

---

## Persuasive Strategies in English and Arabic Covid-19 Vaccine Discourse

Wassila Ouldji\*

Received 5/2/2024

Accepted 10/3/2024

### Abstract:

This contrastive study investigated the persuasive strategies used in a number of English and Arabic speeches of some health ministers about COVID-19 vaccination. The English sample included six speeches by the American and British health ministers, and the Arabic sample featured six speeches by the Omani and Jordanian health ministers. The study aimed at analyzing the persuasive strategies used by health ministers as well as showing the similarities and differences between the utilized strategies. The data were analyzed using Beebe and Beebe's (2013) theory of persuasive strategies. The results revealed that competence is the most used strategy in the speeches of health ministers about COVID-19 vaccines. Moreover, the results showed that the health ministers differ in the frequency of using some strategies and also in using evidence to tell a story and reverence strategies, which exist only in English speeches. However, all health ministers use competence and metaphor strategies with similar frequency.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 Vaccine, Discourse, Health Ministers, Persuasive Strategies.

---

Algeria\ [nessmaouldji31@gmail.com](mailto:nessmaouldji31@gmail.com) \*



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

## استراتيجيات الإقناع في خطاب لقاح كوفيد-19

وسيلة ولجي\*

### ملخص:

تناولت هذه الدراسة مقارنة لاستراتيجيات الإقناع المستخدمة في عدد من الخطابات باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية لبعض وزراء الصحة حول لقاح كوفيد-19. تضمنت العينة الإنجليزية ستة خطابات لوزراء الصحة الأمريكي والبريطاني، بينما تضمنت العينة العربية ستة خطابات لوزراء الصحة العماني والأردني. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل الاستراتيجيات الإقناعية التي يستخدمها وزراء الصحة، فضلاً عن إبراز أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة. تم تحليل البيانات من خلال تطبيق نظرية ببلي و ببلي (2013) للاستراتيجيات الإقناعية. كشفت النتائج أن الكفاءة هي الاستراتيجية الأكثر استخداماً في خطابات وزراء الصحة حول لقاحات كوفيد-19. من ناحية أخرى، أظهرت النتائج أيضاً أن وزراء الصحة يختلفون في تكرار استخدام بعض الاستراتيجيات وكذلك في استخدام الأدلة لرواية قصة واستراتيجيات الاحترام، والتي توجد فقط في الخطابات الإنجليزية. من ناحية أخرى، فهم متشابهون في تكرار الكفاءة والاستعارة. الكلمات المفتاحية: لقاح كوفيد-19، الخطاب، الاستراتيجيات الإقناعية، وزراء الصحة.

\* الجزائر / [nessmaouldji31@gmail.com](mailto:nessmaouldji31@gmail.com)

## 1. Introduction

Language is pivotal in facilitating human communication as a fundamental medium for transmitting knowledge, concepts, and perspectives. It assumes a noteworthy function in influencing folks to adhere to instructions (Sean, 2010; Gorys, 1997), particularly in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic. Likewise, it also assumes a significant function in persuading individuals to adhere to the directives disseminated by authoritative entities.

The Ministries of Health bear the responsibility for ensuring the safety of citizens. Therefore, they have to effectively persuade and convince individuals to adhere to prescribed guidelines, including using face masks, regular hand sanitization, and the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine. Hence, the utilization of persuasive language serves to enhance the efficacy of health ministries' endeavors. This study examines the language health ministers use in the Arab World and English-speaking countries to promote COVID-19 vaccination. It compares their persuasion strategies to convince citizens to follow governmental codes and instructions.

The quick spread of COVID-19 from Wuhan, China, in December 2019 significantly impacted various domains like the economy, healthcare, politics, and society. The World Health Organization (WHO) held news conferences addressing strategies and measures to combat the infection. The increase in death rates and infection cases prompted the declaration of a state of emergency in January 2020 (World Health Organization, 2019).

The vaccine hesitancy phenomenon is not a new one. It existed before the onset of COVID-19, where scholars and practitioners have researched the determinants of individuals' and parents' vaccine hesitancy (Dubé et al., 2013). However, during COVID-19 and the spreading rumors about the ingredients of vaccines and the goal behind vaccination caused vaccine hesitancy. Therefore, press conferences of WHO attempt to clarify the situation and convince people of the importance of vaccination. In particular, health ministers are considered responsible, plus the experts who have to explain and answer people's questions. In Luecke's words (2011, p. 70), "persuasion can be applied in an almost unlimited number of ways."

According to Beebe and Beebe (2013), persuasion is the systematic process of altering or reinforcing attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior (p. 336). The potential impact of the speaker on the audience's attitudes may be partial, as their primary objective is to fulfill their stated goal

effectively. Beebe and Beebe (2013) asserted that persuasive strategies are categorized into three fundamental sorts that align with Aristotle's principles: ethos, pathos, and logos. The first type, enhance credibility, the second use logic and evidence, and the third use emotion to persuade. Other sub-strategies exist within the framework of the three fundamental strategies. Beebe and Beebe (2013) argued that there are 18 persuasive strategies that can be employed by speakers to convince or alter the attitudes of their audience effectively.

