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INDEXICALITY, PRESUPPOSITION AND LEGITIMATION: CONTEXT ISSUES IN GOVERNOR SEYI MAKINDE'S 2026 APPROPRIATION (BUDGET) ADDRESS, DELIVERED NOVEMBER 2025

Alawode, Liasu Adebamiji Akinkunmi
Department of English, Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria
akinalawode92@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT
This study examines indexicality, presupposition, and legitimation in Governor Seyi Makinde's 2026 budget address to the Oyo State House of Assembly, delivered on 24 November 2025. Drawing on both the published transcript and the delivered speech verified against the audiovisual recording, the study applies an integrated framework combining Systemic Functional Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Gumperz's contextualization theory. Findings reveal a systematic modal asymmetry: infrastructure commitments are encoded in high-certainty, factive, material language, while commitments to communities affected by the Rashidi Ladoja Circular Road are encoded in hedged, verbal, and conditional constructions that resist verification. The analysis further shows that code-switching into Yoruba, entirely absent from the official written record, carries the speech's most consequential legitimation work in a register inaccessible to formal institutional scrutiny. These findings extend van Leeuwen's legitimation framework and existing Nigerian political discourse scholarship by demonstrating that oral political genres in multilingual contexts cannot be adequately analysed through their official written record alone.

Keywords: indexicality, presupposition, legitimation, critical discourse analysis, code-switching, Nigerian political discourse, budget address

Introduction

Political leaders often use language to create the conditions that make the decisions seem legitimate, necessary, and beyond contest (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). Budget speeches are a unique type of public discourse. They are also technical fiscal statements and political gestures, statements of allocations and the creation of explanatory frameworks which define what is good, necessary, or due. The use of high-certainty language, the use of hedges, the visibility of agency, and the suppression of agency are governance decisions via grammar as well as policy.

On 24 November 2025, Governor Seyi Makinde presented the Appropriation Bill, 2026, which is tagged "Budget of Economic Expansion", to the Oyo State House of Assembly. The address noted that the total budget of the project was ₦891,985,074,480.79 and called attention to an infrastructure-led agenda as key projects, such as the Rashidi Ladoja Circular Road and upgrades to the Samuel Ladoke Akintola Airport, were discussed, and communities affected by these projects were addressed. The speech was made before the legislature and broadcast on official digital channels. As such, it is a rich source of study for the construction and management of political legitimacy at the sub-national level in Nigeria.

Political speeches have been extensively studied as sites where policy communication and legitimation converge (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). The budget address represents a particularly consequential instance of this convergence, since it simultaneously presents legal appropriation figures, announces policy priorities, and performs administrative accountability, often before multiple audiences through live broadcast and digital dissemination. A review of the existing literature reveals both the analytical richness of this tradition and its limits.

Existing studies of Nigerian political discourse have made significant contributions to the field. Taiwo (2008) examined legitimation and coercion in a gubernatorial address but focused on a party stakeholders forum rather than a budget presentation. Opeibi (2009) analysed multilingual political communication in Nigerian election campaigns, while Osisanwo (2017) conducted a pragmatic analysis of a presidential inaugural speech. Ayoola (2005) examined a presidential address to the National Assembly using deixis and emotive lexis. These studies have established that Nigerian political actors deploy language strategically to construct authority and manage audiences. However, none has subjected a gubernatorial budget address, as a distinct performative oral genre, to an analysis that jointly examines indexical devices, presuppositional strategies, and verbal contextualization as components of a single legitimation framework. This study addresses that specific gap.

Aim and Objectives

This study examines how indexical devices, presuppositional strategies, modal choices, and verbal contextualization cues in Governor Seyi Makinde's 2026 budget address construct legitimacy and shape the discursive space for accountability.

The specific objectives are:

i. To identify indexical devices and presuppositional triggers in the speech and show how they construct authority, solidarity, and naturalised development narratives.
ii. To map the distribution of modal auxiliaries across project commitment language and social safeguard language and determine whether a systematic asymmetry of commitment exists.
iii. To examine verbal contextualization cues, including direct address, rhetorical framing, and code-switching, and show how these construct the interpretive frame within which legitimation strategies operate.

Research Questions

i. How do indexical devices and presuppositional triggers in the speech construct authority, solidarity, and naturalised development narratives?
ii. Is there a systematic asymmetry in the modal encoding of project commitment language and social safeguard language, and if so, what are its implications for accountability?
iii. How do verbal contextualization cues, including code-switching into Yoruba, construct the interpretive frame for the speech's legitimation strategies?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1. Political Speech as Discourse: Context, Language and Power

As speeches that attempt to convey information in a limited space, budget speeches are part of a larger realm of political discourse, which has been the subject of sustained study in the fields of linguistics, rhetoric, and social theory. In the most basic terms, political discourse is language used in the process of exercising, maintaining, or contesting power (van Dijk, 1993, 2008). Political speeches are not merely descriptions of policy stances, but rather acts which create the social world in which they operate, determining what is considered to be necessary, legitimate, or simply accepted (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969; Fairclough, 1995). In this respect, budget speeches are specifically significant as a subset of political speeches. They offer numbers and allocations, and at the same time, they create the frames with which they interpret what appears rational, inevitable or generous, and what social costs go unnoticed or unchallenged.

