Integrity Journal of Arts and Humanities
Volume 7(3), pages 127-133, October 2026
Article Number: A2FE02061
ISSN: 2811-2407
https://doi.org/10.31248/IJAH2026.256
https://integrityresjournals.org/journal/IJAH

Full Length Research

Exploring rhetorical legitimation in Nigeria: A discourse analysis of President Bola Tinubu's Rivers State emergency rule speech

Nwizug, Sumenenua Suzi

Basic Sciences Unit, PAMO University of Medical Sciences, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Email: snwizug@pums.edu.ng; Tel: 2348060951336.

Copyright © 2026 Nwizug. This article remains permanently open access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Received Date: 12 August 2026 | Accepted Date: 16 September 2026 | Published Date: 30 October 2026

ABSTRACT: This study examines the crucial role of language in legitimising emergency rule within a democratic system. The study is anchored on Van Leeuwen's Legitimation Strategy, which includes authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation, and mythopoiesis. These strategies are employed to analyse the Rivers State emergency rule speech of President Bola Tinubu. Data were collected from the Presidential Villa State House Website, http://statehouse.gov.ng. The excerpts were randomly selected in line with the features of the legitimation strategies. The study adopted a qualitative research design. Data were selected through purposive sampling. Findings revealed that the exercise of political power is not only backed by law and policies but also by a careful choice of linguistic items. The study therefore concludes that language is used by political elites to either construct or deconstruct authority. Most significantly, the study encourages readers to pay particular attention to the word choice of political figures and make objective decisions, bearing in mind that the language of politics deliberately works to legitimise the actions of political elites. Above all, the study contributes to discourse studies by expounding how legitimation strategies function in the Nigerian political space.

Keywords: Authority, language, legal, politics, power.

INTRODUCTION

A prominent characteristic of Nigeria's democratic system is persistent rivalry among the political class (Agbara, 2022). Such rivalries sometimes escalate into bitter politics characterised by vendetta, physical attacks and destruction of property, as in the case of Rivers State in 2025. Rivers State was in the news for recurring political rivalries culminating in a swift intervention by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, proclaiming an emergency rule that temporarily truncated the democratic rule of Gov. Siminalaye Fubara in 2025.

Simply put, an emergency rule is a system whereby the President of a country wields the power of language to temporarily truncate an existing democratically elected government at the state or grassroots level. Orji-Obasi (2025) argues that the President of Nigeria has the constitutional power to declare a state of emergency if the conditions stipulated in the constitution are satisfied. The declaration of an emergency rule is to restore peace in warring or violence-prone environments (Agbara, 2022).

An emergency rule, especially within a democratic system, raises questions with respect to its legitimacy (Rufus and Uzakala, 2025). This is where language plays a vital role. Such a proclamation is usually enacted using carefully selected linguistic resources. Language is used by the major actor to persuade the populace to accept the heightened power and control of the government at the apex level. It is undeniable that politics is seemingly characterised by a large following. Therefore, when an emergency rule replaces a duly elected government, citizens unequivocally express their biases either for or against the emergency rule. Therefore, in order to ensure a peaceful transition from a democratic government to an emergency rule, the Government at the apex level makes an appropriate choice of words to persuade the citizens to believe that its choice of emergency rule is legitimate.

It is worthy to mention that between 2024 and 2025, there was a maelstrom in Rivers State with respect to the control of political structures between Former Governor

Nyesom Wike who doubles as the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and his successor, His Excellency, Governor Siminalaye Fubara (Olumide *et al*., 2025; Macleva, 2025; Gbenga, 2025). This feud escalated into severe conflict, leading to the splitting of the Rivers State House of Assembly into two factions, threats of impeachment of the incumbent governor, destruction of the State House of Assembly complex, presidential mediations, agreements, breaches of agreements, violent clashes among supporters and pipeline vandalism (Rufus and Uzakala, 2025). Consequently, on the 18th of March 2025, the President of Nigeria, President Bola Tinubu, presented a long speech declaring a state of emergency in Rivers State.