## **2. Aims of the study**

This contrastive study aims to identify the persuasive strategies employed by ministers of health whose official language is Arabic and ministers of health whose official language is English to uncover how health ministers persuade the audience to get vaccinated against COVID-19. It is an attempt to compare these strategies, using qualitative and quantitative approaches, to show the similarities and differences in persuasive speeches regarding the COVID-19 vaccine in the Arab world and English-speaking countries. In other words, this study attempts to show how health ministers in the Arab World and English-speaking countries use persuasive strategies.

## **3. Research questions**

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the most used persuasive strategies in the health ministers' speeches regarding the COVID-19 vaccine?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the persuasive strategies used in the English and Arabic speeches of health ministers regarding the COVID-19 vaccine?

## **4. Significance of the study**

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a plethora of research on the virus and its vaccine, covering scientific, health, linguistic, and political aspects. However, there are few studies on the persuasive strategies health ministers use to deliver information about the COVID-19 vaccine from a linguistic perspective. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the persuasive strategies used by health ministers from Arabic and English-speaking countries. The study applies Beebe and Beebe's (2013) theory of persuasive strategies to analyze the content and the linguistic devices used by health ministers in their speeches to persuade people to take the vaccines.

The study is significant because it focuses on the persuasive strategies used by health ministers, who are vital in informing the public about the COVID-19 vaccine. Researchers can gain insights into reducing vaccine hesitancy by understanding how health ministers use persuasive language.

## **5. Literature review**

Numerous studies have explored persuasive strategies in COVID-19 vaccination discourse, which have been conducted concerning different spoken and written frameworks in different languages and domains.

### **5.1 Studies on persuasive strategies**

A comparative study by Wenty & Leni (2019) used Beebe & Beebe's theory to examine persuasive strategies and find the similarities and differences between multi-level marketing and insurance agents. The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach. The findings revealed that the most used type of persuasive strategies by both agents is logic and evidence, in which multi-level marketing agents used mostly specific evidence. In contrast, insurance agents focused more on credible evidence.

Galuh and Chatarini (2021) used Beebe and Beebe's theory of persuasive strategies to find the kinds of persuasive strategies and how persuasions are used in freight forwarding advertisements. They analyzed their data qualitatively. The results showed 15 strategies in freight forwarding advertisements in which causal reasoning appeared to be the most used persuasive strategy.

### **5.2 Studies on persuasive strategies regarding COVID-19**

Sidra (2021) studied the political discourse of Imran Khan's speeches on COVID-19 persuasive strategies. The researcher focused on descriptive and thematic analyses using Wodak's (2005) discursive strategies and Aristotle's three rhetorical appeals. The data were analyzed qualitatively. The results concerning persuasive strategies show that all the strategies were used (i.e. ethos, pathos, and logos) in the speeches of Imran Khan to address cultural, religious, and societal ethics; effectively connect pain points; and use logical arguments based on facts, numbers, and certainty.

Another study was conducted by Noori and Hussein (2023) to explore the use of persuasive appeals in Iraqi COVID-19 news reports. They applied Lucas's (2009) persuasive appeals, ethos, pathos, and logos and analyzed data quantitatively and qualitatively. The findings revealed that ethos was used in 50% of the articles, with competence being the most effective. Logos was used in 18 instances, with proof and causal reasoning

being the most beneficial. Pathos was used to elicit emotional responses in various ways.

### **5.3 Studies on persuasive strategies regarding the COVID-19 vaccine**

Azhar and Hutheifa (2022) examined the use of speech acts in persuading individuals to accept the context of the COVID-19 vaccination. Qualitative analysis was used to analyze content. The researchers applied Bach and Harnish's (1979) Model of Speech Acts, Breuer and Naphtine's (2008) and Huggard, Leonie, and Iris's (2006) strategies of persuasion. The results showed that doctors, writers, medical organizations, and journals used persuasive strategies to make their arguments more convincing. These strategies were connected to social interaction and contexts, reflecting the pandemic and hesitation about the vaccine.

Nalini et al. (2023) examined the persuasive strategies used by Malaysian medical doctors on Twitter to combat COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Data were analyzed by applying Mulholand's persuasive strategies (2005). The findings revealed thirteen common persuasion strategies and emphasized the need for health professionals to be seen as authority figures. The study also highlighted the importance of using standard language and diversifying vaccine promotion methods to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation.

In this study, the researcher follows Beebe and Beebe's (2013) theory to find the most frequent persuasive strategies and to highlight the similarities and differences between such strategies. This study examines English-speaking and Arabic-speaking health ministers' speeches about COVID-19 vaccines. Since it is the first study that sheds light on COVID-19 vaccination in light of Beebe and Beebe's persuasive strategies, the researcher includes in the discussion the results of some previous studies on marketing and advertisement that use the same model of persuasive strategies in order to compare and contrast the results reported in such studies.

## **6. Methodology**

To achieve the purpose of this study, the researcher applies Beebe and Beebe's (2013) theory of persuasive strategies. It comprises three strategies compatible with Aristotle's three principles: ethos, logos, and pathos. These strategies, in their role, encompass 18 sub-strategies, as follows:

– **Enhancing credibility** involves three elements.

