Chapter 3
Voices of Economic Competence: Legitimizing the Government in Federal Budget Speeches

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Abstract Budget speeches are an overview of public economic initiatives and can anticipate revenues, expenditures, policies, and activities. These speeches enable a government to discursively legitimize economic competence. While legitimation can be achieved by the representation and evaluation of economic initiatives, intertextuality should also be analyzed because the use of voices helps or hinders legitimation. The chapter explores how the Barisan Nasional (BN) government legitimized its economic competence through intertextual voicing. It outlines the source and engagement of voices and operationalizes a method that involves five sequential stages. The chapter analyzes an archive of Malaysian federal budget speeches from 2010 to 2018. The analysis discloses various instances of intertextual voicing because the speeches articulate voices in economics, politics, and religion. The choice of voices is shaped by the Malaysian context. Intertextual voicing legitimizes BN through moralization and authorization. The voices can be considered as voices of economic competence because economic, political, and religious voices discursively legitimize actions and decisions for the economy. Intertextual voicing serves ideological purposes because it perpetuates government economic agency. In budget speeches, BN promotes itself as indispensable to Malaysian development, and it should consequently continue to govern the country. These speeches then become part of the genres that validate BN.

Keywords Speeches · Economy · Budget · Intertextuality · Voice · Legitimation

3.1 Introduction

Discourse is intertextual because it recontextualizes previous voices (Bakhtin, 1981). Political discourse often deploys intertextuality to gain, maintain, or lose public influence (Windt, 1986). The discourse is manifested in many genres (e.g., debates, interviews, press releases), but research has a proclivity for speeches although budget speeches are rarely analyzed. These speeches are primarily about the economy, which

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has social significance because the economy directly or indirectly impacts a country's development. Budget speeches display intertextuality, and the choice of voices should be examined. The present chapter analyzes Malaysian federal budget speeches, and it explores how the Barisan Nasional (BN) government legitimized its economic competence through intertextual voicing.

Intertextuality operates in multiple genres (Bazerman, 2004), and its use in political genres is considered by several published studies. Murray et al. (2016) categorize voices in speeches about the Resource Super Profits Tax in Australia. The speeches cite economists to justify government opinions and ordinary citizens to endorse government response. The justification and endorsement are packaged as part of better governance and prosperity. Atkins and Finlayson (2016) identify voices in British party conference speeches. Delegates cite ordinary citizens to narrow social distance and the opposition to negate their opinions. The delegates also cite British literature to indicate fidelity to their cultural heritage.

Fairclough (2003) recognizes voices in Prime Minister Blair's post 9–11 speech. The Prime Minister quotes various threats, and they seem to be general beliefs because their origins are unknown or vague. Abdul-Latif (2011) finds a typical voice in President Sadat's post-riot speech. The President quotes the Quran to defend his response, and to contrast those for and against the Egyptian government as believers and unbelievers respectively. During the Biden-Palin American Vice-Presidential debate, Biden cites ordinary citizens for empathy and presidential candidates Obama and McCain for authority, while Palin cites her past self to reveal her strong leadership (Reyes, 2015). During war speeches, Presidents Bush and Obama cite foreign Prime Ministers for authority and generals for expertise, to first start and later escalate military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq (Reyes, 2011).

Hence, intertextuality is a strategy in political discourse because politicians in several countries articulate multiple voices in their speeches. The voices privilege their perspective and can create a particular version of political reality (Murray et al., 2016). Politicians seem credible or reliable, which enhances their legitimacy. These earlier studies examine intertextuality in speeches, but budget speeches have not been explored. The speeches enable a government to discursively legitimize economic competence or the ability to identify, expand, and exploit policies and activities (Carlsson & Eliasson, 1994).

In budget speeches, legitimation can be achieved by the representation and evaluation of economic initiatives. Lukin (2015), Rajandran (2019), and Thompson (2015) study budget speeches and explain the language features that convey the economic competence of the ruling government in Australia, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom, respectively. Their analysis can incorporate intertextuality because the use of voices helps or hinders legitimation. Legitimation gives reasons why a social practice or some part of it must happen or happen in a certain way (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 20). Van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes four categories of legitimation: authorization, moralization, mythopoesis, and rationalization. Authorization is acquired by conformity, expertise, influence, status, or tradition. Moralization is achieved by abstraction, comparison, or evaluation. While mythopoesis employs

stories of observance or non-observance of social practices, rationalization shows the logic and purpose of social practices.

The chapter extends existing research and studies how legitimation can be achieved by intertextual voicing. It is guided by this research question: How did the Barisan Nasional (BN) government legitimize economic competence through intertextual voicing in budget speeches? BN was the longest-serving elected government in Malaysia (1957–2018). Intertextual voicing would have formed part of the coalition's discursive legitimation. The study of intertextuality contributes insights about how BN argued for its agency and establishes a basis for comparing speeches among political parties in Malaysia or other countries.

