

A Positive Discourse Analysis of Mr. Johnson's Opening Statement During the Pandemic of Covid-19 In

By

Duaa Khudeir Ali

Ma Researcher- University Of Babylon-Department Of English
Duaa.Ali.Humh23@Student.Uobabylon.Edu.Iq

Haider Mohammed Hameed

General Directorate of Education/ Babil
Haider90.Muhammed3@Gmail.Com

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the positive side of Mr. Johnson, the Prime Minister of Britain, during the opening statement of COVID-19. Particularly, it sheds light on the positive constructions that are employed by Mr. Johnson at three stages: the description, interpretation and explanation. The data in question are analysed descriptively and statistically. It is found that the active voice and the lexical verbs are mostly used in the description stage; the directive, expressive and declarative speech acts are equally used in the interpretation stage. It is concluded that the positive message are appropriately achieved via using the active voice, verbs, the expressive, declarative and directive speech acts in Mr. Johnson's discourse.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, Positive discourse analysis, Speech acts and Ideology.

Introduction

Language in use is the subject of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis studies the meanings we assign to language and the activities we engage in while using it in certain settings. Discourse analysis is also defined as the study of language beyond the sentence level, of how sentences interact to generate meaning and coherence and achieve goals (Gee & Handford, 2012). Typically, discourse analysis refers to a study strategy in which linguistic materials, such as speech or written texts, and occasionally other materials, are studied as evidence of phenomena that transcend the individual. To illustrate the diversity of discourse analytic research, it is helpful to differentiate between two academic fields of study (Taylor, 2013).

For Fairclough (1992: 223), Critical discourse analysis is defined as an approach through which matters that are related to politics, sociology, power, ideology etc. are examined in different contexts. Further, Luke (2002: 100) insists that CDA 'entails a logical and transparent shunting back and forth between the micro-analysis of texts and the macro-analysis of social formations, institutions, and power relations that these texts index and construct'.

PDA prioritises the 'positive discourses' to make the world a good place since the 'oppressive social structures' are countered. Thus, racism, extremism, inequalities are marginalised rather than centred. Martin's use of PDA is to look at the discourse from a positive perspective, whereas the use of CDA is to examine the discourse from a negative perspective. Thus, PDA and CDA are complement others rather than contradict others, (Hughes, 2018: 96-

97). Hence, the present study aims at highlighting the positive constructions that are used in Mr. Johnson's opening statement during the pandemic of COVID-19.

Thus, the present study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. Showing the positive constructions that are used to achieve the positive message at the description, interpretation and explanation stages; and presenting the most frequent ones.
2. Revealing the type of ideology that are used in Mr. Johnson's speech during the pandemic.

Literature Review

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis and Positive Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (hence forth CDA) brings the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies. It contributes to critical social analysis focusing on discourse and relations between discourse and other social elements (power relations, ideologies, institutions, social identities). Critical social analysis can be understood as a normative and explanatory critique. It is normative critique in that it does not simply describe existing realities but also evaluates them and assesses the extent to which they match up to various values, which are taken to be fundamental for just or decent societies, such as specific standards – material but also political and cultural – of human well-being (Gee & Handford, 2013).

Discourse studies' "Critical Approaches" have been active for thirty years and have spawned various new paths. Positive Discourse Analysis (hence forth PDA) is a technique that has arisen in recent years that is especially intriguing PDA (Martin and Rose 2003). Martin gets his inspiration for this term from Kress (1996: 15-16), who criticises the emphasis of CDA by stating that "inequitable, dehumanising, and deleterious states of affairs" are disclosed. Hence, a transition from "deconstructive activity" to "productive activity" is required. Accordingly, Martin (ibid.) asserts that PDA is a potent ideological and focused approach for analysing a discourse since it "focuses not only on deconstructing language in the service of power but also on analysis of and participation in sites of successful social change." In other words, the new orientation of discourse analysis reveals that language serves both power and achievement in cultures. Moreover, Martin (2004:7) underscores that PDA answers the request for a parallel emphasis on community, considering how people come together and build space for themselves in the world in a manner that redistributes power without necessarily fighting against it.

