

Article

Coherence in Communication: Analyzing Discourse Markers in *Punch* and *Vanguard*

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Abstract

Discourse markers are linguistic devices used to signal relationships between ideas, structure discourse, and facilitate communication. This research investigates discourse markers in selected Nigerian Newspapers articles published in *Punch* and *Vanguard* (June 2023). The major objectives are to: identify the types of discourse markers, analyze the functions of discourse markers, and ascertain the dominant discourse markers in the selected Nigerian Newspapers articles using Halliday and Hasan's classification of discourse markers. The data in this study were purposively selected from Nigerian newspaper articles, namely, *Punch* and *Vanguard* (June 2023). The methods of data analysis utilized are both qualitative and quantitative. The result of this research shows that the additive discourse marker is the most dominant discourse marker used in the selected Nigerian newspaper articles. Through quantitative analysis, additive markers, positioned strategically throughout the text, wielded a substantial influence on shaping the discourse's trajectory and fostering a smoother flow of information. A total of 25 discourse markers were discovered. The additive discourse marker is 39.29%, the adversative discourse marker is 21.43% while the continuative/temporal discourse marker is 21.43%, and finally, the causal discourse marker is 17.85%. The discovery underscored their integral role in maintaining text coherence and guiding reader interpretation, functioning as connective threads within the narrative fabrics.

Keywords: Media Discourse, Coherence, Additive Discourse Markers, Adversative Discourse Markers, Casual Discourse Markers, Continuative/Temporal Discourse Markers

Introduction

Media discourse refers to the language and communication practices employed in the context of media, encompassing newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and online platforms. It involves the use of specific linguistic devices, rhetorical strategies, and persuasive techniques to convey information, shape public opinion, and engage a wide audience. Media discourse is characterized by carefully crafted language, textual structures, and narrative techniques that aim to capture attention, maintain interest, and effectively communicate messages. It reflects the socio-cultural context, values, and ideologies prevalent in a given society. Studying media discourse involves analyzing language use, discourse strategies, and textual features to understand how meaning is constructed, information is organized, and ideologies are conveyed through media texts.

Anne O'Keeffe (2006) opines that "Media discourse refers to interactions that take place through a broadcast platform, whether spoken or written, in which the discourse is oriented to a non-present reader, listener or viewer". This suggests that media discourse encompasses the exchanges occurring via platforms like TV, radio, newspapers, or digital media. It involves communication, whether spoken or written, directed towards an audience not physically present during the interaction. In other words, creators tailor their content, be it news, articles, or broadcasts, to be comprehensible and engaging for readers, listeners, or viewers who will engage

with it at a different time or place. This orientation shapes how information is crafted and delivered, understanding that the audience's absence during the interaction requires a distinct approach to maintain coherence and effectiveness.

Discourse markers are linguistic devices used to signal relationships between ideas, structure discourse, and facilitate communication. Some common terms include pragmatic particles, pragmatic markers, discourse particles, connectives, linking devices, transition markers, conversational markers, interjections, sequential markers, cohesive devices, pragmatic connectors, and modal particles. The choice of term depends on the specific aspect and linguistic conventions.

Discourse markers can be single words, phrases, or even complete sentences, and they play a crucial role in guiding the listener or reader through the flow of information, enhancing coherence, and facilitating understanding. They help to establish connections between different parts of a discourse, such as introducing new information, providing examples, indicating cause and effect, or expressing contrast. Discourse markers are an essential component of effective communication, enabling smooth and coherent interactions in both spoken and written language. They are used to signal the relationship between different parts of a discourse. Discourse markers are universal in all languages and serve various functions in discourse, including signaling relationships between clauses, marking contrasts, signaling speaker attitude, and providing coherence to the discourse. Fraser (1990) presents a pragmatic view of markers; Schiffrin (1987) presents a discourse view of markers, while Halliday and Hassan (1976) present the semantic view of markers as cohesive elements.

Discourse markers play a crucial role in shaping media discourse. Discourse markers within Nigerian newspaper articles serve as important linguistic cues that guide readers through the flow of information, establish connections between ideas, and enhance coherence. They help structure the discourse, signal transitions, provide emphasis, and indicate relationships between different parts of the text. Understanding the usage and functions of discourse markers in Nigerian newspaper articles is essential for comprehending how language is utilized to shape media discourse, convey messages, and effectively engage readers.

