

A Comparative Study of English and Yoruba Languages, as Used in Some Nigerian Court Proceedings

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Abstract

This study adopts a pragmatic approach to investigate the intricate linguistic dynamics of English and Yoruba languages in Nigerian court proceedings, with a view to shedding light on the complex interplay between language, power, and justice. Utilizing the Natural Language Processing (NLP) tool, AntConc, this research examines the frequency, context, and pragmatic functions of linguistic features in a corpus of 20 court transcripts (10 English, 10 Yoruba) sourced from federal and state courts in Nigeria. The study provides a comparative analysis of language use patterns, exploring how language choice influences power dynamics, discourse strategies, and ultimately, justice delivery in multilingual courtrooms. The findings reveal significant differences in language use patterns, with English dominating formal proceedings, while Yoruba is strategically employed for emphasis, mitigation, or solidarity-building, particularly in witness testimonies and cross-examinations. The study highlights the complexities of language use in Nigerian courtrooms, where language choice is often a deliberate pragmatic act with significant implications for judicial outcomes. The results underscore the need for language policies that recognize the importance of indigenous languages in judicial processes, ensuring equitable access to justice for linguistically diverse populations. This study contributes to the development of language technologies, informs language-in-law policies, and advances our understanding of language, power, and justice in multilingual societies.

Keywords: Language-in-law, Nigerian court proceedings, English, Yoruba, pragmatics

1. Introduction

Language is the key instrument of law. In Nigeria's multilingual legal system, English functions as the official language of evidence, whereas over 500 indigenous languages arbitrate daily interactions of litigants, witnesses, and judicial officers. Section 36(6) of the 1999 Constitution confirms the right to an interpreter, yet the pragmatic realities of language preference in court remain under-examined. Lagos State, with Yoruba as the overriding indigenous language, presents a dynamic site to investigate how English and Yoruba co-exist and contend for pragmatic effect in the courtroom. This paper examines the pragmatic functions of English and Yoruba in Nigerian court proceedings. It moves beyond descriptive bilingualism to ask: How is language choice deployed as a discourse strategy? What power relations are endorsed or opposed through code choice? How do these choices reflect on comprehension, involvement, and perceived fairness?

1.1 Background

The Nigerian legal system, inherited from

British common law, designates English as the official language of court records and proceedings. Yet in Lagos State, Yoruba remains the first language of over 80% of litigants and witnesses. This creates a de facto bilingual courtroom where two linguistic systems with different histories, structures, and sociolinguistic statuses interact. Language serves as a fundamental tool in the administration of justice, serving as the medium through which legal processes are conducted, and rights are exercised. In multilingual societies like Nigeria, language choice in court proceedings is a complex issue, influenced by power dynamics, cultural identity, and pragmatic considerations. This study investigates the linguistic dynamics of English and Yoruba languages in Nigerian court proceedings, exploring how language use patterns impact judicial outcomes.

This study builds on previous research on questioning strategies in Nigerian courtrooms, exploring the pragmatic functions of language choice in English and Yoruba languages. Language use in multilingual courtrooms is a

complex issue, influencing power dynamics, discourse strategies, and justice delivery.

It is important to note that Nigeria's linguistic diversity poses challenges to the administration of justice, particularly in courtrooms where language choice can influence power dynamics, discourse strategies, and ultimately, justice delivery. Despite the importance of language in judicial processes, there is a paucity of research on the pragmatic functions of language use in Nigerian courtrooms; this is the gap this study intends to fill.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's linguistic diversity poses challenges to the administration of justice, particularly in courtrooms where language choice can affect power dynamics, discourse strategies, and ultimately, justice delivery. Despite the importance of language in judicial processes, there is a dearth of research on the pragmatic functions of language use in Nigerian courtrooms.

1.3 Research Objectives

- (i) Examine the frequency, context, and pragmatic functions of linguistic features in English and Yoruba languages in Nigerian court proceedings.
- (ii) Investigate how language choice influences power dynamics, discourse strategies, and justice delivery in multilingual courtrooms.
- (iii) Identify the implications of language use patterns for language-in-law policies and language technologies.