Based on a similar assumption as critical techniques, PDA is likewise motivated by the possibility for analysis to impact the social environment. As opposed to analysing the speech we seek to criticise, PDA analyses the discourse we like. In other words, PDA views a good and positive trend that might produce beneficial insights for individuals who desire to fight what they view as problematic mainstream ideology (Martin & Rose, 2003).

According to Hughes (2018: 96-97), PDA and CDA are not identical since 'deconstruction of social issues and reconstruction and improvement of society are distinct concepts. In addition, using PDA gives social actors a presence and a voice. Martin's rationale for establishing PDA was to examine the discourse from the CDA's optimistic perspective. In addition, PDA is seen as the flip side of CDA, with the good aspects of PDA being the focus of discussion. Instead of analysing and dismantling the dominating battles, PDA examines successful discourse.

Fairclough's (1989) Three-Dimensional Model

Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model is considered as one of the typical models to critically analyse discourses. Owing to this model, the implicit relations between language, ideology and power are disclosed for the sake of raising consciousness among less powerful people (Fairclough, 1989:5).

Fairclough's (1989) model encompasses of three stages; namely, the description, interpretation and the explanation. The description stage examines the formal linguistic components, that is, the grammar and vocabulary of a discourse. The Interpretation stage examines the processes of interpreting a discourse. It also includes the situational and inter-textual contexts. The socio-cultural level of a discourse is examined in explanation stage through which the hidden power, ideology, word choice, belief and attitudes are explained (ibid: 26).

2.3 Speech Act Theory and Searle's (1969) Classification of Speech Acts

Speech Act Theory is considered as crucial one that is introduced by the Philosopher Austin. It is based on the idea that focusing on the grammar and the truth conditions of sentences is not enough to examine a language, but also including the actions they perform (Austin, 1975: 375; Searle, et al.,1980: vii).

Speech acts are firstly classified by Austin (1962: 150-151) into five types: Verdictives, Excercitives, Commissives, Behabitives and Expositives. Then, they are classified by Austin's student, Searle (1969: 63) into: **Representatives**: the speaker's belief is expressed due to these acts (i.e., suggesting, claiming, stating, asserting, reporting, etc.); **Directives**: the addressees' actions are performed or done due to these acts (i.e., asking, commanding, ordering, advising, questioning and requesting); **Commissives**: speakers are committed to achieve actions or things due to these acts (i.e., offer, refusal, promise, threat, vow, etc...); **Expressives**: the speaker's feelings, psychological states or attitudes are expressed due to these acts (i.e., thanking, blaming, apologizing, congratulating, etc.); and **Declarations**: state of the world is changed due to these acts (i.e., declaring war, nominating a candidate, firing from work, etc.).

Van Dijk's (1998, 2001 and 2006) Ideological Square

Van Dijk's (1988) socio-cognitive model of CDA predicated on the premise that discourse analysis is focused on various verbal and textual patterns and that cognition mediates between "society" and "discourse" (Van Dijk, 1995: 21).

Lexicon, syntax, themes, local semantics, and schematic structures are all included in the micro-level analysis. As a result, "overall societal structures, such as parliamentary democracy and capitalism; institutional/ organisational structures, such as racist political parties; group relations, such as discrimination; and group structures, such as identity, tasks, goals, norms, position, and resources" are all included in the social analysis (Van Dijk, 1995: 20). Conversely, the macro-level analysis depicts social group domination, inequality, and power.

When investigating an ideology in a discourse four principles are required, according to van Dijk's (2005: 734) "Ideological square":

- Be sure to highlight "Our" positive attributes. (Exaggerate one's activities or favourable traits)
- Put more emphasis on "Their" negative traits. (Exaggerate the undesirable traits or behaviours of others)
- De-emphasise "Our" negative traits.
- De-emphasise "Their" positive traits while emphasising your shortcomings. (Highlight others' admirable traits and deeds)

In a broader contextual perspective of "positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation," these four concepts are fundamental. Positive self-representation stresses people's good conduct, as in stating positive things about "Us" and expressing bad things about "Them," and self-presentation debates the individual's behaviour as a group member while firmly presenting various ideological beliefs. As the interface pattern competes with the other groups, this constructive posture is an abstract representation of group conflicts (Van Dijk, 2000: 2004).

