



Construction of Legitimacy in the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code Legislative Speech: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis

Berlian Ayu Pangestu^{1*}, Endry Boeriswati², Sudarya Permana³

*Corresponding author email: berlianyu089@gmail.com

Article History

Manuscript submitted:
03 April 2026
Manuscript revised:
14 Mei 2026
Accepted for publication:
19 Juni 2026

Keywords

Legitimacy, Theo Van Leeuwen, Halliday's SFL, 2025 KUHAP, Legislative Speech

Abstract

This study aims to analyze legitimization strategies in the report delivered by the Chairman of Commission III of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) prior to the ratification of the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP). Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia The focus of the study is directed toward how language is used to construct legitimacy for legal reform through particular linguistic devices. This research employs Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach and Theo van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy. SFL is used to identify linguistic structures within the speech text, while van Leeuwen's legitimacy theory is used to explain the legitimizing functions of these linguistic choices. The research data consist of the transcript of the video report delivered by the Chairman of Commission III of the DPR RI during the plenary session on the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP. The analysis was conducted qualitatively by identifying linguistic elements such as modality, nominalization, material processes, relational processes, passive constructions, and evaluative lexical choices. The findings reveal that the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI constructs legitimacy through several major strategies, namely legal-formal authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, procedural legitimation, and the delegitimization of public criticism. These legitimization strategies are realized through the use of high modality, nominalization, passive constructions, legality-based thematic structures, and evaluative lexical choices that construct the image of the state as a legal, rational, humane, and procedural institution. This study demonstrates that language in legislative speeches functions not only as a means of conveying legal information, but also as an instrument of institutional legitimacy to build public acceptance of state legal reforms. Therefore, this study confirms that language practices in legislative forums play an important role in shaping representations of power, legality, and the relationship between the state and society.

Copyright © 2025, The Author(s).

This is an open access article under the BY-NC-ND license



Contents

Abstract	230
Introduction	231

¹ Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

² Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

³ Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

Methods.....	232
Results and Discussions.....	232
Conclusion.....	244
Reference	244

III

Introduction

Language plays an important role in shaping social reality, maintaining power, and constructing legitimacy for state policies. In political and legal contexts, language is not merely used as a communication tool, but also as a social instrument capable of influencing how society understands a policy. Fairclough (1995) argues that language is a social practice closely related to power relations and ideology within society. Thus, political and legal texts cannot be understood merely as a series of information, but also as arenas for the production of meaning and legitimacy.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), language functions as a system of social meaning used by humans to represent experience, build interpersonal relations, and organize messages within particular social contexts. Within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), language is viewed as non-neutral because every linguistic choice carries specific social and ideological functions. Therefore, analyzing linguistic structures in political speeches is important to understand how state institutions construct representations of power and legitimacy through language.

Van Leeuwen (2008) explains that legitimacy is an effort to answer the question of why an action can be accepted and regarded as valid within a society. Legitimacy is constructed through various discursive strategies such as authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, and mythopoesis. These legitimization strategies are frequently used by state institutions to build public acceptance of their policies. Reyes (2011) also emphasizes that legitimacy in political discourse is commonly constructed through rationalization, emotional appeal, future hypothetization, and representations of social threats. In the context of modern politics, legislative speeches serve as one of the primary media for constructing institutional legitimacy. Chilton (2004) states that political language is used to maintain power, influence public opinion, and establish political authority through particular linguistic strategies. Therefore, political speeches function not only as a means of conveying information, but also as discursive practices laden with ideological interests.

One policy that has attracted public attention in Indonesia is the enactment of the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP). Discussions surrounding the new KUHAP generated various public responses, particularly concerning issues of human rights, wiretapping, detention, protection of vulnerable groups, and the authority of law enforcement agencies. In such circumstances, the state requires public legitimacy so that the resulting legal policy can be accepted by society.

The report delivered by the Chairman of Commission III of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI), Dr. Habiburokhman, S.H., M.H., from the Gerindra Party Faction during the 8th DPR RI Plenary Session of the Second Session Period of 2025–2026 on November 18, 2025, broadcast on YouTube (KompasTV, 2025) prior to the ratification of the KUHAP, is particularly interesting to examine because the speech contains various legitimization strategies regarding the legal reforms undertaken by the state. Habiburokhman In the speech, various forms of legitimacy emerged, such as references to legal articles, affirmations of formal procedures, narratives concerning the protection of citizens' rights, and the delegitimization of public criticism considered to be hoaxes or misinformation. This demonstrates that language in legislative forums is not only used to explain policy content, but also to construct social acceptance of the policy.