3.2 Government Economic Agency

Malaysia is a middle-income country in Southeast Asia, but it has the 37th highest GDP in the world and posts solid growth rates (Lafaye de Micheaux, 2017). Growth is driven by a diversified economy of agriculture, mining, oil and gas, industry and services. Although agriculture and mining dominated the 1960s and 1970s, oil and gas and industry dominated the 1980s until the present. The government is involved in these areas, but since the 1980s, it has reduced its overt involvement because the neoliberal formula of deregulation, liberalization, and privatization was implemented (Steger & Roy, 2010). Malaysia adopted the neoliberal economic system, but the government maintains a strong presence (Steger & Roy, 2010). The government instituted a developmental state, and its economic agency stimulated growth by transforming Malaysia from an agricultural to an industrial country (Nasrudin et al., 2013). The transformation was evidence for the economic competence of the federal government under Barisan Nasional (BN), the ruling coalition of 13 ethnic and regional parties. BN positioned itself as indispensable to development and its claim to economic competence helped it retain political power for 62 years, despite various social changes (Rajandran, 2013, 2019).

3.3 Budget Speeches

Budget speeches are an overview of public economic initiatives and can anticipate revenues, expenditures, policies, and activities (Lukin, 2015). These speeches are the central economic speech in a government's repertoire of speeches because their content involves the whole country and a variety of domains (e.g., defense, education, health, tourism) (Rajandran, 2019). Budget speeches garner substantial interest among a national and international audience because the prediction of revenues and expenditures and the revelation of policies and activities directly or indirectly impact a country's development for several years. In Malaysia, budget speeches are a fixed political event every fourth quarter. From 2009 to 2017, the Finance Minister,

who was the Prime Minister, tabled the speech. The minister delivers the speech in the Malay language to Members of Parliament, but technological advancement has enabled almost anyone to hear it. The speech is first recontextualized in live television and online streaming, and later in other formats (e.g., articles, interviews, news, tweets).

3.4   Intertextual Voicing

The ideas of Bakhtin, Barthes, and de Saussure inspired Kristeva to create the terminology 'intertextuality' in 1966. Kristeva's (1980) often-cited statement about texts being the absorption and transformation of other texts postulates the presence of multiple voices in texts. Intertextuality has since acquired various definitions, and the profusion of definitions is overwhelming. The present chapter employs the definition of intertextuality in Discourse Studies and Genre Studies, where intertextuality describes the (explicit or implicit) relations among texts and discourses (Bhatia, 2004; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010). Building on earlier contributions, Feng and Wignell (2011) propose the terminologies 'source' and 'engagement' of voices. Source ascertains who provides the voice, and engagement shows how an external voice is positioned in relation to an internal voice. Although Feng and Wignell (2011) study multimodal advertisements, source and engagement can be extended to language in budget speeches. The chapter outlines the intertextual voicing in budget speeches in Fig. 3.1 by adapting Feng and Wignell (2011) with insights from Bazerman (2004), Bhatia (2004), Fairclough (1995), Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), Martin and White (2005), and van Leeuwen (2008).

Source acknowledges the polyphony or plurality of voices (Bakhtin, 1981). Voices are either internal or external. The internal voice is inherent to genres, and its use is not intertextual (Feng & Wignell, 2011). In budget speeches, it is the government using economic discourse. The external voice is composed of two types of intertextual resources, where a discourse may quote other discourses, or a discourse may adopt the conventions of other discourses. Specific to budget speeches, the former is named locutor voice, and the latter is named discursive voice. I proposed these the two types of resources after an exploratory study of budget speeches.

Locutor voice is a terminology encapsulating the quoted individuals/groups, documents or cultural schemata in budget speeches. Individuals/groups are humans or humanized. Documents are categories of texts or specific texts. Individuals/groups and documents may be named by noun phrases (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 1995). The speech by individuals/groups and documents may be provided in clauses through prepositional or verb phrases or is nominalized (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Cultural schemata cannot be traced to individuals/groups or documents. They have relatively fixed words/phrases, and among their typical representatives are clichés, idioms, proverbs, sayings and similes. Cultural schemata seem to be culture-bound although globalization has expanded the repertoire of schemata (Fairclough, 2003).
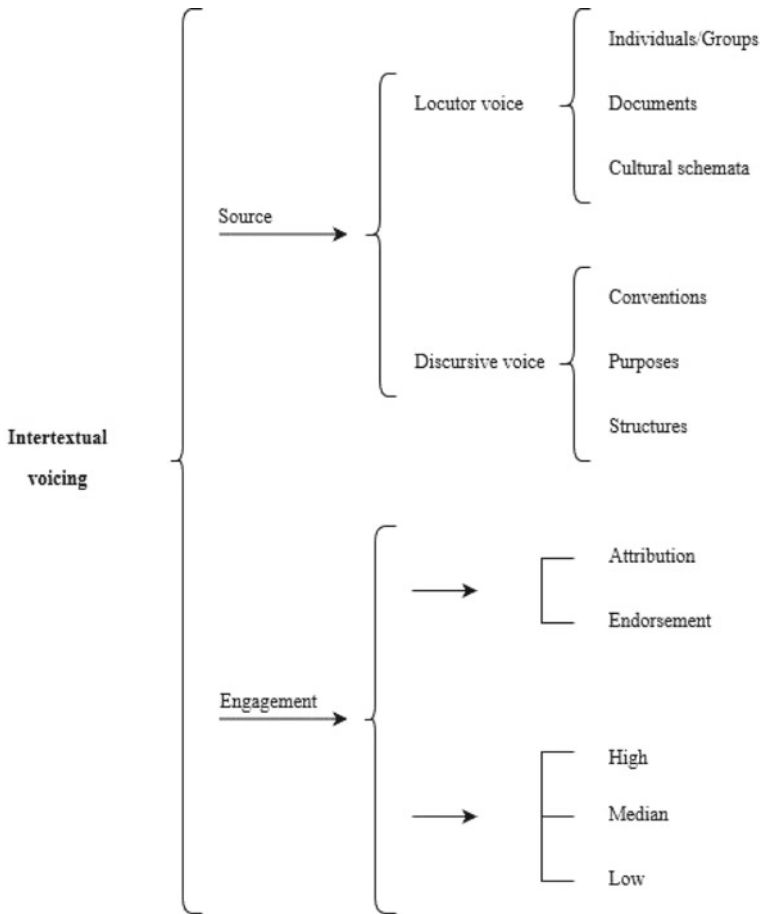
Fig. 3.1 Intertextual voicing in budget speeches

