

**Rhetoric and persuading practs in Nigeria's president
Muhammadu Buhari's broadcasts on the covid-19
pandemic**

**Rhétorique et pratiques de persuasion dans les
interventions du président nigérian
Muhammadu Buhari sur la pandémie de covid-
19**

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Abstract : This study examines rhetoric and pragmatic acts of persuading in Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari's (PMB) first two official broadcasts on the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on Aristotle's rhetorical strategies and Mey's Pragmatic Acts theory, findings show that the various instances of ethos (31), logos (10) and pathos (25) amount to a total of 66 instances, indicating PMB's heavy reliance on ethical and emotional appeals in indexing persuasion. Within the contextual resources of speech act shared situation knowledge, reference, inference and metaphor, pragmatic analysis shows that PMB pract thanking, commending, assuring and requesting to achieve the pragmatic goals of persuading and encouraging. This study concludes that persuasive elements in PMB's broadcasts are employed to evince the government's responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic, plead

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for compliance with COVID-19 prevention protocols and lockdown measures, and solicit the people's support in the fight against the pandemic.

Key-words: Rhetorical appeals, Persuasion, Pragmatic act theory, Covid-19 broadcasts, Muhammadu Buhari

Résumé : Cette étude examine la rhétorique et les actes pragmatiques de persuasion dans les deux premières émissions officielles du président nigérian Muhammadu Buhari (PMB) sur la pandémie de COVID-19. S'appuyant sur les stratégies rhétoriques d'Aristote et la théorie des actes pragmatiques de Mey, les résultats montrent que les diverses instances d'ethos (31), de logos (10) et de pathos (25) représentent un total de 66 instances, indiquant la forte dépendance de PMB aux appels éthiques et émotionnels. Dans les ressources contextuelles de l'acte de parole, connaissance de la situation partagée, référence, inférence et métaphore, l'analyse pragmatique montre que la pratique PMB remercie, félicite, assure et demande pour atteindre les objectifs pragmatiques de persuasion et d'encouragement. Cette étude conclut que des éléments persuasifs dans les émissions de PMB sont utilisés pour prouver la réactivité du gouvernement à la pandémie de COVID-19, plaider pour le respect des protocoles de prévention et des mesures de confinement de la COVID-19, et solliciter le soutien de la population dans la lutte contre la pandémie.

Mots-clés : Appels rhétoriques, Persuasion, Théorie pragmatique des actes, Emissions Covid-19, Muhammadu Buhari

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) broke out in Wuhan, an emerging business centre in China at the end of 2019 and became a global epidemic, permeating continental shores and boundaries of world nations. Since its outbreak, world nations have risen to the occasion of combating the human-to-human rapid spread of the novel viral disease. According to Nigeria's Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the Federal Ministry of Health confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in Nigeria on 27th February, 2020, and since then, the number of confirmed cases and death cases has risen. The

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May 19, 2022 online report of European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDPC) records that there are 519,467,357 covid-19 confirmed cases and 6,277,833 death cases across the world.

In Nigeria, emergency situations such as national disaster, security situation, among others only call for delivery of special speeches by the president, and this happens on rare occasions¹. The speeches considered in this study concern issues of global security and looming disaster. This paper is borne out of the hypothetical notion that PMB is expected to deploy some persuasive resources in his well-constructed rhetoric to win the hearts of many Nigerians, and to be seen as a leader capable of salvaging the destiny of the nation in the face of global threat. Persuasion in PMB's COVID-19 broadcasts is established through the lens of Aristotle's classical rhetorical appeals. Since persuading is a pragmatic act of intention, a pragmatic perspective is offered through Mey's pragmatic acts theory².

1 - Persuasion, Models and Domains

Persuasion is a communicative act that aims at affecting the beliefs and ultimately attitude of participants involved in communication. Lackoff³ sees persuasive discourse as "nonreciprocal attempt or intention of one party to change the behaviour, feelings, intentions or viewpoint of another by

¹ A, Osisanwo, «I Belong to Everybody yet to Nobody: Pragmatic Acts in President Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural Speech. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communication*, 3(4), pp.297-320.

² J, Mey, *Pragmatics : An Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2001.

³ R, Lackoff, «Persuasive discourse and ordinary conversation, with examples from advertising », *In Analysing Discourse : Text and Talk*, D. Tannen, Georgetown University Press, 1982.

communicative means⁴. Ranks⁵ posits, in a broader sense, that attention-getting, confidence-building, desire-stimulating, urgency-stressing and response-seeking are a basic persuasive formula inspired by Cicero's classical oration and Aristotle's ethos that can be applied in advertising, courtroom discourse and other related persuasive discourse⁶. Hussein and Abttan⁷ through the lens of the classic Aristotle's persuasive mode, define persuasion as "an art of effective interactions in which speakers make their opinion believable to the audience by introducing logic clues, triggering emotions and proving their own credibility". Bu⁸ records Searle's position on persuasion as "recognised direct speech act in which the speaker's purpose is to get the hearer to commit him/herself to some course of action" while also attempting to "make the world match the words". Significantly, persuasion has been explored in different contexts and domains through different models of persuasion theories. Literatures on persuasion have flooded the social domains such as politics⁹, sermon¹⁰, academic writing¹¹, advertising¹² child

⁴ K, Hardin, «Trying to persuade : speech acts in the persuasive discourse of intermediate Spanish learners», In (Eds.), *A Mosaic of languages and cultures: studies celebrating the career of K.J. Franklin*, K. Mc Elhanon & G. Reesink, Dallas, SIL International, 2010, p.155. <http://www.sil.org/silepubs/abstract.asp?id=52526>

⁵ H, Ranks, *Persuasion Analysis: A Companion to Composition*, Counter-Propaganda Press, Parkforest, 1988.

⁶ K, Hardin, *op cit*

⁷ A.L, Hussein, & G, Risala, «Pragmatic Analysis of Persuasion in Modern British and Iraqi Parliamentary Election Slogans», *In International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, 3(2), 2018, p.02.

⁸ J, Bu, «Study of Pragmatics transfer in Persuasion Strategies by Chinese Learners in English», *In The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 16(2), 2010, p.95.

⁹ M, Franz, &T, Ridout, «Does Political Advertising Persuade ?», *In Political Behaviour*, 29(4), 2007, pp. 465-491.

training¹³, public health¹⁴, law¹⁵, among others. In this study, Aristotle's persuasion theory is employed to extricate instances of persuasion triggers that appeal to logic, emotion and ethics in PMB's Covid-19 broadcast.

2- Some Linguistics-Based Works on Speeches of Nigerian Politicians

Scholars have carried out linguistic and non-linguistic studies on speeches of Nigerian military leaders, civilian leaders and other iconic political figures. Through the lens of deixis, Adetunji¹⁶ examines inclusion and exclusion in Olusegun Obasanjo's speeches. The study concludes that deictic terms, particularly pronominals, aid the ideological representation of groups in

¹⁰ A, Fadhil, *A Linguistic Study of Persuasive Strategies in English Religious Sermon*, 2015. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327231107>

¹¹ M.G, Adimata, *Persuasion in International Journals: Pragmatic Analysis*, 2016, <https://core.ac.uk/reader/148609490>, S, Ting, «Ethos, Pathos and Logos in University Student's Informal Requests», *In Journal of Language Studies*, 18(1), 2018, pp.234-251.