This ideological square may be further defined as a "fundamental dichotomy" by emphasising "positive self-representation and negative other-representation" (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010: 69). The dichotomy divides actors into in-and-out groups, where the former downplay their bad sides while projecting their positive ones, while the latter project their negative ones while downplaying their positive ones (Bello, 2013: 86). In the political sphere, propaganda, programmes, speeches, debates, and interviews frequently focus on "the chosen issues of "our" group or party, on what we have done successfully, and identify political opponents with unfavourable topics like war, violence, drugs, and lack of freedom (Van Dijk, 2005: 734).

To depict oneself as the so-called "good, superior, and us" and the other as the "bad, inferior, and them" is the overarching goal of these categories (Van Dijk, 2005: 739). Both the negative other-representation and the self-positive self-representation are semantic macro-strategies. Instead, the dichotomy is used for "face-keeping or impression management" and to exclude the opponents from the in-group, designating them as out-group members.

2.5 The Model

The present study adopts an eclectic model that is based on theories of Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional approach, van Dijk's (1998, 2001 and 2006) ideological square and Searle's (1969) classification of speech acts. Accordingly, the positive data will be analysed at three stages: the description (the active and passive voice will be approached at the structural level and the lexical nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs will be approached at the lexical level); the interpretation (the representative, commissive, directive, expressive and declarative speech act will be approached); the positive ideology (emphasise goods and de-emphasised bads) will be approached, as schematised in the following figure:

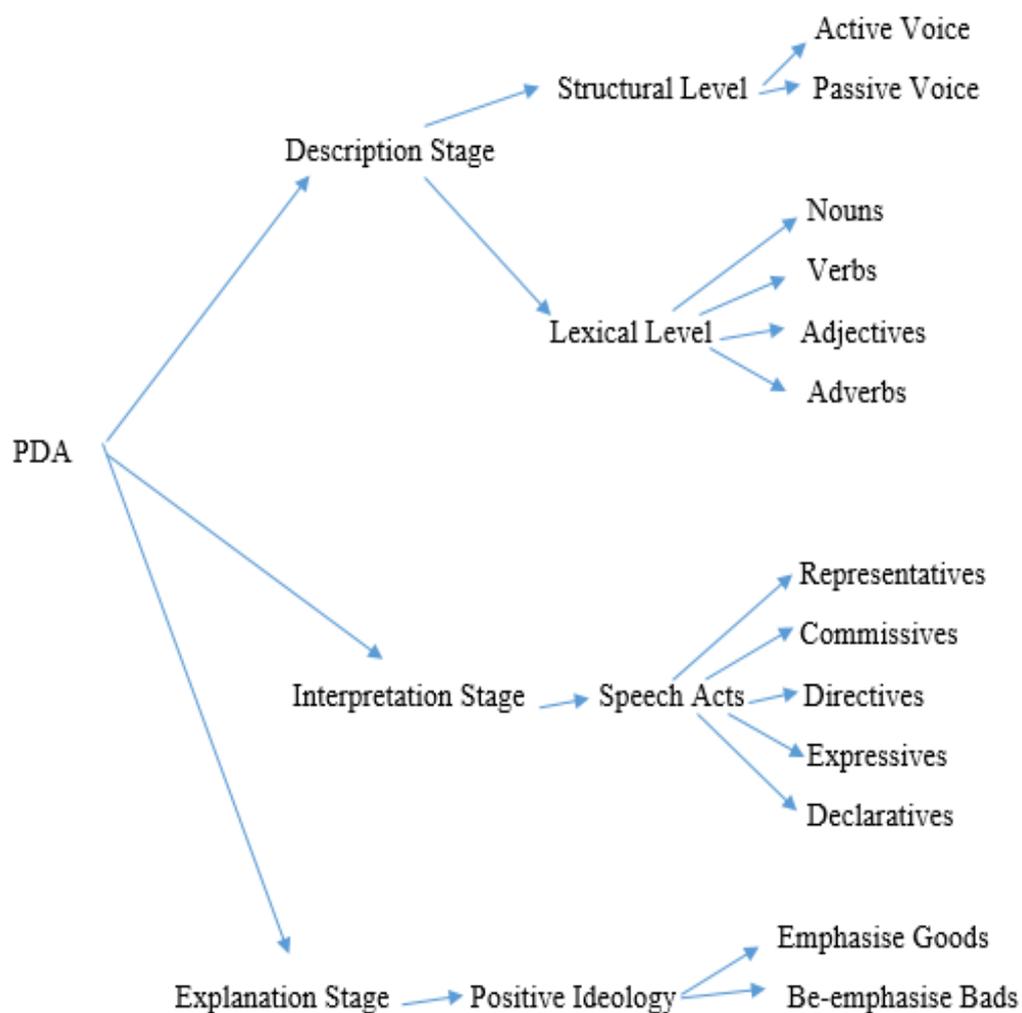


Figure 1 The Eclectic Model of PDA in Mr. Johnson’s Speech

3.0 Data Analysis

3.1 Data Description

The data of the present study encompasses one opening statement at COVID-19 press conference that is presented by the British Prime Minister, Mr., Boris Johnson, during the pandemic of COVID-19 on 4th of January 2022 (see appendix). The main reason behind choosing this data is that it represents a fertile ground to analyse the positive perspective of his discourse. Besides, it complies with the objectives of the present study.

3.2 Method

The data of the present study is going to be analysed descriptively (i.e., in accordance with theories of Fairclough (1989), van Dijk’s (1998, 2001 and 2006) Ideological Square and Searle’s (1969) Speech Acts, and statically in accordance with certain statistical means (i.e., frequencies and percentages). Adopting these theories is to identify the structural components, lexical components, speech acts and the ideology that are used by Mr. Johnson, the Prime Minister of Britain.

Extract 1

On one day last week we had 200,000 people test positive.

Description stage

At the structural level, the speaker employs the active voice through calling for the past simple to deliver his message. At the lexical level, the Prime Minister calls for the adjective 'positive' and the noun 'test' to inform his addressees with regard to the COVID-19 positive statistics.

Interpretation stage

The declarative speech act is used to achieve the positive message of his discourse. The Prime Minister declares the statistics of the covid-19 tests, and, thus, they interpret the positive message (i.e., the British authorities are working hard to save people's lives against the virus).

Explanation stage

Giving such speech indicates that the speaker tries to emphasise the role of the British authorities (medical, civil and military) during their fight against COVID-19. Thus, the British goods are emphasised while their bads are de-emphasised with regard to their protocols and precautions when facing the pandemic by saying 'we had 200,000 people test positive'.

Extract 2

And second, thanks to the fantastic national effort to get Britain boosted, we now have a substantial level of protection, higher than any of our European neighbours, with over 34 million boosters administered, including in England reaching more than 90 per cent of the over-70s, and 86 per cent of the over-50s.

Description stage

At the structural level, it is found that the addresser uses the active voice to deliver his message. At the lexical level, it is seen that the speaker adopts the words that carries the positive meaning. These words include the adjective '**fantastic**', the verb '**boosted**' and '**protection**'. Calling for these two levels indicates that Mr. Johnson attempts to send a positive message, and, accordingly, the British people become hopeful and optimistic towards the virus matters.

Interpretation stage

Achieving the interpretation stage requires the Prime Minister to initiate the **expressive**, **representative** and **declarative** speech acts. The first is accomplished when expressing thanks and gratitude to the British authorities for boosting people 'thanks to the fantastic national effort to get Britain boosted'. The second is fulfilled when the speaker presents the number of vaccinate people whereas the latter speech act is observed when the addresser declares that Britain becomes the higher protective country in comparison with other countries of Europe. In doing so, the speaker intends to make the addressees to interpret his positive message, that is, due to the high number of boosters and the appropriate precautions of the British authorities, people should keep calm and be optimistic towards the dangers of COVID-19.