The use of discourse markers has been the subject of extensive research in linguistics. Researchers have examined their use in various contexts, including conversation, writing, and media discourse. In recent times, there has been an increasing interest in the use of discourse markers in media discourse, especially in newspapers. This is because newspapers are a significant source of information and play a crucial role in shaping public opinion. Therefore, the study of discourse markers in newspapers can provide valuable insights into how they are used to convey meaning and influence readers.

This research examines discourse markers in selected Nigerian newspaper articles and aims to investigate the types, functions, and dominant discourse markers in selected Nigerian newspaper articles published in June 2023, contributing to the understanding of language use in media discourse and shedding light on the specific characteristics of Nigerian media communication. The objectives of the study are summarized in the points below:

1. To identify the types of discourse markers according to Halliday and Hasan's classification in the selected Nigerian Newspapers articles
2. To analyze the function of discourse makers in the selected Nigerian Newspapers articles
3. To ascertain the dominant discourse markers in the selected Nigerian Newspapers articles

Review of Related Studies

Previous research on discourse markers has explored functions and frequencies of discourse markers from different perspectives. This work presents the systematic frames of their analysis of discourse markers in different instances of discourse and also considers related literature on media discourse and its relationship to the discourse markers. Also, other works on the nature of discourse markers in other discourse categories other than media discourse are reviewed. These are done after studying and getting acquainted with existing works in our area of research, revealing the lacuna in previous literature and how our study fills the gaps observed.

Fei and Zou (2023) addressed the function of discourse markers in media in their well-researched article titled "The Functions and Meaning Potentials of Discourse Markers in the TV Talk Show Discourse." Discourse markers, according to them, "are the presentation of meta-linguistically reflexive activity in interaction." They also maintained that discourse markers have a meaning potential rather than a fixed meaning. Discourse markers were once regarded to be superfluous in discourse, particularly in verbal language. Linguists, on the other hand, recognise that the function of discourse markers is critical in expressing communicators' intentions and construing their narrative. Based on Briton's thesis on the dichotomy of discourse marker functions, this study intends to determine the usage of preference, functions, and meaning potential of discourse markers.

Yulianto (2021) investigated discourse markers in four Jakarta Post news articles based on Halliday and Hasan's points of view in a similar study titled "Discourse Markers in News Articles of the Jakarta Post." They were cumulative, adverse, causative, and ongoing. The researcher employed a descriptive qualitative method with sentences from publications that contained discourse markers as data. The data were analysed using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) notion of discourse markers. The findings revealed 21 discourse markers in four news articles. The news pieces all had additive, adversative, causal, and temporal/continuous discourse markers. The number of discourse markers in the Jakarta Post news story was ample for readers to understand the articles better.

Alsager et al (2020) carried out a study on "Discourse Markers in Arabic and English Newspaper Articles: The Case of the Arabic *Lakin* and its English equivalent *But*." They defined discourse markers as words or phrases that play a significant role in promoting coherent segments of discourse. They looked at how discourse markers were used in newspaper articles. This study used Fraser's framework to investigate the functions and placements of the discourse markers 'but' (English) and its Arabic equivalent 'lakin' (Arabic) in newspaper stories written by native and non-native English speakers, as well as Saudi and

Egyptian Arabic speakers. It also highlighted the similarities and differences in the roles and placements of the discourse markers 'but' and 'lakin'. A corpus-based methodology was applied in this quantitative study. The articles were gathered from 12 newspapers published in English in Saudi Arabia (Arab News, Saudi Gazette, Asharq Al-Awsat), Egypt (Al-Ahram, Al-Gomhuria, Eltahrir), Saudi Arabia (Alriyadh, Al Jazirah, AlHayat), and the United States (Washington Post, The New York Times, USA TODAY). They are discourse markers, albeit both native and non-native speakers use them as confirmation or addition markers frequently. However, in traditional Arabic, 'lakin' is the primary correcting discourse signal. Despite dialect differences, native Arabic speakers frequently employ 'lakin' for the same goals. This investigation also demonstrated that the word 'lakin' can only be found in the medial position, whereas the word 'but' can be found in both the initial and medial positions. They concluded that discourse markers, 'but' and 'lakin' demonstrated that the functions of Fraser's suggested discourse markers are universal and may be generalised.