¹² Z, Maleej, «Conceptual Metaphor as Persuasion with special reference to consumer advertising : A cognitive semantics account», In M. Triki & A. Sellami-Baklouti, *Pragmatic Perspectives on Persuasion*, Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Sfax, 2003, pp.121-147. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259784278_Conceptual_metaphor_as_persuasion_with-special_reference_to_consumer-advertising_A_cognitive_semantics_account

¹³ L, Kaharu, «Persuasive Discourse Strategies Used by Mothers at Dinner Time to Persuade Children to Eat », *In International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 1(4), 2013, pp.191-198.

¹⁴ V, Faleke, «Persuasive Act in Medical Communication : A Case of Medical Posters in Nigerian Context», *In Humanities and Social Science*, 6(4), 2017, pp.143-152.

¹⁵ E, Barkley, & D, Anderson, «Using the Science of Persuasion in the Courtroom», *In The Jury Expert*, 2008, pp.1-5.

¹⁶ A, Adetunji, «Inclusion and Exclusion in Political Discourse. Deixis in Olusegun Obasanjo's Speeches», *In Journal of Languages and Linguistics*, 5(2), 2006, pp. 177-191.

opposing camps. Abuya¹⁷ underscores pragma-stylistic analysis of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's inaugural speech and discovers commissive act as preponderant in the text. Ayeomoni and Akinkuolere¹⁸ focus on pragmatic analysis of victory and inaugural speeches of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua and realise the preponderance of assertive acts over all other acts performed in the speech. Akinwotu¹⁹ explores speech acts of the acceptance of nomination speeches of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief M.K.O. Abiola. The study discovers assertive, expressive and commissive acts as dominant mobilisation strategies in the speeches. Aremu²⁰ works on pragmatic analysis of conceptual mappings in inaugural speeches of Nigerian presidents. Analysis shows that pragmatic strategies of appealing, remembering, thanking, warning and promising are instrumental in the conceptual mapping of election as battle, sport and a journey. Koutchade²¹ analyses speech acts in Buhari's address at the 71st session of the UN General Assembly. Findings show that while directive acts are used to put forward suggestions, expressive acts reflect the psychological state of the

¹⁷ E.J, Abuya, «A Pragma-stylistic Analysis of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan Inaugural Speech», *In English Language Teaching*, 5(11), 2012, pp. 8-15.

¹⁸ O.M, Ayeomoni, & O, Akinkuolere, «A Pragmatic Analysis of Victory and Inaugural Speeches of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua», *In Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2012, 2(3), pp.461-468.

¹⁹S.A, Akinwotu, «A Speech Act Analysis of the Acceptance of Nomination Speeches of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief M.K.O. Abiola», *In English Linguistics Research*, 2(1), 2013, pp.43-51.

²⁰ M, Aremu, M. «Pragmatic Analysis of Conceptual Mappings in Inaugural Speeches of Nigerian Presidents», *In Covenant Journal for Language Studies*, 5(2), 2017, pp.32-47.

²¹ I.S, Koutchade, «Analysing Speech Acts in Buhari's Address at the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly», *In International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 6(3), 2017, pp.226-233.

president while giving the address. Osisanwo²² examines the pragmatic acts in President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 inaugural speech, and identifies pract proposing, promising, stating, assuring, acknowledging, thanking, remarking, saluting, appealing, reminding, instructing, advising, hoping, charging, informing, extending, identifying, describing and defining to achieve the pragmatic goals of revealing intention, admitting and appreciating, directing and giving details on issues. Akinmameji²³ understudies persuasive strategies in selected speeches of Nigeria's Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, and discovers how the vice-president appeals to the perceived credibility of his personality and that of his boss; appeals to the emotion of the audience by flaunting the achievements of their administration; and appeals to logic and reasoning through facts, quotes and figures. Investigating practs in first official speeches of Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Nana Akufo-Addo on coronavirus pandemic, Ugoala and Israel²⁴ unveil practs instructing, condemning, pacifying, persuading, and warning in the data to drive home the crux of the speech. However, the present study, unlike others, investigates the persuasive strategies and pragmatic acts of persuading in President Muhammadu Buhari's (PMB) national broadcasts on the Covid-19 pandemic from the standpoint of rhetoric and persuasion.

²² Osisanwo, *op.cit.*

²³ O, Akinmameji, «Persuasive Strategies in Selected Speeches of Nigeria's Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo», In A. Osisanwo, I. Olaosun & I. Odebo, *Discourse-Stylistics, Sociolinguistics and Society : A Festschrift for Ayo Ogunsiji*, Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd, Ibadan, 2018, pp. 463-483.

²⁴ B, Ugoala, & P, Israel, «Practs in First Official Speeches of Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Nana Akufo-Addo on Coronavirus Pandemic», *In Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 10(6), 2020, pp.740-764.

3 - Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Aristotle's rhetorical appeals and Mey's pragmatic acts theory²⁵ as analytical framework. While Aristotle's persuasive theory gives insights to instances of ethical, emotional and logical appeals in PMB's speeches, pragmeme reveals the pragmatic acts of persuading performed in the speeches within the pragmatic context of shared situational knowledge, reference, relevance, inference and voice. The choice of these theories is borne out of their rich background in pragmatics, their content-based analytical approach, author-centred approach and applicability to the context of rhetoric.

3-1- Aristotle's Rhetorical Appeals

Aristotle's persuasive theory known as rhetorical appeals are ethos, pathos and logos. Persuasion by moral character and credibility (ethos), persuasion by logical or rational presentation (logos) and persuasion by putting the hearer in an emotional frame of mind (pathos) are inherent in every persuasive discourse. Ethos is established in speaker, pathos is evoked in audience and logos is conveyed in speech²⁶. Ethos refers to the display of credibility and trustworthiness by a speaker/writer in objectively presenting a universal truth which may not be the truth the speaker believes in (Murthy & Ghosal, 2014). Ethos is speaker or writer-centred. In communicative acts, speakers/writers use certain style and tone that aid acceptability of their messages. Ethos takes into consideration the integrity and track record of a

²⁵ Mey, *op.cit.*

²⁶ A, Dlugan, *Ethos, Pathos, Logos*, 3 Pillars of Public Speaking, 2010.
<http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/ethos-pathos-logos/>

speaker in a certain field that makes him believable²⁷. Dlugan²⁸ avers that ethos of a speaker is measured by trustworthiness (being honest), similarity to the audience (certain characteristics shared with the audience), authority (might be political, institutional or others) and reputation (expertise and experience in a certain field). Ethical appeal relies on personality and stance. The speaker rides on the wings of his personality which is not hidden from the audience. His stance, position or standpoint is influenced by his perceived personality.

Pathos is an audience-centred persuasive style that appeals to emotion of target audience. To achieve persuasion, emotions must be evoked to suit the context of persuasion either positively or negatively. Emotional appeal is the ability to evoke audience emotions and strategically connect these emotions with elements of the speech.²⁹ Pathos is the conditioning of audience's state of mind such as love, greed, guilt, security, anger, empathy, insult, fear, pity, confusion, humour³⁰ emulation, shame, contempt, envy, goodwill, favour³¹, surprise, joy, sadness, remorse and awe.³² Speakers can persuade their audience by exploiting their emotions and by showing identification with

²⁷ M.G, Adimata, *op.cit.*

²⁸ A, Dlugan, *op.cit.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ U, Demirdogen, «The Roots of Research in (political) Persuasion. Ethos, Pathos, Logos and the Yale Studies of Communication», *In International Journal of Social Enquiry*, 3(1), 2010, pp.189-201.