Budget speeches may also adopt the conventions, purposes, and structures of other discourses through discursive voice (Feng & Wignell, 2011). The voice is indicated by topics, words/phrases, or social actors. Every topic has its order and frequency and statements converging around it (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 2003). Words/phrases are adjectives, adverbs, nouns, or verbs indicating an activity or domain (Bazerman, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Social actors investigate how entities taking part in events are construed (van Leeuwen, 2008). Among the representations of social actors are activation/passivation (entities are a dynamic force in events or are undergoing events), genericization/specification (entities are generic or specific), and appraisement (entities are positively or negatively valued) (van Leeuwen, 2008).

Engagement exhibits the stance of the internal voice toward the external voice. It has several options to expand or contract dialogue, but two options (attribution, endorsement) trace dialogue to an external voice (Martin & White, 2005).

The external voice can contract dialogue through endorsement and expand dialogue through attribution. Endorsement makes the internal voice construe the external voice as undeniable or valid (Martin & White, 2005). Attribution makes the internal voice acknowledge or doubt the external voice (Martin & White, 2005). Engagement is also gradable along a high, median, or low scale (Martin & White, 2005). It can indicate the intensity in the locutor voice, where a high, median, or low degree of intensity operates over entities, events, or modalities of inclination, likelihood, obligation, and usuality (Martin & White, 2005). Moreover, it can indicate the degree of integration in the discursive voice (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 1995). High integration blends voices and their boundaries are not easily distinguishable (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 1995). Mid-integration embeds one voice in another voice (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 1995). Low integration sequences one voice after another voice, and their boundaries may signal another section (Bhatia, 2004).

Intertextuality encourages genres to traverse their prototypical boundaries. It permits hybridity (Bhatia, 2004) by mixing 'old' or established and 'new' or novel voices. The reason for mixing shifts in space and time, but it is inspired by changes in social practices. The changes reflect power dynamics, which influences the choice of voices. These practices raise concerns about truth and manipulation in recontextualization (Fairclough, 1995). Intertextuality may recontextualize aspects of reality to cater to the goals and priorities of social groups. It may be strongly linked to ideology and can therefore enable the distribution of ideologies in genres (Feng & Wignell, 2011).

3.5   Data

The budget speeches are tabled in Malay, and the transcripts are later published. The transcription preserves linguistic content but not non-linguistic content (e.g., body language, laughter, pauses, voice pitch/tone/volume). It is not a concern because the present chapter only analyzes the language of the speeches. Although a speech writer may prepare the speeches, their content reflects the government's perspective. The actual writer is perhaps unimportant because these speeches are considered an authentic and authoritative portrayal of the economy (Rajandran, 2013, 2019).

The chapter analyzed an archive of budget speeches from 2010 to 2018. The speeches were delivered by the Prime Minister/Finance Minister under Barisan Nasional (BN), Najib Razak. Although the speeches throughout Najib's tenure (2009–2018) were analyzed, the number of speeches is arguably modest. It became an advantage because a qualitative and interpretive study was pursued, following Abdul-Latif (2011), Atkins and Finlayson (2016), Fairclough (2003), Murray et al. (2016), and Reyes (2011, 2015).

3.6 Method

Although earlier studies examined intertextuality, the criteria for studying voices are not particularly clear. The chapter operationalized a method that involved five sequential stages. The method is a systematic way for studying voices, and it may mitigate arbitrary decisions. It also triangulates academic and practitioner feedback because it is informed by researchers and specialist informants. The first stage was deciding the genre (Bazerman, 2004). The decision should be motivated by one or more research objectives. I decided to explore budget speeches because I wanted to understand the choice of voices in these speeches. Other researchers may be motivated by different reasons.