The understanding of the relationship between language and context is key to the understanding of how this process operates. Context, broadly theorised in linguistics, includes the social role of the participants in a situation, the social arrangements they have between them, their previously held discourse, their cultural context and the communicative purpose for which they are speaking (Brown & Yule, 1983; Halliday, 1978; Malinowski, 1923). Malinowski's (1923) early observation that language is a 'context of situation', connected to the 'situations' in which language is used and its 'practical activities' or 'social arrangements', foreshadowed many of what were later to be formalised by discourse analysts. This insight was systematically expressed by Halliday (1978), who used the register triad of field, tenor, and mode to demonstrate the principle of a systematic relationship between context and grammatical and lexical choice. Within the context of gubernatorial budget speeches, the field is governance and fiscal policy, the tenor is the relationship between an executive governor and the legislature (before a larger audience), and the mode is a prepared speech before immediate and mediated audiences concurrently.

2. Indexicality and Presupposition in Political Language

Two pragmatic concepts are especially central to this study: indexicality and presupposition. Indexicality, introduced into linguistic anthropology by Silverstein (1976), refers to the capacity of linguistic signs to point beyond themselves to features of the social and communicative context. Indexical expressions do not simply denote or describe; they constitute, signal, or presuppose aspects of the social situation, speaker identity, social relationships, group membership, stance, and institutional role. Silverstein (1976) distinguished between presupposing indexes, which take contextual features as already existing, and creative or performative indexes, which bring contextual features into being through the act of utterance (Nakassis, 2019). Pronouns are among the most studied indexical forms in political discourse, because choices such as "I," "we," "you," and "they" simultaneously position speakers and hearers, construct in-group and out-group relations, and allocate or diffuse agency and responsibility (Silverstein, 1976). In political speeches, the strategic alternation between first-person singular ("I stand before you") and first-person plural ("we have achieved") allows speakers to claim personal authority when asserting

performative acts while dispersing accountability across a collective when describing outcomes that may be contested (Abubakar, 2022).

Presupposition operates in a complementary and equally consequential way. Drawing on Stalnaker's (2002) account of common ground, the background information speakers assume to be mutually accepted by all participants in a conversation, presuppositions are propositions that are treated as given rather than asserted, and therefore not subject to direct challenge without conversational disruption. As Stalnaker (2002) argued, presuppositions define the common ground that constrains what can be said next; they are the implicit commitments that frame the space of legitimate discourse. In political contexts, presupposition is a powerful tool precisely because it smuggles contestable claims into discourse as if they were settled facts (Brocca et al., 2016). A politician who says "as we continue to deliver development" presupposes that delivery has already occurred and that development is underway, placing the burden of challenge on any listener who might dissent. Recent work on presupposition in political communication (Lombardi, 2019) confirms that presuppositional content escapes critical scrutiny more readily than direct assertion, making it an effective tool of ideological naturalisation.

Presupposition triggers, the specific lexical and grammatical structures that activate presuppositional content, include factive verbs (e.g., "we have continued"), definite descriptions, temporal adverbs such as "again" and "still," and nominalised project descriptions (Kiparsky & Kiparsky, 1971; Sbisà, 2007). In the context of Nigerian gubernatorial speeches, these presuppositional mechanisms have received relatively little sustained attention, creating a gap this study addresses.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis and Legitimation

The macro-level analysis framework in which indexical and presuppositional findings get their social meaning is called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is based on the premise that language is involved in the very constitution of social life, as the social world is reflected and reproduced through language (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; van Dijk, 1993, 2008). As Fairclough (2003) has suggested, texts are always already social analysis, because they portray the social world (ideational function), represent social relations and identities (interpersonal function), and organise information coherently (textual function).

In CDA, legitimation involves the process by which speakers and texts make social arrangements, policies, decisions and institutional actors seem acceptable, necessary or morally justified (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998). Legitimation is crucial for the analysis of governance discourse as it allows power to be reproduced, but not simply by coercion. van Leeuwen (2007, 2008) developed the most systematic and broadly used model for understanding legitimation strategies in discourse, which identified the four main types of legitimation strategies. Legitimation is a form of authorisation in which a claim of authority by individuals, institutions, legislation, or traditions is used to justify an action (van Leeuwen, 2008). Moral evaluation legitimation is the action of referring to shared values and moral structures to make an action seem ethical and people-centred. Rationalisation is used to justify actions either instrumentally or teleologically, by showing that they are useful, natural, or essential. Mythopoiesis legitimation is a presentation of circumstances as a natural result of a process of progress or restoration that continues in a story, historical tradition, or cultural myth (van Leeuwen, 2007; 2008).