³¹ Stephen, Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking (12th ed.)*, 2012, https://www.academia.edu/40918025/The_Art_of_Public_Speaking_12th_Edition

³² A, Dlugan, *op.cit.*

what the audience value, desire and need.³³ Logos refers to rational appeal supported by proof/evidence. The substances of rational, critical, logical and analytical discourse are the use of logic, claims, argumentation, examples/evidence and data in speech or message.³⁴

3-2- Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory

Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act Theory or Pragmeme is an improvement on Austin's (1962) Speech Act theory. Pragmeme was borne out of the shortcomings of Austin's theory of speech act. Mey is of the opinion that socio-cultural and societal factors and conditions are instrumental to meaning interpretation, and that human communication is shaped by these factors. People, places time, among others, are not only made reference to by context, action is also related with Akinwotu³⁵. These factors that broaden context are not accounted for in Austin's theory. Therefore, the goal of pragmatic act theory is to properly situate speech acts, particularly conversations, in a context in which it is meant to be understood.³⁶ Utterances cannot be interpreted in a single context. In this sense, Mey³⁷ submits that "there are no speech acts ; but situated speech acts or instantiated pragmatic acts". Mey³⁸ posits that pragmatic act theory "does not try to explain language use from

³³ C, Higgins, & R, Walker, «Ethos, Logos, Pathos : Strategies of Persuasion in Social/environmental Report», *In Accounting Forum*, 36(3), 2012, pp.194-209. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256979449_Ethos_Logos_Pathos_Strategies_of_Persuasion_in_SocialEnvironmental_Reports

³⁴ S, Ting, *op.cit.*

³⁵ S.A, Akinwotu, *op.cit.*

³⁶ M, Aremu, *op.cit.*

³⁷ J, Mey, *op.cit.*, p.218

³⁸ *Ibid*, p.219.

the inside out...rather, its explanatory movement is from the outside in". Odebunmi³⁹ corroborates Mey's claim that pragmatic acts are performed in implicit communication. Utterances should therefore be interpreted "within the affordances of a society" and based on "the rules of engagement of the language in use"⁴⁰. Pragmeme is a generalized pragmatic act that can be instantiated through individual pragmatic act. The instantiated pragmatic act is what Mey refers to as "pract" or "allopract". According to him, "pract" or "allopract" is "a concrete and different realisation of a particular pragmeme.

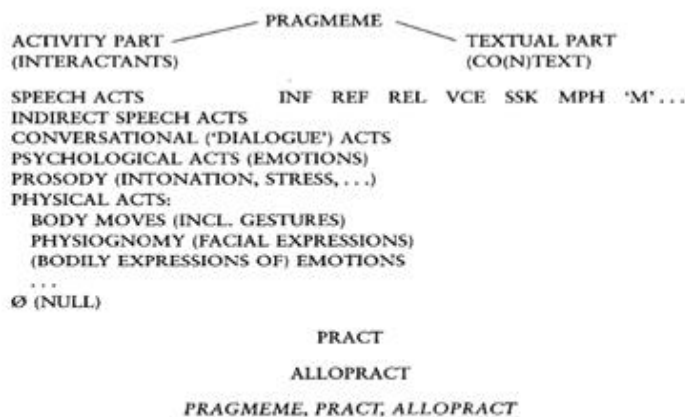


Figure 1: A Model of Pragmatic Acts (Mey 2001: 222)

The schema above shows the division of pragmeme into two parts: activity and textual parts. The activity part is a constituent of options available to participants (interactants) which are speech acts, indirect speech acts, conversational acts, psychological acts, prosody, physical acts, body moves,

³⁹ A, Odebunmi, «A Pragmatic Reading of Ahmed Yerima's Proverbs in Yemoja, Attahiru and Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees», *In Intercultural Pragmatics*, 3(2), 2006, pp.153-169.

⁴⁰ S.A, Akinwotu, *op.cit*, p.85.

physiognomy and bodily expression of emotions. Some pragmatic tools in the textual part such as shared situation knowledge, relevance, reference, inference and voice form pragmatic background for analysis of this text.

4 - Methodology

This study sourced its data from the March 29, 2020 and April 27, 2020 speeches delivered by President Muhammadu Buhari on the COVID-19 pandemic. The speeches were culled from the website of The Guardian newspaper. The selection of these broadcasts was informed by the sense of promptness and urgency that inspired them. The broadcasts came at a period when lockdown was chief among measures adopted by Covid-19 embattled nations to curtail the widespread of the disease despite the socio-economic disadvantages it brings. Hence, it was assumed that PMB would deploy his rhetoric tactics in communicating with Nigerians and avoid throwing the nation into pandemonium. The texts were subjected to rhetorical analysis through Aristotle's rhetorical appeals in order to show the various instances of appeals in the speeches. Mey's pragmatic act theory reflects the pragmatic acts of persuading as performed in the speeches. The study employs quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches. Results were represented statistically to provide frequencies of instances of the rhetorical appeal and pragmatic acts (practs). The implications of these persuasive strategies as illustrated by extracts are extensively discussed. The March 29 broadcast is labelled B1 and the April 27 broadcast is labelled B2 for ease of reference. B1 contains 65 paragraphs (PGR henceforth), numbered PGR 1-65 while B2 contains 45 paragraphs, numbered PGR 66-110.

5 - Analysis and Discussion

Table 1 : Model for rhetorical analysis informed by the data

Persuasive strategy	Definition	Form of Realisation
Ethos	persuasion by moral character and credibility; speaker-centred	(i) effort and achievements to show credibility, competence and expertise (ii) sense of responsibility, dutifulness and commitment (iii) stance and universal truth (iv) 'I-have directed' imperative showing political authority
Pathos	persuasion by putting the hearer in an emotional frame of mind; audience-centred	(i) identifying with citizen's needs (ii) commiseration and condolences (iii) call for commitment, support and solidarity (iv) commendation and acknowledgements
Logos	persuasion by logical or rational presentation	(i) data and statistics (ii) reasoning from specific instances (iii) reasoning from principles

Researchers in rhetoric have created analytical frameworks and methods of analysis from Aristotle's theory of persuasion based on phenomenon being investigated because procedures for analysing persuasive communication were not specifically stated by Aristotle.⁴¹ Therefore, this study draws on the various procedures for analysing persuasive strategies as contained in existing literatures on persuasion, and develops its method and procedures for

⁴¹ Higgins & Walker, Ting, op.cit.

analysis. The various forms of realising these persuasive effects are explained in the table below.

Table 2: Summary of rhetorical appeals in PMB's COVID-19 broadcasts

Rhetorical Appeal	B1		B2		B(1&2)	
	Freq of Instances	%	Freq of Instances	%	Freq of Instances	%
Ethos	20	54.05	11	37.93	31	46.97
Pathos	11	29.73	14	48.28	25	37.88
Logos	6	16.22	4	13.79	10	15.15
Total	37	100	29	100	66	100

The table above shows a summary of the various instances of rhetorical appeals in PMB's COVID-19 broadcasts as well as their frequency counts and percentages. Broadcast 1 (B1) has 20 instances of ethos (54.05%), 11 instances of pathos (29.73%) and 6 instances of logos (16.22%). In broadcast 2 (B2), there are 11 instances of ethos (37.93%), 14 instances of pathos (48.28%) and 4 instances of logos (13.79%). In both speeches, there are 31 instances of ethos (46.97%), 25 instances of pathos (37.88%) and 10 instances of logos (15.15%). In total, there are 66 instances of rhetorical appeals.