The second stage was detecting the voices. It should be grounded in language (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, 2011), explaining which language features convey voices (See 'Intertextual Voicing' section). I recruited my experience and judgment to detect voices (Fairclough, 1995), but it was not easily replicable and may not always be reliable. I mitigated these concerns and asked another researcher to also detect voices. The detected voices were reviewed together before an initial inventory of voices in budget speeches was finalized. The third stage was verifying the voices. I consulted specialist informants, as done by Bhatia (2004) and Rajandran (2018). The informants were involved in writing and editing speeches. Although I had information about budget speeches, specialist informants had disciplinary exposure. Our combined theoretical and practical knowledge provided a reasonable basis to identify the voices.

The fourth stage was naming the voices. There was no definitive list of voices to draw on (Fairclough, 1995), and I utilized general knowledge, searched typical or favored terminology in the literature, or asked the specialist informants for suitable names. The naming of voices prioritized comprehension (an easy to decipher name recognized by members of society) and consistency (a name used throughout analysis). The fifth stage was deducing the function of the voices because intertextuality is purposive (Bhatia, 2004; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010). I surveyed the literature and asked the specialist informants about the context. The political context, meaning the configuration of history, culture, economy, and politics, can influence the recontextualization of voices in budget speeches.

3.7 Voicing Economy, Politics, and Religion

Various instances of intertextual voicing are available, but space constraints permit a few representative extracts. Extracts 1–14 reproduce the Malay original, and they were translated into English. In budget speeches, economic discourse is the central discourse (Rajandran, 2018) because it permeates the genre through its use in most sections. The discourse is centered on topics regarding the state of the economy and details of past/future initiatives. Economic discourse quotes organizations in Extracts

1–2 and studies in Extracts 3–4. The organizations and studies represent authorization (van Leeuwen, 2008) because their expertise legitimizes the government pursuing certain initiatives.

Extracts 1–2 explain the state of the economy. The explanation receives median likelihood in Extract 1 using the verb phrase (*italicized*) 'diunjurkan' [projected] but low likelihood in Extract 2 using the verb phrase (*italicized*) 'dijangka' [is expected]. The likelihood varies perhaps because Extract 1 is explicitly traced to an organization ('Tabung Kewangan Antarabangsa' [International Monetary Fund]), but Extract 2 implicitly signals an organization. The IMF can verify its explanation, but the explanation of the unnamed organization cannot be verified. The explanation is attributed to organizations because their expertise is economics. Their authority of expertise (van Leeuwen, 2008) is respected and predicts an economic recovery. Since the economy has recovered, the government can justify the money spent on initiatives.

Extracts 3–4 explain details of future initiatives. Extract 3 names a report ('Laporan United Nations World Tourism Organization' [United Nations World Tourism Organization Report]), and Extract 4 names a policy ('Dasar Agro Makanan Negara' [National Agro-Food Policy]). These studies were produced by reputable organizations, namely the United Nations in Extract 3 and the federal government in Extract 4. Their explanation receives high likelihood because it is taken for granted as factual. The explanation endorses change in tourism and food security because it is the expertise of the studies. The authority of expertise (van Leeuwen, 2008) is respected and inspires new developments. The government can justify initiatives in response to the studies.

Extract 1

Seperti yang *diunjurkan* oleh Tabung Kewangan Antarabangsa atau IMF pada 1 Oktober, ekonomi dunia tahun 2009 menguncup pada kadar yang lebih rendah iaitu negatif 1.1 peratus berbanding negatif 1.4 peratus semasa anggaran dibuat pada bulan Julai tahun ini.

As *projected* by the International Monetary Fund or IMF on October 1, the world economy in 2009 contracted at a lower rate of negative 1.1 percent compared to negative 1.4 percent when estimates were made in July this year.
(2010)

Extract 2

Prestasi ekonomi dunia, turut *dijangka* kembali pulih pada kadar 4.8 peratus berbanding negatif 0.6 peratus tahun 2009.

Global economic performance *is* also *expected* to recover at a rate of 4.8 percent compared to negative 0.6 percent in 2009.
(2011)

Extract 3

Berdasarkan Laporan United Nations World Tourism Organization, pada tahun 2009, Malaysia menduduki tangga ke-9 dari segi bilangan ketibaan pelancong.

Based on the United Nations World Tourism Organization Report, in 2009, Malaysia ranked 9th place in terms of number of tourist arrivals.

(2011)

Extract 4

Melancarkan Dasar Agro Makanan Negara 2011 hingga 2020 yang menggariskan empat strategi iaitu menjamin bekalan makanan mencukupi, meningkatkan nilai ditambah, melengkapkan dan memperkukuhkan rantaian bekalan serta menyediakan guna tenaga pertanian berpengetahuan dan terlatih.

Launch the National Agro-Food Policy 2011 to 2020 that outlines four strategies, namely ensuring adequate food supply, increasing value added, completing and strengthening supply chains as well as providing knowledgeable and trained agricultural employment.

(2012)

Moreover, budget speeches utilize political and religious discourses as auxiliary discourses (Rajandran, 2018), which reinforce economic discourse. Their use makes the government the most suitable political and religious choice for developing the country. Political discourse recontextualizes social actors in practices such as campaigning, governing, legislating, or voting. In budget speeches, the discourse has two topics regarding economic and social governance. Extract 5 explains the topic of debts (economy), and Extract 6 explains the topic of unity (society). 'Kerajaan' [Government] is specified because the noun phrases (**bolded**) 'hari ini' [the day] and 'BN' (Barisan Nasional) signal the federal government, but the noun phrase (**bolded**) 'pihak lain' [other parties] is genericized and evokes the opposition.