Statement of the problem

The pronouncement of an emergency rule within a democratic system is alien to Nigerians; however, President Bola Tinubu, on the 18th of March 2025, declared a state of emergency suspending the state executive and legislative arms of government in Rivers State, Nigeria. This emergency rule pronouncement was highly debatable. Thus, the President needed to employ a certain kind of language to legitimise his actions. While legal personnel have argued over the constitutionality of this speech (Otung, 2026), scholars are yet to look at how the language was used to justify the deposition of an elected governor to the best of the researcher's knowledge; that is the academic gap this paper sets out to fill.

Aim and objectives

This paper specifically aims at studying the nature of the language use in the President's speech, paying particular attention to rhetoric and how the power of language is used to justify the suspension of a democratically elected government. President Bola Tinubu's speech declaring a state of emergency in Rivers State supplies researchable grounds for exploring the rhetoric inherent in the speech that birthed emergency governance in Rivers State. It is worthy of mention that this paper does not focus on the constitutional validity surrounding the legitimacy of the emergency rule, rather, it specifically addresses the discursive elements in the speech that ushered in the emergency rule in Rivers State.
The objectives are to;

1. examine discursive elements of language that reveal legal authority in Tinubu's speech
2. explore moral labels used in the speech
3. investigate how language use rationalises the deposition of an elected governor.

This research is therefore motivated by the need to unravel how an action adjudged by a large number of the populace as unconstitutional (Rufus and Uzakala, 2025) is legitimised using language. The study is also motivated by the need to expound how rhetorical strategies such as framing are used to legitimise extraordinary executive power. It is worthy of mention that existing studies in speech analysis of political leaders abound in discourse studies like the works of Adebayo *et al*. (2025) and Olawe (2025). However, it is important to mention that there is a paucity of studies with regard to rhetorical legitimation of emergency rule by a democratically elected leader, to the best of the researcher's knowledge. This gap is the exact focus of this research.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Beyond serving as a vehicle for communication, language from a critical discourse analysis perspective is a tool through which power and control are exerted, especially in political discourse. 'In political contexts, language becomes an instrument of power, employed to influence public opinion, assert authority, and legitimise political actions' (Shamim *et al*., 2025, p.406). Language is not a neutral factor in political discourse. It is wielded deliberately in order to enact legitimation (Shamim *et al*., 2025). Shamim *et al*. (2025) argue that democratic environments excel when accountability is in place. This implies that the people often hold their leaders accountable for decisions made; therefore, leaders also, through the use of language, endeavour to legitimise their actions. What then is legitimation?

From a scholarly standpoint, it is widely perceived that legitimation simply connotes the act of being legal (Gelot and Soderbaum, 2023). Several scholars have raised their voices to expound the meaning of legitimation. Abuelwafa (2021) defines legitimation as a state of legalising certain societal ideologies. The act of legitimating certain societal ideologies can only be achieved through language. Language, therefore, plays a profound role in constructing an act as either legal or illegal. According to Cap (2008), legitimisation is the principal goal of the political actor who intends to justify his actions and also attract support, and so legitimation solely serves the interest of the addressee. Kosova (2020, p.52) adds that the act of legitimation produces legitimacy, that is, 'the right to be obeyed, discursively by explicit statements, implicatures or various types of arguments.' In addition, Suchman (1995), cited in Yu and Zheng (2023), asserts that 'legitimation is purposive, calculated, and frequently oppositional, and offers a widely agreeable definition of legitimacy (the result of legitimation), suggesting legitimacy is defined as 'a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions'. Drawing from the views of the scholars highlighted above, rhetorical legitimation is undoubtedly a

variegated concept. It draws its features from various fields: politics, law and language.

Rhetorical legitimation is therefore anchored in political discourse through the strategic use of language by political actors to sway the public towards justifying their actions as legal. It basically serves the power needs of the language user, who is obviously a political leader. Van Leeuwen (2007) highlights important strategies that embody rhetorical legitimation as: authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation, and mythopoiesis.