5-1- Appeal to ethos

Ethos is a speaker-centred appeal that raises consciousness of a speaker's credibility in any speech event. With a critical study of the data, it was discovered that PMB used ethical appeals in different ways. Therefore, these realisations are categorised and discussed below.

5-1-1 Efforts and achievements showing credibility, competence and expertise

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PGR17. To date, we have introduced healthcare measures, border security, fiscal and monetary policies in our response. We shall continue to do so as the situation unfolds.

PGR75. This means that despite the drastic increase in the number of confirmed cases recorded in the past two weeks, the measures we have put in place thus far have yielded positive outcomes against the projections.

PRG76. The proportion of cases imported from other countries has reduced to only 19% of new cases, showing that our border closures yielded positive results.

In the above extracts, PMB resorts to self-criticism to establish credibility, competence and expertise in handling the COVID-19 threat. In PGR17, PMB outlines the various efforts taken to combat COVID-19 to show the Nigerian government's responsiveness to the pandemic. PGR75 and PGR76 show the consequence of the government's decisions. That measures taken by the Nigerian government have so far yielded positive results is a signification of competence and expertise.

5-1-2 Sense of responsibility, dutifulness and commitment

PGR11. Since the outbreak was reported in China, our Government has been monitoring the situation closely and studying the various responses adopted by other countries.

PGR31. Our agencies are currently working hard to identify cases and people these patients have been in contact with.

PGR80. Over ten thousand healthcare workers have been trained. For their protection, additional personal protective equipment has been distributed to

all the states. Although we have experienced logistical challenges, we remain committed to establish a solid supply chain process to ensure these heroic professionals are can work safely and are properly equipped.

In the above extracts, PMB attempts to explain the government's approaches in fighting the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria. These approaches include monitoring situations, studying the responses of other countries to the pandemic, vigorously identifying contact cases and equipping the health sector. Through this positive face strategy, PMB tries to prove the government's dutifulness and commitment in ensuring the protection of the lives of the citizens and also curtailing the spread of the virus. In essence, PMB paints a picture of a responsive government committed to winning the battle against Covid-19.

5-1-3 Stance and universal truth

PGR7. As of today, COVID-19 has no cure. Scientists around the world are working very hard to develop a vaccine.

PGR9. For now, the best and most efficient way to avoid getting infected is through regular hygienic and sanitary practices as well as social distancing.

PGR91. No country can afford the full impact of a sustained lockdown while awaiting the development of vaccines or cures.

Stance expresses a speaker's standpoint or judgement in a discourse. PMB employs stance as ethical appeal in persuading the people to accept a universal truth about COVID-19's undiscovered cure. The speaker's stance indirectly calls for people's compliance with the general safety rules as directed by the World Health organization (WHO) in order to curb the spread of the virus.

5-1-4 'I-have-directed' imperative showing political authority

PGR51. Furthermore, I have directed that a three-month repayment moratorium for all TraderMoni, MarketMoni and FarmerMoni loans be implemented with immediate effect.

PGR53. ...I have directed our development financial institutions to engage these development partners and negotiate concessions to ease the pains of the borrowers.

PGR84. I have directed the Central Bank of Nigeria and other financial institutions to make further plans....

The use of imperatives in these extracts shows PMB's personality as a political figure exercising his political power and authority in a situation that calls for promptness and urgency. The 'I-have-directed' imperative demonstrates the president's authority in giving executive orders and dispatching duties and responsibilities to persons and agencies who in turn are expected to act promptly. The extract describes PMB as a leader who has not lost control over the financial sector. This ethical style is to foreground the notion of the president's effectiveness and sovereign power in the heat of the nation's combat against COVID-19.

5-2 Appeal to pathos

Emotional appeal exploits emotions of the audience and attempts to condition their mind. In this study, PMB employs pathos to perform a psychological act of persuading Nigerians to throw their weight behind the government in ousting COVID-19 from Nigeria.

5-2-1 Identifying with citizen's needs

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PGR49. For residents of satellite and commuter towns and communities around Lagos and Abuja whose livelihoods will surely be affected by some of these restrictive measures, we shall deploy relief materials to ease their pains in the coming weeks.

PGR54. For the most vulnerable in our society, I have directed that the conditional cash transfers for the next two months be paid immediately. Our Internally displaced persons will also receive two months of food rations in the coming weeks.

The president, in the above extracts, declares his plans on the release of palliatives/food materials to mitigate hunger since the people's livelihood would be affected, given that food is a basic need of life. His special plans for the 'most vulnerable' and 'internally displaced persons' is an attempt to win the heart of the people and portray himself as a compassionate leader. Identifying with their needs is a strategy to ensure the people's compliance to the lockdown rules and to also earn their trust.

5-2-2 Commiseration and condolence

PGR6. Regrettably, we also had our first fatality, a former employee of PPMC, who died on 23rd March 2020. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family in this very difficult time. We also pray for quick recovery for those infected and undergoing treatments.

PGR73. I am using this opportunity to express our deepest condolences to the families of all Nigerians that have lost their loved ones as a result of the COVID nineteen pandemic. This is our collective loss and we share in your grief.

The extract above shows PMB's attempts to exploit the state of mind of the citizens by commiserating with them on the loss of their loved ones. This emotional appeal signifies that the president shares the sorrow of the bereaved by referring to the death incidents as 'collective loss'. The president's goodwill and prayers directed to infected persons undergoing treatments gives a picture of a president who is not heartless but cares for the people.

5-2-3 Call for commitment, support and solidarity

PGR47. However, we must all see this as our national and patriotic duty to control and contain the spread of this virus. I will therefore ask all of us affected by this order to put aside our personal comfort to safeguard ourselves and fellow human beings. This common enemy can only be controlled if we all come together and obey scientific and medical advice.

PGR55. We also call on all Nigerians to take personal responsibility to support those who are vulnerable within their communities, helping them with whatever they may need.

PGR86. I urge all Nigerians to continue to cooperate and show understanding whenever they encounter security agents.

The president, in the above extracts, gives a charge on commitment, support, solidarity, patriotism, sacrificing personal comfort and helping the vulnerable. The president's metaphorical representation of COVID-19 as 'common enemy' triggers a sense of shared interest. This is an attempt to stir the heart of the people to collectively erode the virus from the nation.

5-2-4 Commendation and acknowledgements

PGR67. I will start by commending you all for the resilience and patriotism that you have shown in our collective fight against the biggest health challenge of our generation.

PGR81. ...At this point, I must commend the insurance sector for their support in achieving this within a short period of time.

In the extract above, the president recognises and appreciates the efforts of Nigerians in the fight against COVID-19 through commendation and acknowledgements. It is an indirect way of commending the obedience demonstrated so far by Nigerians. These resources appeal to emotion and state of mind, and subtly demand more responsibilities from Nigerians.

5-3 Appeal to logos

Logos is an appeal to reason or logic. A speech must be replete of evidences, facts and statistics for persuasion to occur. PMB in his broadcasts, employs some rational tools in an attempt to persuade Nigerians to comply with COVID-19 safety rules and guidelines.