1.4 Research Questions

- (i) What are the patterns of language use in English and Yoruba languages in Nigerian court proceedings?
- (ii) How does language choice affect power dynamics, discourse strategies, and justice delivery in multilingual courtrooms?
- (iii) What are the implications of language use patterns for language-in-law policies and language technologies?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the development of language technologies, informs language-in-law policies, and advances our understanding of language, power, and justice in multilingual societies. The findings have implications for language planning, judicial training, and the promotion of linguistic diversity in Nigeria.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on a corpus of 20 court transcripts (10 English, 10 Yoruba) sourced from federal and state courts in Nigeria. The analysis is limited to the pragmatic functions of language use in court proceedings, excluding other aspects of language use in judicial processes.

1.7 Definition of Terms

- Pragmatics: The study of language in use, focusing on the speaker's intended meaning and the context in which language is used.
- Language choice: The selection of a particular language or language variety in a given context.
- Multilingual courtrooms: Courtrooms where multiple languages are used, either simultaneously or alternately.

2. Literature Review

This literature review situates the study within the interdisciplinary field where language, law, and multilingual communication intersect, with specific focus on Nigerian courtroom practice. Because the research examines how English-Yoruba bilingualism shapes legal meaning and decision-making, the review draws on scholarship from several complementary domains. First, it engages foundational work in Language and Law and Legal Discourse to establish how legal systems construct authority, precision, and procedure through specialized linguistic forms (Mellinkoff, 1963; Tiersma, 1999; Bhatia, 1993). Second, it considers Multilingualism and Legal Bilingualism to explain the constitutional, policy, and practical implications of operating

courts in more than one language, particularly where English functions as the language of record and Yoruba as a language of testimony (Bamgbose, 1991; Mattila, 2006). Third, the review addresses Courtroom Discourse and Communication, including interpretation, code-switching, and pragmatic mismatch, to show how spoken interaction mediates evidentiary outcomes (Berk-Seligson, 2002; Odebunmi, 2006). Fourth, it incorporates Pragmatics to account for how indirectness, honorifics, and illocutionary force in Yoruba interact with the direct, adversarial norms of legal English (Ayoola, 2009; Shuy, 2005). Finally, it integrates Corpus Linguistics as an empirical method for identifying lexico-grammatical and collocational patterns that characterize Nigerian legal texts and interpreted oral data (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998; Jegede, 2015). Taken together, these domains provide the conceptual and methodological framework for analyzing how multilingual language use in Nigerian courtrooms influences comprehension, procedural fairness, and legal certainty.

2.1 Language and Law in Multilingual Contexts

The relationship between language and law becomes most visible in multilingual contexts, where legal authority must be exercised through more than one linguistic system. Law is both constituted by language and dependent on it for communication, interpretation, and enforcement (Mellinkoff, 1963). In multilingual jurisdictions, this dependence creates tensions between legal uniformity, linguistic rights, and access to justice. Comparative legal-linguistic research therefore treats multilingualism not as a peripheral administrative issue, but as a substantive factor that shapes legal meaning, procedure, and legitimacy (Mattila, 2006). Studies in forensic linguistics establish courtrooms as sites of asymmetrical discourse where institutional power is linguistically encoded. In postcolonial contexts, the exoglossic language frequently maintains

prestige whereas indigenous languages are relegated to informal domains. (Gibbons, 2003), (Adegbija, 2004).

2.1.1 Language in the Courtroom

The courtroom is a highly regulated speech event in which language is the primary instrument of authority, evidence, and decision-making. Unlike ordinary conversation, courtroom discourse is institutionally constrained by rules of procedure, precedent, and record-keeping, such that every utterance can carry legal consequence (Conley & O'Barr, 2005). From opening statements to final judgments, the outcome of a case is therefore contingent on how language is produced, interpreted, and translated.

Moreover, Courtroom English constitutes a distinct legal register marked by archaism, nominalization, and passivization, modality through verbs such as shall, may, must (Tiersma, 1999). This register is designed for precision and disambiguation, but its opacity can reduce intelligibility for lay participants. Studies of witness testimony show that unfamiliar syntax and vocabulary increase cognitive load, leading to incomplete or inaccurate responses, (Gibbons, 2003). Therefore, legal language simultaneously enables professional control of proceedings and creates a barrier to participation. Thus, Courtroom interaction is asymmetrical: judges control turn-taking, counsel frame questions, and witnesses are limited to responsive speech (Atkinson & Drew, 1979). Question design is particularly consequential. Leading, tag, and complex questions can constrain a witness's narrative and increase the risk of misstatement, especially for linguistically vulnerable speakers (Walker, 1987). Comparative studies indicate that such control strategies are more pronounced in adversarial systems, where language is used strategically to construct competing versions of fact (Maley, 1994). International scholarship establishes the courtroom as a "linguistic institution" where language constructs legal reality (Tiersma, 1999; Gibbons, 2003).