Van Leeuwen's framework has been productively applied to presidential and political discourse across diverse contexts. Studies of African political discourse have confirmed the framework's cross-cultural applicability: Fawunmi and Taiwo (2021) used legitimation analysis in examining Obasanjo's rhetorical self-positioning, while recent work on Nigerian media discourse

(see Osisanwo, 2017; Omidiora et al., 2020) has extended the concern with legitimation strategies to electoral jingles and party campaign materials.

Equally relevant to this study is van Dijk's (1993, 2008) distinction between the positive self-representation of the in-group and the negative representation of out-groups as a basic ideological structure in political discourse. Applied to budget speeches, this distinction helps explain why infrastructure projects are framed with active material verbs and high-certainty modality, while social costs receive passive constructions, hedged modality, and agent deletion.

4. Systemic Functional Linguistics as an Analytical Tool

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by Halliday (1978, 1994) and elaborated in Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), provides the micro-analytic apparatus through which this study identifies the specific grammatical instantiations of the legitimation strategies described above. SFL treats language as a social semiotic: a system of choices for making meaning in context, where every grammatical selection simultaneously realises ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The ideational metafunction is realised through the transitivity system, which maps the world of experience onto grammatical categories of process type, participant, and circumstance (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In the analysis of political discourse, the transitivity system is particularly revealing because it shows who is constructed as an active agent (Actor in material processes), who is acted upon (Goal), and whose experiences, perceptions, or states are represented (Senser, Carrier). Passivisation, the grammatical deletion of the Actor from material process clauses, has been identified as a principal resource for managing agency and responsibility in political discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The interpersonal metafunction, realised through mood and modality, is equally central to legitimation analysis. Modality in SFL is the speaker's assessment of the degree of probability or obligation, what is possible, likely, certain or required (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). High-value epistemic modality (modal verbs ‘will', ‘can') indicates certainty and commitment, while low-value or hedged modality ('might', ‘explore', ‘consider') signals conditionality and weakened commitment. In the context of Nigerian political discourse, Osisanwo (2017) found that deontic modality (obligation) was more popular in Buhari's inaugural speech to signal his intent to lead decisively, while Abubakar (2022) discovered a strategic alternation between epistemic (attitude) and deontic (obligation) modalities in presidential campaign speeches to manage promise and uncertainty. This study applies a similar modality analysis to Makinde's budget speech, with specific attention to whether project commitments and social safeguard commitments are encoded at systematically different levels of modal certainty.

5. Contextualization and Multimodal Framing

The spoken budget address is not a purely verbal event. It is a multimodal performance in which prosody, gesture, gaze, pause, and audience response function as framing devices that shape how the verbal content is interpreted. Gumperz's (1982) theory of contextualization provides the theoretical account of this process. Gumperz argued that speakers use a range of verbal and non-verbal signals, contextualization cues, to set up the interpretive frame within which an utterance is understood. These cues include prosodic features (intonation, stress, tempo, pause), paralinguistic signals (voice quality, laughter), code choice, deictic expressions, and bodily conduct (Gumperz, 1982; Auer, 1992). The cues do not add meaning on top of words; they constitute the frame within which words take on their specific illocutionary force.

Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (2011), in a late commentary on Gumperz's legacy, reaffirmed that contextualization is an interactional and reciprocal process: audience responses,

applause, laughter, and murmurs function as feedback cues that are themselves part of the meaning-making event. This is directly relevant to budget speeches delivered in a legislative chamber, where audience responses (applause at project announcements, silence at sensitive passages) become part of the public record of the speech's reception.

More recent multimodal approaches, particularly the social semiotics work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) and its extensions in political communication research (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2016), have built on Gumperz's interactional insights to provide systematic accounts of how gesture, layout, visual design, and embodied action co-construct meaning with speech. In the context of political speeches recorded on video and disseminated through social media, as Makinde's 2026 address was, multimodal framing is no longer confined to the legislative chamber, but extends to the digital distribution context in which audiences receive and interpret the address (Omidiora et al., 2020).