5-3-1 Data and statistics

PGR5. By the morning of March 29th, 2020, the total confirmed cases within Nigeria had risen to ninety-seven.

PGR68. As at yesterday, 26th April 2020, some three million confirmed cases of COVID nineteen have been recorded globally with about nine hundred thousand recoveries. Unfortunately, some two hundred thousand people have also died as a result of this pandemic.

PGR71. Exactly two weeks ago, there were three hundred and twenty-three confirmed cases in 20 States and the Federal Capital Territory.

PGR72. As at this morning, Nigeria has recorded one thousand two hundred and seventy-three cases across 32 States and the FCT. Unfortunately, these cases include 40 deaths.

PMB provides data and statistics to prove the ravaging effects of the virus nationally and globally. He emphasises the contact cases, death cases, contact areas and dates and time of these events. With this statistical evidence, reasoning is influenced such that Nigerians can reason with the president on issues related to their security and survival amidst the pandemic and further pledge their allegiance to the government.

5-3-2 Reasoning from specific instances

PGR46. ...But this is a matter of life and death, if we look at the dreadful daily toll of deaths in Italy, France and Spain.

PGR62. Every nation in the world is challenged at this time. But we have seen countries where citizens have come together to reduce the spread of the virus.

PMB deploys this form of logical appeal to influence the reasoning of Nigerians, warning them about the danger of opening the door to the devastating consequences of COVID-19, a fate suffered by Italy, France and Spain. On the other hand, the president calls for solidarity among Nigerians in reducing the spread of the virus just as citizens of other nations have successfully done. This is a call to emulation.

5-3-3 Reasoning from principles

PGR20. Accordingly, as a government, we will continue to rely on guidance of our medical professionals and experts at the Ministry of Health, NCDC and other relevant agencies through this difficult time.

PGR21. I therefore urge all citizens to adhere to their guidelines as they are released from time to time.

Logical appeal of reasoning from principles is explained in the above extracts. Owing to the fact that the COVID-19 vaccine is undiscovered at the time of the speech, it is only reasonable that Nigerians should follow the advice and instructions from medical professionals, experts and agencies to avoid the disaster of the virus. The principle of life requires that one submits to those who potentially can solve one's problems. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the medical authorities must be seen as saviours.

5-4 Pragmatic acts of persuading

This study is borne out of the argument that Nigeria's president, PMB, attempts to persuade Nigerians in his broadcasts to solicit their continuous support and cooperation with the government in the battle against COVID-19. From the lens of pragmatics, Mey's Pragmatic Act theory gives insights to the different pragmatic acts of persuading in the broadcasts. Persuading is a pragmatic intention that can be achieved in different ways. The different pragmatic acts (henceforth, practs) of persuading are discussed in this section.

Table 2: Summary of practs/allopracts of persuading in PMB's COVID-19 broadcasts

Pract/allopract of persuading	B1		B2		B1&2	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%

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Thanking	3	16.67	5	29.41	8	22.86
Commending	1	5.55	4	23.53	5	14.28
Assuring	7	38.89	5	29.41	12	34.28
Requesting	7	38.89	3	17.65	10	28.58
Total	18	100	17	100	35	100

Drawn from the data and revealed in the table above, findings show a total of overlapping 35 practs aimed at achieving persuasive effects: 18 practs in the first broadcast and 17 in the second broadcast. In the broadcasts, there are instances of practs thanking (8), commending (5), assuring (12), and requesting (10). The pragmatic contextual background for these practs are shared situation knowledge (SSK), reference (REF), inference (INF) and metaphor (MPH). The pandemic situation serves as the SSK that PMB and Nigerians share through which inference (INF) is drawn and intentions understood. The pragmatic tool of reference (REF) accounts for and relates to how humans and objects in the broadcasts are pointed or referred to, and some metaphorically (MPH) represented.

5-4-1 Pract thanking

Thanking is a way of showing gratitude. It is a strategic way of expressing pleasure and appreciation, and not to portray oneself as an ingrate and opportunist. Thanking is also a grease of effective communication especially when further requests are to be made. It maintains positive face between and among interactants. In PGRS 59, 64, 65, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110, PMB practs thanking to drive home his requests and intentions to Nigerians.

PGR64. I will take this opportunity to thank all our public health workforce, health care workers, port health authorities and other essential staff on the

frontlines of the response for their dedication and commitment. You are true heroes.

PGR107. I will also thank the Nigeria Governors' Forum and the Presidential Task Force for all their hard work to date...

PGR108. I also wish to thank corporate organisations, philanthropists, the UN family, the European Union, friendly nations, the media and other partners that have taken up the responsibility of supporting our response.

In PGR64, PMB rides on SSK of the pandemic, MPH and REF as contextual background to pract thanking by expressing his gratitude to health workers for putting their lives on the line in a selfless service to the nation. With the MPH resource, these individuals are metaphorically mapped as true heroes. It is indeed a heroic act to endanger one's life in order to save a nation. In PGR107 and PGR108, PMB leans on REF to practs thanking notable forums and organisation such as the governors' forum, presidential task force, UN for giving the country the support and morale needed during the pandemic. Getting succour from these local and foreign actors is not an easy thing to come by, knowing how the pandemic has affected economies of the world. Hence, pract thanking is a way of eliciting more supports and aids.

5-4-2 Pract commending

Commending is an act of praising an individual for notable achievements. In PGRS12, 67, 79, 81, 105, PMB is full of praise for individuals whose contributions to the fight against COVID-19 has resonated the nation.

PGR12. ...I am personally very proud of Dr Ihekweazu for doing this on behalf of all Nigerians.

PGR67. I will start by commending you all for the resilience and patriotism that you have shown in our collective fight against the biggest health challenge of our generation.

PGR81. ...At this point, I must commend the insurance sector for their support in achieving this within a short period of time.

PMB hinges on the contextual background resources of MPH, SSK, REF, to pract commending three groups of people: the DG of NCDC, the insurance sector and all Nigerians for the acts of patriotism and resilience. Within the SSK of the pandemic, 'The biggest threat to our generation' is a metaphoric representation of the COVID-19. Again, to publicly commend these individuals, achieved through REF, is to ensure continuous alignment. It therefore tells that that these individuals or bodies have been pivotal to Nigeria's survival and a slack in duty would be a major blow to the nation.

5-4-3 Pract assuring

Assuring is a pract notably and predominantly performed in the broadcasts. PMB practs assuring by being committal and by telling Nigerians what they desire to hear – that their safety and security is guaranteed. The instances of these practs are found in PGRS 29, 37, 49, 54, 56, 58, 61, 76, 85, 104, 105, 109.

PGR37. We will use this containment period to identify, trace and isolate all individuals that have come into contact with confirmed cases. We will ensure the treatment of confirmed cases while restricting further spread to other States.

PGR58. ...We remain committed to do whatever it takes to confront COVID-19 in our country.

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PGR85. ...I want to assure all Nigerians that your safety and security remains our primary concern especially in these exceedingly difficult and uncertain times...The few reported incidences are regrettable, and I want to assure you that the culprits will be brought to justice.

PGR109. ...I assure you that government shall continue to take all necessary measures to protect the lives and livelihoods our citizens and residents.