Rasheed and Nazim (2020) in their study “An analysis of the use of Discourse Markers in Pakistani Punjabi Newspapers” explored the different types of discourse markers in Punjabi newspapers published in Pakistan. They described the function of discourse markers in terms of increasing the coherent links between speech and text units. The study used a descriptive design. The discourse markers studied in this study were represented using the Fraser taxonomy. Language, according to the academics, is an instrument that depicts what is on our minds. Discourse Markers, according to them, are connecting phrases, words, or sentences. They studied the purposes of discourse markers in media discourse and the frequency of discourse markers in the Pakistani Punjabi daily Bhulaikha, as well as the sorts of discourse markers employed in Bhulaikha. Elaborative discourse markers were employed by Punjabi newspaper writers to explain their ideas, and temporal discourse markers were utilised to convey time and date.

Bedu (2019) investigated “Meta-discourse Markers in Nigerian Newspapers Editorials: A Bond between Text Producers and Reading Community”. The study argued that meta-discourse indicators linguistically store clues on how text producers aim to advise and steer their audience so that the community understands both the discourse and the writer's perspective. According to him, the qualitative and quantitative discussions in his paper demonstrate that the interpersonal and textual meta-discourse markers used in the selected articles are critical rhetorical devices used by editorial writers to not only engage and influence readers, but also to direct and signal to them the propositional content and information organisation of the texts for their easy understanding and interpretation of the discourse.

Jauro et al (2014) carried out a study on “An Evaluation of the Use of Discourse Markers in Nigerian Newspapers”. The study is a corpus-based study with a descriptive design. Purposive sampling was utilised by the researchers to acquire data. The analysis found that news writers in Nigerian newspapers utilise additive, adversative, causal, and temporal discourse markers to communicate information to their readers, and that they operate to strengthen

the coherent relationships between the units of talk in the text analysed. It is consequently recommended that Nigerian newspaper writers be trained in the appropriate use of discourse markers in information transmission. This research is connected to the current study in its field of study, which is discourse markers and their use in Nigerian newspapers in general, except that the current study focuses solely on articles.

Tera (2017) evaluated “The uses and advantages of Discourse Markers on Speaking Skill Learning at Pesantren-Based”. Discourse markers are frequently encountered by her during the process of communicating, utilising her speaking abilities. In this instance, the speaker and listener will always offer a sign as evidence that they can comprehend each other. They can listen in on the conversation or the lecture. Discourse markers are used by both parties to indicate interest and comprehension of what is being discussed. The researcher describes the variety of discourse markers in three languages in this study: English, Indonesian and Madura. The researcher saw the Pesantren-Based English course three times and documented it. Pesantren is an Islamic boarding home where students immerse themselves in a learning environment based on Islamic beliefs. English-based Pesantren was chosen since all students and teachers must speak English even when undertaking daily activities. The findings revealed that discourse markers serve two purposes: textual and interpersonal.

From the review of the literature, it can be deduced that little attention has been paid to Nigerian media discourse in the study of discourse markers. It also surveyed previous studies and research conducted in this area, identified gaps and limitations in the existing literature. Other studies that we have reviewed here have concentrated on their data mainly and analyzed the functions of discourse markers in media discourse, but not in the selected Nigerian newspaper articles (June 2023). For instance: Fei and Zou (2023) explored “The Functions and Meaning Potentials of Discourse Markers in the Tv Talk Show Discourse”, Yulianto (2021) investigated “Discourse Markers in News Articles of the Jakarta Post”, Alsager, Afzal and Aldawood (2020) investigated “Discourse Markers in Arabic and English Newspaper Articles: The Case of the Arabic *Lakin* and its English equivalent *But*”, Rasheed and Nazim (2020) investigated “An analysis of the use of Discourse Markers in Pakistani Punjabi Newspapers”, Bedu (2019) investigated “Meta-discourse Markers in Nigerian Newspapers Editorials: A Bond between Text Producers and Reading Community”, Jauro, Teneke and Bitrus (2014) investigated “An Evaluation of the Use of Discourse Markers in Nigerian Newspapers”. It is observed that the majority of the studies carried out on media discourse used the qualitative method of analysis, while a few used the quantitative and mixed methods. This study addresses a research gap and guides future research on discourse markers in Nigerian newspaper articles.

