



Towards Political and Economic Stability: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Rhetoric and Power Dynamics in Tinubu's State of Emergency Address

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Introduction

The role of political rhetoric in governance is crucial, particularly in times of crisis. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria, on March 18, 2025, declared a State of Emergency in Rivers State in his nationwide address due to the lingering and persistent political instability. In the speech, the president justified his action as necessary intervention, he framed the crisis as a threat to democracy, governance, and security. However, the language used in such declarations often entails remote power struggles, ideological underpinnings, and governance strategies. In this study, effort is made at critically analysing Tinubu's State of Emergency Address, paying more attention to its rhetorical strategies and implications for power dynamics and governance in Nigeria, and how political rhetoric influences governance and public perception. The study is anchored on (CDA) (Fairclough, (2015) and Political Rhetoric Theory.

Methodology

Since this work involves textual analysis rather than numerical data, descriptive and interpretive research design will be used, focusing on preponderant texts showcasing the use of political rhetoric to influence public perception, maintain peace, and equally stabilise economy. The official transcript of Tinubu's state of emergency address of March 18, 2025, purposively selected, serves as the primary data for this study. The text was chosen for its rich analytical elements. Identified texts were subjected to textual analysis taking cognizance of the preponderant linguistic strategies, in tandem with the analytical tools from Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Rhetoric Theory.

Findings and Discussion

Findings unveil that Tinubu deploys rhetorical strategies like Crisis Framing Metaphorical Expressions, Use of Legal Justification, Delegitimising Opposition and Dissent, and Emotional Appeals to Nationalism and Order just to justify his executive action. Through the speech, using metaphors of destruction and disorder, the Rivers State political situation is strategically framed as a grave crisis that requires extraordinary intervention. By interrogating some rhetorical strategies, power dynamics, and governance implications entailed in the speech, the speech also relied on legal rhetoric to justify suspending democratic governance in Rivers State. The paper submits that Tinubu's State of Emergency Add ressexemplifies how political rhetoric can be deployed to legitimise executive decisions, defend governance actions, and manage public perception.

Conclusion

The speech effectively depicts the Rivers State crisis as a cog in the wheel of progress for democracy while simultaneously rationalising a suspension of democratic governance in the state. The study posits that though crisis rhetoric can serve as a tool for stability and order, it also, in a way, raises questions about the balance between security and democratic accountability.

Keywords: Political rhetoric, Power dynamics, Governance, State of Emergency, Crisis Management.