While SSK deeply foregrounds the essence of the broadcasts, PMB rides on the pragmatic context of REL to pract assuring. In the extracts, the recurring lexical choices ‘assure’ and ‘committed’ show explicitness in declaration of intentions. Modal auxiliary ‘will’ is functionally deployed to show the government’s willingness and ability to protect the nation. Again, pract assuring is performed to inject hope and trust into the doubtful and fearful hearts of Nigerians and also to commit them to continually support the government’s various decisions to expunge COVID-19 out of Nigeria.

5-4-4 Pract requesting

Request can be a persuasive strategy in a context where a speaker makes a gentle plea, considering the fact that giving orders could damage the face of other participants. In this sense, request does not show power imbalance. PMB performs the pragmatic act of requesting in appealing to Nigerians and soliciting their cooperation. PGRS 13, 18, 21, 47, 55, 60, 63, 83, 86, 89 show instances of this pract. In the speeches, asking, imploring and urging are seen as forms of gentle request.

PGR3. ...We ask all Nigerians to 1 support the work the Federal Ministry of Health and NCDC are doing, led by the Presidential Task Force.

PGR21. I therefore urge all citizens to adhere to their guidelines as they are released from time to time.

PGR47. ...I will therefore ask all of us affected by this order to put aside our personal comfort to safeguard ourselves and fellow human beings. This common enemy can only be controlled if we all come together and obey scientific and medical advice.

PGR89. Drawing from these, I implore all Nigerians to continue to adhere strictly to the advisories published by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control...

In the above extracts, PMB relies on the contextual resources of SSK, REF, REL to practise asking, imploring and urging by challenging the obedience, patriotism and cooperation of Nigerians. This situation explains the idiomatic meaning of 'a tree cannot make a forest'. The broadcasts record recurrence of words like 'ask', 'implore' and 'urge' and these lexical choices are strong trigger words for practise of requesting. PMB charges Nigerians to support established agencies, NCDC especially, and comply with their instructions.

CONCLUSION

This study explores persuasion in President Muhammadu Buhari's (PMB) COVID-19 broadcasts of March 29 and April 27, 2020 from the standpoints of rhetoric and pragmatics. Using Aristotle's classical rhetorical appeal as persuasion theory, instances of ethos, logos and pathos are extricated to show the various attempts of PMB in persuading Nigerians to support the government in the fight against COVID-19. A total of 66 instances of rhetorical appeals were drawn from the data: ethos (35), pathos (25) and

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logos (10). Analysis categorises each of these appeals to give a more extensive analytical insight. It was discovered that PMB relies more on ethical and emotional appeals with 40% and 35% instances of occurrence respectively. Logical appeal of 25% was minimally used despite the prevailing situation that warranted daily generation of statistical results and facts on contact cases, recovered cases and mortality cases. Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory guides the study into a pragmatic domain. Analysis uncovers a performance of 35 practs aimed at persuading. Findings further show that PMB hinges on the contextual background of SSK, REL and MPH to pract thanking (8), commending (5), assuring (12) and requesting (10). These practs are aimed at achieving the pragmatic goals of persuading and encouraging. This paper significantly contributes to existing researches on rhetoric, pragmatics, political discourse and the COVID-19 discourse. The rhetoric and pragmatic analyses aid the interpretation of PMB's intentions to Nigerians in his COVID-19 broadcasts.

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APPENDIX

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ADDRESS BY H.E. MUHAMMADU BUHARI, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SUNDAY 29TH MARCH, 2020

1. Fellow Nigerians,
2. From the first signs that Coronavirus, or COVID-19 was turning into an epidemic and was officially declared a world-wide emergency, the Federal Government started planning preventive, containment and curative measures in the event the disease hits Nigeria.
3. The whole instruments of government are now mobilized to confront what has now become both a health emergency and an economic crisis.
4. Nigeria, unfortunately, confirmed its first case on 27th February 2020. Since then, we have seen the number of confirmed cases rise slowly.
5. By the morning of March 29th, 2020, the total confirmed cases within Nigeria had risen to ninety-seven.
6. Regrettably, we also had our first fatality, a former employee of PPMC, who died on 23rd March 2020. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family in this very difficult time. We also pray for a quick recovery for those infected and undergoing treatment.
7. As of today, COVID-19 has no cure. Scientists around the world are working very hard to develop a vaccine.
8. We are in touch with these institutions as they work towards a solution that will be certified by international and local medical authorities within the shortest possible time.
9. For now, the best and most efficient way to avoid getting infected is through regular hygienic and sanitary practices as well as social distancing.
10. As individuals, we remain the greatest weapon to fight this pandemic. By washing our hands regularly with clean water and soap, disinfecting frequently used surfaces and areas, coughing into a tissue or elbow and strictly adhering to infection prevention control measures in health facilities, we can contain this virus.
11. Since the outbreak was reported in China, our Government has been monitoring the situation closely and studying the various responses adopted by other countries.
12. Indeed, the Director-General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) was one of ten global health leaders invited by the World Health Organisation to visit China and understudy their response approach. I am personally very proud of Dr Ihekweazu for doing this on behalf of all Nigerians.
13. Since his return, the NCDC has been implementing numerous strategies and programs in Nigeria to ensure that the adverse impact of this virus on our country is minimized. We ask all Nigerians to support the work of the Federal Ministry of Health and NCDC are doing, led by the Presidential Task Force.
14. Although we have adopted strategies used globally, our implementation programs have been tailored to reflect our local realities.

15. In Nigeria, we are taking a two-step approach.
16. First, to protect the lives of our fellow Nigerians and residents living here and second, to preserve the livelihoods of workers and business owners to ensure their families get through this very difficult time in dignity and with hope and peace of mind.
17. To date, we have introduced healthcare measures, border security, fiscal and monetary policies in our response. We shall continue to do so as the situation unfolds.
18. Some of these measures will surely cause major inconveniences to many citizens. But these are sacrifices we should all be willing and ready to make for the greater good of our country.
19. In Nigeria's fight against COVID-19, there is no such thing as an overreaction or an under-reaction. It is all about the right reaction by the right agencies and trained experts.
20. Accordingly, as a Government, we will continue to rely on guidance of our medical professionals and experts at the Ministry of Health, NCDC and other relevant agencies through this difficult time.
21. I, therefore, urge all citizens to adhere to their guidelines as they are released from time to time.
22. As we are all aware, Lagos and Abuja have the majority of confirmed cases in Nigeria. Our focus therefore remains to urgently and drastically contain these cases, and to support other states and regions in the best way we can.
23. This is why we provided an initial intervention of fifteen billion Naira (N15b) to support the national response as we fight to contain and control the spread.
24. We also created a Presidential Task Force (PTF) to develop a workable National Response Strategy that is being reviewed on a daily basis as the requirements change. This strategy takes international best practices but adopts them to suit our unique local circumstances.
25. Our goal is to ensure all States have the right support and manpower to respond immediately.
26. So far, in Lagos and Abuja, we have recruited hundreds of Adhoc staff to man our call centres and support our tracing and testing efforts.
27. I also requested, through the Nigeria Governors Forum, for all State Governments to nominate Doctors and Nurses who will be trained by the NCDC and Lagos State Government on the tactical and operational response to the virus in case it spreads to other states.
28. This training will also include medical representatives from our armed forces, paramilitary and security and intelligence agencies.
29. As a nation, our response must be guided, systematic and professional. There is a need for consistency across the nation. All inconsistencies in policy guidelines between Federal and State agencies will be eliminated.

30. As I mentioned earlier, as at this morning we had ninety-seven confirmed cases. Majority of these are in Lagos and Abuja. All the confirmed cases are getting the necessary medical care.