Methodology

Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain data for the analysis on the use of discourse markers in articles in selected Nigerian newspapers. The samples of data were selected from the articles in the selected Nigerian newspapers. The data collection process involves systematically retrieving the selected Nigerian newspaper articles online, meticulously documenting their sources, publication

dates, and genres. The chosen articles underwent rigorous analysis, identifying discourse markers, analyzing their functions, and assessing their frequency within the selected corpus.

This study used a mixed-methods approach to analyze discourse markers in Nigerian newspaper articles. The qualitative component involves a thorough content analysis of the articles, and it identified various discourse marker types using Halliday and Hasan's classification. The quantitative analysis assesses the frequency and the dominant discourse markers in the research, providing a numerical perspective on their frequency. The study analyzed news articles from two Nigerian newspapers, Punch and Vanguard 2023. It includes articles that meet the requirements of relevance to the research topic, full-text content availability, and balanced representation across different sections of the newspapers. A total of 20 excerpts were selected from both Punch and Vanguard newspapers for analysis. The researchers used quantitative analysis to calculate word counts and maintain a clean-text policy. Extra text and marks were removed to maintain primary information. The articles were read to identify discourse markers, frequency, usage patterns, and functions. The qualitative analysis employs a simple percentage method. The analysis was tabulated to show discourse markers that are dominant in the newspaper articles. The simple percentage formula was used to calculate the percentage rate of each type of discourse marker in the selected newspaper articles. This approach ensures the achievement of the objectives of this research and provides a comprehensive understanding of discourse marker usage in the context of selected Nigerian newspaper articles.

Thus, the formula:

$$\text{Simple percentage formula: } \frac{\text{Total number of each type of discourse markers} \times 100}{\text{Total number of all the discourse markers}} \quad 1$$

This mixed descriptive analysis provides a nuanced understanding of discourse markers' role in shaping media discourse. The research investigated and analyzed the types, frequencies, and functions of discourse markers employed in these articles. By examining the discourse markers in Nigerian newspaper discourse, the study sought to gain insights into how these linguistic devices contribute to the structure, coherence, and effectiveness of the articles. The research focused on understanding how discourse markers are used within the specific context of Nigerian newspaper articles and their role in guiding reader interpretation and conveying meaning.

Theoretical Framework

The Coherence theory in linguistics has been explored and discussed by various scholars across different fields. Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan's view on coherence theory, rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), offers a robust framework for understanding coherence in discourse, including the role of discourse markers. This theory delves into how linguistic choices work together to create cohesive and coherent communication. When applied as a framework for analyzing discourse markers, Halliday and Hasan's view on coherence theory provides valuable insights into how these markers contribute to the overall

coherence and structure of texts. Some Linguists who viewed Coherence theory also are: Paltridge (2012), Carter and McCarthy (2006), Gee (1999), Salkie (1995), Schiffrin (1987), and Van Dijk (1977).

Coherence theory, according to Van Dijk (1977), focuses on how texts are organized and structured to form a meaningful whole. It is concerned with the relationships between sentences and propositions in a text and how they contribute to the overall interpretation and understanding of the discourse. Coherence involves the integration of information, where each part of the discourse contributes to the coherent interpretation of the whole. Gee (1999) describes coherence as the principle that governs how elements within a text are connected to one another to create a unified and intelligible communication. Coherent texts have logical connections between sentences and ideas, making it easier for readers or listeners to follow the flow of information and derive meaning from the discourse.

Paltridge (2012) explains that coherence is achieved when a text's content and organization contribute to its meaningfulness and understandability. This involves ensuring that the information is structured in a way that readers can follow and that there is a clear progression of ideas that supports the intended message. Salkie (1995) defines coherence as the property of a text that allows it to be easily understood and interpreted by readers or listeners. Coherent texts are organized in a way that avoids confusion and facilitates the construction of a coherent mental representation of the information.