1. **Competence**: Speakers demonstrate their knowledge and expertise

- in the subject being highlighted to the audience.
2. **Trustworthiness:** The speakers effectively communicate honesty and sincerity by providing evidence that instills confidence and belief in the audience regarding the speaker's statements.
  3. **Dynamism** is about the charisma and energy of the speakers, i.e., people are attracted to charismatic speakers.
- **Using logic and evidence** encompasses two types reasoning and evidence, as follows:
1. **Inductive reasoning:** The speaker emphasizes particular evidence to illuminate the general conclusion.
  2. **Deductive reasoning:** Unlike inductive reasoning, it involves deriving specific conclusions from general statements.
  3. **Causal reasoning** involves connecting two or more events in a manner that leads to the inference that one or more of the occurrences were the cause of the others.
  4. **Credible evidence:** The speakers' credibility is determined when he provides trustworthy evidence from unbiased sources, particularly authentic experiences and testimonies.
  5. **New evidence:** The speakers prefer using novel contemporary evidence to the listeners rather than relying on previously heard material.
  6. **Specific evidence:** The speakers provide precise facts, such as specific numbers and details, to minimize any ambiguity the audience may have.
  7. **Evidence to tell a story** is another strategy the persuaders employ to capture the listeners' attention by telling stories.
- **Using emotion** includes:
1. **Concrete examples:** Using specific, tangible, and vivid evidence enhances speech's persuasiveness, strength, and attention-grabbing nature.
  2. **Emotion-arousing words:** The persuaders elicit emotional responses from the audience, such as delight, grief, and a sense of security, which implies that they understand their intended listeners' emotions.
  3. **Non-verbal behavior:** Voice level, gestures, and body movements effectively convey emotions such as grief or rage. Also, they enable the audience to share the emotional experience demonstrated by the speakers empathetically.
  4. **Visual image:** The speakers' discourse is more persuasive when

images and photos depict emotionally evocative settings.

5. **Metaphors and similes**: Using figures of speech to establish a parallel between dissimilar entities with a common attribute can effectively support one's credibility and evoke emotive impression.
6. **Fear appeals** elicit a change in the audience's thoughts or behavior and advise them to avoid the negative aspects.
7. **Appeals to several emotions**: hope, pride, courage, and reverence are other emotions that help to achieve the persuasive goal of the speakers.
8. The speakers use **shared myths** to persuade an audience that their thoughts and beliefs are the same as theirs. Beebe & Beebe (2013, p. 362-381)

## 7. Data Collection

The researcher carefully selected 12 speeches in English and Arabic for data collection on the COVID-19 vaccine topic, depending on criteria such as availability and clarity of language for a contrastive study. American, UK, Omani, and Jordanian health ministers have been chosen as representative samples of the Western and Arab world, respectively. Considering the countries mentioned, the researcher had a greater chance of obtaining the necessary data and resources for her work. The data included three speeches by Sajid Javid, the British Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; three speeches by Xavier Becerra, the American Secretary of Health and Human Services; and three speeches by Dr. Nathir Obeidat, the former Minister of Health in Jordan. It also included three speeches by Dr. Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al-Saeedi, the Health Minister in Oman. All the speeches were collected from YouTube, except one speech by the Jordanian health minister, collected from a Facebook page. In addition, all the speeches were delivered in 2021, and only one speech by the American health minister in 2022.

## 8. Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the collected data qualitatively and quantitatively by applying the Beebe and Beebe's theory (2013). Only the data related to the research questions were included as a matter of space and to be more specific. Persuasive strategies in English and Arabic speeches were highlighted in one table, as shown in Section (9) below.

## 9. Findings

The results in Table (1) below showed that there were 12 persuasive

strategies out of the 18 strategies reported by Beebe and Beebe (2013). These include competence, trustworthiness, using specific evidence, appropriate metaphors, causal reasoning, new evidence, emotion-arousing words, credible evidence, appeals to several emotions, appropriate fear appeals, concrete examples, and evidence to tell a story, respectively. Deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, visual images, and shared myths were not found. However, the analysis did not include dynamism and nonverbal behavior because they were difficult to establish a clear and objective analysis that could ensure reliability and validity, i.e. in order to avoid reaching biased conclusions. The following table represents quantitative information about persuasive strategies in English-speaking and Arabic-speaking health ministers.