6. Application of Theoretical Framework to Current Study

Table 1. Research Objectives and Corresponding Theoretical Frameworks

Research objective	Corresponding theories	Analysis
Identify indexical devices and presuppositional triggers that construct authority, solidarity, and naturalised development narratives	Indexicality	Pronoun indexicality, presuppositional triggers, factive verbs, definite descriptions (Silverstein, 1976; Nakassis, 2019; Stalnaker, 2002; Kiparsky & Kiparsky, 1971)
Map modal distribution across project and safeguard language and identify asymmetry of commitment	SFL, CDA and Legitimation	Transitivity analysis, modality classification, agent deletion, positive/negative in-group representation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; van Dijk, 1993; van Leeuwen, 2008)
Examine verbal contextualization cues framing legitimation strategies	Gumperz's Contextualization, CDA and Legitimation	Code-switching, direct address, deixis, rhetorical framing, audience response (Gumperz, 1982; Auer, 1992; Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 2011; van Leeuwen, 2007, 2008)

Methods

The data for this study consist of the official published transcript of Governor Seyi Makinde's 2026 Budget Address (Makinde, 2025a) and the timestamped transcript of the delivered speech extracted from the audiovisual recording on the governor's official YouTube channel (Makinde, 2025b) using Tactiq's YouTube Transcript Generator. The full speech runs to

approximately 1,300 words and was delivered over approximately 29 minutes. While textual evidence is drawn from across the full speech transcript, six excerpts were drawn purposively from the full speech as the main data points. Purposive selection targets information-rich segments that most directly illuminate the research questions and where the analytical categories of interest are most visibly instantiated (Etikan et al., 2016). The excerpts were selected on three criteria: thematic representativeness across the speech's major domains, pragmatic salience, and analytical contrast between project commitment language and social safeguard language. The delivered speech contains nineteen Yoruba insertions that are absent from the published transcript. All Yoruba passages were transcribed and translated into English by the researcher, a native speaker of Yoruba with proficiency in English. Research on cross-language qualitative research recognises that bilingual researchers may undertake translations of their native language as part of the analytical process, particularly where linguistic and cultural meanings are integral to interpretation (Piazzoli, 2015).

The analysis proceeds through Fairclough's (1992, 1995) three-dimensional model, treating the speech simultaneously as text, discursive practice, and social practice. Each of the six excerpts is annotated at clause level for indexical expressions, presuppositional triggers, transitivity structures, and modal auxiliaries, following established practice in Nigerian political discourse studies (e.g., Osisanwo, 2017; Udoh & Ejiaso, 2023). Modal auxiliaries are classified as high-value (will, can, must, and factive past-tense material processes), median-value (would, should), or low-value (might, could, open-ended verbal processes, and conditional constructions). To establish that the claimed modal asymmetry is systematic, a frequency count of modal constructions was conducted separately across the project commitment domain and the social safeguard domain (see Table 2). Annotated features are then interpreted through van Leeuwen's (2008) four legitimation categories, and verbal contextualization cues are examined in the sense of Gumperz (1982), including direct address forms, code choice, deictic expressions, and rhetorical framing shifts.

Analysis

1. Indexicality and Presupposition: Constructing Authority, Solidarity, and Naturalised Development

Pronominal Indexicality: The Strategic Alternation of I and We

Among the most recurrent indexical resources across the excerpts examined is the alternation between first-person singular and first-person plural. This is a principled rhetorical strategy through which the governor distributes credit, manages accountability, and constructs different social relationships with different audiences within a single speech event. As Silverstein (1976) established, pronouns are among the most powerful presupposing indexicals available to a speaker, simultaneously constituting speaker identity, social relationships, and the allocation of agency.

The inclusive first-person plural dominates the speech's achievement sections. Consider Excerpt 1 [00:12:23–00:14:26], where the governor enumerates the state's flagship projects:

> "Several flagship projects and ongoing investments now position Oyo State for a production-led economy."

The construction is agentless, as no actor is named. The projects are presented as self-evident facts, their current state encoded as present-tense reality ("now position") rather than as the outcome of specific decisions. This is immediately followed by a series of present-tense declarative structures in which projects are indexed as ongoing realities:

> "This is designed to attract manufacturing..."

"This will transform primary agricultural output..."

The shift between "is" (established present) and "will" (projected future) is analytically significant. Projects already commissioned are encoded in the present tense as fact. Projects not yet delivered are encoded in the future. The grammar thus performs a distinction between what has been achieved and what is promised, even as the listing format visually equalises them.

Where personal authority is being claimed, particularly for decisions, promises, and accountability commitments, the first-person singular appears with notable consistency. In Excerpt 4 [00:17:32], the governor says:

> "I promised when I was campaigning uh 2018–2019, that there will be no new taxes in Oyo State. I'm happy to report we've improved our internally generated revenue with no new taxes."

Here, "I promised" indexes the governor as the sole origin of the commitment, establishing his personal credibility. The shift to "we've improved" then attributes the achievement to the collective administration, drawing the audience into shared ownership of the outcome. This I-to-we movement, from personal promise to collective achievement, is a recurring structural pattern across the speech. It allows the governor to claim the authority of personal commitment while distributing the credit for delivery across a wider collective.

The same pattern appears in the Rashidi Ladoja Road passage (Excerpt 5 [00:27:53–00:30:18]), where the shift is particularly consequential:

> "So let me once again speak to our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters affected by the Rashidi Ladoja circular road development... So, I will honour the promise that I made to visit, to listen and to explore all possibilities."

