Based on the data gathered, it was determined that Dr. Tedros employed a number of discourse techniques to persuade the audience of the message he intended to convey. The study of the data reveals that emotive language, imperative, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification are all examples of discursive techniques. Those strategies were used by Dr Tedros to reassure listeners about the health messages in the face of the Covid-19 disaster and to mobilize global cooperation in an effort to overcome the negative impact of the spread of the pandemic.

In addition, after analyzing the types of speech function in Dr. Tedros's speeches, there are just three of four speech functions that the researchers got from Dr. Tedros's Speeches; they are Statement, Command, and Offer. Statement was 86 (87,75%), Command was 10 (10,20%), Offer was 2 (2,04%), and there is no Question in Dr. Tedros's Speeches (0%). The dominant type of speech functions used in Dr. Tedros's speeches is Statement 86 (87,75%).

The results show that the statement was the dominant type of speech function in Dr. Tedros's speeches. It was the way of the speaker to deliver the information about the current world's health problems due to Covid-19 outbreak; the solution of the problem; His planning; and the appreciation for the audience in joining collective actions against Covid-19.

### ***Suggestion***

In education, media is significant to make it easier for students to understand the material from their teacher. The speech is one of many media that is suitable for learning English. By using speeches, the students can see how native speakers use language to communicate with each other. Students observe to understanding through experience. In the speech transcript, all utterances from the speaker

contains speech functions, such as statement, command, and offer. After learning about speech function, the students can understand how to communicate precisely and correctly to the teachers and their friends in the school environment and communicate with parents when at home because they know the functions in every sentence. Besides, speech functions help the teacher provide material and manage the class through the language used by the teacher in class interactions. By understanding the importance of the speech function, the message will be conveyed smoothly. Likewise, the delivery of the material can proceed well, and students will understand the meaning of the material. For the other researchers, this study could be used as a reference to conduct other research in the same field by using different media with larger data corpus.

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# Discursive Strategies of Speeches of The World Health Organization Director-General on Handling Covid-19

*by Moh Muhassin*

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## Discursive Strategies of Speeches of The World Health Organization Director-General on Handling Covid-19

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**Abstract.** *Speeches have been analyzed from multiple perspectives, yet the literature reveals gaps in the examination of discursive strategies and speech functions. To address this issue, this study aims to uncover the discursive strategies and speech functions utilized by Dr. Tedros, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), in his speeches on managing Covid-19. This qualitative content analysis employs purposive sampling of speeches from YouTube, specifically speeches given at the onset and conclusion of the pandemic. The findings indicate that Dr. Tedros employed emotive, imperative, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and personification language to convey his message. Furthermore, only three speech functions were identified: statements, commands, and offers. This underscores Dr. Tedros's focus on delivering precise and persuasive information regarding Covid-19 management. This study offers implications for future research and discourse analysis.*

**Keywords:** *covid-19; discursive strategy; speech function.*

### A. INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, a new virus called Covid-19 emerged from Wuhan, China and quickly spread across the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) advised countries to be vigilant and recommended steps to improve public health and prevent the spread of the virus. Linguistic contributions have played a role in handling the pandemic, with health messages conveyed through various forms of media. However, misinformation and hoaxes have also circulated, hindering efforts to combat the virus. To counter this, it is important to provide accurate information

through credible sources such as speeches by the WHO Director-General. This study aims to investigate the discursive strategies used in Dr Tedros' speeches on handling Covid-19 and how they function to motivate and guide people in fighting the pandemic.

Speech is a form of communication delivered effectively and efficiently emphasized on oral language skills by using available persuasion tools (Sutrisno & Wiendijarti, 2014). A speech delivered by someone who is competent in their field can certainly be a reference in dealing with a problem because it is powerful and persuasive (Pasaribu, 2016; Jannatussolihah & Triyono, 2020). In the context of this study, the speeches by Dr Tedros, WHO Director-General, on handling Covid-19 is important to observe and examine both their structure and content since the speeches use linguistic elements as a discursive strategy to convey information on the best practices of handling Covid-19. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the types of discursive strategies used by Dr Tedros in his official speeches on dealing with Covid-19 and the purposes of using these discursive strategies in speeches to answer the question: *What discursive strategies were used in the speeches and how do they function in handling Covid-19?*

### *Previous Studies*

Research on discursive strategies employed in speech discourse regarding the handling of Covid-19 is warranted as it remains a relatively unexplored area. For example, several studies only studied topics such as newspaper reports (Fariza & Syahirah, 2020) and euphemisms (Olimat, 2020a). The findings of Fariza and Syahirah (2020) show that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact, both economically and socially for the Malaysian people. In the study, several collocations were found that illustrate the government's full control over this crisis situation. A different study was conducted by Olimat (2020a) using a

sociolinguistic approach. The results of the study show that euphemism techniques are more dominant in Jordan's daily Covid-19 conversations about Covid-19.