Additionally, the speeches of political leaders have been studied by scholars from diverse perspectives. Olawe (2025) examines pragmatic facework and economic suffering in Nigerian presidential rhetoric: A speech analysis of Bola Tinubu (2023-2025). Olawe (2025) specifically investigates how President Tinubu uses pragmatic strategies in his speech to downplay the economic hardship plaguing Nigerians. Also, Al-khawaldeh *et al*. (2023) view the predominant linguistic strategies utilised in President Biden's inauguration of 2021. In line with using CDA, language was analysed at both the micro and macro levels, infusing syntax and stylistics in the analysis of Biden's 2021 speech. Using intertextuality and CDA, Kostova (2020) studied the acceptance speeches of contemporary American political leaders.

The studies reviewed in this research reveal a clear gap in scholarship: no study has been carried out on the rhetorical legitimation of emergency rule, especially within Nigeria's civilian context. Also, there is a gap in the literature with respect to how linguistic resources are used to foreground emergency rule within Nigeria's democratic system. Therefore, addressing these gaps is absolutely necessary for unveiling the discursive tools used by a democratically elected President to convince the populace to accept a highly controversial solution such as an emergency rule.

Theoretical inclination

Van Leeuwen's model of legitimation framework

Van Leeuwen's Legitimation Framework is a framework initiated by Van Leeuwen to analyse how legitimation works in public discourse. Van Leeuwen (2007) expounds four different ways through which authority is justified: (1) Authorisation, (2) Moral Evaluation, (3) Rationalisation and (4) Mythopoiesis. Van Leeuwen's legitimation strategies dissect how language users justify their actions. Authorisation, as the name implies, simply answers the question: on whose authority are actions justified? Here, Van Leeuwen (2007) expounds that such authority could be personal or impersonal. Impersonal authority is drawn from power sources such as the constitution, law, tradition and one's expertise. On the other hand, personal authority is vested in powerful individuals on whom such authority has been conferred. The next strategy is moral evaluation; here, justification of actions is based on values or what is morally right. Using this strategy, Van Leeuwen acknowledges that actions are weighed based on the value system of the people. Van Leeuwen (2007) outlined three aspects of moral evaluation as: evaluation, abstraction and analogy. Similarly, rationalisation simply implies the expression of the rationale behind the actions taken. Lastly, among the legitimation strategies is mythopoiesis. Mythopoiesis applies storytelling, narratives and future postulations to justify actions. Van Leewen's legitimation strategy is appropriate for the analysis of the legitimation strategies in President Tinubu's emergency rule speech.

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a qualitative research design to explore the linguistic strategies inherent in Nigeria's President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 2025 emergency rule speech, which legitimises the temporary deposition of Gov. Siminalaye Fubara's democratically elected government. The data comprise a nineteen-paragraph, thirty-one-sentence speech entitled *President Tinubu Declares State of Emergency in Rivers State on Tuesday 18th March, 2025*. The speech is available on https://statehouse.gov.ng. Purposive sampling was employed to extract the data. Purposive sampling strategically samples data based on the criteria 'relevant to the sample based on the inclusion or exclusion of the units of analysis' (Bryman, 2012, p. 418). Although the population consists of thirty-one sentences, only eighteen sentences were carefully selected based on indicators of discursive elements of legitimation and analysed using Van Leeuwen's (2007) four legitimation strategies: authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation and mythopoiesis. Abbreviated as AUT, MOR, RAT and MYT respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data 1: Authorisation

AUT 1: On February 28, 2025, the Supreme Court, in a judgment in respect of about eight consolidated appeals concerning the political crisis in Rivers State, based on several grave unconstitutional acts and disregard of the rule of law that have been committed by the Governor of Rivers State as shown by the evidence before it, pronounced in very clear terms: "a government cannot be said to exist without one of the three arms that make up the government of a state under the 1999 Constitution as amended.