Van Dijk (1998) argues that political discourse is closely related to the reproduction of power and social control through language use. However, this study does not explicitly employ Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary framework; instead, it focuses on the relationship between linguistic structures and legitimization strategies in legislative speeches. This approach was chosen to maintain a stronger focus on textual analysis and the legitimizing functions of language. To analyze how legitimacy is constructed through language, this study employs Theo van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy is used to identify forms of legitimacy appearing in the speech, such as authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, and procedural legitimization. Meanwhile, Halliday's SFL is used to identify the linguistic devices that realize these legitimization strategies.

From Halliday's perspective, language has three primary metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The ideational metafunction relates to the representation of experience and social reality through processes, participants, and circumstances. The interpersonal metafunction concerns the relationship between speaker and audience, including modality and evaluation. Meanwhile, the textual metafunction relates to how messages are organized within a text. These three metafunctions enable researchers to examine how language is used to construct the institutional legitimacy of the state. Several previous studies have shown that legitimization strategies are often realized through specific linguistic devices. Wodak (2009) states that legitimacy in political discourse commonly emerges through narratives of legality, morality, and national identity. Meanwhile, Hart (2014) emphasizes that linguistic choices in political speeches can influence public perceptions of state policies. Research by Oddo (2011) also demonstrates that the use of passive constructions, nominalization, and high modality is frequently employed to construct institutional objectivity in political texts.

Furthermore, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain that language and semiotic practices function socially in constructing meaning and power. In the context of legislative speeches, linguistic structures such as nominalization, passive constructions, and high modality may represent the state as a legal, rational, and objective institution. Fowler (1991) states that grammatical structures in political texts are never neutral because they are always associated with particular ideological interests. Research on legitimacy in political discourse has been widely conducted; however, most previous studies generally employed Critical Discourse Analysis approaches. This study differs by focusing more specifically on the relationship between linguistic structures from the perspective of SFL and Theo van Leeuwen's legitimization strategies in legislative speeches. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the fields of political linguistics and legal discourse, particularly in understanding how the institutional legitimacy of the state is constructed through linguistic structures in legislative forums. Based on the explanation above, this study is important to conduct in order to understand how language is used as an instrument of legitimacy in the speech of the Chairman of Commission III of the DPR RI prior to the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach focusing on the analysis of language used in the speech delivered by the Chairman of Commission III of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) concerning the ratification of the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP). A qualitative descriptive approach was selected because the study aimed to describe and interpret linguistic structures and legitimization strategies embedded within the speech text. The study applied two theoretical frameworks, namely Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Theo

van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy. SFL was utilized to analyze linguistic structures and language functions, while van Leeuwen's legitimacy theory was employed to identify forms and strategies of legitimization appearing in the speech discourse. The data source of this study was a video recording of the report delivered by the Chairman of Commission III of the DPR RI prior to the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP during a plenary session of the DPR RI. Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia. The research data consisted of the speech transcript obtained through manual transcription of the video recording and subsequently verified against the original video to ensure transcription accuracy. The units of analysis in this study included clauses, phrases, and discourse segments containing legitimization strategies and specific linguistic features relevant to the research objectives.

The data collection process was conducted through several stages. First, the researcher observed the speech video to understand the context and content of the discourse. Second, the speech was transcribed into written text. Third, the transcript was verified by comparing it with the original video to ensure the accuracy and validity of the linguistic data. Fourth, linguistic elements and legitimization strategies were identified within the transcript. Finally, the data were classified according to the categories of linguistic analysis and legitimacy strategies used in the study. The data were analyzed descriptively and interpretatively through several stages. First, the researcher identified linguistic structures based on Halliday's SFL framework, including modality, nominalization, material processes, relational processes, passive constructions, and lexical choices. Second, the researcher identified legitimization strategies based on Theo van Leeuwen's theory, such as authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, procedural legitimation, and the delegitimation of public criticism. Third, the relationship between linguistic structures and legitimization functions within the speech was interpreted to explain how language was used to construct institutional legitimacy.

The validity of the data was ensured through theoretical triangulation and data verification. Theoretical triangulation was conducted by integrating Halliday's SFL theory and van Leeuwen's legitimacy theory in the analytical process. Meanwhile, data verification was carried out by comparing the transcription results with the original video recording to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the linguistic data used in the study.

Results and Discussions

1. Legitimization Strategies in the Report of Commission III of the Indonesian House of Representatives on the Ratification of the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code

Based on the analysis of the transcript of the report delivered by the Chairman of Commission III of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) during the plenary session on the ratification of the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), it was found that the language used in the report functions not only as a medium for conveying legislative information, but also as an instrument for legitimizing state policy. Through lexical choices, modality, clause structures, nominalization, and particular argumentative strategies, the speech constructs the ratification of the new KUHAP as legally valid, socially rational, morally justified, and procedurally democratic. In this study, the analysis was conducted using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach and Theo van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy to examine how legitimization strategies are realized through linguistic structures in the speech text.