**Table 1: Frequency of the persuasive strategies in English and Arabic speeches**

| Persuasive Strategies        | English Speeches | Arabic Speeches | Total        |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Enhancing Credibility     | 73(9.51%)        | 165 (21.48%)    | 238 (30.99%) |
| Competence                   | 42(5.47%)        | 105 (13.67%)    | 147 (19.14%) |
| Trustworthiness              | 31(4.04%)        | 60 (7.81%)      | 91 (11.85%)  |
| 2. Using Logic and Evidence  | 134(17.45%)      | 151 (19.66%)    | 285 (37.11%) |
| Inductive Reasoning          | 0(0%)            | 0 (0%)          | 0 (0%)       |
| Deductive Reasoning          | 0(0%)            | 0 (0%)          | 0 (0%)       |
| Causal Reasoning             | 40(5.21%)        | 36 (4.68%)      | 76 (9.90%)   |
| Credible Evidence            | 18(2.34%)        | 30 (3.91%)      | 48 (6.25%)   |
| New Evidence                 | 29(3.78%)        | 47 (6.12%)      | 76 (9.90%)   |
| Specific Evidence            | 41(5.34%)        | 38 (4.95%)      | 79 (10.29%)  |
| Evidence to Tell a Story     | 6(0.78%)         | 0(0%)           | 6(0.78%)     |
| 3. Using Emotion to Persuade | 90(11.72%)       | 155 (20.18%)    | 245 (31.90%) |
| Concrete Examples            | 8(1.04%)         | 11 (1.43%)      | 19 (2.47%)   |
| Emotion-Arousing Words       | 22(2.86%)        | 45 (5.86%)      | 67 (8.72%)   |
| Visual Image                 | 0(0%)            | 0(0%)           | 0(0%)        |
| Metaphors and Similes        | 32(4.17%)        | 45 (5.86%)      | 77 (10.03%)  |
| Fear Appeals                 | 12(1.56%)        | 25 (3.26%)      | 37 (4.82%)   |
| Appeals to Several Emotions  | 16(2.08%)        | 29 (3.78)       | 45 (5.86%)   |
| Hope                         | 8(1.04%)         | 11 (1.43%)      | 19 (2.47%)   |
| Pride                        | 4(0.52%)         | 12 (1.56%)      | 16 (2.08%)   |
| Courage                      | 2 (0.26%)        | 6 (0.78%)       | 8 (1.04%)    |
| Reverence                    | 2 (0.26%)        | 0(0%)           | 2 (0.26%)    |
| Shared Myths                 | 0(0%)            | 0(0%)           | 0(0%)        |
| TOTAL                        | 297(100%)        | 471 (61.33%)    | 768 (100%)   |

The examination of the dataset yielded a foundation of 12 persuasive strategies used in English speeches and 11 persuasive strategies used in

Arabic speeches. In addition, the aforementioned data demonstrate that the English-speaking and Arabic-speaking health ministers employed the three distinct types of persuasive strategies. Using logic and evidence emerged as the most frequently employed, accounting for 37.11% of instances (285 occurrences). Specifically, the English-speaking health ministers used this strategy 134 times (17.45%), and it appeared in the Arabic-speaking health ministers 151 times (19.66%) in their speeches about COVID-19 vaccines. Using emotion to persuade ranks as the second most frequently used strategy, accounting for 245 (31.90%). Notably, it appeared 90 times (11.72%) in English and 155 times (20.18%) in Arabic speeches. Lastly, enhancing credibility ranked as the third-most-used strategy with 30.99% (238 occurrences). Specifically, the Western health ministers utilized it 73 times (9.51%) and 165 times (21.48%) in Arab health ministers' speeches.

According to the table, and in line with the first research question, only the most used persuasive strategies by all the health ministers are illustrated.

**1. Competence strategy:** The use of competence strategy by speakers establishes their perceived competence and expertise on the subject matter being discussed (Beebe & Beebe, 2013). Consistent with the research findings, it is evident that this particular strategy holds the foremost position and is widely utilized as a persuasive strategy in the English and Arabic speeches about COVID-19 immunization. This strategy was used in 147 instances, accounting for 19.14% of the occurrences. It occurred 105 times (13.67%) in the Arabic speeches, and it appeared 42 times (5.47%) in the English speeches.

Examples (a & b) below show the use of this strategy.

a) “[Lies]...they appeal to emotion, not reason, to the amygdala, not the cerebral.” (Xavier Becerra, 2021, 10:51)

b) "لاشك أنه آليات تصنيع المطاعيم المتوفرة والتي العالم يبحث عنها في هاي الأيام بما يتعلق مختلفة الآليات. مختلفة يعني نبدأ ببساطة ولا أريد أن أخوض بمطاعيم فيروس كورونا هي كثيرا بالمطعم الصيني اللي هو بعنقد آليته قديمة ليست جديدة وهي تعتمد عل أنه فيروس غير نشط، يتم اعطاؤه بجسم الانسان. وجسم الانسان ببساطة النظام المناعي لدى الانسان يكون أجسام مضادة لهذا الفيروس غير النشط وبالتالي هاي الأجسام المضادة وطبعاً في أمور أخرى غير الأجسام المضادة. يعني المطاعيم لها آليات أخرى غير الأجسام المضادة فعندما يتعرض مرة أخرى للفيروس الحقيقي هاي الأجسام المضادة والتغييرات المناعية اللي

"بتصير بجسم الانسان تقوم يعني بمقاومة هذا الفيروس." (Nathir Obeidat, 2021, 11:40)

"There is no doubt that the mechanisms for manufacturing the available vaccines that the world is talking about these days regarding coronavirus vaccines are different. The Chinese vaccine, which I believe is not new, is an old technology that relies on an inactive virus that is injected into the human body. And the human body, simply, the human immune system produces antibodies to this inactive virus, and thus these antibodies, and of course, there are other things besides antibodies. This means that vaccines have other mechanisms besides antibodies. When a person is exposed to the real virus again, these antibodies and the immune changes that occur in the human body help to fight off the virus."

Statement (a) suggests that the Western health minister possesses a high level of knowledge and expertise in his field when he refers to the amygdala's role in regulating emotions. He said the cerebral is mainly associated with intellectual faculties and the brain, precisely logical reasoning and empirical evidence.

