

Analyzing Apposition and the Typology of Specific Reference in Newspaper Discourse in Nigeria

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Abstract : The language of the print media is characterized by the use of apposition. This linguistic element function strategically in journalistic discourse where it is communicatively necessary to name individuals and provide information about them. Linguistic studies on the language of the print media with bias for apposition have largely dwelt on other areas but the examination of the typology of appositive reference in newspaper discourse. Yet, it is capable of revealing ways writers communicate and provide information necessary for readers to follow and understand the message. The study, therefore, analyses the patterns of appositional occurrences and the typology of reference in newspaper articles. The data were obtained from The Punch and Daily Trust Newspapers. A total of six editions of these newspapers were collected randomly spread over three months. News and feature articles were used in the analysis. Guided by the referential theory of meaning in discourse, the appositions identified were subjected to analysis. The findings show that the semantic relation of coreference and speaker coreference have the highest percentage and frequency of occurrence in the data. This is because the subject matter of news reports and feature articles focuses on humans and the events around them; as a result, readers need to be provided with some form of detail and background information in order to identify as well as follow the discourse. Also, the non-referential relation of absolute synonymy and speaker synonymy no doubt have fewer occurrences and percentages in the analysis. This is tied to a major feature of the language of the media: simplicity. The paper concludes that appositions is mainly used for the purpose of providing the reader with much detail. In this way, the writer transmits information which helps him not only to give detailed yet concise descriptions but also in some way help the reader to follow the discourse.

Keywords : apposition, discourse, newspaper, Nigeria, reference

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