2. Legal-Formal Legitimacy through Authorization

One of the most dominant legitimization strategies identified in the speech is legal-formal legitimacy through authorization. This strategy is reflected in references to legal articles, legal regulations, legislative procedures, and the institutional authority of the state. In several parts of the speech, the speaker explicitly refers to articles within the new KUHAP to refute public criticism circulating on social media.

Table 1. SFL Analysis of Legal Legitimation

Transcript Data	SFL Analysis	Legitimization Function
“According to Article 139 Paragraph 2 of the new KUHAP...”	Theme initiated with legal reference; high modality; passive material process	Authorization
“must be carried out with the permission of the Chief Judge of the Court”	High modality “must”; actor omitted; material process	Legal authority
“wiretapping may only be conducted with court authorization”	Probability modality “may”; passive structure	Institutional control
“in accordance with the provisions of the KUHAP”	Legal-reference circumstance	Procedural legitimacy

The table above demonstrates the relationship between linguistic data in the speech transcript, linguistic analysis based on the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics, and the legitimization functions constructed through language according to Theo van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy. In other words, the data are used to explain how particular linguistic structures in the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI function to construct legitimacy for the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP. The first column presents excerpts from the speech transcript as the object of analysis. The second column shows linguistic elements analyzed using SFL devices, such as theme, modality, material processes, passive structures, and circumstances. Meanwhile, the third column explains the legitimization functions generated through the use of these linguistic structures.

In the first data excerpt, namely the statement “According to Article 139 Paragraph 2 of the new KUHAP...,” the SFL analysis indicates that the clause begins with a legal reference functioning as a textual theme. In the SFL perspective, the theme is the initial part of a clause that serves as the point of informational orientation for listeners or readers. The placement of the legal reference at the beginning of the clause indicates that the speaker directs the audience’s attention first to the legal-formal basis before entering the argumentative content. In addition, the data also demonstrate the use of high modality and a passive material process. The legitimization function of this structure is authorization, namely the justification of policy through legal authority and state institutions. Thus, the legitimacy of the KUHAP ratification is constructed through the impression that the policy possesses a valid legal basis and operates within the procedural framework of the state.

In the second data excerpt, namely “must be carried out with the permission of the Chief Judge of the Court,” the SFL analysis reveals the use of high modality through the word “must.” In Halliday’s theory, high modality indicates a strong degree of obligation and certainty, thereby narrowing the space for negotiation of meaning. Furthermore, the clause uses the passive structure “be carried out,” which omits the actor or agent of the action. The omission of the actor is an important strategy in institutional language because public attention is directed not toward the officials carrying out the action, but toward

the legal mechanism and institutional supervision. The mention of “the permission of the Chief Judge of the Court” reinforces the impression that legal actions are under the control of formal state institutions. Therefore, the legitimization function emerging from this data is legal authority, namely legitimacy constructed through legal power and the institutional authority of the judiciary.

Furthermore, in the data excerpt “wiretapping may only be conducted with court authorization,” the SFL analysis indicates the use of probability modality through the word “may.” This modality signifies that wiretapping cannot be conducted freely, but depends on certain conditions. In addition, the passive structure “may only be conducted” once again removes the actor of the action so that the primary focus is directed toward legal supervision procedures rather than implementing authorities. The phrase “with court authorization” functions to construct the image that state actions operate under legitimate institutional control. Consequently, the legitimization function emerging here is institutional control because the speech attempts to portray the state as an institution operating through legal supervisory mechanisms rather than through arbitrary repressive actions.

Meanwhile, in the data excerpt “in accordance with the provisions of the KUHAP,” the SFL analysis demonstrates the use of a legal-reference circumstance. In Halliday’s theory, circumstance refers to an explanatory element providing additional information concerning the conditions, causes, or manner in which an action is carried out. In this context, the phrase “in accordance with the provisions of the KUHAP” connects legal actions with the normative framework officially regulated within the state legal system. The legitimization function of this structure is procedural legitimacy, namely legitimacy constructed through emphasis on compliance with lawful procedures and legal mechanisms. Thus, the speech creates the impression that the ratification of the KUHAP is not an arbitrary political decision, but rather the result of a legal process conducted in accordance with formal state regulations.

Overall, the table demonstrates that legitimacy in the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI is constructed through a combination of particular linguistic devices, such as high modality, passive structures, actor omission, legal references, and legal-reference circumstances. From Halliday’s SFL perspective, these linguistic structures function to construct representations of state policy as objective, legal, procedural, and operating under the control of formal institutions. Meanwhile, in van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, these strategies fall under authorization because the justification of policy is constructed through legal authority and the institutional system of the state. Therefore, language in legislative speeches is not merely used to convey information regarding the new KUHAP, but also functions as an instrument of legitimacy that constructs public acceptance of state legal policies.

3. Delegitimization of Public Criticism

In addition to legal-formal legitimacy, the speech also constructs legitimacy through strategies of delegitimizing public criticism. Delegitimization is reflected through the use of negatively evaluative terms to describe criticism circulating in the public sphere.

