FORMING LEGITIMACY IN MEDIA DISCOURSE

D.M.Baxtiyorova[1]

1. English teacher, Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service

Mas'ul muallif: Baxtiyorova Dilnora Mirali qizi, English teacher, Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service.

e-mail: dilibakhtiyorova@gmail.com

Received: 04 Noyabr 2026
Accepted: 09 Noyabr 2026
Published: 14 Noyabr 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the author(s). Licensee Buxoro xalqaro universiteti ilmiy axborotnomasi.

Iqtibos uchun: Baxtiyorova, D. M. FORMING LEGITIMACY IN MEDIA DISCOURSE / D. M. Baxtiyorova // Buxoro xalqaro universiteti ilmiy axborotnomasi. — 2026. — T. 11, № 1. — B. 333–335.

Abstract. Legitimacy in media discourse is an important topic in modern linguistics. Media do more than report events; they also influence how people understand and evaluate individuals, organizations, and institutions. Legitimacy means that society accepts certain decisions, actions, or authorities as reasonable and trustworthy. This acceptance is shaped not only by actions themselves but also by the language used to describe them. Word choice, framing, expert opinions, and persuasive expressions can strengthen or challenge public trust. Digital media have made this process more interactive because people can now share opinions and respond directly to information. This article examines the main linguistic strategies used to construct legitimacy and considers their influence on public opinion.

Keywords: Media discourse, legitimacy, linguistic strategies, public opinion, framing, persuasion, critical discourse analysis.

MEDIA DISKURSIDA LEGITIMLIKNI SHAKLLANTIRISH

Annotatsiya. Media diskursida legitimlikni shakllantirish zamonaviy tilshunoslikning muhim yo‘nalishlaridan biridir. Ommaviy axborot vositalari nafaqat voqealar haqida ma’lumot beradi, balki insonlarning turli shaxslar, tashkilotlar va institutlarga bo‘lgan munosabatiga ham ta’sir ko‘rsatadi. Legitimlik jamiyat tomonidan muayyan qaror yoki faoliyatning asosli va ishonchli deb qabul qilinishini anglatadi. Bu jarayonda til muhim o‘rin tutadi. So‘z tanlash, axborotni yoritish usuli, ekspert fikrlari va ishontiruvchi ifodalar jamoatchilik ishonchini mustahkamlashi yoki unga shubha uyg‘otishi mumkin. Raqamli media esa auditoriyaga o‘z fikrini bildirish va axborot muhokamasida qatnashish imkonini berdi. Maqolada legitimlikni shakllantiruvchi asosiy lingvistik strategiyalar va ularning jamoatchilik fikriga ta’siri tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Media diskursi, legitimlik, lingvistik strategiyalar, jamoatchilik fikri, ramkalashtirish, ishontirish, tanqidiy diskurs tahlili.

ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ЛЕГИТИМНОСТИ В МЕДИАДИСКУРСЕ

Аннотация. Формирование легитимности в медиадискурсе является важной темой современной лингвистики. Средства массовой информации не только сообщают о событиях, но и влияют на отношение общества к людям, организациям и различным институтам. Легитимность означает общественное признание определённых решений и действий как обоснованных и заслуживающих доверия. В этом процессе важную роль играет язык. Выбор слов, способы подачи информации, экспертные мнения и убедительные выражения могут укреплять общественное доверие или вызывать сомнения. Развитие цифровых медиа сделало этот процесс более интерактивным, предоставив аудитории возможность выражать своё мнение и участвовать в обсуждениях. В статье рассматриваются основные языковые стратегии формирования легитимности и их влияние на общественное мнение.

Ключевые слова: Медиадискурс, легитимность, языковые стратегии, общественное мнение, фреймирование, убеждение, критический дискурс-анализ.

Introduction. Language plays an important role in the way people communicate and understand the world around them. This is especially clear in media, where information reaches large audiences every day. Newspapers, television, online platforms, and social networks do not simply report events. They also influence how people interpret them. One important aspect of media communication is legitimacy. It refers to the public acceptance of an institution, decision, or action as appropriate and justified. For example, governments and organizations often use media to explain their decisions and maintain public trust. However, the way information is presented can be just as important as the information itself. A positive description may strengthen an institution's image, while critical language may encourage people to question its actions. Fairclough explains that discourse is closely connected with social practices and power relations [1; 54]. The purpose of this article is to examine how language helps create or challenge legitimacy in media discourse, with particular attention to vocabulary, framing, expert opinions, and digital communication.

Literature review. Legitimacy has been studied in linguistics, sociology, political

science, and communication studies. Researchers generally connect it with public acceptance, social values, and institutional authority. Norman Fairclough explores the relationship between language and society in Media Discourse. He explains that media texts should be understood in their social context because language can reflect and influence power relations [1; 54]. Jürgen Habermas highlights the importance of public discussion and rational argument. His work suggests that institutions gain legitimacy when their decisions can be openly discussed and justified [2; 178]. Mark Suchman examines legitimacy from an organizational perspective. He describes it as public recognition that an organization's actions are appropriate within society's shared values and expectations [3; 574]. Teun A. van Dijk focuses on the connection between discourse, ideology, and power. His research shows how media language can influence public understanding by emphasizing certain information and leaving other details in the background [4; 255]. Theo van Leeuwen identifies several strategies used to justify social actions, including authorization, moral evaluation, and rationalization [5; 94]. Wodak and Meyer also emphasize the importance of studying language together with its political and social context [6; 32]. Together, these studies show that media language plays an important role in shaping public trust and institutional credibility.

Research methodology. This study uses qualitative linguistic analysis to examine how legitimacy is constructed in media discourse. Several methods are applied:

Descriptive analysis helps identify persuasive words, evaluative expressions, and metaphors used in media texts.