From the aspect of communication during the Covid-19 pandemic, Eriyanto and Ali (2020) show that the Indonesian government seeks to present discourses to dominate public conversations and make adjustments to mediate conflicting discourses. Another study conducted by Olimat (2020b) analyzed dysphemism in Trump's Covid-19 speech. The findings reveal that US Presidents use more abusive expressions and are prone to insults, displeasure, and discrimination. In addition, the risk of the Covid-19 pandemic can be reduced more effectively if the government communicates information clearly and directs the public to behave rationally and without fear (Kim & Kreps, 2020). Ineffective government communications during the Covid-19 pandemic can cause confusion, misunderstanding and have social impacts on citizens and prolong the pandemic period. Studies by Eriyanto and Ali (2020) and Olimat (2020b) determined that studies on how governments use discursive strategies to inspire their citizens have not been researched, while studies of Kim and Kreps (2020) show that research on the language used by government communications during the Covid pandemic -19 has not yet arrived at the study of discursive strategies.

<sup>11</sup> This study aims to explore the discursive strategies employed by the WHO Director-General in speeches on Covid-19 handling. The study will provide novel insights in language studies that can aid in the pandemic situation. Results can serve as a guide for the public to understand and practice effective Covid-19 measures based on authoritative WHO speeches.

### ***Discursive Strategy***

Discursive strategy refers to planned practices adapted to achieve goals or represent a point of view or ideology (Igwebuikwe, 2018; Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). Discursive

strategy can be understood as an attempt by social actors to manipulate reality in order to achieve goals. A discursive strategy is a linguistic manifestation carried out to help or oppose certain political actions (Küçükali, 2015).

Thus, the basis of discursive strategy analysis is linguistic traits. In the context of this research, discursive strategies are actions taken by the government to encourage resistance, revival, and struggle against Covid-19 (Nartey, 2020). Discursive strategies are used to direct attention, strengthen, and naturalize ideological attitudes towards certain points of view (Kwauk, 2012). Discursive strategies can be realized in discourse in various forms and are empowered in various ways by experts.

Reisigl (2018) and Reisigl and Wodak (2009) identify forms of discursive strategies consisting of nomination, predication, argumentation, perspective, as well as intensification and mitigation. Meanwhile, Trask (2000) argues that when analyzing socio-political discourse, versions of linguistic elements must be presented through emotional, imperative, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and personification language discourse strategies. Trask's (2000) version of the discourse strategy will be used as the main analytical tool in this study because it contains language elements that can be practically applied to convey the intent and purpose of speeches regarding the Covid-19 response.

There were five types of languages than can convey intent. Emotive Language, Imperative, Metaphor, Hyperbole, and Personification. Emotive language is a powerful tool that aims to evoke strong feelings and persuade readers to agree with the writer's viewpoint. It carries an emotional burden and is one of the most effective strategies used to assess a situation or discourse (Wei, 2011; Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Napoli, 2016). It employs emotional words like "terrible," "sensational," and "effective" to engage with the readers' emotions. Imperatives are

verbs that instruct or command people, typically appearing at the beginning of a sentence (Potsdam, 2017). In linguistics, sentences are not only formed by declarative and interrogative clauses with the function of affirming and questioning, but also by imperatives used to order or ask, give advice, express wishes or curses, and grant permission. Metaphor is a type of rhetorical strategy in which the writer uses the literal of the sentence to indicate or refer to something else that has the same purpose but not in the direct sense of the sentence (Aini, 2019). Hyperbole, according to Burgers et al. (2016), is an exaggerated expression that goes beyond the actual reality. This type of expression is characterized by exaggeration, extremity, and excess. It involves a shift between propositional and intended meaning and includes special references. Additionally, Gibbs (2000) considers hyperbole as a sub-type of verbal irony, along with other figures of speech like rhetorical questions and disparaging statements. Personification is the attribution of human qualities and actions to non-human entities such as inanimate objects, animals, social organizations, and abstract ideas (Hamilton, 2002). According to Edgecombe (2017), it involves expressing exaltation by giving these entities the characteristics of living things that can perform actions. Dorst (2011) describes personification as an ontological metaphor that maps across domains, where an object or entity is further defined as a living being or thing. Understanding personification is essential for this study because it is frequently used in speech texts to influence the reader's perspective.