Carter and McCarthy (2006) note that coherence is the result of both cohesive ties (lexical and grammatical connections between sentences) and coherent structure (the way ideas are sequenced and organized). These elements work together to ensure that a text flows logically and that the relationships between ideas are clear. Schiffrin (1987) emphasizes that coherence is achieved through the interplay of linguistic elements and world knowledge. It involves creating a context in which the reader can make connections between ideas and infer relationships based on linguistic cues and background information.

These definitions highlight the shared understanding that coherence theory involves the interplay of linguistic and contextual factors to create a unified and meaningful discourse. Coherence is achieved through careful organization, logical connections, and the utilization of linguistic devices to guide the reader's interpretation and understanding.

This study focuses on Halliday and Hasan's view of coherence theory. Central to their view on coherence theory, "Cohesion in English" (1976), is the recognition of the textual meta-function's significance in orchestrating coherence within texts. Discourse markers, acting as linguistic tools, assume a pivotal role in guiding readers through the text. By signifying relationships between ideas, these markers facilitate the organization of information, thereby shaping the overall flow of discourse. This role aligns closely with the textual meta-function's objective, significantly contributing to the coherent construction of a text. Furthermore, the emphasis on cohesion and coherence, as expounded in "Cohesion in English" (1976),

underscores how discourse markers function as cohesive devices to connect various parts of the text. These markers foster connections and bolster coherence by guiding the audience's interpretation of relationships between ideas. By establishing a logical flow of ideas, discourse markers ensure that readers navigate the text seamlessly and construct a coherent understanding of its content.

Their discussion on reference and ellipsis, central to "Cohesion in English" (1976), aligns harmoniously with the role of discourse markers. Frequently involving references and ellipses, these markers embody crucial cohesive elements. References, encompassing pronouns or words that refer back to prior elements and ellipsis, involving the omission of understood words, contribute indispensably to the functioning of discourse markers. Moreover, discourse markers can explicitly enhance references or indicate the omission of information, further contributing to the text's cohesive fabric.

In conclusion, Halliday and Hasan's view of coherence theory, as elucidated in "Cohesion in English" (1976), serves as an enlightening framework for understanding the role of discourse markers within discourse. By comprehending how these markers contribute to cohesion, coherence, reference, and ellipsis, researchers gain profound insights into how linguistic choices intricately shape communication, fostering meaningful interpretation across diverse contexts.

Data Analysis

This section gives general findings on discourse markers usage in selected Nigerian newspapers within a specific timeframe, and analyzes their role in contributing to coherence. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) model for analyzing discourse markers was used in the study. This model deals with connective devices in writing for coherence. The analysis was done on the following heading:

Additive Discourse Markers

Additive markers are used to link semantic similarity in discourse units, introducing repeating ideas or adding new information to maintain text coherence. They play a crucial role in newspaper articles, as they influence public opinion and persuade readers to accept the writer's interpretation. Examples include and, or, also in addition, additionally, furthermore, besides, similarly, likewise, by contrast, for instance, etc. The following excerpts below therefore is analyzed in relation to the discourse marker used:

Excerpt 1: In God's adamant **and** inscrutable will, TB Joshua came to the scene when the acts of Christianity seen in Jesus Christ **and** His early disciples **and** apostles, as captured in the Bible, were gradually becoming moonlight tales to this generation. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (sic) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 2: There's no hide **and** seek in his life. He was love personified. The humblest human being I have ever come across. Firm **and** stern, even in his moment of severity, you would still find love

encapsulated. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (*sic*) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

- Excerpt 3:** Transport sector **also** gained significant progress as rail-lines were laid to link some parts of the country **and** beyond such as the rail track linking Kano to the Niger Republic, while teachers **and** lecturers smiled at their salaries along with retirement age extension. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)
- Excerpt 4:** Peace is vital towards development in all ramifications; nothing could be overhauled or achieved in a rancorous situation, **and** therefore security of lives **and** property is pertinent. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)
- Excerpt 5:** President Tinubu's administration needs to come up with empowerment programmes that will encourage those who attended schools **and** those who didn't. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Additive Discourse Markers function in the *Vanguard* newspaper article