Statement (b) offers a comprehensive overview of the various techniques employed in manufacturing coronavirus vaccines and their efficacy in safeguarding individuals from illness. In other words, this refers to the knowledge and competence of the Arab health minister in his field of health when he gave explanations related to the mechanisms of COVID-19 vaccines.

**2. Trustworthiness strategy** focuses on how speakers may establish and enhance their credibility in the eyes of their audience (Beebe & Beebe, 2013). Based on the results, this strategy demonstrates the second highest level of performance after competence. It occurred 91 times (11.85%); in particular, it is used 60 times (7.81%) in Arabic speeches, and it is used 31 times (4.04%) in English speeches.

Examples (c & d) show how this strategy is used by health ministers. (c) "last week, I attended the G20 health ministers' meeting, and I met counterparts from across the world, and I talked about the part that we'll be playing to lead the global effort to accelerate access to vaccines to therapeutics and to diagnostics, and as we do this we'll maintain our strong defences at the border allowing us to identify and to respond to variants to concern" (Sajid Javid, 2021, 34:37)

(d) "كوزير صحة طبعا، قطعت عهد في بداية الجائحة أن أول لقاء يصل للسلطنة سأكون أول"

"متلق له وهذا فعلا تم." (Ahmed Al-Saeedi, 2021, 08:53)

"As a Minister of Health, of course, I pledged at the beginning of the pandemic that the first vaccine to arrive in the Sultanate I would be the first to receive it, and this is what happened."

In example (c), the speaker mentioned that he attended the G20 health ministers' meeting and engaged with international colleagues, which positioned him as a knowledgeable authority within global health. Furthermore, he emphasized maintaining border defenses, showcasing their dedication to safeguarding citizens. Thus, he attempted to convince the audience that their nation is credible and trustworthy in the global effort to accelerate access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics.

In example (d), the speaker, by mentioning that he pledged to be the first to receive the first vaccine to arrive in the Sultanate, demonstrated his trust in the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Also, he emphasized that he achieved his pledge and established himself as a credible and trustworthy leader.

3. The persuader uses a **specific evidence strategy** to enhance the effectiveness of their argument by providing precise proof, such as actual statistics and extra facts. This strategy aims to minimize ambiguity and increase the persuasiveness of their claims (Beebe & Beebe, 2013). Consistent with the results, this strategy was observed with sufficient frequency and used as the third most common strategy. It occurred 79 times (10.29%); it is used in English speeches 41 times (5.34%) and 38 times (4.95%) in Arabic speeches.

(e) "The vaccination program in England has prevented between 7.5 million and 8.9 million infections; it's prevented some 46,000 hospitalizations, and around 30000 people losing their lives" (Sajid Javid, 2021, 15:30)

(f) " أثبت أنه أكثر من 65% الى 70% منهم ما أصابو Johnson & Johnson بالمرض." (Nathir Obeidat, 2021, 06:53)

"Johnson & Johnson has proved that more than 65% to 70% of them did not get sick."

The provided illustration in (e) presents precise statistical data regarding infections, hospitalizations, and deaths due to the vaccination initiative. The term "prevented" implies that the vaccination program exhibits efficacy in stopping the spread of the virus and protecting people

from infection and death. Thus, the health minister attempted to persuade the audience of the importance of vaccination. Similarly, example (f) presents precise statistical data regarding the proportion of individuals who remained unaffected by illness after getting the vaccine. The speakers persuaded the audience to get vaccinated by using specific details.

**4. Use appropriate metaphor and simile strategy;** employing metaphoric language may bolster one's credibility and evoke emotive response (Beebe & Beebe, 2013). In this study, the persuaders used only metaphors and did not mention similes. It appears as the fourth most frequently employed strategy with 10.02% (77 times) in total; it is used 45 times (5.86%) in Arabic speeches and is used in English speeches 32 times (4.17%). The following examples will illustrate this.

(g) "This isn't the first time scientists themselves have been under the proverbial microscope." (Xavier Becerra, 2021, 10:06)

(h) "التطعيم ليس ربحي وإنما لمجابهة الجائحة" (Ahmed Al-Saeedi, 2021, 04:37)

"Vaccination is not for profit, but to combat the pandemic."

The statement in (g) alludes to a powerful, persuasive strategy that elicits a vivid mental representation in the audience's minds. The speaker employed the metaphor "under the proverbial microscope" to illustrate the perpetual scrutiny that scientists face from the public and their peers. Despite this scrutiny, scientists persist in generating dependable work and deserving of confidence. Scientists are dedicated to maintaining the utmost levels of integrity and objectivity in their research endeavors.

Example (h) expressed a metaphor that frames vaccination as a war against the COVID-19 pandemic, appealing to people's patriotism, civic duty, and desire to protect themselves and loved ones. This metaphor highlights vaccination as a social responsibility, motivating people to vaccinate. When used carefully, this persuasive strategy motivates people to take action and achieve meaningful goals. These statements show that the Western and Arab health ministers employed metaphor as a persuasive strategy to bolster credibility and establish an emotional depiction.

**5. Causal reasoning strategy** involves the speaker establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between two or more occurrences. It is the fifth most frequently used strategy to persuade people to be vaccinated. In line with the findings, it appeared 76 times (9.90%), 40 times (5.21%) in English speeches, and 36 times (4.69%) in Arabic speeches.