### ***Speech Function***

Language, being an essential medium for expressing ideas and fulfilling interpersonal needs, is inseparable from human beings and facilitates effective communication and interaction, enabling individuals to exchange their thoughts and ideas. Paziraei (2013) states that the interpersonal metafunction shows the way the addressor and the addressee interact and how they use the language to maintain the relations between them. During a conversation the addresser may give something

to the addressee or ask something from the addressee. This metafunction is an exchanging. This exchanging may be an offer, a command, a declarative, or an interrogative.

The interpersonal function is realized at two levels namely at the level of semantics and lexicogrammar which is term mood. At the level of semantic human being perform two roles namely giving and demanding. The commodity exchange may be either information or goods and services. Yipei and Lingling (2013) states that delivering a speech is a typical interpersonal activity, and whether a speech succeeds or not, to a large degree, depends on the way speaker intrudes himself into the interaction. How to arouse audience interest and enthusiasm is the keypoint.

Halliday (1994) points out that when exchanging and expressing ideas, human being perform two roles namely giving and demanding, for the commodity such as information and goods or services. In systemic functional linguistic (SFL), it is named speech function. Speech function is a way of someone delivers ideas in communication to make listeners understand the ideas well. Speech function itself can be divided into four kinds: statement, question, command and offer.

Accordingly, Ye (2006) maintains that speech functions are an action or performance done by language users such as asking, commanding and answering in order to fulfil the intention of the speakers and listeners. Speech functions are used as the medium exchanging experiences in order to fulfil their needs. Further, Sulistyowati (2010) cites that to communicate effectively, we should clearly organize the messages that we want to convey through conversation. The organization of messages involves giving and demanding and this exchange might be more complicated than it seems. If we are demanding something, it means we are inviting to give, and if we are giving something, it means we are inviting to receive. Halliday (1994) postulates that there are four primary types of speech



function; they are statement, offer, question, and command that realized by Mood to perform two roles, they are giving and demanding. When communicate with other people, we are actually trying to do something with our language. It may be either to give information, or demand something.

### ***Types of Speech Function***

#### ***Statement***

Grolier (1992) points out that <sup>10</sup> statement is a way of giving information by stating or the act of stating in speech and writing. Statement can be positive and negative. Statement usually begins with subject, followed by verb or auxiliary verb and ended by full stop.

Emily likes ice cream.  
Subject Verb Object

#### ***Question***

A question is an interrogative question which is used to seek confirmation or to ask something or an inquiry that invites or calls for reply (Grolier, 1992). A question begins with auxiliary verb or WH-Question and will be ended with question mark (?)

Do you bring an umbrella?  
Aux. Verb Subject Verb Object

#### ***Offer***

Grolier (1992) argues that <sup>6</sup> offer as an expression of willingness to give or do something, or to put forward for acceptance, rejection. Offer also can be defined as a way of giving good and service to someone. Offer is usually begun with modal and always ended with a question mark (?).

Would you like some help?  
Modal Subject Verb Object

### Command

6

Grolier (1992) emphasizes that command is a way to receive information, good or service by forcing the listener to give them. Command also is a way of demanding good and service in form of imperative statement whether in the form of positive or negative command. In command sentences, the subject is omitted. It is begun with the predicate and it is usually ended with exclamation mark (!).

Open     the door!

Verb     Object

Accordingly, Saragih (2010) maintains that in act interaction, the speech function is initiated by speaker (addresser) and then the listener (addressee) responds to the speech function. Speech function recognize a correlation between the different structure of an initiating move and the structure of a responding move; position and negative responding speech function. The manuscript derived from the result of the research and written in English will be prioritized. The manuscript(s), which discusses the possible development of theories or suggested ideas in English language, is considered to be accepted in this journal.