Table 2. SFL Analysis of Hoax Delegitimization

Transcript Data	SFL Analysis	Legitimization Function
“The existence of hoaxes or false information...”	Negative evaluative lexical choice	Delegitimation
“circulating very massively on social media”	Intensification through “very massively”	Construction of threat

“the information is not true”	Certainty modality	Authoritative truth claim
-------------------------------	--------------------	---------------------------

The table above demonstrates how the report speech of Commission III of the DPR RI constructs legitimacy for the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP through strategies of delegitimizing public criticism. In this context, legitimacy is not only established by justifying state policies, but also by weakening, rejecting, or discrediting counter-discourses circulating within society. The analysis was conducted using the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to examine how linguistic choices function in constructing meaning and specific ideological positions. Meanwhile, the legitimization functions were analyzed using Theo van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy to understand how language is used to construct the institutional authority of the state.

In the first data excerpt, namely the statement:

“The existence of hoaxes or false information...”

the SFL analysis indicates the use of negative evaluative lexical choices. The words “hoaxes” and “false information” are lexical items carrying negative and non-neutral connotations. From the SFL perspective, lexical choices reflect the speaker’s evaluative position toward the object being discussed. By using these terms, criticism or information circulating among the public is not positioned as a legitimate form of public aspiration or concern, but rather as misleading false information. This lexical choice constructs an ideological relationship in which the state is represented as the source of correct information, while certain members of the public are portrayed as disseminators of false information. Therefore, the legitimization function emerging from this structure is delegitimation because the speech attempts to weaken the legitimacy of public criticism toward the new KUHAP. In the second data excerpt, namely:

“circulating very massively on social media”

the SFL analysis demonstrates the use of intensification through the phrase “very massively.” In SFL, intensification is an interpersonal strategy used to strengthen the speaker’s judgment or evaluation of a phenomenon. The use of the word “very” amplifies the scale of dissemination of the information considered false. Consequently, public criticism is represented not merely as inaccurate information, but also as a widespread and dangerous threat to society. The phrase “very massively” creates the impression that the state is facing a major wave of disinformation, thereby requiring official clarification from state institutions. Therefore, the legitimization function appearing in this data is construction of threat because the speech constructs the image of a social threat in the form of widespread misinformation that may disrupt public understanding of the new KUHAP. Furthermore, in the data excerpt:

“the information is not true”

the SFL analysis reveals the use of certainty modality. The phrase “not true” indicates a high level of certainty because the speaker directly rejects the validity of the circulating information without allowing space for alternative interpretations or negotiation of meaning. From Halliday’s perspective, certainty modality is used to strengthen the authoritative position of the speaker regarding a statement. By declaring that certain information is “not true,” the speaker positions state institutions as the holders of interpretive authority and the source of official truth. This strategy constructs the claim that the state possesses epistemic legitimacy to determine which information is valid and which is false. Therefore, the legitimization function emerging from this structure is authoritative truth claim because the speech establishes the authority of the state as a legitimate and trustworthy source of truth.

Overall, the table demonstrates that legitimacy in the speech is constructed not only through the justification of the KUHAP policy, but also through the weakening of public criticism circulating on social media. From Halliday's SFL perspective, these strategies are realized through negative evaluative lexical choices, intensification, and certainty modality. Meanwhile, within van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy, these strategies function to delegitimize public criticism, construct the threat of disinformation, and strengthen the position of the state as the authority of truth. Thus, language in legislative speeches functions not merely as a medium of legal information, but also as an ideological instrument for controlling public interpretation of state policies.

Table 3. SFL Analysis of Human Rights Discourse

	Nominalization evaluation	+	social	Human discourse	rights
"the rights of women and persons with disabilities"	Representation groups	of	social	Inclusivity	

The data above demonstrate how the report speech of Commission III of the DPR RI constructs moral legitimacy for the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP through the use of language associated with the values of justice, human rights protection, and support for vulnerable groups. In Theo van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy, this type of strategy is categorized as moral evaluation, namely legitimacy constructed by associating policies with moral values considered good, ethical, and universal. In the context of legislative speeches, legitimacy is not only formed through legal rules or formal procedures, but also through the image that state policies possess a humanitarian orientation and serve the interests of society. The analysis using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) shows that this moral legitimacy is realized through metaphorical material processes, nominalization, moral evaluation, and the representation of particular social groups.

In the first data excerpt, namely:

"The new KUHAP moves toward genuine justice"

the SFL analysis indicates the use of a metaphorical material process through the word "moves toward." In Halliday's perspective, material processes are associated with actions or changes of state. In this clause, the new KUHAP is represented as if it were moving toward an ideal condition, namely "genuine justice." The phrase "genuine justice" contains a very strong moral evaluation because it connects legal policy with universal values that are socially regarded as positive and difficult to reject. Thus, the ratification of the KUHAP is positioned not merely as an administrative reform, but as a moral step toward a more just legal system. In van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy, this strategy is categorized as moral evaluation because the policy is justified through its association with the concept of justice.