(i) "Thanks to the vaccination program, the link between cases and

hospitalizations and deaths has significantly weakened” (Sajid Javid, 2021, 03:11)

(j) "التطعيمات طبعا والاجراءات الاحترازية هي ماكانت وراء انخفاض الحالات عندنا كما ذكرت سابقا بالنسبة للمستشفيات وصل عندنا في احدى الأيام والله الحمد حالتين بالمستشفى فقط (Ahmed Al-Saeedi, 2021, 13:37) وصارلنا والله الحمد أكثر من 33 يوم بدون وفيات."

“Of course, vaccinations and precautionary measures are what were behind the decline in cases in our country, as I mentioned previously. Regarding hospitals, on one day, we had only two cases in the hospital, thank God. And we have been without deaths for more than 33 days, thank God.”

The speaker uses causal reasoning in example (i) to argue that the vaccination program has reduced COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. They support their argument using real-world evidence, such as vaccinated individuals being less likely to be hospitalized or die. Despite concerns about vaccine safety, the speaker argues that the benefits outweigh the risks, demonstrating the causal relationship between vaccination and COVID-19 prevention.

The health minister used causal reasoning by establishing a cause-effect relationship between vaccinations and precautionary measures and reducing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. Moreover, it makes it more difficult for the audience to dismiss or refute their arguments, as in example (j).

– **New evidence strategy** involves the presentation of current or previously unheard evidence by persuaders to target audiences. It is ranked at the same level as causal reasoning with 9.90% (76 times); it appeared in English speeches 29 times (3.78%), and it is used in Arabic speeches 47 times (6.12%).

(k) "We've extended the offer of a vaccine to more and more people, including young people aged between 12 and 15 years, and we'll be making it easier for them to get protected by opening up our national booking service so they can get their jab at a vaccination center across the country as well as at school." (Sajid Javid, 2021, 07:39)

(l) "الواقع احنا متفقين انو يوم الأحد سنبدأ بارسال رسائل للناس يالي سجلو." (Nathir Obeidat, 2021, 05:06)

“In fact, we agreed that we will start sending messages to the people who registered on Sunday.”

The speaker used this novel evidence to persuade the audience to get vaccinated. He emphasized the expanded accessibility of the vaccine, and the simplified vaccination process conveys the government's commitment to addressing the pandemic earnestly and ensuring comprehensive protection for all individuals, in example (k).

In example (l), the health minister used new evidence to demonstrate his dedication to fulfilling his commitments. Additionally, this implies that he has qualities of organization and efficiency, as evidenced by his proactive approach to making arrangements to communicate with the registrants. The instances above demonstrate that the four health ministers disseminated novel information and offered further elaboration to engage the target audience, presenting them with fresh perspectives to contemplate.

**6. Emotion-arousing words strategy** is employed to elicit emotional reactions within the audience. It is the sixth most frequently used strategy by the four health ministers, with 8.72% (67 times). It occurs in English speeches 22 times (4.17%) and in Arabic speeches 45 times (5.86%).

(m) "Get vaccinated with an updated COVID Vaccine to protect yourself and those you love against the most severe consequences of COVID." (Xavier Becerra, 2022, 01:27)

"الحرية موجودة اخترت تطعم أم لا تتطعم هذا شأنك... لا أعتقد يوجد لدينا أو بيننا أي شخص حتى يفكر في الرجوع الى ما كنا فيه قبل عدة أشهر من الاغلاق. من الحظر الانهاك (Ahmed Al-Saeedi, 2021, 15:17 ) للاقتصاد وللحياة الاجتماعية"

"Freedom exists. Whether you choose to get vaccinated or not, it is your business... I don't think anyone among us even thinks about returning to what we were before a few months of the closure. From the lockdown, the exhaustion of the economy and social life."

In example (m), the health minister used the terms 'protect', 'love' and 'severe consequences' to evoke a sense of safety, duty, and urgency, motivating individuals to vaccinate. In other words, the health minister used emotion-arousing words to evoke emotions in the audience's minds and emphasized the importance of getting vaccinated to protect against the most severe consequences of COVID-19.

In example (n), the Arab health minister also used a combination of

emotional terms: freedom, lockdown, and exhaustion. He evokes strong and negative emotions and highlights the negative consequences of the pandemic, respectively. In these instances, the Arab and Western health ministers used emotion-arousing words effectively to increase the chances of persuading the audience to accept getting vaccines.

## **10. Discussion**

With respect to the first research question, the predominant persuasive strategies employed in English and Arabic speeches regarding COVID-19 vaccination are as follows: competence, trustworthiness, specific evidence, metaphor, causal reasoning, new evidence, and emotion-arousing words, in order of frequency. The health ministers, both English-speaking and Arabic-speaking, employed a combination of persuasive sub-strategies to enhance credibility, present logical evidence, and engage their audience emotionally. They are based more on competence and trustworthiness to gain the audience's confidence, bring credible information to the audience, and make them feel safe and secure, therefore increasing the audience's attention.