In **Excerpt 1**, the additive discourse marker "and" is used in a sentence to establish an additive relationship between different elements, enhancing coherence and reinforcing their cumulative effect. In this context, the sentence discusses the time when TB Joshua emerged, juxtaposing his appearance with previous acts of Christianity. The use of "and" connects the various elements - "acts of Christianity seen in Jesus Christ," "His early disciples and apostles," and "captured in the Bible" - to emphasize their collective relevance. By grouping these elements, "and" enhances the coherence of the sentence, showing a cohesive link between them. This additive discourse marker helps readers follow the logical progression of ideas, highlighting the accumulation of Christianity-related references and their significance in the context of TB Joshua's emergence. The additive discourse marker "and" in this sentence helps readers understand the context and significance of the situation by connecting similar ideas and reinforcing their cumulative effect.

In **Excerpt 2**, the additive discourse marker "and" is used in sentences to establish an additive relationship between different qualities and characteristics, enhancing coherence and reinforcing the overall portrayal. In the given sentences, "and" is used to add a series of distinct qualities and characteristics that contribute to the cumulative description of the subject. These qualities include being straightforward, embodying love, displaying humility, and showing firmness even during severity. The use of "and" connects these qualities, highlighting their combined presence in the subject. By presenting these characteristics in succession, "and" enhances the coherence of the description, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the subject. This additive discourse marker helps readers follow the logical progression of ideas, showcasing the accumulation of distinct attributes that collectively define the subject's personality.

Additive Discourse Markers function in the *Punch* newspaper article

In **Excerpt 3**, the discourse markers "and" and "also" play a crucial role in enhancing the coherence of sentences. They establish connections between related ideas and emphasize additional information. In the first sentence, "Transport sector also gained significant progress as rail-lines were laid to link parts of the country and beyond," "also" introduces an additional point related to the preceding information, emphasizing the cumulative effect of advancements in various areas. This usage enhances coherence by showing the comprehensive nature of the progress. In the second sentence, "while teachers and lecturers smiled at their salaries along with retirement age extension," "also" functions similarly, introducing an additional piece of information, indicating that teachers and lecturers experienced positive outcomes in conjunction with two specific circumstances: their salaries and the extension of retirement age. The use of "and" connects the two related actions, highlighting their simultaneity and aligning with the overall theme of positive developments for these professionals. In both sentences, "also" and "and" contribute to coherence by presenting related ideas in a connected and organized manner. "Also" introduces supplementary information, emphasizing additional points, while "and" establishes links between related actions, highlighting their parallel occurrences. These discourse markers help guide the reader through the text and underscore the relationships between different elements, ultimately enhancing the overall coherence of the content.

In **Excerpt 4**, the additive discourse marker "and" is used to connect and emphasize the importance of peace, development, security, and achieving goals in a sentence. It establishes a logical connection between the concepts of peace and security, emphasizing their interdependence in contributing to the overall well-being and progress of society. The sentence initially emphasizes the significance of peace for overall development, but the use of "and" further strengthens the connection between these concepts. The logical flow between related ideas is demonstrated, and the additive discourse marker "and" unifies the concepts, highlighting their collective role in societal progress. In summary, the "and" in this sentence serves to highlight the interconnectedness of peace, development, achievement, and security, enhancing coherence and highlighting their collective role in societal progress.

In **Excerpt 5**, the additive discourse marker "and" is used to connect and introduce two related ideas, indicating an addition or extension of the previous point. It helps maintain coherence by signaling that the upcoming idea is complementary to the preceding one. In the sentence, "President Tinubu's administration needs to come up with empowerment programs that will encourage those who attended schools and those who didn't." The additive nature of "and" conveys that both groups should be included in the planned empowerment initiatives. The use of "and" enhances coherence by seamlessly connecting the two ideas and indicating their mutual relevance. It helps readers understand the broader scope of President Tinubu's administration's plans for empowerment and how it applies to individuals with different educational backgrounds. In summary, the additive discourse marker "and" serves to connect the ideas of encouraging individuals who attended schools and those who didn't attend schools with the concept of empowerment programs,

contributing to coherence by signaling the relationship between these ideas and ensuring a smooth transition between them.