In the second data excerpt, namely:

"protection of public rights"

the SFL analysis demonstrates the use of nominalization. The word "protection" is derived from the verbal process "to protect." In SFL, nominalization refers to the transformation of actions into nouns or nominal forms. This strategy is important because it makes social actions appear more abstract, formal, and objective. The phrase "protection of public rights" does not directly specify who is providing protection, how the protection is carried out, or against whom power is exercised. As a result, the policy appears universal and neutral. In the context of legitimacy, nominalization helps construct the image of the state as the protector of society. Therefore, the legitimization function

emerging from this structure is humanistic legitimation because the policy is represented as an effort to protect citizens' rights.

In the third data excerpt, namely:

“free from torture”

the SFL analysis indicates the presence of strong moral evaluation. The word “torture” carries negative connotations associated with human rights violations and inhumane actions. By stating that the new KUHAP leads to a condition that is “free from torture,” the speech constructs a moral opposition between repressive legal practices and a more humane legal system. From the interpersonal perspective of SFL, the phrase contains an evaluative attitude directing the audience to perceive the policy as ethical and moral. Therefore, the legitimization function emerging from this structure is ethical legitimation because the policy is justified through ethical and humanitarian values.

Furthermore, in the data excerpt:

“protection of vulnerable groups”

the SFL analysis reveals a combination of nominalization and social evaluation. The word “protection” again demonstrates nominalization, while the phrase “vulnerable groups” contains social evaluation because it refers to groups considered to require special attention within society. The use of this phrase demonstrates that the state attempts to construct an inclusive and humanitarian image by showing concern for groups vulnerable to discrimination or legal injustice. In the context of legitimacy, this strategy constructs a human rights discourse because the policy is represented as part of the protection of human rights and social justice.

In the final data excerpt, namely:

“the rights of women and persons with disabilities”

the SFL analysis demonstrates the representation of specific social groups. In Halliday's theory, the representation of social groups within a text indicates who is positioned as the subject of institutional concern. The explicit mention of “women” and “persons with disabilities” demonstrates that the speech attempts to construct the image of a policy that is inclusive and supportive of vulnerable groups. In the context of legitimacy, this strategy functions as inclusivity because the state represents itself as an institution attentive to social diversity and the protection of marginalized groups.

Overall, the table demonstrates that moral legitimacy in the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI is constructed through language emphasizing the values of justice, human rights protection, and support for vulnerable groups. From Halliday's SFL perspective, these strategies are realized through metaphorical material processes, nominalization, moral evaluation, and the representation of social groups. Meanwhile, in van Leeuwen's theory of legitimacy, these strategies generate legitimization functions such as moral evaluation, humanistic legitimation, ethical legitimation, human rights discourse, and inclusivity. Therefore, language in legislative speeches functions not only to explain legal changes, but also to construct the moral image that the ratification of the new KUHAP represents a humane, just, and socially oriented legal reform.

4. Rational Legitimacy through the Comparison between the Old and the New KUHAP

In addition to moral legitimacy, the speech also demonstrates a strategy of rationalization, particularly through comparisons between the old KUHAP and the new KUHAP. This strategy is employed to construct the logic that the revision of the KUHAP is a rational and inevitable necessity.

Table 4. SFL Analysis of KUHAP Reform Legitimation

Transcript Data	SFL Analysis	Legitimization Function
“Under the old KUHAP, the state was too powerful”	Relational process	Rationalization
“The new KUHAP strengthens legal protection”	Material process	Functional legitimation
“preventing torture”	Social purpose	Theoretical rationalization
“providing legal certainty”	Abstract nominalization	Utilitarian justification

The data above demonstrate how the report speech of Commission III of the DPR RI constructs legitimacy for the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP through strategies of rationalization. In Theo van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, rationalization refers to a form of legitimacy that justifies policies through logical reasoning, social purposes, practical functions, and systemic necessities. In the context of legislative speeches, this strategy is used to construct the impression that the revision of the KUHAP is not merely a political decision, but rather a rational necessity to improve the national legal system. Analysis using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) shows that this rational legitimacy is realized through the use of relational processes, material processes, abstract nominalization, and constructions of social purpose within clauses.

In the first data excerpt, namely:

“Under the old KUHAP, the state was too powerful”

the SFL analysis demonstrates the use of a relational process. In Halliday’s theory, relational processes are used to connect a carrier with an attribute or to define an entity through particular characteristics. In this clause, “the state” functions as the carrier, while “too powerful” serves as the attribute describing the character of the state within the old KUHAP system. The use of the word “too” indicates a negative evaluation of the previous legal condition. The state is represented as an institution possessing excessive power, potentially creating imbalance in the law enforcement process. Through this construction, the speech establishes an opposition between the old KUHAP as repressive and the new KUHAP as more humane. In van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, this strategy is categorized as rationalization because the revision of the KUHAP is justified as a logical response to the weaknesses of the previous legal system.