2.2 Legal Language in Nigeria

Legal terms and expressions are assumed to constitute an integral part of any society; legal language therefore represents an interesting aspect of legal setting. Some of the linguistic features used are conscious and strategic choices, while others are less so, however, the language chosen conveys not only the content of the message, but also information about the interlocutors, their relationship to each other, and their opinions about what was said and who said it. Nigerian scholars (Adegbija, 2004; Omoniyi, 2010) document English as the language of power in courts, while indigenous languages are relegated to interpretation. (Egbe & Olatunji, 2017) note that Yoruba interpreters often summarize rather than translate, altering legal meaning. Some more scholarly works conducted on the discourse of Nigerian courtroom practices include the examination of legal documents (Abdullahi-Idiagbon 2006) and courtroom proceedings such as witness examination (Opeibi 2008; Aina, 2018). Opeibi (2008) outlines distinctive features of Nigerian courtroom proceedings, highlighting the formal institutional settings, linguistic proficiency differentials among participants, strategic construction of legal discourse, explicit manifestation of professional legal knowledge, and the prevalence of written language-based legal jargon. (Aina, 2018), posits that courtroom questioning is achieved not just through the structural pattern of questions but by the recursive process of pragmatic repetition, and such linguistic elements as negation as well as discourse markers, especially where confirmatory questions are involved.

2.3 Pragmatics and Courtroom Discourse

Pragmatic approaches examine speech acts, politeness, and implicature in legal talk. Code-switching can function as mitigation, coercion, or alignment. Nigerian studies have addressed interpreter use but few employ corpus methods to quantify pragmatic functions across languages. (Kurzon, 1997, (Cotterill, 2003), (Olanrewaju, 2018). Pragmatics goes beyond

describing utterances as actions. It indicates reasons behind the actions and the implications, considering the beliefs, and ideologies of the contacts involved. Several inferences beyond immediate context is also needed to analyse utterances that relate to sociocultural context. To this end, Pragmatics reveals the intricacies involved in legal dealings to actualise the goal of fairness and justice.

Mey, 1993 laid emphasis on the contextual nature of language use. He argued that the meaning of utterances is not solely determined by their linguistic form but is also influenced by the situational context in which they occur. he highlighted the importance of considering factors such as the participants involved, their intentions, and the social norms governing communication in interpreting meaning. Furthermore, Mey explored the concept of inference and implicature in pragmatic communication. He proposed that in everyday interaction, speakers often convey meaning indirectly through implicature, where the intended meaning goes beyond the literal interpretation of the words used. His work on implicature helped to elucidate how speakers communicate effectively by exploiting contextual cues and shared knowledge (Mey, 2001)

2.4 Corpus Linguistics and Legal Discourse

Corpus Linguistics is the empirical study of language based on large, principled collections of authentic texts, known as corpora (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998). When applied to Legal Discourse, it shifts analysis from intuition-based description to quantitative and qualitative evidence of how law is actually written, spoken, and interpreted. Legal discourse is institutionally constrained, highly formulaic, and precision-oriented (Tiersma, 1999). Corpus methods therefore provide a robust framework for identifying recurrent patterns, collocational behavior, and genre-specific norms that shape judicial reasoning, statutory drafting, and advocacy.

AntConc and similar NLP tools enable

systematic identification of keywords, collocations, and concordances in legal corpora (Goźdz-Roszkowski, 2011). This study extends corpus methods to a bilingual Nigerian court corpus, bridging computational and pragmatic analysis.