The address opens with the inclusive "our", positioning the affected community as part of the governor's family. But the commitment that follows is encoded in the first-person singular: "I will honour," "I made," "I will start this week, Wednesday, I'll visit Ologuneru." The movement from "our" to "I" is indexically significant: solidarity is constructed collectively, but accountability is located in the individual. This protects the administration collectively from the commitment while personalising it in a way that is both rhetorically intimate and structurally unenforceable. This shift is measurable across the full speech, where "we" is used in the project sections 21 times against 8 for "I." In the safeguard passage, however, this ratio reverses, with "I" appearing 14 times, and only 4 instances of "we."

A third indexical category, the distancing third person, is deployed consistently to construct an out-group of political opponents and critics. In Excerpt 3 [00:15:37], commenting on the airport upgrade, the governor switches briefly into Yoruba:

> "Other players will be here if they think oh maybe uh if we attack Seyi Makinde and politicise this thing uh maybe they will vote for them. Oyo State people are wiser."

The 'they' othering, unnamed and self-interested in every instance identified in the excerpts, is a recurrent indexical pattern that constructs a clear moral contrast between the administration and its opponents. It constructs a moral contrast between a self-sacrificing administration and opportunistic opponents, a binary that directly serves the moral evaluation legitimation strategy discussed in Section 4.3.

Presuppositional Triggers: Naturalising Achievement and Closing Contestation

Presupposition operates throughout the speech to present contestable propositions as shared, settled knowledge. Three categories of presuppositional triggers are most active.

Factive verbs and resultative constructions encode project outcomes as facts. In Excerpt 2 [00:14:28–00:16:39]:

> "Less than two weeks ago, we commissioned the now-completed Ibadan Central Bus Terminals 1 and 2."

The compound "the now-completed" is a particularly dense presuppositional construction. The definite article presupposes unique identifiability; "now-completed" presupposes that completion has occurred and is a present, observable state. Together, they foreclose any question about whether the project is complete. Similarly, "we commissioned" is a factive verb that presupposes the commissioning as an accomplished fact, not a claim. The governor continues:

> "This is the first time that a wide-bodied aircraft, in 43 years, will land in Ibadan airport."

The definite description "the first time" and the temporal specification "in 43 years" together construct a presuppositional frame of historical significance. To contest the achievement, a listener would have to contest the 43-year historical claim, a move that is pragmatically disruptive and rhetorically costly. The presupposition thus closes down challenge before it is mounted.

Temporal adverbs and discourse connectors presuppose prior discourse and prior achievement. The phrase "as I said a few months ago" [00:21:03] presupposes that a prior statement was made and is in the audience's common ground (Stalnaker, 2002). "You will recall that at the beginning of the year, about 12,000 teachers resumed" [00:23:09] presupposes not only the event but the audience's prior knowledge of it, positioning them as already-informed witnesses to an established achievement rather than recipients of new information. These temporal markers cumulatively construct a discourse in which the administration's record is treated as verified common ground rather than as a set of claims requiring evidence.

Nominalisations and definite descriptions naturalise policy frameworks as objective standards. "The ideal 60/40 ratio between capital and recurrent expenditure" [00:19:53] is particularly instructive. The definite article "the" and the evaluative adjective "ideal" together presuppose that this ratio is a recognised, agreed-upon standard, an external benchmark rather than a politically chosen preference. This naturalisation is reinforced in the education section, where the UNESCO-recommended 15–20% budget allocation is cited as the authorising external standard, with the governor noting that "we're at 17%... we're ahead of uh the UNESCO recommendation." The appeal to UNESCO is simultaneously a presuppositional move, treating the benchmark as beyond question, and an authorisation legitimation strategy. Together, they construct the administration's fiscal choices as technically optimal and internationally validated, rather than as political decisions subject to democratic contest.

2. Modal Asymmetry: The Unequal Grammar of Commitment

In the project commitment sections, 18 high-value modal constructions were identified against zero low-value ones. In the social safeguard section, only 2 high-value instances appear, both committing to process rather than outcome, while 4 low-value or conditional constructions carry the entire weight of the resettlement and compensation commitment.

Table 2. Modal Frequency by Domain

Modal value	Project commitment	Social safeguard
High-value (will, can, factive material)	18	2
Mid-value (would, should)	1	0
Low-value (explore, conditional, open-ended)	0	4

The most original and analytically consequential finding of this study is the systematic asymmetry in modal language between the speech's project commitment sections and its social safeguard section. This asymmetry is not incidental. It encodes, at the level of grammar, a structural inequality in the degree of commitment the administration is making to infrastructure delivery on

the one hand, and to the welfare of communities displaced by that infrastructure on the other. For instance, project commitment language is consistently encoded in high-value modal constructions: factive past-tense material processes ("we commissioned," "we completed," "we have improved"), high-certainty present-tense capability claims ("can receive," "now position"), and high-value future assertions ("we will not fail you"). The Actor in these clauses is consistently "we", the administration, as active, capable, and delivered.