Critical discourse analysis examines how language represents people, institutions, and social relationships.

Pragmatic analysis focuses on the intentions behind media messages and how context influences their meaning.

Comparative analysis considers how different media sources present the same event in different ways.

The research is based on the theoretical approaches of Fairclough, Suchman, van Dijk, van Leeuwen, and Wodak. It focuses on linguistic strategies rather than measuring the actual reactions of a particular audience.

Analysis and results. The words used in media reports can strongly influence how readers understand an event. Positive expressions such as responsible, successful, transparent, and necessary can create a favorable impression. In contrast, words such as controversial, ineffective, and unjustified may encourage criticism.

Consider these two headlines:

"The Government Introduces Necessary Economic Reforms."

"The Government Introduces Controversial Economic Measures."

Both may describe the same event, but they create different impressions. The first presents the decision positively, while the second encourages readers to question it.

This shows that word choice is not simply a matter of style. It can influence public attitudes towards institutions and their decisions.

Media organizations often use statements from experts, government representatives, researchers, and legal specialists to support their reports. For example, the phrase "According to independent economic experts..." suggests that the information is based on professional knowledge. References to laws, official reports, and scientific research can also make a statement appear more convincing.

Van Leeuwen identifies authorization as an important strategy for establishing legitimacy [5; 94]. However, an expert quotation does not automatically make a report reliable. Readers should consider the source's qualifications and the context of the statement.

Media discourse often connects decisions with values such as justice, equality, freedom, security, and responsibility. For instance, a government policy may be described as necessary for protecting public safety. This presents the decision as serving a wider social purpose. Such language can be persuasive because people often judge information not only through facts but also through their beliefs and personal experiences. Van Leeuwen also identifies moral evaluation as an important way of justifying social actions [5; 96]. However, different media sources may emphasize different values when discussing the same issue. This can lead to different interpretations of legitimacy.

Framing means presenting an event by emphasizing certain details while giving less attention to others. For example, an economic decision may be described as an opportunity for development or as a cause of social inequality. Although the event is the same, the presentation leads audiences towards different conclusions.

Headlines, photographs, quotations, and the order of information all influence framing. Van Dijk's research helps explain how such choices can reflect ideological perspectives and social power [4; 255]. Therefore, framing can either strengthen public confidence or encourage people to question an institution's decisions.

Rationalization involves explaining decisions through logical arguments, practical goals, and expected results. Media reports often use statistics, research findings, and expert opinions to support particular actions. For example, a statement that a new program will reduce unemployment presents the program as beneficial to society. However, statistics should not be accepted without examination. Selected figures can create an incomplete picture. Readers should consider the source of the information and whether the evidence supports the conclusion being presented.

Digital media have changed the relationship between journalists and audiences. In traditional media, information mainly moved from media organizations to the public. Today, social networks and online platforms allow people to respond, comment, and share alternative views. For example, an organization may publish an official announcement online, but users can immediately respond with questions or criticism. These reactions may influence how others understand the announcement. As a result, institutions have less control over their public image. Digital platforms provide opportunities for direct communication, but they also make public trust more sensitive to misinformation and inconsistent

messages.

Legitimacy can also be challenged through language. This process is called delegitimization. It involves questioning the authority, credibility, or actions of a person or institution. Expressions such as "unaccountable institution" or "decision unsupported by evidence" create a critical impression and may reduce public confidence. Nevertheless, criticism is not always harmful. Investigative journalism can expose corruption and institutional failures. In such cases, challenging authority may help improve accountability. Fairclough's approach shows that discourse can both maintain and challenge existing power relations [1; 72].

The analysis leads to several main observations. First, legitimacy is shaped by language, social values, and the way information is presented. Second, context plays an important role because the same words may have different effects in different situations. Third, audiences are not passive: they can question and reject media messages. Finally, digital platforms have made legitimacy formation more interactive. These findings confirm that understanding media language is essential for recognizing how public trust and institutional authority are constructed.

Conclusion and recommendations. This study has shown that language plays an important role in forming legitimacy in media discourse. Media do not simply provide information; they also influence how people understand events and evaluate institutions. Lexical choices, expert opinions, moral evaluation, framing, and evidence are among the main strategies used to establish or challenge legitimacy. Their influence depends on the social context, the reliability of information, and the way audiences interpret media messages. Digital media have made this process more interactive. People can now express opinions and challenge official information more easily. At the same time, misinformation and manipulative language can weaken public trust. Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made:

Develop media literacy. Students should learn to recognize persuasive language and check the reliability of information.

Support responsible journalism. Media organizations should provide accurate information and use reliable sources.

Encourage linguistic research. Further studies should examine legitimacy in different languages and cultures.

Improve public communication. Institutions should explain their decisions clearly and support them with evidence.

Study digital media. More attention should be given to the influence of social networks on public trust.

Promote ethical communication. Journalists should avoid misleading information and manipulative expressions.

In conclusion, legitimacy is closely connected with language and public perception. Understanding how media use language can help people think more critically, evaluate information, and make better-informed decisions.

References

[1] Fairclough N. Media Discourse. London: Edward Arnold, 1995, -214p.

[2] Habermas J. The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989, -328p.

[3] Suchman M. C. Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. Academy of Management Review, 20(3), 1995, pp. 571–610.

[4] van Dijk T. A. Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach. London: SAGE Publications, 1998, -384p.

[5] van Leeuwen T. Legitimation in Discourse and Communication. Discourse & Communication, 1(1), 2007, pp. 91–112.

[6] Wodak R. Meyer M. (Eds.). Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis. 2nd ed. London: SAGE Publications, 2009, -216p.