AUT 2: It has become inevitably compelling for me to invoke the provision of section 305 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended, to declare a state of emergency in Rivers State with effect from today, 18th March, 2025 and I so do.

AUT 3: Personal authority- ' I feel greatly disturbed…, I have, of course, given stern orders to the security agencies…, I hereby nominate Vice Admiral Ibokette Ibas (Rtd) as administrator….

AUT 1, 2 and 3 show evidence of the use of both personal and impersonal authorisation. A close look at the data reveals President Tinubu's citation of authorities such as the Supreme Court, the Nigerian Constitution and the National Assembly to legitimise the emergency rule, as highlighted in the data. Also, his authority as the President of the Federation also comes into play. Thus, the data specifically reveals three different power sources of authorisation in his speech: (1) Legal authorisation, (2) Constitutional authorisation, and (3) Personal Authority.

The data reveals a reference to the Supreme Court judgment stating how the governor flouted the judgment, thus warranting an emergency rule. Also, the data revealed President Tinubu's invocation of Section 305 of the Nigerian Constitution to support his reason for the emergency rule. In addition, the use of the first-person pronoun, ' I ', is also predominant in the data, as shown in AUT 3 where personal authorisation comes into play. The linguistic undertone unveils Tinubu's invocation of his power as both President and Commander-in-Chief. He utilises the first person personal pronoun, 'I ', generously to show the authority vested in him. His personal authority is also displayed in AUT 3, especially in the following excerpts: 'I have, of course, given stern orders to the security agencies…, I hereby nominate Vice Admiral Ibokette Ibas (Rtd) as administrator….'

The above discourse reveals the power of this authorisation strategy. It uncovers how President Tinubu galvanises the role of both personal and impersonal authorisation to make the Emergency Rule appear legitimate, constitutional, just, the only option and, as such, exonerates him from blame.

DATA 2: Moral Evaluation

MOR 1: The state has been at a standstill since the crisis started, with the good people of the state not being able to have access to the dividends of democracy.

MOR 2: With the crisis persisting, there is no way democratic governance, which we have all fought and worked for over the years, can thrive in a way that will redound to the benefit of the good people of the state.

MOR 3: Also, it is public knowledge that the Governor of Rivers State for unjustifiable reasons, demolished the House of Assembly of the state as far back as 13th December 2023 and has, up until now, fourteen (14) months after, not rebuilt the same.

MOR 4: I have made personal intervention between the contending parties for a peaceful resolution, but my efforts have been largely ignored.

MOR 5: No good and responsible President will stand by and allow this grave situation to continue without taking remedial steps.

Moral evaluation is deployed in the speech through the use of certain lexical items that depict values, comparison of values and vices, and negation in MOR 1-4. In MOR 1, the choice of addressing Rivers people as 'the good people of the state' is a deliberate moral evaluation strategy. It emphasises that the good people of the state have not been able to enjoy the dividends of democracy, such as the need for emergency rule. In this way, the 'good people of the state' become the moral purpose for truncating an existing democratic system. Hence, this makes the citizens believe that the rule is beneficial for those who are morally upright.

In MOR 2, there is also a careful selection of words to foreground moral evaluation. For instance, a close look at the excerpt, 'there is no way democratic governance, which we have all fought and worked for over the years, can thrive…' also connotes moral evaluation. The expression reveals inclusivity of the 'good people.' Democracy connotes a state where the masses are empowered as stakeholders of the government. Here, President Tinubu carefully uses the discursive strategy in MOR 3 to illustrate a collective moral effort of sacrifice and commitment by the masses in the defence of democracy. Tinubu frames democracy as a product of collective effort, thus creating the need to defend it. This morally legitimises the emergency rule as a necessity in order to safeguard democracy.