The government and opposition are agents and can impact citizens. The government and its practices receive positive evaluation, as designated by the noun phrases (**bolded**) 'usaha memantap tadbir urus fiskal' [improved fiscal governance efforts], 'tanggungjawab moral' [moral responsibility], 'perintis kepada perpaduan kaum' [pioneer of racial unity], and 'teras kestabilan nasional' [core of national stability]. In contrast, the opposition and its practices receive negative evaluation, as designated by the noun phrases (**bolded**) 'konflik' [conflict] and 'kebencian' [hatred] and the verb phrases (*italicized*) 'difitnah' [is slandered] and 'dituduh' [is accused]. The government manages the economy and society, while the opposition could cause socioeconomic risks. Political discourse legitimizes the government and delegitimizes the opposition using moral evaluation (van Leeuwen, 2008) because the government brings stability and the opposition brings instability. Because the government and

opposition, respectively, deliver desirable and undesirable results, the binary of positive 'us' (government) and negative 'them' (opposition) is reproduced (van Dijk, 1997).

Extract 5 has features of economic and political discourses. While several noun phrases (**bolded**) ('usaha memantap tadbir urus fiskal' [improved fiscal governance efforts], 'defisit fiskal' [fiscal deficits], 'kewangan Persekutuan' [Federal finance], 'masalah hutang' [debt problems]) are typical for the economic domain, their use serves the political domain because it conveys government agency. Extract 5 blends economic and political discourses, and the blend displays high integration between the discourses because their boundaries are difficult to distinguish (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 1995). Extract 6 is present after numerous paragraphs of economic discourse. The initiatives (economic discourse) confirm the capability of the government (political discourse). Budget speeches can sequence political discourse after economic discourse, and the sequence displays low integration because the discourses remain separate (Bhatia, 2004).

The moral evaluation in political discourse is strengthened by citing the opposition in Extracts 7–8 and idioms in Extract 9. In Extracts 7–8, the opposition is named by the noun phrases (**bolded**) 'pihak' [parties] and 'seorang pemimpin pembangkang' [an opposition leader]. The verb phrases (*italicized*) 'mencadangkan' [propose] and 'menyebut' [mention] imply low inclination because the opposition does not seem to commit to their opinion about abolishing debts (Extract 7) and about predicting the state of the economy (Extract 8). The internal, government voice (underlined) negates the opinion and gives it negative evaluation using the noun phrases (**bolded**) 'perbuatan yang amat tidak bertanggungjawab' [very irresponsible act], 'sandiwara' [game], 'tiada substance' [no substance], 'pembelot' [defector], and 'perkhianat' [traitor]. Negative evaluation is reinforced by a conditional ('jika dimansuhkan…' [if abolished…]), and a rhetorical question ('siapa…?' [who…?]). The opposition is attributed because their authority of status is recognized (van Leeuwen, 2008), but it is negated to explicitly delegitimize their economic competence and implicitly legitimize the government's competence. The negation distances the government and the opposition. It contrasts those who can and cannot manage the economy, and the contrast strengthens the 'us' and 'them' binary (van Dijk, 1997).

Political discourse also quotes idioms. In Extract 9, the noun phrase (**bolded**) 'pujangga' [poets] does not mean individuals/groups, but it is a metonym for the repository of cultural ideas. The metonym introduces an idiom (dash underlined) to describe unexpected problems. The idiom represents the authority of tradition (van Leeuwen, 2008) because it invokes schemata about problems as part of life. It helps to endorse the internal, government voice (underlined), which articulates the crisis in 2014 as part of life. The adverb (*italicized*) 'Sesungguhnya' [Indeed] implies high usuality because a tangible crisis in real life is emphasized as the manifestation of an abstract cultural idea. Although not about the economy, the idiom shows the government caring for citizens. The government is emphatic but posits the inevitability of problems.

Extract 5

Sejelasnya, Kerajaan yang ada **hari ini** berpegang teguh kepada prinsip bahawa **usaha memantap tadbir urus fiskal** seperti mengurangkan **defisit fiskal** adalah satu **tanggungjawab moral** generasi kita untuk generasi pewaris masa hadapan. Pokoknya, kita tidak mahu mewariskan Malaysia dengan **kewangan Persekutuan** yang terbeban dengan **masalah hutang**.

Clearly, the government of **the day** adheres firmly to the principle that **improved fiscal governance efforts** such as reducing **fiscal deficits** are **the moral responsibility** of our generation for future generations. In any case, we do not want to leave Malaysia with **the Federal finance** burdened by **debt problems**.

(2015)

Extract 6

Kalau kita lihat lagi, hakikatnya Kerajaan **BN** adalah **perintis kepada perpaduan kaum** yang menjadi **teras kestabilan nasional** tetapi **pihak lain** yang ingin menjadi Kerajaan merintis kekuatan melalui **konflik** dan **kebencian**. Kerajaan *difitnah* dan *dituduh* semahunya.