Explanation stage

Extract 2 shows that the Prime Minister sheds light on the role of the British medical, military and civil organisations in fighting the pandemic by mentioning the words 'Britain', 'England' and 'we'. The reason behind doing so is to reflect the positive ideology of his country through emphasising the positives and de-emphasising the negatives of his country with regard to the matters of COVID-19.

Extract 3

We've asked qualified teachers who have left the profession to come back and help fill temporary absences, and I want to thank them and all teachers, parents and pupils for taking the precaution to test yourselves and to wear a mask in the classroom, enabling vital face-to-face education to continue.

Description stage

As for the description stage, the doctor adopts the structural and lexical levels to deliver his positive message.

Firstly, the structural level is performed due to the speaker's use of the active voice to highlight the doer of the safety action against the spread of the virus. Performing the active voice during his speech means that the speaker prioritises the hard work of the British authorities, particularly the civil one (teachers and pupils who wearing masks, filling temporary absences and taking other safety precautions into considerations so as to have face-to-face education).

Secondly, the lexical level is seen when the speaker calls for the adjective 'qualified' and the verbs '**thank**', '**wear**' and '**enabling**' and the nouns '**precaution**' and '**test**'. These words carry the positive meaning of the Prime Minister's discourse. Focusing on the hard work of the qualified teachers who follow the appropriate procedures to defeat the virus and continue face-to-face education requires the Prime Minister to adopt gratitude expressions and other optimistic expressions.

Interpretation stage

Mr. Johnson performs two types of speech acts to achieve the interpretation stage in extract 3; namely, **the directive speech act** and **the expressive speech act**. The former is used by the speaker to inform the qualified teachers that they must come back to school and fill necessary absences. The latter is seen when the speaker expresses his gratitude for both teachers and pupils since they practice the positive and safe protocols to succeed face-to-face education. Hence, Mr. Johnson's positive message is succeedingly and optimistically interpreted by the British addressees.

Explanation stage

Revealing the positive ideology of the British authorities (civil, military and medical) to the world is the reason behind declaring this positive discourse. He aims at reflecting that the British community is qualified and trained to follow the safety procedures and defeat the pandemic through emphasising the goods and de-emphasising bads of their community.

Extract 4

Wear face coverings on public transport and in indoor public places, and take a test before you go to a high-risk venue or meet those who are elderly or vulnerable. And follow the relevant rules if you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Description stage

Two levels are utilized when declaring a positive discourse, that is, the structural and the lexical.

It is the active voice that is executed in the directive form at the lexical level in extract 4. The reason behind doing so is to achieve his positive message of his discourse through which

people are directed to follow the appropriate instructions and protocols so as to have a safe life for all.

At the lexical level, Mr. Johnson employs the lexical verbs ‘wear’, ‘take’ and ‘follow’ and the noun ‘a test’ that have a positive intention. Using the base form of these verbs indicates that the speaker gives higher emphasis to prioritise people’s lives.

Interpretation stage

It is found in extract 4 that the addresser employs the **directive speech act** so as to achieve the interpretation stage of his discourse. The initiation of the directive speech act is attributed to the use of the directive constructions ‘Wear face coverings...’, ‘...take a test before you go...’, and ‘And follow the relevant rules if you live ...’. The Prime Minister aims at alerting the addressees of the dangers of the pandemic, and, thus, certain safety precautions must be taken place.

Explanation stage

When giving such discourse on public means that British Prime Minister intends to reflect the positive ideology through which the British authorities’ goods are emphasised while their bads are emphasised. Accordingly, the instructive forms are observed in extract 4.

Table 1 the Overall Use of the Description Stage and Interpretation Components by Mr. Johnson

		Type	Frequency	Percentage
Description Stage	Structural level	Active voice	4	100
		Passive voice	0	0
		Total	4	%
	Lexical Level	Nouns	5	33.33
		Verbs	7	46.67
		Adjectives	3	20
		Adverbs	0	0
		Total	15	%
Interpretation Stage	Speech Acts	Representatives	1	14.5
		Commissives	0	0
		Directives	2	28.5
		Expressives	2	28.5
		Declaratives	2	28.5
		Total	7	%

Table 1 authenticates that the British Prime Minister employs the components of the description and interpretation differently when declaring his positive discourse. In the description stage, he uses the active voice (100%) to highlight the positive and hard effort of the British authorities at the structural level, while he adopts the lexical verbs more frequently then followed by nouns and adjectives with percentages that amount to (46.67%), (33.33%) and (20%) respectively when giving his positive speech at the lexical level.