In MOR 3 above, the President unequivocally condemned the governor's act of demolishing the State House of Assembly. His undertone judges the action of the governor as morally unacceptable; his reasons for doing so were also seen as unjustifiable. Drawing from MOR 2, where the President highlighted democracy as a collective effort, the demolition of the State House of Assembly is presented as an attack on democracy and therefore evaluated as immoral. Similarly, the act of not rebuilding it portrays negligence and irresponsibility, which are all conduits of immorality. From MOR 3, we deduce that the governor is painted as a villain while the House of Assembly is the victim, a democratic institution threatened, and emergency rule is legitimised as the only panacea to the problem.

In MOR 4, the President frames himself as a peace-loving individual and a mediator. These powerful moral attributes depict him as a responsive and responsible leader. Peace is a moral attribute, and the President presents himself as one who possesses it, as shown in the expression, 'I have made personal intervention between the contending parties.' Besides institutional authorisation as displayed in AUT 1, moral authorization hands him the

weapon to use his only option, which is the emergency rule.

In addition, MOR 5 is laden with moral lexical items such as good and responsible, used in describing the government at the apex. These words endow them with the moral justification of carrying out the emergency action to forestall peace. In MOR 5, the president is described as a responsible leader who intervenes in grave situations.

The application of Van Leewen's (2007) moral authorisation to draw on strategies that legitimise the emergency rule in Rivers State reveals how carefully selected words such as 'good, responsible, democracy, mediation, peaceful resolution, remedial steps and many others' are used to create a scenario where the masses are made to believe that the emergency rule is the best option. Data also reveals the framing of the President as good and responsible and the governor as the opposite, especially as shown in the expression, 'I am also aware that many well-meaning Nigerians, Leaders of thought and Patriotic groups have also intervened at various times with the best of intentions to resolve the matter.' By using moral evaluation, the President condemns the actions of the State Governor as morally unacceptable, and the emergency rule is justified as a strategy for restoring peace.

Data 3: Rationalisation

RAT 1: With the crisis persisting, there is no way democratic governance, which we have all fought and worked for over the years, can thrive in a way that will redound to the good people of Rivers State.

RAT 2: Some militants had threatened fire and brimstone against their perceived enemy of the governor, who has up till now not disowned them.
Apart from that, both the House and the governor have not been able to work together.

RAT 3: The latest security reports made available to me show that between yesterday and today there have been disturbing incidents of vandalisation of pipelines by some militants without the governor taking action to curtail them.

RAT 4: I have made personal intervention between the contending parties for a peaceful resolution, but my efforts have been largely ignored.

RAT 5: No good and responsible President will stand by and allow this grave situation to continue without taking remedial steps.

Recall that Van Leeuwen's legitimation strategy analyses rationalisation works on the psyche of the recipient to believe that an action is logical or the most appropriate solution. A close observation of RAT 1-5 reveals evidence of Van Leeuwen's (2007) rationalisation strategy. Specifically, in RAT 1, the speaker rationalises the reason democratic governance cannot benefit the 'good people' of the state at that moment. In the same vein, the expression 'there is no way' used in RAT 1 shows a complete despondency on the part of the Federal Government concerning an in-house resolution of the crisis. Also, the crisis is viewed as a bad tooth which must be pulled out with urgency through the tool of an emergency rule.

RAT 2 also rationalises the emergency rule. In RAT 2, the president framed the governor as being docile or non-responsive to the bombing of two pipelines by militants whom he alleged were fighting for the governor. The second part of RAT 2 also reveals that both the House of Assembly and the Governor are unable to unite, therefore grinding the state to a standstill. IN RAT 3, the speaker points out the vandalisation of two pipelines and unequivocally accuses the Governor of being non-responsive. The statement in RAT 3 where the Governor is accused of muteness and docility also justifies the need for the emergency rule. Similarly, RAT 4 unveil the fact that mediation between the two contending parties has failed; hence, the reason for the emergency intervention. The President viewed the emergency step as the only solution since a peaceful mediation could not restore peace.