2.5 Comparative Legal Linguistics

Comparative studies of legal discourse have been done for Spanish-English (Berk-Seligson, 2002) and Arabic-English courts, but bilingual English-Yoruba courtroom interaction remains under-researched. Existing Nigerian work focuses on sociolinguistics, not systematic corpus comparison of actual proceedings. Comparative Legal Linguistics examines how law is constructed, interpreted, and applied through language, and how differences between legal-linguistic systems affect legal outcomes (Mattila, 2006). In bilingual jurisdictions, courtroom interaction becomes a site where two linguistic and cultural systems meet, often with unequal institutional status. Nigeria's superior courts operate primarily in English, the language of statute and precedent, while litigants, witnesses, and counsel frequently use indigenous languages such as Yoruba in oral testimony and cross-examination (Bamgbose, 1991). This English-Yoruba interface therefore raises critical questions in comparative legal linguistics: how meaning is transferred, how legal concepts are re-encoded, and how linguistic asymmetry shapes fairness and comprehension.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on an interdisciplinary framework that combines pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, and code-choice theory. The integration is necessary because courtroom interaction in a multilingual context is simultaneously a matter of meaning-making in talk, a site of institutional power, and a space for strategic language selection. The three frameworks are therefore complementary: Levinson's Pragmatics explains how meaning is negotiated at the level of utterance, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA] explains

how those utterances reproduce legal authority, and Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model explains why speakers shift between English and Yoruba to manage rights and obligations.

3.1 Levinson's Pragmatics: Speech Acts, Deixis, and Implicature in Institutional Talk

Pragmatics provides tools for analyzing how speakers do things with words in context (Levinson, 1983). Three constructs are central here. First, speech act theory distinguishes locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, which clarifies how questions, objections, and rulings perform legal functions such as eliciting evidence or establishing liability (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Second, deixis accounts for person, time, place, and discourse reference that anchor testimony to specific events and participants, which is critical for evidentiary precision (Levinson, 1983). Third, implicature explains how meaning is inferred beyond what is literally said, particularly in adversarial questioning where presupposition and indirectness are used strategically (Grice, 1975). In institutional talk, these pragmatic mechanisms are constrained by procedural rules, such that a judge's "Do you understand?" is not a request for information but a performative that creates legal capacity (Drew & Heritage, 1992). This framework therefore enables a micro-analysis of how English-Yoruba courtroom talk achieves, or fails to achieve, intended legal effects.

3.2 Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis: Language as Social Practice

While pragmatics addresses utterance-level meaning, CDA situates language within relations of power and ideology (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough's three-dimensional model treats discourse as text, discursive practice, and social practice. Applied to the courtroom, this means that legal English is not neutral but a resource through which the state exercises control over turn-taking, topic, and legitimate forms of expression (Conley & O'Barr, 2005). The dominance of English over Yoruba in records, judgments, and statutes exemplifies

“ideological power,” where one linguistic variety is institutionalized as the norm of rationality and truth (Fairclough, 1989). CDA thus explains why deviations from legal English, such as proverbial or indirect Yoruba testimony, are often interpreted as non-compliance or evasiveness, even when they are culturally normative (Ayoola, 2009).

3.3 Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model: Code Choice as Negotiation of Rights and Obligations

The Markedness Model [MM] provides the sociolinguistic bridge between utterance and structure by explaining code choice as rational behavior (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Speakers select an “unmarked” code that aligns with expected role relations, but may employ a “marked” code to renegotiate those relations. In the Nigerian courtroom, English is the unmarked code of authority, record, and legal expertise, while Yoruba is the unmarked code of solidarity, cultural intelligibility, and witness identity (Jegede, 2015; Odebunmi, 2006). When counsel or interpreters code-switch, the shift is not random but a strategic move to claim or resist power, build rapport, or signal deference to the bench. The MM therefore accounts for the functional motivations behind English-Yoruba alternation that pragmatics describes and CDA politicizes. Integration and Analytical Value

Overall, the three frameworks form a layered model of analysis. Pragmatics supplies the tools to map speech acts, deixis, and implicature in interpreted testimony. CDA locates those linguistic moves within a hierarchy where English institutionalizes legal authority and marginalizes indigenous discourse norms. The Markedness Model explains the speaker's agency in navigating that hierarchy through code choice. This integration is particularly suited to bilingual English-Yoruba courtroom data because it connects micro-level linguistic detail to macro-level questions of access to justice, procedural fairness, and linguistic rights.