In the interpretation stage, table 1 presents that the speaker approximately employs the speech acts in question. That is, the expressive, directive and declarative speech acts register approximate percentage of (28.5%) for each, while the representative speech act assigns the percentage of (14.5%).

4. Conclusions

The present study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. CDA and PDA are two perspectives used to analyse discourses but from different sides. While the first studies the negative side of a discourse, the second studies the positive side of a discourse.

2. At the description stage, it is found in table 1 that the speaker only employs the active voice to achieve the structural level. However, the passive voice is not used by the speaker during his discourse. Besides, the lexical level is achieved by using the verbs and followed by nouns. Thus, it can be concluded that the active voice and the lexical verbs and nouns are the appropriate components to achieve positive message at the structural and lexical levels respectively.

3. Concerning the interpretation stage, it is found that the Prime Minister approximately utilises the directive, expressive and declarative speech acts and followed by the representative speech act. Hence, to achieve the positive message of his discourse, Mr. Johnson prefers to employ the expressive, declarative and directive speech acts.

4. As for the positive ideology, Mr. Johnson utilises the inclusive expressions such as 'we', 'our people', 'England', 'British' and the like to emphasise their hard work and goods and de-emphasise their bads in relation to the appropriate and safety protocols during the pandemic of COVID-19. Accordingly, solidarity, optimism and togetherness are boosted among the British people.

References

- Austin, J.L. (1962) *How to do things with words*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bello, U. (2013). "If I could make It, you too can make it!" Personal pronouns in political discourse: a CDA of president Jonathan 's presidential declaration speech. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 3 (6), 84-96.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. London: Polity Press.
- Gee, J. P. & Handford, M. (Eds.). (2012). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K. & Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.). Edward Arnold.
- Hughes, J. M. F. (July 2018). "Progressing Positive Discourse Analysis and/in Critical Discourse Studies: Reconstructing Resistance through Progressive Discourse Analysis." *Review of Communication*. 18 (3), 193–211. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/15358593.2018.1479880.
- Martin, J. R. (2004). "Positive Discourse Analysis: Solidarity and Change." *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 49, 179–200.
- Martin, J., R., & Rose, D. (2003). *Working with Discourse: Meaning Beyond the Clause*. Continuum.
- Rashidi, N., & Souzandehfar, M. (2010). A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Debates between Republicans and Democrats over the Contribution of War in Iraq. *JOLIE*, 3(67), 42-82.
- Searle, J. (1969). *Speech acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, S. (2013). *What is Discourse Analysis: Research Methods Series*. Bloomsbury Academic. <http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/what-is-discourse-analysis>.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Discourse Semantics and Ideology. *Discourse & Society* 6(2): 243–89.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2006c) Ideology and Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*. 11(2), 115-140.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2005). Politics, ideology and discourse. In: Ruth Wodak, (Ed.), Elsevier Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics. Volume on Politics and Language, 728-740.
- van Dijk, T. (2000). On the analysis of parliamentary debates on immigration. In Martin, R. & Wodak, R. (eds.), *The semiotics of racism: Approaches to critical discourse analysis*. Passagen Verlag, 85-103.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. OUP.

Appendix

Speech

PM opening statement at COVID-19 press conference: 4 January 2022

Prime Minister Boris Johnson held a COVID-19 press conference.

From:

[Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street](#) and [The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP](#)

Published

5 January 2022

Location:

9 Downing Street

Delivered on:

4 January 2022 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)

Previous waves of the pandemic did not have a single day with more than 100,000 new cases reported.

On one day last week we had 200,000 people test positive.

And the latest figure today is another 218,000, though that includes some delayed reports.

So anyone who thinks our battle with Covid is over is, I'm afraid, profoundly wrong.

This is a moment for the utmost caution.

But our position today differs from previous waves in two crucial respects.