In RAT 5 also, where the President states that, 'No good and responsible President will stand by and allow this grave situation to continue without taking remedial steps', it also contains conspicuous evidence of rationalisation. The use of the word grave to qualify the situation emphasises how deteriorated the issue is perceived. The word grave frames the situation as a matter of urgent attention. The president asserts that it is preponderant on a responsible government to restore order. Hence, viewing it as a duty that must be carried out to restore peace in the state.

Data 4: Mythopoiesis

MYT 1: Like many of you, I have watched with concern the development with the hope that the parties involved would allow good sense to prevail at the soonest, but all that hope burned out without any solution to the crisis.

MYT 2: Also, it is public knowledge that the Governor of Rivers State for unjustifiable reasons, demolished the House of Assembly of the state as far back as 13th December 2023 and has, up until now, fourteen (14) months after, not rebuilt same. I have made personal interventions between the contending parties for a peaceful resolution of the crisis, but my efforts have been largely ignored by the parties to the crisis. I am also aware that many well-meaning Nigerians, Leaders of thought and Patriotic groups have also intervened at various times with the best of intentions to resolve the matter, but all their efforts were also to no avail.

The above data reveal evidence of mythopoiesis in President Tinubu's speech through the use of storytelling, narratives, and explanations to construct a narrative where the crisis between the State House of Assembly and the Governor is perceived as a threat to the lives of the citizens of the state, as shown in the whole speech. The speech is a rhetorical legitimation of emergency rule in Rivers State announced by President Tinubu. The speech, through mythopoiesis, establishes the fact that there is a crisis, that all attempts at mediation failed, that the Governor complacent the lives of the 'good people' of the state at risk and justifies the emergency rule as the only panacea to the problem.

Specifically, MYT 1 opens with the expression, 'Like many of you.' With the use of such an expression, the speaker aligns himself with the sordid experience of the citizens. The expression gives the idea of shared experience, empathy, and collectivity. The mythopoetic effect of the expression is that it makes the people assume that the President is part of their story. In addition, the expression, 'I have watched with concern' as used in MYT 1, also legitimises the emergency rule through mythopoiesis. It shows the emotional connection of the President to the problem and his careful observation of the problem for a while. The rhetorical legitimation observed in the expression is that the President did not act impulsively; rather, he acted after keen monitoring over a period.

Findings reveal the crucial role language plays in highly sensitive political speeches such as the pronouncement of an emergency rule within a democratic system. Significantly, findings reveal that exercising political power is not only dependent on laws and policies but also on the careful choice of language, as expounded in the above data. Through language, political actors justify their actions, and it snowballs into public perception of such actions.

One significant finding of this study is that linguistic markers are deliberately chosen to construct legitimation in the emergency rule speech studied. The speech contained all four of Van Leeuwen (2007) legitimation strategies, which include authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation, and mythopoiesis. Specifically, through the use of authorisation, three aspects of authorisation were identified in the speech: personal (the President), legal (the constitution) and institutional (The Supreme Court). With these three levels of authorisation, the actions of President Tinubu were justified. Through moral evaluation, the Governor's actions were framed in a negative perspective, while the President morally evaluated the Federal Government as a responsible, empathic and responsive government out to save the endangered lives of Rivers citizens. This supports Rey (2011) cited in Butler (2024) that asserts that 'legitimising one position automatically implies the delegitimisation of alternative positions (p.14). In the text, the President unequivocally 'delegitimises' the Governor's actions while carefully 'legitimising' those of the government at the apex level.

Conclusion

This study has critically explored the linguistic strategies deployed by President Bola Tinubu to depose a democratically elected state government. Beyond exploring the legal validity of Tinubu's speech, this study has successfully unravelled the linguistic choices employed by the President to legitimise such a sensitive and highly controversial issue. Theoretically, this paper clearly advances Van Leeuwen's legitimation strategies by dissecting Tinubu's emergency rule speech and excavating its features for public awareness. This research concludes that language functions as a mechanism for constructing and contesting authority. Also, it shows that language is a powerful instrument in political practice. It not only describes political decisions; it subtly imposes the ideology of the political elites on the masses. On the other hand, this study encourages readers to pay particular attention to the word choice of political figures and make objective decisions, bearing in mind that the language of political elites is deliberately chosen to legitimise their actions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