They used specific evidence to make the message concrete and objective. A metaphor makes the complex utterances clear and evokes vivid emotion. Moreover, causal reasoning presented a cause-effect relationship, demonstrating the audience's understanding of the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination. Using the new evidence strategy drew the audience's attention toward the recent arguments concerning the previous ones, which made the speakers' speech credible and relevant. Lastly, the speakers used emotion-arousing words to attract the audience and give a level to the message. In addition, the speakers also used other persuasive strategies less frequently, such as using credible evidence to support and validate statements. They appealed to several emotions by addressing hope, pride, courage, and reverence to evoke feelings of a brighter future. They also used fear appeals to emphasize the adverse outcomes to change the audience's beliefs.

These strategies were not included in the analysis as a matter of space and are unrelated to the research questions. Similarly, Galuh and Chatarini (2021), in their study of "Persuasion in Advertisements of Freight Forwarding", also found that causal reasoning, competence and trustworthiness are the most frequently used persuasive strategies. However, compared to the present study, metaphor did not appear in Galuh & Chatarini's study. In addition, the current research findings

revealed 12 persuasive strategies in English and 11 persuasive strategies in Arabic speeches, whereas 15 were found in the Galuh & Chatarini study. These findings confirm the results of the first research question.

Concerning the second research question, whether English-speaking health ministers and Arabic-speaking health ministers differ in the frequency of using the persuasive strategies, first, it was found that the English speeches included 12 persuasive strategies, whereas the Arabic speeches included 11 persuasive strategies. Second, they used the three types of persuasive strategies in different frequencies. The English speakers used logic and evidence, followed by emotion then enhancing credibility; however, the Arabic speakers used enhancing credibility, followed by using emotion, then logic and evidence. Third, evidence to tell a story is used only in the English speeches since the Western health ministers focused more on logic and evidence, in contrast the Arab health ministers focused more on enhancing credibility. In addition, reverence did not appear in Arabic speeches because they were not delivered during holidays' time as English speeches did.

In addition, first, they are similar in using competence as the most frequent strategy, and metaphor appeared in the English and Arabic speeches as the fourth most frequent strategy. Second, neither English nor Arabic speeches includes inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, visual images, and shared myths. This result shows that health ministers preferred to give credible and valid information from credible sources in order to avoid falling into biased conclusions and manipulations. Third, using emotion to persuade appeared as the second most used type by English-speaking and Arabic-speaking health ministers. Compared to Wenty & Leni's study (2019), the results showed that both marketing agents used logic and evidence more frequently and differed on which they focused more; specific evidence appeared more in one marketing group, and credible evidence appeared more in the other. The marketing groups differ in the second and third most frequently used persuasive strategies.

It is clear from the result that the health ministers know their audience well, that is why they are different, and this is confirmed by the previous study by Wenty & Leni's study (2019). This difference and similarity also confirm that using persuasive strategies to convince people differs from one person to another, whatever the domain or language is. Speakers change their focus on persuasive strategies according to the target audience; thus, concerning the current study, the results answered the research questions and achieved the research purposes; however,

additional research is required to fully understand the reasons behind this difference in using persuasive strategies.

To sum up, the Western society is more concerned with logic and evidence, which were achieved and appeared in health ministers' speeches through credible, precise, cause-effect, recent or up-to-date evidence, and so on, as appeared in the analysis. In contrast, the Arab society focused more on enhancing credibility, whereby it is attracted by competent, knowledgeable, skilled, honest, and expert health ministers. However, using mixed persuasive strategies, which include logic, emotion, and credibility by Western and Arab health ministers, make their speeches perfect, convey robust and credible information, and gain the audience's attention.

## **11. Conclusion**

The investigation of this comparative study revealed that English-speaking and Arabic-speaking health ministers used mixed sub-strategies of persuasion. They are based more on competence, trustworthiness, specific evidence, metaphor, causal reasoning, new evidence, and emotion-arousing words, respectively. It appeared that both Western and Arab health ministers most frequently used competence strategy, demonstrating that health ministers give importance to public trust.

In addition, the Western and Arab health ministers use the three persuasive types differently. On the one hand, logic and evidence appeared as the most used type of persuasion in English speeches. It is followed by using emotion to persuade, then enhancing credibility, ranked as the least used. However, competence appeared to be the most used persuasive strategy, denoting the significance of mixing persuasive strategies in Western health ministers' speeches.

On the other hand, Arab health ministers used enhancing credibility as the highest and most frequent type in their speeches. It is followed by using emotion to persuade, then using logic and evidence. The appearance of the new evidence strategy as the third most used strategy in Arabic speeches signifies the importance of using different types to attract the audience's attention despite being under logic and evidence, which ranked third.

The deviation between the three types of Western health ministers is significant. However, it is not significantly different in the Arab health ministers' speeches. To conclude, persuading people to get the COVID-19 vaccine differs from one language to another, depending on the audience's

interest and society. It is worth mentioning that Western society pays more attention to logic and evidence, while Arab society considers the speaker's credibility more important.

Using emotion is also significant in sending a message and achieving goals to make people do actions. The findings of this study uncover that using mixed types and mixed sub-persuasive strategies in COVID-19 vaccination speeches is considered perfect for gaining the audience's attention and achieving their needs.