31. Our agencies are currently working hard to identify cases and people these patients have been in contact with.

32. The few confirmed cases outside Lagos and Abuja are linked to persons who have travelled from these centres.

33. We are therefore working to ensure such interstate and intercity movements are restricted to prevent further spread.

34. Based on the advice of the Federal Ministry of Health and the NCDC, I am directing the cessation of all movements in Lagos and the FCT for an initial period of 14 days with effect from 11pm on Monday, 30th March 2020. This restriction will also apply to Ogun State due to its close proximity to Lagos and the high traffic between the two States.

35. All citizens in these areas are to stay in their homes. Travel to or from other states should be postponed. All businesses and offices within these locations should be fully closed during this period.

36. The Governors of Lagos and Ogun States as well as the Minister of the FCT have been notified. Furthermore, heads of security and intelligence agencies have also been briefed.

37. We will use this containment period to identify, trace and isolate all individuals that have come into contact with confirmed cases. We will ensure the treatment of confirmed cases while restricting further spread to other States.

38. This order does not apply to hospitals and all related medical establishments as well as organizations in health care-related manufacturing and distribution.

39. Furthermore, commercial establishments such as;

a. food processing, distribution and retail companies;

b. petroleum distribution and retail entities,

c. power generation, transmission and distribution companies; and

d. private security companies are also exempted.

40. Although these establishments are exempted, access will be restricted and monitored.

41. Workers in telecommunication companies, broadcasters, print and electronic media staff who can prove they are unable to work from home are also exempted.

42. All seaports in Lagos shall remain operational in accordance with the guidelines I issued earlier. Vehicles and drivers conveying essential cargoes from these Ports to other parts of the country will be screened thoroughly before departure by the Ports Health Authority.

43. Furthermore, all vehicles conveying food and other essential humanitarian items into these locations from other parts of the country will also be screened thoroughly before they are allowed to enter these restricted areas.

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44. Accordingly, the Hon. Minister of Health is hereby directed to redeploy all Port Health Authority employees previously stationed in the Lagos and Abuja Airports to key roads that serve as entry and exit points to these restricted zones.

45. Movements of all passenger aircraft, both commercial and private jets, are hereby suspended. Special permits will be issued on a needs basis.

46. We are fully aware that such measures will cause much hardship and inconvenience to many citizens. But this is a matter of life and death, if we look at the dreadful daily toll of deaths in Italy, France and Spain.

47. However, we must all see this as our national and patriotic duty to control and contain the spread of this virus. I will therefore ask all of us affected by this order to put aside our personal comfort to safeguard ourselves and fellow human beings. This common enemy can only be controlled if we all come together and obey scientific and medical advice.

48. As we remain ready to enforce these measures, we should see this as our individual contribution in the war against COVID-19. Many other countries have taken far stricter measures in a bid to control the spread of the virus with positive results.

49. For residents of satellite and commuter towns and communities around Lagos and Abuja whose livelihoods will surely be affected by some of these restrictive measures, we shall deploy relief materials to ease their pains in the coming weeks.

50. Furthermore, although schools are closed, I have instructed the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development to work with State Governments in developing a strategy on how to sustain the school feeding program during this period without compromising our social distancing policies. The Minister will be contacting the affected States and agree on detailed next steps.

51. Furthermore, I have directed that a three month repayment moratorium for all TraderMoni, MarketMoni and FarmerMoni loans be implemented with immediate effect.

52. I have also directed that a similar moratorium be given to all Federal Government funded loans issued by the Bank of Industry, Bank of Agriculture and the Nigeria Export-Import Bank.

53. For on-lending facilities using capital from international and multilateral development partners, I have directed our development financial institutions to engage these development partners and negotiate concessions to ease the pains of the borrowers.

54. For the most vulnerable in our society, I have directed that the conditional cash transfers for the next two months be paid immediately. Our Internally displaced persons will also receive two months of food rations in the coming weeks.

55. We also call on all Nigerians to take personal responsibility to support those who are vulnerable within their communities, helping them with whatever they may need.

56. As we all pray for the best possible outcome, we shall continue planning for all eventualities.

57. This is why I directed that all Federal Government Stadia, Pilgrims camps and other facilities be converted to isolation centres and makeshift hospitals.

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58. My fellow Nigerians, as a Government, we will avail all necessary resources to support the response and recovery. We remain committed to do whatever it takes to confront COVID-19 in our country.

59. We are very grateful to see the emerging support of the private sector and individuals to the response as well as our development partners.

60. At this point, I will ask that all contributions and donations be coordinated and centralized to ensure efficient and impactful spending. The Presidential Task Force remains the central coordinating body on the COVID-19 response.

61. I want to assure you all that Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies with a role to play in the outbreak response are working hard to bring this virus under control.

62. Every nation in the world is challenged at this time. But we have seen countries where citizens have come together to reduce the spread of the virus.

63. I will, therefore, implore you again to strictly comply with the guidelines issued and also do your bit to support the Government and the most vulnerable in your communities.

64. I will take this opportunity to thank all our public health workforce, health care workers, port health authorities and other essential staff on the front lines of the response for their dedication and commitment. You are true heroes.

65. I thank you all for listening. May God continue to bless and protect us all.

President Muhammadu Buhari

29th March 2020.

ADDRESS BY H.E. MUHAMMADU BUHARI,

PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON THE CUMULATIVE LOCKDOWN ORDER OF LAGOS AND OGUN STATES AS WELL AS THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ON COVID- 19 PANDEMIC

AT THE STATE HOUSE, ABUJA

MONDAY, 27th APRIL, 2020

1. Fellow Nigerians

2. I will start by commending you all for the resilience and patriotism that you have shown in our collective fight against the biggest health challenge of our generation.

3. As at yesterday, 26th April 2020, some three million confirmed cases of COVID nineteen have been recorded globally with about nine hundred thousand recoveries. Unfortunately, some two hundred thousand people have also died as a result of this pandemic.

4. The health systems and economies of many nations continue to struggle as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

5. Nigeria continues to adopt and adapt to these new global realities on a daily basis. This evening, I will present the facts as they are and explain our plans for the coming month

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knowing fully aware that some key variables and assumptions may change in the coming days or weeks.

6. Exactly two weeks ago, there were three hundred and twenty three confirmed cases in 20 States and the Federal Capital Territory.

7. As at this morning, Nigeria has recorded one thousand two hundred and seventy-three cases across 32 States and the FCT. Unfortunately, these cases includes 40 deaths.

8. I will useam using this opportunity to express our deepest condolences to the families of all Nigerians that have lost their lives loved ones as a result of the COVID nineteen Pandemic. This is our collective loss and we share in your grief.

9. Initial models predicted that Nigeria will record an estimated two thousand confirmed cases in the first month after the index case.

10. This means that despite the drastic increase in the number of confirmed cases recorded in the past two weeks, the measures we have put in place thus far have yielded positive outcomes against the projections.

11. The proportion of cases imported from other countries has reduced to only 19% of new cases, showing that our border closures yielded positive results. . These are mostly fellow Nigerians returning through our land borders. We will continue to enforce land border arrival protocols as part of the containment strategy.

12. Today, the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has accredited 15 laboratories across the country with an aggregate capacity to undertake 2,500 tests per day across the country.