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## B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative content analysis design. Qualitative content analysis has a tendency to describe media content seen from the context and process of source documents so that the results obtained are more in-depth and detailed regarding media content and are able to explain the relationship between media content and the context of social reality that occurs (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In the context of this study, the process of qualitative content analysis is an ideal method to investigate communicative messages and draw conclusions about the meanings and discursive strategies used by Dr Tedros in his speeches on handling Covid-19.

### ***Data and Data Resource***

The data in this study are language elements in the form of words, phrases, sentences that represent discursive strategies in Dr Tedros' speeches on handling Covid-19. The data were collected based on three selected themes, namely the beginning of Covid-19 outbreak, the peak period of the pandemic, and the stage of vaccination as an integral part in handling Covid-19. The data sources are the recordings of selected speeches by Dr Tedros accessed from the Youtube.com.

### ***Techniques of Collecting Data***

The data collection was carried out by observing and note-taking the recordings downloaded from Youtube.com. Using the Transcript program, data in the form of recordings are transcribed into writing. Furthermore, the transcription results are read repeatedly to identify and classify the lingual units of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences based on the discursive strategy developed by Trask (2000). The next step is to translate the data using an interlingual translation technique (Jacobson, 2013), which involves transferring the entire text from English to Indonesian as the target language. In analyzing the data, each explanation of the data sample in English is followed by Indonesian translation.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data analysis will be carried out in three stages, namely identification, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough, 2003). This type of data analysis is used because it is able to reveal the practice of discursive strategies that have an ideological goal, namely to influence the attitudes and opinions of listeners to follow the instructions for handling Covid-19 appropriately as stated in Dr Tedros' speeches. In terms of substance, the data are analyzed using Trask's (2000) discursive strategy framework which includes emotive, imperative, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and personification languages. Meanwhile the second data are

categorized based on Halliday's (1994) theory of speech functions, including statement, offer, question, and command.

### Schemes of Analysis

To carry out the discussion of this study, the researcher applies the data analysis procedure designed by Fairclough (2003) which includes three levels of analysis, namely identification, interpretation, and explanation as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Procedures of Data Analysis

Phase	Description	Data	Analysis
1. Identification	The researcher reads the transcription carefully, examines the language elements that indicate discursive strategies and marks those elements. Language elements can be words, phrases, or clauses/sentences with various forms. Key questions: What language elements are used as discursive strategies?	<b>1</b> <i>The clock is still ticking on vaccine equity. We have nine days left until we reach the hundredth day of the year and the target of starting vaccine rollout to health workers and those at-risk in all countries remains in our grasp.</i>	Identify discursive strategies: the use of metaphor in the clause <i>"The clock is still ticking..."</i>
2. Interpretation	The researcher groups the data based on the theme of discursive strategy (Trask, 2000), explains its linguistic features, and interprets its meaning according to the context of the discourse.		Through the metaphor of <i>"The clock is still ticking"</i> , the discourse maker compares the ticking of the clock with the decreasing time from the target of 100 days for vaccine procurement efforts, especially for health workers. This is like chasing contest between the running time and the predetermined target time.
	The researcher explains the intent and		Dr Tedros as the WHO authority emphasizes the importance of the

### 3. Explanation

purpose of using the discursive strategies by considering aspects of the situation and context when the speech is delivered and connecting it with the efforts of handling Covid-19 in a pandemic situation.

availability of vaccines in the near future to increase immunity for health workers as those who are at the forefront of handling Covid-19. This is important to put forward considering the increasing number of victims of health workers due to exposure to Covid-19 because they have not received the vaccine.

## C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

From the data collected, it was found that Dr Tedros used several discourse strategies to convince the listeners of the meaning he conveyed in the speech. The results of data analysis show that the use of discursive strategies can be summarized in the use of emotive language, imperative, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification. Here is a more detailed explanation.

### *Emotive Language*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of emotive language. This is intended so that the message communicated will be more easily understood by listeners with parable or figurative language. <sup>3</sup> Emotive language is one of the most powerful strategies used to gain an assessment of a situation or discourse. It is characterized by the use of words that are full of emotion, such as, terrible, sensational and very effective, in which the <sup>3</sup> writer tries to engage with the emotions of the reader (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011; Wei, 2011). The use of emotive language is intended to strengthen the message conveyed and try to influence the opinion of the audience, as in the following example:

4 (1) We are *deeply* concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction.