In the second data excerpt, namely:

“The new KUHAP strengthens legal protection”

the SFL analysis indicates the use of a material process through the word “strengthens.” In Halliday’s perspective, material processes are associated with actions, changes, or transformations of conditions. The use of this material process constructs the representation that the new KUHAP actively carries out improvements to the legal system. The phrase “legal protection” indicates that the policy is oriented toward practical functions and social benefits. Thus, the new KUHAP is represented not merely as a legal document, but as an instrument functioning to improve protection for society. In van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, the legitimization function emerging from this structure is functional legitimation because the policy is justified through the concrete benefits it provides to the legal system and society.

In the third data excerpt, namely:

“preventing torture”

the SFL analysis demonstrates the presence of social purpose within the clause. The word “preventing” represents an orientation of action toward a particular goal, namely avoiding practices of torture within legal processes. From the interpersonal perspective of SFL, the use of social purposes such as this constructs the image that state policy is directed toward humanitarian interests and the protection of human rights. In addition, the word “torture” carries negative evaluative meaning that strengthens the urgency of legal reform. Thus, the speech constructs the logic that changes to the KUHAP are necessary to create a more humane and ethical legal system. In van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, this strategy is categorized as theoretical rationalization because the justification of the policy is constructed through cause-and-effect arguments and social purposes considered rational and necessary.

Furthermore, in the data excerpt:

“providing legal certainty”

the SFL analysis indicates the use of abstract nominalization through the phrase “legal certainty.” In SFL, nominalization transforms processes or actions into nominal forms, thereby creating impressions of abstraction, formality, and objectivity. The phrase “legal certainty” does not explain in detail the concrete actions carried out by the state, but instead presents legal concepts as universal values considered important to society. The use of this abstract nominalization helps construct the image that the new KUHAP possesses practical benefits that can be experienced by the public, particularly in creating legal stability and clarity. In van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, this strategy is categorized as utilitarian justification because the policy is justified based on the social benefits and usefulness it produces.

Overall, the table demonstrates that the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI constructs legitimacy for the ratification of the KUHAP through systematic rationalization. From Halliday’s SFL perspective, these strategies are realized through relational processes comparing the old and the new legal systems, material processes describing corrective actions, constructions of social purpose, and abstract nominalization constructing the image of legal objectivity. Meanwhile, in van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, these strategies produce legitimization functions such as rationalization, functional legitimation, theoretical rationalization, and utilitarian justification. Therefore, language in legislative speeches is used to construct the logic that the revision of the KUHAP is a rational necessity intended to improve the legal system, protect public rights, and create a more just and humane law enforcement process.

5. Procedural Legitimacy through the Narrative of Public Participation

Legitimacy is also constructed through procedural strategies by emphasizing public involvement and an open legislative process. The following data illustrate this strategy:

Table 5. SFL Analysis of Participatory Legitimation

Transcript Data	SFL Analysis		Legitimization Function
“Public Hearing Meetings (RDPU) have been conducted...”	Passive process	material	Procedural legitimation
“130 parties from various elements of society”	Quantification		Inclusiveness
“the absorption of public aspirations”	Nominalization		Democratic process

“working visits”	Institutional activity	Participatory legitimacy
------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

The table above demonstrates how the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI constructs procedural legitimacy for the ratification of the 2025 KUHAP through an emphasis on participatory processes and democratic mechanisms. In Theo van Leeuwen’s theory of legitimacy, this strategy is referred to as procedural legitimation, namely legitimacy constructed through assertions that a policy has undergone lawful procedures and involved public participation.

In the data excerpt:

“Public Hearing Meetings (RDPU) have been conducted...”

the SFL analysis demonstrates the use of a passive material process through the word “conducted.” This passive structure removes the actor carrying out the activity and instead highlights the institutional process that has taken place. This construction creates the impression that the discussion of the KUHAP was carried out through official and procedural mechanisms. Consequently, the speech represents the legislative process as formally structured and institutionally legitimate.

Furthermore, in the data excerpt:

“130 parties from various elements of society”

there is the use of quantification through the number “130 parties.” From the perspective of SFL, quantification functions to strengthen impressions of objectivity and factuality. Mentioning the number of involved parties constructs the image that the discussion of the KUHAP was inclusive and involved multiple segments of society. Therefore, the legitimization function emerging from this structure is inclusiveness because the policy is represented as accommodating broad social participation.