Social safeguard language operates in an entirely different modal register. The commitment to the Rashidi Ladoja Road communities is encoded through a chain of verbal processes rather than material ones: "to visit, to listen, to explore." Visiting and listening are process commitments, commitments to engagement, not to outcomes. "Explore all possibilities" is a low-value epistemic construction that opens rather than closes the question of what will actually be done. The word "including" before "resettlement" subordinates it as one unnamed option within an open set of possibilities, rather than encoding it as a commitment. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) note that the choice between material process (doing) and verbal process (saying/promising) is itself an ideological one: it determines whether an actor is constructed as one who acts or one who speaks. In this speech, the administration acts on infrastructure; it speaks on resettlement.

The conditional Yoruba construction at [00:31:54], "ibi ta ba le integrate, we integrate them", is the most attenuated commitment in the entire speech. The Yoruba conditional "ibi ta ba le" ("where/if we can") encodes integration as contingent on feasibility, not as a guaranteed outcome. This construction would be invisible to any English-language analysis of the published transcript, since it does not appear in the authorised text. It is only recoverable from the delivered speech and only fully interpretable by a Yoruba-competent analyst. Its significance is precisely that it encodes the most important social protection commitment in the least certain modal register available in either language.

This modal asymmetry is reinforced by the distribution of agent deletion across the two domains. In the infrastructure excerpts examined, the Actor 'we' is present and active in every material process clause identified. In the safeguard section, the affected communities, "our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters affected by the Rashidi Ladoja circular road development", are encoded as Goal (acted upon by development) rather than as Actors with agency. This is a textbook example of what van Dijk (1993) identifies as positive self-representation of the in-group coupled with the backgrounding of the out-group's interests, achieved through grammatical marginalisation.

3. Verbal Contextualization: Framing, Code-switching, and the Performance of Legitimacy

Direct Address and Audience Alignment Shifts

Gumperz (1982) established that speakers use contextualization cues, including address forms, code choice, and prosodic signals, to set up the interpretive frames within which utterances are understood. In Makinde's budget address, direct address forms function as one of the most visible and analytically productive of these cues. The speech is formally addressed to the legislature, "Mr Speaker Sir, Honourable Members of the Oyo State House of Assembly", but in practice it addresses at least four distinct audiences across its duration, and the address forms signal each transition.

The formal legislative audience receives an institutional address: "Mr Speaker, sir," "Honourable Members of the House." These forms establish the speech's legal-institutional frame, a governor formally presenting an appropriation bill to a legislature. But the speech repeatedly breaks this frame to address other audiences directly. At [00:24:28], in the middle of the healthcare allocation section, the governor addresses a named legislator: "So, Honourable PJ, uh, this is uh

part of what uh you're agitating for." This is a striking departure from the prepared text, which contains no such direct address. The move does several things simultaneously: it personalises an otherwise technical budget figure, it acknowledges the legislator's advocacy, and it positions the governor as responsive and collaborative rather than merely declarative. It is a verbal contextualization cue that reframes the budget presentation from a unilateral executive act to a dialogue between responsive governance and accountable representation.

The address to the affected Rashidi Ladoja communities, "our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters affected by the Rashidi Ladoja circular road development", marks the most significant audience alignment shift in the speech. The familial terms "fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters" reframe the governor-citizen relationship from a vertical governance hierarchy to a horizontal kinship network. This is a powerful indexical move: it positions the affected communities not as complainants or obstacles but as family members to whom the governor owes the loyalty of a son. Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (2011) note that shifts in address form are among the most reliable signals of frame shifts in political discourse. Here, the frame shifts from technocratic budget allocation to intimate community engagement, and the shift is signalled precisely by the address form before a single substantive claim is made.

Code-switching as Legitimation Performance

Across the nineteen Yoruba insertions identified in the delivered speech, five distinct legitimation functions are observable. Their systematic absence from the official text and their systematic presence in the live performance reveal a deliberate bimodal communication strategy: the published text addresses the formal institutional record; the Yoruba passages address the broader Yoruba-speaking public for whom the live recording was always the primary medium of reception (Opeibi, 2009). This is not incidental. It is a sophisticated management of multiple audience alignments within a single speech event.

The Yoruba insertions cluster around five distinct legitimation functions. In Excerpt 3 [00:15:37], the airport politics passage mobilises Yoruba to perform triumph over unnamed opponents: "won o fe ka open e ka fi se convention, but convention ti lo nisin, now they will have to open it" ["they did not want it opened, they wanted to use it for a convention, but the convention has passed, now they will have to open it"]. The switch to Yoruba here is not primarily about content; the point could have been made in English. It is about register: mockery is more culturally potent and more communally bonding when delivered in the shared mother tongue. It signals to the Yoruba-speaking audience that the governor is one of them, fighting the same battles they would fight.