Kami sangat prihatin dengan tingkat penyebaran dan keparahan tingkat kelambanan penanganan yang mengkhawatirkan.

In excerpt (1) it can be found the clause “We are deeply concerned...”. The clause in the context tries to evoke the listener's emotions with the use of the word *deeply* which means ‘very intense’. This raises awareness and the importance of our concern for the dangers of the spread of Covid-19, so it is necessary to increase vigilance and alertness in dealing with the impact of the virus.

This finding is supported by Wei’s (2011) argument that the use of emotive language is intended to strengthen the message conveyed and try to influence the opinion of the audience. In this context, Dr Tedros showed deep concern for listeners on the current condition affected by Covid-19. He tries to invite the listeners together to raise awareness in the face of the dangers of Covid-19. The same pattern is shown by the use of emotive words in the following sentences:

- 4 (2) Pandemic is not a word to use *lightly or carelessly*.
- (3) It is a word that, if misused, can cause *unreasonable fear*, or *unjustified acceptance* that the fight is over, leading to *unnecessary* suffering and death.
- (4) We have called every day for countries to take *urgent* and *aggressive* action.
- (5) Two of those – China and the Republic of Korea - have *significantly* declining epidemics.

### *Imperatives*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of imperative language. It is expected that the message delivered will be more easily understood by listeners since it shows

an intention. Imperatives are verbs that give instructions or commands to people, and usually appear at the beginning of a sentence (Potsdam, 2017). In addition, imperative are used to give advice, express wishes or curses and even to give permission, as in the following examples:

(6) This is not just a public health crisis, it is a crisis that will touch every sector – so every sector and every individual *must be involved* in the fight.

Ini bukan hanya krisis kesehatan masyarakat, ini adalah krisis yang akan menyentuh setiap sektor – sehingga setiap sektor dan setiap individu harus terlibat dalam perjuangan.

In excerpt (6) it can be found the clause "...every individual must be involved...". The clause in the context tries to direct listeners to do something in the face of threats of Covid-19 with the use of the expression *must be involved* which means 'actively concern with'. This statement encourages and invites listeners to join together in efforts to face and overcome the current world Health crisis as the bad excess of the virus.

This corroborates Postdam's (2017) finding that the use of imperative is intended to give instructions or commands to people. In this context, Dr Tedros orders the listeners to join forces in the fight against the virus. The same pattern is shown by the use of imperatives in the following sentences.

(7) I *remind* all countries that we are calling on you to activate and scale up your emergency response mechanisms.

(8) *Find, isolate, test and treat* (MAT) every case and trace every contact.

(9) I also *requested* manufacturers to help ensure that the countries that step up can rapidly donate those doses.

(10) I'm still *hopeful* that some forward looking and enlightened leaders will step up.

### *Metaphors*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of metaphorical elements. This is intended so that the message communicated will be more easily understood by listeners with parable or figurative language. Metaphorical language expresses and elicits more emotions than literal language (Citron & Goldberg, 2014; Mohammad et al., 2016). The use of metaphors is intended to strengthen the message conveyed and try to influence the opinion of the audience, as in the following example:

(11) *The clock is still ticking* on vaccine equity. We have nine days left until we reach the hundredth day of the year and the target of starting vaccine rollout to health workers and those at-risk in all countries remains in our grasp.

*Jam terus berdetak* pada ekuitas vaksin. Kami memiliki sembilan hari tersisa hingga mencapai hari keseratus dalam setahun dan target untuk memulai *peluncuran* vaksin kepada petugas kesehatan dan mereka yang berisiko di semua negara tetap dalam genggaman kami.

In excerpt (11) it can be found the clause “The clock is ticking...”. The clause in the context of this sentence does not refer to ‘the form of a clock that has a ticking clockwise’, but rather as a figurative expression maintaining that the availability of vaccines must be rushed in view of the nine more days of the deadline for procuring vaccines for health workers. This is based on findings in the field that many health workers died as victims of Covid-19 transmission from patients while carrying out their duties to treat patients. Thus, the availability of vaccines in a short time becomes an urgent matter to reduce the risk of more victims.