First, we now know that Omicron is milder than previous variants,

so while hospital admissions are rising quickly

with over 15,000 Covid patients now in hospital in England alone -

this is not yet, thankfully, translating into the same numbers needing intensive care that we saw in previous waves.

And second, thanks to the fantastic national effort to get Britain boosted,

we now have a substantial level of protection, higher than any of our European neighbours,

with over 34 million boosters administered,

including in England reaching more than 90 per cent of the over-70s,

and 86 per cent of the over-50s.

And so together with the Plan B measures that we introduced before Christmas,

we have a chance to ride out this Omicron wave without shutting down our country once again.

We can keep our schools and our businesses open, and we can find a way to live with this virus.

But the weeks ahead are going to be challenging, both here in the UK and across the world.

There is no escaping the fact that some services will be disrupted by staff absences,

but we have been working through Christmas to prepare for this wherever possible.

And if we all play our part in containing the spread of this virus

the disruptions we face can be far less severe than a national lockdown, with all the devastation that would bring for livelihoods and the life chances of our children.

So the government is acting to protect critical national services, keep supply chains open, and fortify our NHS to withstand the pressures ahead.

We've identified 100,000 critical workers, in areas from food processing to transport to our border force - and from 10 January we'll be rolling out lateral flow testing for all these workers, available on every working day.

We'll be sending testing kits directly to these organisations and liaising with them on the logistics.

We've asked qualified teachers who have left the profession to come back and help fill temporary absences, and I want to thank them and all teachers, parents and pupils for taking the precaution to test yourselves and to wear a mask in the classroom, enabling vital face-to-face education to continue.

We're increasing NHS capacity by building onsite Nightingale hospitals, as well as creating 2,500 virtual beds where people can be safely treated at home.

We've bought more antivirals per person than anywhere else in Europe those are the tablets which reduce your chances of going to hospital once you've caught Covid.

We're mobilising our volunteers – the emerging territorial army of the NHS – and we're working to identify those NHS Trusts which are most likely to need actual military support, so this can be prepared now.

As our NHS moves to a war footing, I will be recommending to Cabinet tomorrow that we continue with Plan B, because the public have responded and changed their behaviour, your behaviour, buying valuable time to get boosters in arms and help the NHS to cope with the Omicron wave. So please carry on observing those measures for now. Work from home if you can. Wear face coverings on public transport and in indoor public places, and take a test before you go to a high-risk venue or meet those who are elderly or vulnerable. And follow the relevant rules if you live in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. Above all, if you haven't already done so please, please get that booster. Since I launched the Get Boosted Now campaign on 12 December: we have delivered 10 million extra boosters across the UK; we have doubled the rate of vaccination from 450,000 doses a day to a peak of more than 900,000; we matched the NHS's previous record day, and then beat it again and again; and we met our target of offering a booster to every eligible adult a whole month early. The freedoms we are able to maintain in the teeth of this Omicron wave have been made possible by the number of people getting boosted, and I want to thank again, everyone who assisted this extraordinary national effort over Christmas.

Our GPs and their teams, pharmacists and everyone in our fantastic NHS, the thousands of volunteers, the ingenious initiatives of local communities, like the one in Redbridge Town Hall which vaccinated 1,700 people on Christmas Day - and every one of you who has come forward and done your bit by getting jabbed. But there are still almost 9 million people eligible, who haven't had their booster,

And it's absolutely heart-breaking that as many as 90 per cent of those in intensive care with Covid have not had their booster, and over 60 per cent of those in Intensive Care, who have Covid, have not had any vaccination at all.

People are dying needlessly because they haven't had their jabs, they haven't had that booster.

And there are 2 million booster slots available this week alone.

It's already the case that to travel to some countries you need a booster to be considered fully vaccinated,

and it's likely that within weeks this will increasingly become the norm.

So if you haven't done it already, get yourself boosted this month.

Exactly a year after the UK administered the first AstraZeneca vaccine, a British invention that has enabled 2.5 billion jabs around the world - the best way to contain this virus, help our NHS, and keep our country open, is to get boosted, and so please, Get Boosted Now.

Published 5 January 2022