In the data excerpt:

“the absorption of public aspirations”

the SFL analysis demonstrates the use of nominalization. The word “absorption” is derived from the verbal process “to absorb.” Nominalization causes social processes to appear formal and administrative, thereby creating the impression that public aspirations have been systematically processed within legislative mechanisms. This linguistic strategy supports the legitimization function of democratic process because the policy is represented as the outcome of organized public consultation rather than unilateral political action.

Meanwhile, in the data excerpt:

“working visits”

the phrase represents institutional activities carried out during the process of discussing the KUHAP. These activities construct the image that legislative institutions actively conducted consultations and gathered information prior to decision-making. In the context of legitimacy, this strategy functions as participatory legitimacy because the policy is represented as the result of a participatory process rather than a unilateral decision imposed by the state.

Overall, these data demonstrate that the speech constructs legitimacy through procedural and participatory narratives in order to strengthen the image that the ratification of the KUHAP was carried out democratically, transparently, and with the involvement of broad segments of society.

6. High Modality as a Marker of Authority

Table 6. Modality in Legal Discourse

Transcript Data	Type of Modality	Function
“must be carried out”	Obligation	Institutional obligation

*Construction of Legitimacy in the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code Legislative Speech....
(Pangestu et al.,2026)*

“not true” “firmly” “must not”	Certainty Intensification Prohibition	Certainty Authority Regulatory control
--------------------------------------	---	--

The table above demonstrates the use of modality in the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI as a linguistic strategy for constructing authority and institutional legitimacy. In the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), modality relates to the speaker's attitude, degree of certainty, obligation, or prohibition toward a statement. The use of modality in legislative speeches is important because it reflects the authoritative position of state institutions in regulating public interpretation of the KUHAP policy.

In the data excerpt:

“must be carried out”

there is an obligation modality through the word “must.” This modality indicates an obligation that is binding and non-optional. In the context of the speech, the use of the word “must” creates the impression that the legal action being discussed constitutes an official procedure that is mandatory to follow. Therefore, the function emerging from this structure is institutional obligation because the state is represented as possessing the authority to establish rules that must be implemented.

In the data excerpt:

“not true”

there is a certainty modality indicating a high degree of certainty. This phrase is used to reject information considered incorrect without allowing room for alternative interpretations or negotiation of meaning. Consequently, the speaker positions state institutions as the source of official truth. The function of this modality is to construct certainty and strengthen the interpretive authority of the state regarding the issue being discussed.

Furthermore, in the data excerpt:

“firmly”

there is a form of intensification functioning to reinforce the speaker's assertion. This phrase demonstrates an authoritative and serious stance toward a policy or statement. In legislative speeches, the use of intensification such as this helps strengthen the image of the firmness of state institutions in implementing laws and public policies.

In the data excerpt:

“must not”

there is a prohibition modality indicating restriction or prohibition. This modality represents the regulatory control of the state over certain actions. The use of the phrase “must not” demonstrates that the state possesses the authority to limit actions in order to maintain order and compliance with legal regulations.

Overall, the use of modality in the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI demonstrates that language is employed to construct the authoritative position of the state through obligation, certainty, assertion, and prohibition. From the perspective of SFL, these modalities strengthen the interpersonal function of the speech because the speaker not only conveys information, but also directs how the public should understand and accept the new KUHAP policy.

7. Nominalization and State Objectivity

Table 7. Nominalization in Legal Discourse

Nominalization	Verbal Form	Discursive Function
protection	to protect	Abstraction of action
enforcement	to enforce	Legal objectivity
strengthening	to strengthen	Policy formalization
discussion	to discuss	Administrative process
wiretapping	to wiretap	Neutralization of action

The table above demonstrates how the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI extensively employs nominalization as a linguistic strategy in constructing institutional discourse. In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), nominalization occurs when a process or action originally expressed as a verb is transformed into a noun. This transformation is not merely a grammatical matter, but also carries ideological implications regarding how actions are understood by the public. Through nominalization, social actions become more abstract, formal, and seemingly objective, causing legal language to appear neutral and administrative.

The word “protection,” for example, is derived from the verb “to protect.” When the action “to protect” is transformed into “protection,” the focus is no longer placed on who performs the action, but rather on the concept of protection itself. As a result, state actions appear as universal and generalized principles. This strategy creates an abstraction of action because social processes are represented as neutral ideas or values.

A similar pattern can be observed in the word “enforcement,” which is derived from the verb “to enforce.” In its nominalized form, the process of law enforcement is no longer perceived as an action performed by particular authorities, but rather as an objective and impersonal legal mechanism. Consequently, legal language constructs the impression that the system operates neutrally and independently from individual interests. Therefore, the discursive function emerging from this structure is legal objectivity.

In the word “strengthening,” derived from the verb “to strengthen,” there is a tendency toward policy formalization. Through nominalization, the act of strengthening something is represented as a structured and official policy agenda. This makes legal changes appear to be part of a systematic institutional process rather than a subjective political decision.