4. Methodology

The procedural steps adopted for the

conduct of this study, which is both qualitative and quantitative method of analysis, is provided in this section. The major process of data collection follows a systematic technique that involves a careful selection of the sample frame and its associated fundamentals. Attention is paid to the research design and other elements such as population, samples, method of data collection and method of analysis.

4.1 Research Design

Descriptive-comparative corpus study using mixed methods.

4.2 Data and Corpus Design

- Corpus: 20 verbatim court transcripts, 2018–2024, totaling 286,540 tokens.
- Sub-corpora: English-dominated proceedings (10 transcripts, 164,210 tokens) and Yoruba-mediated proceedings (10 transcripts, 122,330 tokens) from Lagos High Court and Magistrate Courts.
- Selection Criteria: Cases with substantive witness testimony; final judgments delivered; ethical clearance obtained. Names withheld

4.3 Analytical Tool and Procedure

AntConc 4.2.0 used for wordlist, keyword, concordance, and N-gram analysis. Manual pragmatic coding followed the Corpus Pragmatics framework.

1. Frequency and keyword lists generated for each sub-corpus.
2. Concordance lines coded for speech event: opening, examination-in-chief, cross-examination, re-examination, judgment.
3. Pragmatic functions tagged: assertion, mitigation, emphasis, solidarity, coercion, clarification.
4. Quantitative comparison using log-likelihood and qualitative discourse analysis of representative extracts.

5. Results and Findings

This section presents the empirical

outcomes of the comparative analysis of English and Yoruba as used in selected Nigerian court proceedings. The findings are organized to address the study's central objective: to determine how differences in lexis, discourse structure, pragmatics, and code choice between the two languages shape courtroom communication, evidentiary presentation, and procedural outcomes. Data drawn from court transcripts, interpreted testimony, and observed proceedings are analyzed using the integrated framework of Pragmatics, Critical Discourse Analysis, and the Markedness Model. The presentation proceeds from micro-linguistic patterns such as: speech acts and deixis, to macro-level practices, including power

asymmetry, interpreter mediation, and the negotiation of rights through marked and unmarked code selection. Together, the results demonstrate the points of convergence and divergence between English and Yoruba in the courtroom, and explain how multilingual language use influences comprehension, credibility assessment, and access to justice.

5.1 Distributional Patterns

English accounted for 87.3% of total tokens in “formal” speech events – judges' rulings, counsels' submissions. Yoruba tokens clustered in witness testimony (68.4% of Yoruba use) and occurred in 9/10 cross-examinations.

Table 1: Top 10 Keywords by Peculiarity

English Sub-corpus	Peculiarity	Yoruba Sub-corpus	Peculiarity
Objection	121.4	Olohun	119.7
Pursuant	110.3	L?t??	102.4
Evidence	98.1	? j??	96.8
Plaintiff	92.5	Kò	91.3

(I) (God) (Truth) (Please) (Not)

5.2 Pragmatic Functions of Code Choice

1. English as Authority Marker: Judges and senior counsel used English for procedural speech acts- “This court hereby rules...” - indexing institutional power. Latinity and archaisms pursuant to hereinbefore occurred 0 times in Yoruba.
2. Yoruba for Mitigation and Solidarity: Witnesses shifted to Yoruba to appeal to shared cultural morality: “Mo bẹ yin, ? jẹẹ, mi ò ?e bẹẹ” (I beg you, please, I did not do it). Counsels used Yoruba in cross-examination to lower tension: “?é ó dá ? lójú pé...” (Are you sure that...), yielding longer, narrative responses.
3. Emphasis through Repetition: Key evidentiary terms were doubled across languages: “He stole it. Ó jí i”. The

switch functioned as pragmatic reinforcement before the judge.

4. Exclusion Effect: 73% of monolingual Yoruba-speaking litigants showed comprehension breaks when technical English was not interpreted, evidenced by “I no understand” or silence in concordance lines.

Discussion A

The data verify that language choice in Nigerian courts is not simply referential but a pragmatic tactic. English operates as the “unmarked” code of institutional authority per Myers-Scotton, while Yoruba is a “marked” choice deployed to do relational work: appeal, mitigate, or intensify. This aligns with CDA: linguistic resources replicate the hierarchy that privileges English-literate actors. The tactical

use of Yoruba by counsel during cross-examination demonstrates legal actors' pragmatic competence, but the absence of systematic interpretation means such strategies remain inaccessible to the court when used by witnesses alone. Thus, power is not only in what

is said, but in who said what, and can switch and be understood. These findings have implications for language technology: NLP tools trained only on English legal corpora will miss critical pragmatic cues in Nigerian courts.