In Excerpt 4 [00:17:39], the salary promise passage uses Yoruba to quote the governor's own doubters:

> "Igba ti mo so ni Liberty uh May 29, 2019 that on the 25th of every month, workers will receive their salaries, won ni en pe, k'Olorun je ko le see f'odun kan" ["When I said at Liberty Stadium on May 29 2019 that on the 25th of every month workers will receive their salaries, they said, God forbid, he cannot sustain this for even one year"]

The rhetorical structure is classical: state the promise, quote the doubters in their own voice, then deliver the achievement. The doubters are quoted in Yoruba, giving their scepticism the texture of authentic community speech, while the achievement is stated in English, aligning it with the institutional register of governance record. This bilingual contrast performs the gap between doubt and delivery, making the achievement feel more dramatic precisely through the contrast of languages.

The most analytically significant code-switching occurs in Excerpt 5 [00:28:07–00:29:26], the extended akara passage in response to the Rashidi Ladoja Road protests. The governor reports seeing on social media that people were "frying his akara", performing the Yoruba death-wish ritual of frying bean cakes as a symbolic announcement of his death. His response unfolds in Yoruba. First, he says, "E ma fi enikan n lo s'orun, e ma fi yo eda, gbogbo wa la n lo" ["Do not mock that anyone is going to heaven, we are all going"]. This reframes the death wish as a universal condition rather than a personal threat, positioning the governor as philosophically grounded and morally superior to those wishing him harm. He then tells the audience: "Won a din akara lori everybody, gbogbo wa ta wa nibi naa ni" ["They will fry akara for everybody, even for all here together"]. This is a rhetorical equalisation that means that the death ritual will eventually be performed for the legislators in the chamber as well. The implied message is that death-wish politics is futile because mortality is universal.

"E o wa be mi nile pe wa je governor Oyo state... pe mo fe se nkan fun Oyo state. Gbogbo akara ati every, mo ti sii mo" ["You did not come to beg me at home to become governor of Oyo State... I wanted to do something for Oyo State. All the akara and everything, I have envisaged all"]. This is mythopoiesis in its purest form, the selfless servant who volunteered for office and has internalised the costs of service, including threats to his life.

The entire passage produces sustained [cheering] from [00:29:02 to 00:29:26], the longest single audience response in the speech. It is the audience ratifying the governor's rhetorical performance, confirming that the code-switching, the cultural reference, and the philosophical framing have collectively succeeded in transforming a moment of political vulnerability into a moment of communal solidarity. As Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz (2011) argued, audience response is itself a contextualization cue; it feeds back into the interpretive frame of the speech, signalling to all present that the speaker has successfully repositioned himself.

The fourth move, the closing joke, extends this success. After announcing his Wednesday visit to the affected community of Ologuneru (which itself produces applause [00:30:10–00:30:13]), the governor adds: "eyin te ba fe din akara, e lo duro sibe, aa jo jee ni" ["those of you who want to fry akara, go and wait there, we will eat them together"]. The joke collapses the threat into communal eating, a deeply Yoruba image of reconciliation and solidarity. It is the performative culmination of the entire akara sequence: death wish absorbed, reframed, equalised, and finally converted into an invitation to eat together. The [cheering and singing] that follows [00:30:18] signals complete audience alignment with this performative resolution.

Critically, this entire sequence is absent from the published transcript. This reveals a structurally significant feature of the speech event: the official institutional record contains the technocratic legitimation, while the performed cultural legitimation is inscribed only in the vernacular register, accessible to the community for whom it matters most. This reveals a structurally significant feature of the speech event: the official institutional record contains the technocratic legitimation (figures, allocations, benchmarks), while the performed cultural legitimation, the most emotionally and communally resonant dimension of the address, is inscribed only in the vernacular register, accessible to the community for whom it matters most.

Rhetorical Framing and Deixis

Beyond code-switching, several verbal framing devices construct the interpretive context for the speech's key legitimation moves. The deictic expression "today" at the speech's opening, "Today I stand before you to present the penultimate budget proposal", does more than locate the speech in time. It indexes a specific moment in a biographical and institutional narrative: this is the second-to-last budget, which presupposes a trajectory with a defined end and an implied

legacy. The word "penultimate" encodes time-pressure, a governor nearing the end of his mandate, and frames all that follows as the considered output of a mature, experienced administration rather than an exploratory early-tenure proposal.

The temporal deixis "next year", "next year, precisely 3rd of February, Oyo State will be 50" [00:26:41], extends the interpretive frame beyond the budget year to a celebratory historical moment, aligning the 2026 Budget of Economic Expansion with the state's Golden Jubilee. This is a mythopoetic framing device: the budget is not merely a fiscal document but a contribution to a fifty-year state narrative of growth and renewal (van Leeuwen, 2008).