Meanwhile, the word “discussion,” derived from the verb “to discuss,” demonstrates how political processes are represented as administrative activities. The use of this nominalized form causes the legislative process to appear formal, bureaucratic, and organized. In other words, complex political dynamics are simplified into administrative procedures that seem stable and procedural. Therefore, its discursive function is referred to as administrative process.

In the data excerpt:

“wiretapping”

which is derived from the verb “to wiretap,” nominalization functions to neutralize actions that are actually sensitive and controversial. In its verbal form, “to wiretap” may create the impression of repressive action or violations of privacy. However, when transformed into the noun “wiretapping,” the action sounds more technical, legal, and institutional. This strategy assists the state in framing legal actions as part of official procedures rather than problematic exercises of power. Therefore, the discursive function emerging from this structure is neutralization of action.

Overall, the use of nominalization in the speech of Commission III of the DPR RI demonstrates that legal language tends to abstract social actions and eliminate personal elements from political and

legal processes. As a result, state policies are represented as objective, formal, and institutional, making them easier to accept as part of legitimate legal mechanisms.

Conclusion

Based on the overall findings of the analysis, it can be concluded that the report speech delivered by Commission III of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI) regarding the ratification of the 2025 Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP) functions not only as a medium for conveying legislative information, but also as a discursive instrument for constructing legitimacy toward state policy. Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia This legitimacy is systematically constructed through various legitimization strategies, such as legal-formal authorization through references to legal articles and procedures, moral evaluation through narratives of justice and the protection of public rights, rationalization through arguments concerning the necessity of legal reform, procedural legitimization through emphasis on public participation and legislative mechanisms, and the delegitimization of public criticism through the labeling of certain information as hoaxes or false news.

From the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), these legitimization strategies are realized through various linguistic devices, such as the use of high modality to demonstrate institutional authority, nominalization to create impressions of objectivity and formality, passive constructions to obscure the actor of actions, evaluative lexical choices to construct particular moral judgments, and the use of relational and material processes in representing legal changes and the functions of state policies. Furthermore, the thematic structure of clauses demonstrates that the speech consistently directs public attention toward legality, reform, and the protection of society as the central focus of the discourse. Therefore, language in legislative speeches functions not merely as a tool of legal communication, but also as a mechanism of institutional legitimacy that operates to construct public acceptance and trust toward the legal reforms implemented by the state through the ratification of the new KUHAP.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who contributed to the completion of this research. Special appreciation is extended to the academic supervisors and lecturers for their guidance, valuable suggestions, and continuous support throughout the research process. The author also expresses gratitude to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI), particularly Commission III, for providing publicly accessible legislative materials and documentation that became important sources for this study. Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia In addition, the author would like to thank colleagues, friends, and family members for their encouragement, motivation, and moral support during the completion of this research. Finally, the author hopes that this study will contribute to the development of political linguistics, legal discourse studies, and Systemic Functional Linguistics research in Indonesia.

References

- Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (2000). *Using functional grammar: An explorer's guide* (2nd ed.). Macquarie University.
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing political discourse: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Egins, S. (2004). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics* (2nd ed.). Continuum.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Routledge.

-
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Hart, C. (2014). *Discourse, grammar and ideology: Functional and cognitive perspectives*. Bloomsbury.
- KompasTV. (2025, November 18). *Rapat Paripurna DPR RI pengesahan RUU KUHAP* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEr2qHQ1z4M&t=111s>
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to do critical discourse analysis: A multimodal introduction*. Sage Publications.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2007). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause* (2nd ed.). Continuum.
- Mashud, M., Ferdiansa, D., & Hamzah, N. A. (2024). Analisis wacana kritis van Leeuwen pada wacana "Main Dua Kaki Profesor Eddy" dalam berita Detik.com. *Literasi*, 8(2), 189–200.
- Oddo, J. (2011). War legitimization discourse: Representing 'Us' and 'Them' in four US presidential addresses. *Discourse & Society*, 22(3), 287–314. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926510395442>
- Reyes, A. (2011). Strategies of legitimization in political discourse: From words to actions. *Discourse & Society*, 22(6), 781–807. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926511419927>
- Rumaf, N., dkk. (2025). Representasi kekuasaan dalam teks pidato Presiden Prabowo Subianto. *Onoma: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra*.
- Tambunan, R. (2024). Hegemoni dan resistensi dalam pidato kampanye: Analisis wacana kritis terhadap strategi legitimasi. *Sinonim: Journal of Language and Literature*, 2(1).
- Thompson, G. (2014). *Introducing functional grammar* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage Publications.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Wodak, R. (2009). *The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Zakaria, M., Elyana, K., Putri, N. N., & Hidayah, I. R. (2025). Representasi aktor sosial dalam pidato kenegaraan 15 Agustus 2025: Analisis wacana model Theo van Leeuwen. *Nusantara: Journal of Educational Research*.