Further Analysis

Lexical and Syntactic Comparison

Feature	English	Yoruba
Average Sentence Length	24.7 words	13.2 words
Lexical Density	62%	43%
Top Keywords	pursuant, hereby, defendant, objection, exhibit	mo, o, ní, kò, l?t??
Syntax	Passive voice 31%; embedded clauses; legal archaisms	Active voice 89%; serial verbs; proverbs
Register Markers	Latinisms, modal auxiliaries shall/may	Honorifics ?, discourse markers nígbà tí

(I) (you) (have) (not) (truth)

(I) (you) (have) (not) (truth)

(Please)

5.3 Distribution by Speaker and Speech Event

1. Judges/Magistrates: 96% English. Yoruba used only for direct address: “? ó gbẹ̀ mi?” (Do you hear me?)
2. Counsel: 88% English in submissions; switched to Yoruba in 71% of cross-examinations for emphasis or rapport.
3. Witnesses/Defendants: 64% Yoruba tokens. English used when repeating counsel's words or reading statements.
4. Judgments/Rulings: 100% English.

5.4 Functions of Code-Switching

1. Quoting/Reporting: “He said 'Mi ò ní l?' (He said 'I will not go').
2. Emphasis: “It is not true. Kò jẹ̀ bẹ̀ẹ̀ rára” (It is not so at all).
3. Mitigation/Solidarity: Counsel: “My Lord, ? jẹ̀, the witness is confused”.
4. Cultural Concept: Terms like iwà ?m?lúàbí (good character) had no English equivalent and were retained.

5.5 Comprehension Barriers

Concordance analysis showed 42 instances of “I don't understand” or silence following dense English legal jargon. No such breakdowns followed Yoruba, except when code-mixed with English technical terms.

Discussion B

The data reveal a functional diglossia: English functions as the High variety for law-making, procedure, and evidence. Yoruba functions as the Low variety for narration, emotion, and lived experience. This confirms and extends Ferguson's diglossia model to the Nigerian legal domain. (1959)

However, the courtroom is not strictly diglossic because code-switching creates a third space where legal actors negotiate meaning. When counsel switches to Yoruba, they temporarily reduce social distance with witnesses, often eliciting more detailed testimony. Yet because judgments are in English, those Yoruba narratives are re-entextualized,

and pragmatic force may be lost. Whereas, from a CDA perspective, the dominance of English maintains the “language ideology of the law”, that equates legalism with English. This weakens Yoruba-monolingual citizens, not because Yoruba lacks capacity, but because the institution does not officially elaborate a legal Yoruba register.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that corpus-pragmatic study demonstrates that English and Yoruba execute distinct but interdependent pragmatic functions in Lagos courts. English specifies procedure and authority; Yoruba manages interpersonal meaning and evidential emphasis. The asymmetrical distribution risks habitual injustice for non-English speakers. English and Yoruba are not merely parallel codes in Nigerian courts; they execute complementary but unequal discourse meanings. English constructs legal influence; Yoruba constructs human experience. The current arrangement privileges those bilingual in legal English and creates dormant exclusion for others.

Recommendations:

1. Evaluate judicial practice directions to authorize pragmatic, not just literal interpretation; capturing tone, emphasis, and code-switched demands.
2. Integrate bilingual pragmatic proficiency into legal education and continuing education for judges.
3. Develop bilingual legal NLP resources and AntConc plugins for English-Yoruba court discourse to assist transcription and unbiased hearing audits.
4. Explore insightful studies on how jurors/judges construe code-switches across other indigenous languages.

Contributions

Sequel to the conclusions of this study, it is imperative to note that this study contributes to Digital Humanities and forensic linguistics by

modeling how corpus tools can uncover power in postcolonial legal discourse. Recognizing indigenous languages as pragmatic resources, not impediments, is critical for substantive infiltration to justice. It provides a corpus-based comparative narrative of English-Yoruba courtroom discourse, and offers experiential data for language planning, legal education, and the development of African forensic linguistics.

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