Abuelwafa, M. A. (2021). Legitimation and manipulation in political speeches: A corpus-based study. *Procedia Computer Science*, *189*, 11-18. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2021.05.066

Adebayo, D. O., Sarah, I. O., Bassey, A. K., Omonfomhan, I. O., Bashir, P. I., Kehinde, O. A., & Chioma, I. (2025). Rhetoric of transition: A pragmatic analysis of inaugural speeches under extraordinary political succession in Nigeria. *Path of Science*, *11*(5), 8006-8027.

Agbara, D. A. (2022). A legal review of exercise of emergency powers in Nigeria *vis-à-vis* Minimum International Standards. *International Scholar Journal of Arts and Social Science Research*, *5*(1), 414-434.

Al-Khawaldeh, N. N., Rababah, L. M., Khawaldeh, A. F., & Banikalef, A. A. (2023). The art of rhetoric: persuasive strategies in Biden's inauguration speech: a critical discourse analysis. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications,10,* Article number 936.

Butler, R. (2024). Legitimisation strategies for a delegitimised political world. An introduction. In Butler, R. (ed.). *Political discourse analysis. Legitimisation strategies in crisis and conflict*. Edinburgh University Press, p. 222.

Cap, P. (2008). Legitimation in political discourse. A cross-disciplinary perspective on the modern US war rhetoric. (2nd edition). *Cambridge Scholars Publishing.*

Gbenga, H. (2025). Rivers crisis: Nigeria needs development not power struggles. Vanguard News. Retrieved on 1st April 2026 from https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/03/rivers-crisis-nigeria-needs-development-not-power-struggles-gbenga-hashim/

Gelot, L., & Söderbaum, F. (2024). Legitimation struggles in international organisations: the case of the African Union. *Globalizations*, *21*(5), 821-838. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2023.2275819

Kostova, B. (2020). Authority legitimation in campaign discourse of American presidential candidates. *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT*, *8*(2), 52-84.

Mac-leva, F. (2025). Rivers unending political turbulence: Is Governor Fubara on the firing line? International Centre for Investigative Reporting. Retrieved 1st April 2026 from https://www.icirnigeria.org/rivers-unending-political-turbulence-is-governor-fubara-on-the-firing-line/.

Olawe, O. E. (2025). Pragmatic Facework and Economic Suffering in Nigerian Presidential Rhetoric: A Speech Analysis of Bola Tinubu (2023–2025). *JOLLS: Journal of Language and Literature Studies, 5*(3), 541-557.

Olumide, S., Godwin, A., Daka, T., Abuh, A., & Akubo, J. (2025). Doubts, uncertainty in Rivers power tussle as Fubara returns. The Guardian Nigeria News. Retrieved 1st April 2026 from https://guardian.ng/politics/doubts-uncertainty-in-rivers-power-tussle-as-fubara-returns/

Orji-Obasi, C. (2025). Powers of the president to declare state of emergency in states and autonomy of state governments in Nigeria's federalism. *Akwa Capital Bar Journal, 4*(1), 55-63.

Otung, U. E. (2026). The Exercise of Emergency Powers and Suspension of Democratic Structures in Nigeria and India. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *10*(7), 5895-5905.

Rufus, A., & Uzakala, C. F. (2025). Federalism on trial: examining state of emergency declaration in Nigeria with reference to Rivers State. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Global Politics, Governance and Management,* 5(1), 396-410.

Shamim, M., Bushra, & Dwivedi, V. K. (2025). Language and power: A critical discourse analysis of political speeches. *International Journal of Social Impact, 10*(2), 459-468. https://doi:10.25215/2455/1002044

Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse & Communication*, *1*(1), 91-112. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481307071986

Yu, X., & Zheng, H. (2023). An overview of research on discursive legitimation. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, *11*(10), 112-127. https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2023.1110008