This finding is in accordance with Cabot et al., (2020) who claim that the metaphorical use in news discourse is a strategy to make a strong interpretation of what you want to describe. From this data, it can be seen that the use of metaphorical expressions emphasizes Dr Tedros’s messages of the urgency of the vaccine



availability for health workers in a shorter time. The same pattern is shown by the use of metaphors in the following sentences:

- (12) We have rung *the alarm bell* loud and clear.
- (13) Even those countries with community transmission or large clusters can turn *the tide* on this virus.
- (14) Health and care workers are (REL-CIRC) at the *forefront* of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (15) We're not in a *race* against each other, we're in a race against the virus and over the last year.

### *Hyperboles*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of hyperbole expressions. The word hyperbole is referred to a figure of speech that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis (Burgers et al., 2016). It is the opposite of understatement.

- (16) In the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased 13-fold and the number of affected countries has *tripled*.  
Dalam dua minggu terakhir, jumlah kasus COVID-19 di luar China telah meningkat 13 kali lipat dan jumlah negara yang terkena dampak meningkat tiga kali lipat.

In excerpt (16) it can be found the clause "...the number of affected countries has tripled...". The clause in the context tries to convince listeners that the threat of Covid-19 is very big that is infecting all countries in the world. This is conveyed by the use of words that contain excessive meaning, namely has tripled which means 'three times'. This statement shows Dr. Tedros's concern about the dangers and threats of the virus which is already visible in front of his eyes so that it has a bad impact on human life, often with more and more victims dying.

This statement is in line with Burgers's et al (2016) citing that the use of hyperbola is intended to give emphasize the meaning of the message conveyed. In this context, Dr Tedros reassured listeners of the great and real threat of the spread of Covid-19.

### *Personification*

In delivering health messages in the midst of a pandemic situation, Dr Tedros in his speeches used linguistic features in the form of personification. This is intended so that the message communicated will be more easily understood by listeners with parable or figurative language. Personification is an expression of exaltation in which inanimate objects are given the characteristics of living things that can perform actions (Edgecombe, 2017), in which an object or entity is further defined as a living being or thing (Hamilton, 2002; Dosrt, 2011). Personification occurs when animals, objects, social organizations, and abstract ideas are given the qualities of a person, as in the following example:

- (17) In the days and weeks ahead, we expect to see the number of cases, the number of deaths, and the number of affected countries *climb* even higher. Dalam beberapa hari dan minggu ke depan, kami berharap untuk melihat jumlah kasus, jumlah kematian, dan jumlah negara yang terkena dampak naik lebih tinggi.

In excerpt (17) it can be found the clause "...the number of affected countries climb...". The clause in the context tries to convince listeners that the threat of Covid-19 is very big that is infecting all countries in the world. This is conveyed by the use of words that contain personification, namely climb which means 'go or come up', that is something that a living thing does. This statement shows Dr. Tedros's concern about the dangers and threats of the virus in which the number of cases affected by the virus is increasing day by day.

This statement is in accordance with Dorst's (2011) argument that the use of personification is intended to give emphasize the meaning of the message

conveyed. In this context, Dr Tedros reassured listeners of the great and real threat of the massive spread of Covid-19.

### ***Discussion***

Having analyzed the data, the researchers tried to answer the second research question on the functions of the speeches delivered by Dr Tedros on handling Covid-19. The presentation of the finding can be summarized on Table 2:

Table 2. Distribution of Speech Functions

No	Types of Speech Function	Number (F)	Percentage % (X)
1	Statement	86	87,75%
2	Question	0	0%
3	Command	10	10,20%
4	Offer	2	2,04%
<b>Total</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the finding on the table 2, it can be known that there were 98 sentences found in Dr. Tedros's speeches on handling Covid-19. In addition, the sentences comprises 4 functions of the speeches, i.e. there were 86 Statements (87,75%), no question (0%), 10 Commands (10,20%), and 2 Offers (2,04%). The speech function dominantly used was Statement (87,75%), followed by Command (10,20%), and Offer (2,04%), and no case of Question found. The highest proportion in the use of speech functions due to the fact that speech deals with give information to the audience. Statement is giving information to the audience/listener, in terms of inviting listeners to receive information. When the speaker said something in the form of statement, it means that the speaker expected the audience to receive the information.

From the analysis it can be recognized that Dr. Tedros gave more information than goods or services. He tried to influence people to receive what he wanted to say and how people did something regarding the handling of Covid-19.