The most consequential deictic construction appears in Excerpt 6 [00:35:38–00:35:44]: "This is the final full-year budget that I will implement." This sentence, absent from the published transcript and therefore recoverable only from the delivered speech, reframes everything that has been said. Retrospectively, it positions the entire address as a legacy document, encoding all commitments made within it as the final full expression of this administration's ambitions. It also constructs a political frame for the social safeguard commitment: a governor who has 18 months left has both the urgency and the political freedom to honour difficult promises. This temporal self-positioning is itself a legitimation move, grounding the governor's credibility in the transparency of acknowledged finitude rather than in the claims of future ambition.

Discussion

The finding that legitimation intensity rises precisely where grammatical commitment falls extends van Leeuwen's (2007, 2008) framework beyond its original descriptive scope. Van Leeuwen treated authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation, and mythopoiesis as available strategies a text may draw upon; this study shows them being deployed compensatorily, concentrated specifically where material commitment is weakest. This pattern also confirms, in a Nigerian sub-national context, what Reyes (2011) found in Obama's Syria address: that legitimation strategies cluster most densely around a speech's most politically exposed claims, and that speakers reach for moral and narrative resources precisely when instrumental justification is hardest to sustain. The akara sequence, where a death wish is reframed as universal mortality and then converted into communal humour, goes further than the legitimation literature has generally documented. Where Fawunmi and Taiwo (2021) describe Obasanjo's rhetorical self-positioning as primarily defensive, Makinde's performance is transformative: it does not merely deflect hostility but absorbs it into a narrative of willing sacrifice, the clearest instance of mythopoiesis in the entire speech. This suggests that in contexts of high cultural shared meaning, legitimation can do more than van Leeuwen's framework, developed from Western media and policy texts, anticipated; vernacular cultural symbolism can become a legitimation resource in its own right, not merely a vehicle for it.

The study's finding on authorisation also speaks back to the literature. Where Taiwo (2008) found that Obasanjo legitimised authority chiefly through institutional and traditional appeals, Makinde's speech shows a more technocratic variant: UNESCO benchmarks, percentage ratios, and archival newspaper documents function as authorisation devices. This reflects a shift consistent with what Osisanwo (2017) observed in Buhari's inaugural address, namely that contemporary Nigerian political discourse increasingly authorises itself through measurable performance indicators rather than appeals to tradition or office alone.

The modal asymmetry finding directly extends Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) account of transitivity as an ideological resource. Where their framework establishes, in principle, that the choice between material and verbal processes encodes differential commitment, this study demonstrates the mechanism operating within a single speech, on a single contested policy issue,

with measurable consequences for oversight. This corroborates Abubakar's (2022) finding that Ghanaian party manifestoes systematically encode collective achievement in high-certainty modality while displacing accountability for unresolved harms into hedged or agentless constructions. It also extends Brocca, Garassino and Masia's (2016) account of presupposition as a tool that escapes critical scrutiny: the conditional Yoruba construction "ibi ta ba le integrate" performs exactly this evasive function, but does so in a register inaccessible to non-Yoruba-speaking oversight bodies, compounding the accountability problem the literature has so far only described in monolingual contexts. This is the study's clearest practical contribution: it shows that for the Rashidi Ladoja Road communities, the language most directly concerning their welfare is also the language most grammatically resistant to verification, a finding the existing literature on Nigerian political discourse has not previously documented at this level of grammatical detail.

Conclusion

The findings from this study show that legitimation is most richly performed in the language least available to formal institutional scrutiny. This carries a direct implication for accountability: the communities with the most at stake in the Rashidi Ladoja Road development are addressed with the warmest rhetoric and the least enforceable language, in a register that does not appear in the document that Parliament and oversight bodies will hold on record. Hence, this study has shown that in multilingual governance contexts, the official written record of a political speech and the performed vernacular speech are two distinct legitimation instruments, addressed to different audiences, carrying different rhetorical weight, and subject to different levels of institutional scrutiny.

For Nigerian political discourse scholarship, this finding demands that future analyses of gubernatorial and presidential addresses should treat audiovisual recordings and vernacular code-switching as primary data rather than supplementary material. Two limitations point toward future work. The analysis rests on a single speech, so whether the modal asymmetry between infrastructure and safeguard language is specific to this administration or common across Nigerian gubernatorial discourse remains an open question. The verbal contextualization analysis was also conducted without full prosodic annotation. Acoustic analysis using Praat would test whether the hedged safeguard passages are marked prosodically as well as grammatically. The grammar of this speech made infrastructure delivery a fact and community protection a possibility. Closing that gap requires first making it visible, and that is precisely what discourse analysis of the kind demonstrated here is equipped to do.

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