If we look again, the fact is that the **BN** government is **a pioneer of racial unity** that is **the core of national stability,** but **other parties** who want to be the government gain strength through **conflict** and **hatred**. The government *is slandered* and *accused* as they wish.

(2013)

Extract 7

Kita tahu Tuan Yang di-Pertua, ada **pihak** yang *mencadangkan* supaya keseluruhan hutang PTPTN dimansuhkan. Ini adalah satu **perbuatan yang amat tidak bertanggungjawab** kerana jika dimansuhkan, siapa yang akan menanggung lebih 30 bilion ringgit hutang PTPTN?

We know Mr. Speaker Sir, there are **parties** who *propose* that the entire PTPTN debt be abolished. This is **a very irresponsible act** because if abolished, who will bear the over 30 billion ringgit of PTPTN debt?

(2013)

Extract 8

Malah, ada **seorang pemimpin pembangkang** *menyebut* pula, 'Malaysia mengharungi ribut ekonomi yang sukar pada tahun ini'. Saudara dan saudari sekalian, sebenarnya di sini, siapa yang bermain **sandiwara**, siapa yang **tiada substance** sebenarnya, siapa yang menjadi **pembelot** dan **perkhianat** negara sebenarnya, di mana pula timbulnya ribut ni?

In fact, **an opposition leader** even *mentioned*, 'Malaysia faces a difficult economic storm this year'. Ladies and gentlemen, actually, who is playing **a game**, who actually has **no substance**, who actually became **a defector** and **traitor** to the nation, from where has the storm arisen?

(2017)

Extract 9

Bak kata **pujangga**, musim panas, kehujanan, musim hujan, kepanasan. *Sesungguhnya*, tahun 2014 menjadi takwim yang penuh dugaan. Pada suku tahun pertama, belum pun lagi reda dengan misteri kehilangan MH370, rakyat Malaysia dikejutkan pula dengan peristiwa tragik pesawat MH17 milik Malaysia Airlines System ditembak jatuh di timur Ukraine.

As **poets** say, during summer, it rains, during the monsoon, it is hot. *Indeed*, 2014 was a year filled with challenges. In the first quarter, not yet truly understanding the mystery of the disappearance of MH370, Malaysians were shocked by the tragic event of the MH17 plane owned by Malaysia Airlines System being shot down in eastern Ukraine.

(2015)

Budget speeches also employ religious discourse. It recontextualizes social actors in practices such as praying, preaching, predicting, and teaching. In budget speeches, the discourse establishes the topic of petitions. Budget speeches contain Islamic petitions because Islam is the majority (60% Muslim population) and official (Federal Constitution Article 3) religion in Malaysia. Islam enjoys economic and social privileges, and Islamic religious discourse frequently penetrates political genres (Lafaye de Micheaux, 2017).

Extract 10 has a petition for the economy, and Extract 11 shows a petition for an initiative. 'Allah' [God] is specified because it primarily means God in Islam, and 'kita' [we] is specified to refer to the government. The government acquires agency through the noun phrase (**bolded**) 'lawatan ini' [this visit] and the verb phrase (*italicized*) 'telah berusaha' [have worked]. Its agency receives positive evaluation through the adjective (underlined) 'sehabis baik' [well]. The government then shifts agency to God because the verb phrases (*italicized*) 'membuat' [perform], 'mengembalikan' [return], and 'Doakanlah' [Pray] confer God the ultimate agency to decide on results. His decision is presumed to favor the government because it receives positive evaluation, as indicated by the noun phrase (**bolded**) 'kejayaan yang lumayan' [profitable success].

From Extracts 10–11, the government acknowledges Islam and petitions God for his favorable intervention. The government may evoke God because the economy has various uncertainties (Steger & Roy, 2010). During these uncertainties, the government absolves itself of total liability and can claim that God has other plans for the economy. Religious discourse legitimizes the government using moral evaluation (van Leeuwen, 2008) because the government champions Islam although the economy functions along capitalist principles. The discourse can reproduce the binary of positive 'us' (government) and negative 'them' (opposition) (van Dijk, 1997) because the government can demonstrate more Islamic piety than the opposition (Abdul-Latif, 2011).

Extract 10 is present after numerous paragraphs of economic discourse. The petition (religious discourse) comes after initiatives are explained (economic discourse). Budget speeches can sequence religious discourse after economic discourse, and the sequence displays low integration because the discourses remain separate (Bhatia, 2004). Extract 11 has three sentences. The first sentence conveys economic discourse because it describes an initiative. The second sentence continues the description, but it marks a transition between discourses as it inserts a prayerful 'Insya-Allah' [God-willing]. The third sentence conveys religious discourse because it has a petition for the initiative. Budget speeches may embed religious discourse in economic discourse and the embedding displays median integration of the discourses (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 1995). Although religious discourse leaves traces in economic discourse, the removal of certain words/phrases ('Insya-Allah', 'Doakanlah') would separate the two discourses.