Accordingly, following the theory of speech functions of Halliday (1994), the data were classified based on the four types of speech functions from all sentences in the speeches of Dr. Tedros. From the data, there were 98 sentences containing speech functions. Here are some examples of representative data based on the types of speech function:

#### *Statement*

There are 86 statements found in the speech transcripts. The statements occur when the speaker gives information to the hearer. The examples of statement can be seen as follows.

(18) *We have therefore made* the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic.

(19) Last week, *I made* an urgent request to countries, with doses of vaccines that have WHO Emergency Use Listing, to share 10 million doses immediately with COVAX.

Sentence (18) is classified as a statement as it begins with subject *We* followed by auxiliary and verb *have made*. The same pattern occurs in sentence (19), subject *I* is followed by verb *made*. Both were classified into statement since they function to share Dr Tedros's information to the audience on the early assessment of Covid-19 as pandemic (18) and an urgent request upon the vaccines (19).

#### <sup>12</sup> *Command*

As a speech function, command has the purpose to demand goods and services in a conversation. We can say that command function is to ask someone to do something. The commodity exchange in a command is goods and services. In the

speech transcripts, the researchers find 10 commands as the speech function. The example of command are as follows.

(20) *Find, isolate, test and treat every case and trace every contact!*

(21) *Protect and train your health workers!*

The speech function found in the examples above is command. It is started by verbs find, isolate, test and treat (20) and protect and train (21) and is ended by exclamation marks. The examples above were classified into command since Dr Tedros as the speaker demands for the actions from the audience.

#### *Offer*

In the conversation, offer is a kind of basic speech function move initiated only by the speaker. It indicates that the speaker has a role as giving goods or service to the other speakers. There are 2 offers found in the speech transcripts. The examples of offer can be seen as follows.

(22) Dr. Koca the floor is yours.

(23) My friend, Carl, the floor is yours

The above examples show that the speaker is giving goods and service to the hearer by using the speech function of offer. The utterance Dr. Koca the floor is yours, in (22) means that Dr Tedros offers Dr Koca an opportunity of delivering a speech. The same pattern occurs in (23) as Dr Tedros offers Carl a turn of speaking. The function describes that Dr Tedros is giving or providing goods and service and he invites his opposite speaker to receive that goods and service. The title of this section should be written in capital letter, 12pt, and bold. This section is organized systematically, and only the related results or information of the research should be discussed here.

## D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### *Conclusions*

Based on the data gathered, it was determined that Dr. Tedros employed a number of discourse techniques to persuade the audience of the message he intended to convey. The study of the data reveals that emotive language, imperative, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification are all examples of discursive techniques. Those strategies were used by Dr Tedros to reassure listeners about the health messages in the face of the Covid-19 disaster and to mobilize global cooperation in an effort to overcome the negative impact of the spread of the pandemic.

In addition, after analyzing <sup>15</sup> the types of speech function in Dr. Tedros's speeches, there are just three of four speech functions that the researchers got from Dr. Tedros's Speeches; they are Statement, Command, and Offer. Statement was 86 (87,75%), Command was 10 (10,20%), Offer was 2 (2,04%), and there is no Question in Dr. Tedros's Speeches (0%). The dominant type of speech functions used in Dr. Tedros's speeches is Statement 86 (87,75%).

The results show that the statement was <sup>15</sup> the dominant type of speech function in Dr. Tedros's speeches. It was the way of the speaker to deliver the information about the current world's health problems due to Covid-19 outbreak; the solution of the problem; His planning; and the appreciation for the audience in joining collective actions against Covid-19.

### *Suggestion*

In education, media is significant to make it easier for students to understand the material from their teacher. The speech is one of many media that is suitable for learning English. By using speeches, the students can see how native speakers use language to communicate with each other. Students observe to understanding through experience. In the speech transcript, all utterances from the speaker

contains speech functions, such as statement, command, and offer. After learning about speech function, the students can understand how to communicate precisely and correctly to the teachers and their friends in the school environment and communicate with parents when at home because they know the functions in every sentence. Besides, speech functions help the teacher provide material and manage the class through the language used by the teacher in class interactions. By understanding the importance of the speech function, the message will be conveyed smoothly. Likewise, the delivery of the material can proceed well, and students will understand the meaning of the material. For the other researchers, this study could be used as a reference to conduct other research in the same field by using different media with larger data corpus.

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