### References

- Azhar, F. S. , & Hutheifa, Y. T. (2022). A pragmatic analysis of persuasion of receiving COVID-19 Vvaccine. *Majallat kulliyah Alma'arif Al-jaami'ah*, 33(4), 454-472.
- Bach, K., & Harnish, R.M. (1979). *Linguistic communication and speech acts*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Beebe, S., & Beebe, S. (2013). *Public speaking handbook* (4 th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Breuer, I. a. , & Napthine, M. (2008). *Persuasive language in media texts*. Melbourne, Australia: Hyde Park Press.
- Dubé, E. , Laberge, C., Guay, M. Bramadat, P., Roy, R., & Bettinger, J. A. (2013). Vaccine hesitancy. *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics*, 9(8), 1763–1773.
- Galuh, D. M. , & Chatarini, S. N.L. (2021). Persuasion in advertisements of freight forwarding. 2(2), 58-76.
- Gorys, K. (1997). *Komposisi*. Nusa Indah: Ende-Flores.
- Huggard, R., Lconie, K., & Iris, B. (2006). *Insight outcomes: English year 12*. Mentone, Victoria: Insight Publication Ptd. Ltd.
- Lucas, S. E. (2009). *The art of public speaking*. (10th ed.). The McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Luecke, R. (2011). *Power, influence, and persuasion*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Nalini, A., Alice, S., Purwarno, P., Mohd, N. L. A., & Kaarthiyainy, S. (2023). Persuasive Strategies used in tweets to address Covid-19 Vaccine Hesitancy. *I-ROLE 2023 International Conference of Research on Language Education* (pp. 178-191). European Publisher.
- Noori, B. F., & Hussein, A. B. (2023). The use of persuasive appeals in Iraqi Covid-19 selected news reports. *Al-Adab Journal*, 144(3), 1-16.
- Sean, M. (2010). *Effective communication skills*. MTD Training . g & bookboon.com. Ventus Publishing APS.

- Sidra, M. (2021). Political discourse of Imran Khan speeches in COVID-19: persuasive strategies. *Biannual Research Journal Grassroots.*, 55(II), 74-86.
- Wenty, A. &, Leni, M. (2019). Persuasive strategies used by multi-level marketing and insurance agents. *E-Journal of English Language & Literature.*, 8(4), 75-85.
- Wodak, R. (2005). Feminist critical discourse analysis: New perspectives for interdisciplinary gender studies. *Symposium on CDA: Feminist CDA and Interdisciplinary; Rightwing Populism Local Answers to Global Issues, Athens.* .
- World Health Organization. (2019). Ten threats to global health in 2019. HYPERLINK <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019> <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019>.
- Al Arabiya. (2021, September 20). AlArabiya. (2021, September 20). مقابلة مع وزير الصحة في حكومة سلطنة عمان الدكتور أحمد السعيدى [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK ["https://youtu.be/I3D0Glste0w"](https://youtu.be/I3D0Glste0w) <https://youtu.be/I3D0Glste0w>
- ITV News. (2021, October 20). Health Secretary Sajid Javid gives update amid calls for Covid Plan B to be implemented | ITV News [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK ["https://youtu.be/3ASTh8uub08"](https://youtu.be/3ASTh8uub08) <https://youtu.be/3ASTh8uub08>
- National Academy of Medicine. (2021, November 2). . Special Remarks from Sec. Xavier Becerra [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK ["https://youtu.be/Ize0HfeZp3c"](https://youtu.be/Ize0HfeZp3c) <https://youtu.be/Ize0HfeZp3c>
- Oman TV General. (2021, December 14). لقاء معالي الدكتور أحمد بن محمد السعيدى وزير الصحة للحديث حول مستجدات المتحور [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK ["https://youtu.be/UsEct1Nv8jc"](https://youtu.be/UsEct1Nv8jc) <https://youtu.be/UsEct1Nv8jc>
- Radio Hala. (2021, Mars 1). وزير الصحة د. نذير عبيدات يتحدث لبرنامج الوكيل عن خطة لإعطاء جرعة من لقاح كورونا لعدد كبير من المواطنين غداً [Video]. Facebook Live. HYPERLINK ["https://fb.watch/pmzLycJ5tc/"](https://fb.watch/pmzLycJ5tc/) <https://fb.watch/pmzLycJ5tc/>

- Shoman Foundation. (2021, January 11). "حوارية "مطعم كورونا والموقف العلمي" بعنوان. [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK  
["https://youtu.be/SjgF51vkjNo"](https://youtu.be/SjgF51vkjNo) <https://youtu.be/SjgF51vkjNo>
- The Sun. (2021, September 14). In Full: Sajid Javid updates parliament on Covid-19 pandemic winter plans [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK  
["https://youtu.be/NxahnNGChow"](https://youtu.be/NxahnNGChow) <https://youtu.be/NxahnNGChow>
- The Telegraph. (2021, July 12). In full: Sajid Javid sets out Freedom Day guidance on masks and return to work [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK  
["https://youtu.be/fNVDSTUoiyI"](https://youtu.be/fNVDSTUoiyI)  
<https://youtu.be/fNVDSTUoiyI>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2022, November 14). Secretary Xavier Becerra Says Vax Up, America! [Video]. YouTube. HYPERLINK  
["https://youtu.be/LFs8e1Jsd-U"](https://youtu.be/LFs8e1Jsd-U)  
<https://youtu.be/LFs8e1Jsd-U> .