The moral evaluation in religious discourse is strengthened by citing scholars in Extract 12 and scriptures in Extracts 13–14. In Extract 12, 'para hukama' [ulemas] explain religious knowledge and acquire the authority of status (Abdul-Latif, 2011; van Leeuwen, 2008). Speech is traced to scholars through the verb phrase (*italicized*) 'kata' [say]. It establishes high usuality because the quotation by scholars presents a taken-for-granted description about godly and human natures in Extract 12. While godly nature receives positive evaluation using the adjective (underlined) 'indah-indah' [beautiful], human nature receives negative evaluation using the adverb (underlined) 'kurang' [less]. The internal, government voice quotes scholars to endorse inadequacies that seem inherent in anything human led. The government can mitigate future problems because being human led, its initiatives may not always be adequate.

Religious discourse also quotes scriptures. In Extracts 13–14, 'Surah Al-Hajj' and 'Surah Yusuf', two chapters in the Quran, and 'Hadis' [Hadith], the sayings of Prophet Muhammad, are the principal basis of Islamic knowledge and acquire the authority of status (Abdul-Latif, 2011; van Leeuwen, 2008). Speech is traced to scriptures through the noun phrases (**bolded**) 'marhum' [interpretation] and 'pengertian' [understanding]. They indicate low inclination because the scriptural quotations only paraphrase a description about human behavior in Extract 13 and a concept in Extract 14. These descriptions are employed for the economy and become the basis for initiatives. The internal, government voice quotes scriptures to endorse the divine sanction of initiatives, giving a veneer of Islamic principles. These principles furnish

a religious justification for initiatives, besides their obvious secular justification. The justification strengthens the 'us' and 'them' binary (van Dijk, 1997) because the government is seen as Islamic, and the opposition becomes un-Islamic if it questions the presumably divine-sanctioned initiatives.

Extract 10

Akhir kalam, dalam segala kudrat manusia, kita *telah berusaha* <u>sehabis baik</u>. Kepada Allah kita *membuat* segala penyerahan dan *mengembalikan* segala urusan.

Finally, in human terms, we *have worked* <u>well</u>. To Allah, we *perform* all surrender and *return* all affairs.

(2014)

Extract 11

Pelaburan untuk kilang LED di Kulim, Kedah ini adalah yang terbesar dan terkini di seluruh dunia. Insya-Allah, minggu hadapan, saya akan ke China pula. *Doakanlah* agar **lawatan ini** akan membawa **kejayaan yang lumayan** untuk negara kita.

This investment for the LED factory in Kulim, Kedah is the largest and latest in the whole world. God-willing, next week, I will go to China. *Pray* that **this visit** will bring **profitable success** for our country.

(2017)

Extract 12

Akhir kalam, bak *kata* para hukama, yang <u>indah-indah</u> itu dari Ilahi dan yang <u>kurang</u> itu sifat insani.

Finally, as the ulemas *say*, anything <u>beautiful</u> is from the divine, and anything <u>less</u> is human nature.

(2016)

Extract 13

Sayugia, sambil merujuk-rujuk **mafhum** tafsir daripada Surah Yusuf, bahawa Tuhan tidak menyuruh kita berhenti dari berusaha, Tuhan juga tidak benarkan kita sesekali berputus asa dari rahmatNya, dan apatah lagi sesungguhnya, Tuhan juga tetap menjanjikan kepada hamba-hambaNya yang berislah dan beriltizam, bahawa, kejayaan pasti menjelma jua.

Indeed, referring to **the interpretation** of Surah Yusuf that God does not ask us to stop trying, God also does not allow us to ever give up on His grace,

and indeed, God also always promises His servants who work hard and who are committed that success will ultimately be achieved.
(2016)

Extract 14

Manakala menerusi **pengertian** Surah Al-Hajj dan Hadis antaranya Riwayat Ahmad, Haa-Ji-Yat pula, berkaitan perkara yang diperlukan oleh manusia bagi memberi kemudahan kepada mereka supaya tidak berlaku kesempitan yang membawa kepada kesulitan dan kesukaran hidup.

Whereas through **the understanding** of Surah Al-Hajj and Hadith, among which are Riwayat Ahmad, Haa-Ji-Yat refers to things required by humans to give them comfort so that insecurities that cause inconveniences and difficulties in life do not happen.
(2018)

3.8 Intertextual Voicing: Perpetuating Government Economic Agency?

From Extracts 1–14, Malaysian federal budget speeches articulate voices in economics, politics, and religion. The locutor voice quotes individuals/groups (opposition, organizations, scholars), documents (scriptures, studies), and cultural schemata (idioms), and the discursive voice adopts conventions in politics and religion. The choice of voices is shaped by the Malaysian context, which helps to understand the significance of the voices. In budget speeches, economic discourse is the central discourse because it is used in most sections (Bhatia, 2004; Rajandran, 2018). The discourse confirms the government discharging its economic responsibility in terms of anticipating revenues, expenditures, policies, and activities (Lukin, 2015; Thompson, 2015). The absence of the discourse would disrupt meaning as budget speeches cannot convey their content. Economic discourse quotes organizations and studies because their expertise legitimizes the government pursuing certain initiatives.