13. Based on your feedback, Lagos the State Government and the FCT with support from NCDC is have established several sample collection centers in Lagos and the FCT. They are also reviewing their laboratory testing strategy to further increase the number of tests they can perform including the accreditation of selected private laboratories that meet the accreditation criteria.

14. Several new fully equipped treatment and isolation centres have been operationalised across the country thereby increasing bed capacity to about three thousand. At this point, I will commend the State Governors for the activation of State-level Emergency Operation Centres, establishment of new treatment centres and the delivery of aggressive risk communication strategies.

15. Over ten thousand healthcare workers have been trained. For their protection, additional personal protective equipment have been distributed to all the states. Although we have experienced logistical challenges, we remain committed to establish a solid supply chain process to ensure these heroic professionals are can work safely and are properly equipped.

16. In keeping with our Government’s promise to improve the welfare of healthcare workers, we have signed a memorandum of understanding on the provision of hazard allowances and other incentives with key health sector professional associations. We have also procured insurance cover for five thousand frontline health workers. At this point, I must commend the insurance sector for their support in achieving this within a short period of time.

17. Nigeria has also continued to receive support from the international community, multilateral agencies, the private sector and public-spirited individuals. This support has ensured that critical lifesaving equipment and materials, which have become scarce globally, are available for Nigeria through original equipment manufacturers and government-to-government processes.

18. The distribution and expansion of palliatives which I directed in my earlier broadcast is still on going in a transparent manner. I am mindful of the seeming frustration being faced by expectant citizens. I urge all potential beneficiaries to exercise patience as we continue to fine tune our logistical and distribution processes working with the State Governments.

19. I have directed the Central Bank of Nigeria and other financial institutions to make further plans and provisions for financial stimulus packages for small and medium scale enterprises. We recognise the critical role that they play in Nigeria's economy.

20. Our Security Agencies continue to rise to the challenge posed by this unusual situation. While we feel deeply concerned about isolated security incidents involving hoodlums and miscreants, I want to assure all Nigerians that your safety and security remains our primary concern especially in these exceedingly difficult and uncertain times. As we focus on protecting lives and properties, we will not tolerate any human rights abuses by our security agencies. The few reported incidences are regrettable, and I want to assure you that the culprits will be brought to justice.

21. I urge all Nigerians to continue to cooperate and show understanding whenever they encounter security agents. Furthermore, for their protection, I have instructed the personnel of the security agencies be provided with the necessary personal protective equipment for their own protection.

22. As we continue to streamline our response in the epicenters of Lagos and the FCT, I remain am concerned about the unfortunate developments in Kano in recent days. Although an in-depth investigation is still ongoing, we have decided to deploy additional Federal Government human, material and technical resources to strengthen and support the State Government's efforts. We will commence implementation immediately.

23. In Kano, and indeed many of other States that are recording new cases, preliminary findings show that such cases are mostly from interstate travel and emerging community transmission.

24. Drawing from these, I implore all Nigerians to continue to adhere strictly to the advisories published by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control. These include rRegular hand washing, social physical distancing, wearing of face masks/coverings in public, avoidance of non-essential movement and travels and avoidance of large gatherings remain paramount.

25. Fellow Nigerians, for the past four weeks, most parts of our country have been under either Federal Government or State Government lockdowns. As I mentioned earlier, these steps were necessary and overall, have contributed to slowing down the spread of COVID nineteen in Nigeria.

26. However, such lock downs have also coame at a very heavy economic cost. Many of our citizens have lost their means of livelihoods. Many businesses have also shut down. No

country can afford the full impact of a sustained lockdown while awaiting the development of vaccines or cures.

27. In my last address, I mentioned the Federal Government will develop strategies and policies that will protect lives while preserving livelihoods.

28. In these two weeks, the Federal and State Governments have jointly and collaboratively worked hard on how to balance the need to protect health while also preserving livelihoods, leveraging global best practice while keeping in mind our peculiar circumstances.

29. We assessed how our factories, markets, traders and transporters can continue to function while at the same time respecting adhering to the NCDC guidelines on hygiene and social distancing.

30. We assessed how our children can continue to learn without compromising their health.

31. We reviewed how our farmers can safely plant and harvest in this rainy season to ensure our food security is not compromised. Furthermore, we also discussed how to safely transport food items from rural production areas to industrial processing zones and ultimately, to the key consumption centers.

32. Our goal was to develop implementable policies that will ensure our economy continues to function with while still maintaining our aggressive response to the COVID nineteen pandemic. These same difficult decisions are being faced by leaders around the world.

33. Based on the above and in line with the recommendations of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, the various Federal Government committees that have reviewed socio-economic matters and the Nigeria Governors Forum, I have approved for a phased and gradual easing of lockdown measures in FCT, Lagos and Ogun States effective from Monday, 4th May, 2020 at 9am.

34. However, this will be followed strictly with aggressive reinforcement of testing and contact tracing measures while allowing the restoration of some economic and business activities in certain sectors.

35. The highlights of the new nationwide measures are as follows;

a. Selected businesses and offices can open from 9am to 6pm;

b. There will be an overnight curfew from 8pm to 6am. This means all movements are will be prohibited during this period except essential services;

c. There will be a ban on non-essential inter-state passenger travels until further notice;

d. There will be Partial and controlled interstate movement of goods and services will be allowed to allowed for the movement of goods and services from producers to consumers; and

e. We will strictly ensure the mandatory use of face masks or coverings in public in addition to maintaining physical distancing and personal hygiene. Furthermore, the restrictions of on social and religious gathers shall remain in place. State Governments, corporate organisations and philanthropists are encouraged to support the production of cloth masks for citizens.

36. For the avoidance of doubt, the lockdown in the FCT, Lagos & Ogun States shall remain in place until these new ones come into effect on Monday, 4th May 2020 at 9am.

37. The Presidential Task Force shall provide sector specific details and timing guidelines to allow for preparations by Governments, businesses and institutions.

38. The above are guidelines. State Governors may choose to amend adapt and expand based on their unique circumstances provided they maintain alignment with the guidelines issued on public health and hygiene.

39. These revised guidelines do will not apply for to Kano State. The total lockdown recently announced by the State Government shall remain enforced be enforced for the full duration. The Federal Government shall deploy all the necessary human, material and technical resources to support the State in controlling and containing the pandemic.

40. I wish to once again commend the frontline workers across the country who, on a daily basis, risk everything to ensure we win this fight. For those who got infected in the line of duty, be rest assured that Government will do all it takes to support you and your families during this exceedingly difficult period. I will also take this opportunity to assure you all that your safety, wellbeing and welfare remains paramount to our Government.

41. I will also recognize recognise the support we have received from our traditional rulers, the Christian Association of Nigeria, the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and other prominent religious and community leaders. Your cooperation and support has significantly contributed to the successes we have recorded to date. I will urge you all to please continue to create awareness on the seriousness of coronavirus among your worshippers and communities while appealing that they strictly comply with public health advisories.

42. I will also thank the Nigeria Governors' Forum and the Presidential Task Force for all their hard work to date. Through this collaboration, I remain confident that success is achievable.

43. I also wish to thank corporate organisations, philanthropists, the UN family, the European Union, friendly nations, the media and other partners that have taken up the responsibility of supporting our response.

44. And finally, I will thank all Nigerians again for your patience and cooperation during this difficult and challenging period. I assure you that government shall continue to take all necessary measures to protect the lives and livelihoods our citizens and residents.

45. I thank you for listening and may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.