Also, in budget speeches, political and religious discourses are auxiliary discourses and reinforce the central discourse (Rajandran, 2018). Political discourse contrasts the government and opposition delivering desirable and undesirable results, respectively. The discourse gives a political perspective to public economic initiatives because the government can outshine the opposition in economic decision-making. Religious discourse reconciles capitalism and Islam because the government can achieve Islamic principles through the capitalist economy. These principles placate the Muslim-majority population and bolster the official religion, which reduces the

charisma of opposition Islamic political parties (Lafaye de Micheaux, 2017). While political discourse projects the government's capability, religious discourse projects its piety. These discourses legitimize the government because their moral evaluation makes the government the most suitable choice for developing the country. The legitimation is complemented by negating the authority of the opposition and recognizing the authority of idioms, scholars, and scriptures.

The choice of voices reveals the imprint of power because it involves the strategic articulation of voices. Budget speeches by design incorporate the internal voice, but its portrayal of economic competence would sound biased. The use of the internal voice alone could increase resistance to budget speeches because the portrayal insinuates self-praise. Budget speeches incorporate the external voice, which enhances the credibility and reliability of the portrayal. The use of the external voice may decrease resistance to budget speeches (Abdul-Latif, 2011) because the portrayal is legitimized by moralization (Extracts 5–6, 10–11) and authorization (Extracts 1–4, 7–9, 12–14). The portrayal creates a particular version of reality about the government (Murray et al., 2016), and BN acquires positive values through the validation of economic, political, and religious voices.

Previous research (Abdul-Latif, 2011; Atkins & Finlayson, 2016; Fairclough, 2003; Murray et al., 2016; Reyes, 2011, 2015) shows how governance is legitimized by intertextual voicing. Malaysian federal budget speeches reflect the trend because the Barisan Nasional (BN) government incorporates voices in budget speeches to legitimize its economic competence. The government can argue that it can identify, expand, and exploit policies and activities to develop the country. Hence, the voices in budget speeches can be considered as voices of economic competence because economic, political, and religious voices legitimize government actions and decisions for the Malaysian economy.

Intertextual voicing serves ideological purposes in budget speeches because it perpetuates government economic agency, a continuing feature of the Malaysian economy (Lafaye de Micheaux, 2017). The government is promoted as able to manage the economy. The promotion normalizes a paternalistic government, who guides and supervises economic decision-making for citizens (Rajandran, 2019). The binary and dependent relationship characterizes the developmental state (Nasrudin et al., 2013), and its maintenance is believed to foster development. Intertextual voicing sustains the status quo, as if only BN can transform the country through public economic initiatives. In budget speeches, BN promotes itself as indispensable to Malaysian development, and it should consequently continue to govern the country. The discursive legitimation of its economic competence strengthens its claim to political power.

Budget speeches then become part of the genres that validate BN, such as advertisements, election manifestos, interviews and press releases. The genres obscured the distinction between campaigning and governing because they were employed to maintain citizen confidence in BN. BN required their confidence to retain the federal government during elections and to ensure their participation in initiatives in other periods. The endeavor became harder because other parties contested the discursive legitimation of economic competence. The contestation generated debates,

which debilitated the legitimation. These debates manifested citizens' concerns about cronyism, corruption, rising cost of living, taxation, and government financial scandals (notably 1Malaysia Development Limited). The discourse was compromised, and Pakatan Harapan (PH) defeated BN in the 2018 general elections. Clearly, the voices of economic competence could not indefinitely maintain citizen confidence in BN.

In conclusion, the chapter has explored legitimation through intertextual voicing in Malaysian federal budget speeches. The economic, political, and religious voices legitimize the economic competence of the BN government. The chapter reinforces the contribution of intertextuality to Discourse Studies and Genre Studies (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2011). The use of voices may legitimize entities or events in discourses, and subsequently enhance arguments. Knowledge of intertextuality should be inculcated as part of discursive competence or a systematic way to decipher and deploy semiotic features (Rajandran, 2018). The competence may stimulate critical thinking. Citizens can learn to identify voices. They should evaluate discourse and reality, and demand transparency in politics. The practice of discursive competence should transcend emancipatory academic exercise (Abdul-Latif, 2011) and importantly, become an element of engaged citizenry (Rajandran, 2013, 2019).

Malaysian budget speeches constitute a large repository for analysis, as they have been produced since 1960. Future research can track diachronic changes and inspect earlier budget speeches (1960–2018) by Barisan Nasional or later budget speeches by the federal government under Pakatan Harapan (2018–2020) and Perikatan Nasional (2020–2021) (See Farrah Diebaa and Su'ad, Chap. 4). Research can also track change over time and inspect budget speeches of other countries. The diachronic and synchronic variables can disclose how intertextual voicing legitimizes a government's actions and decisions. Comparative studies may reveal the choice of voices across different political contexts. Moreover, intertextuality may or may not be a conscious strategy, and future research can discover how writers and readers interpret voices through ethnographic and experimental methods. Therefore, various avenues exist for the analysis of intertextuality, which enriches our understanding of its contribution to political discourse.

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