Adversatives Discourse Markers

In adversative, the discourse marker represents a contrary idea to what is expected. The expectation depends on what is being said. It serves as a contrast between different points of view. Examples include "however," "nevertheless," and "on the other hand."

Excerpt 6: He was extraordinarily generous and at home in humility with all categories of people as a friend, **however** commonised other people may look at them. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (sic) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 7: To TB Joshua, Christianity is not a religion **but** a relationship with God. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (sic) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 8: He faced satanic conspiracies and persecution galore, **but** the man remained focused with unmitigated perseverance, vision and mission of his divine assignments, which he tenaciously upheld victoriously till the last. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (sic) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 9: Many benefitted from the N-Power scheme **but** more than 50 per cent of the beneficiaries are redundant. The rate of graduates from institutions is increasing annually **but** the labour market is congested. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Excerpt 10: The country, in the past eight years, witnessed transformation in some sectors of the economy, **yet** challenges are inevitable as they hinder the smooth implementation of budgets. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Adversatives Discourse Markers function in the Vanguard newspaper article

In **Excerpt 6**, the adversative discourse marker "however" is used in a sentence to introduce a contrast or unexpected aspect that challenges a generalization. In this context, "however" is used to contrast the assertion made in the first part of the sentence, which initially describes the individual's generosity and humility towards all people. However, the use of "however" introduces the contrasting point that some people may view others as "commonised" despite their positive qualities. This adds a layer of complexity to the statement by presenting a contrary perspective. The text gains coherence by presenting a counterpoint that provides a more nuanced understanding of the individual's interactions. This adversative discourse marker helps readers recognize the potential disparity between the individual's

positive attributes and how others might perceive certain people, contributing to a fuller comprehension of the complexity of the situation.

In **Excerpt 7**, the adversative discourse marker "but" is used to contrast two contrasting ideas, enhancing coherence by highlighting the distinction between the subject and the concepts. In the sentence "To TB Joshua, Christianity is not a religion but a relationship with God," TB Joshua views Christianity as a relationship with God, not a religion. This contrast highlights the unique viewpoint of TB Joshua and emphasizes the distinction he draws. The use of "but" helps readers understand the contrast and the emphasis TB Joshua places on the nature of Christianity. In summary, the adversative discourse marker "but" in this sentence serves to introduce a contrast between the conventional understanding of Christianity as a religion and TB Joshua's view of it as a personal relationship with God. It enhances coherence by highlighting the distinct perspective and emphasis TB Joshua brings to the discussion.

In **Excerpt 8**, the adversative discourse marker "but" is used to contrast two opposing ideas in a sentence, enhancing coherence by highlighting the subject's challenges and unwavering determination. The sentence initially describes the subject's satanic conspiracies and persecution, but the use of "but" introduces a contrast by presenting the subject's response to these challenges. He remained focused, persevered, and upheld his divine assignments with determination and success. This contrast helps readers understand the subject's resilience and strength of character, emphasizing his resilience despite the difficulties he faced. The adversative discourse marker helps readers understand the contrast between the difficulties and the subject's resolute response, emphasizing his strength of character. In summary, the adversative discourse marker "but" in this sentence serves to highlight the subject's determination and resilience in the face of adversity, providing depth to the narrative.

Adversatives Discourse Markers function in the *Punch* newspaper article

In **Excerpt 9**, the adversative discourse marker "but" is used in sentences to create a contrast between two contrasting ideas, enhancing coherence by presenting opposing viewpoints or situations. In the given sentences, "many benefited from the N-Power scheme," "more than 50% of the beneficiaries are redundant," and "the rate of graduates from institutions is increasing annually but the labor market is congested." The use of "but" signals a shift from a positive outcome to a contrasting or unexpected situation, helping readers follow the logical progression of ideas and highlighting the tension between opposing viewpoints or conditions. This adversative discourse marker helps readers understand the relationships between different ideas and helps them follow the logical progression of ideas.

In **Excerpt 10**, the adversative discourse marker "yet" is used to contrast positive developments in certain sectors of the economy over the past eight years, with the ongoing challenges hindering the smooth implementation of budgets. This contrast highlights the contradiction between progress and obstacles, providing a balanced view of the situation. The sentence initially describes the positive transformations in certain sectors, but the use of "yet" acknowledges that challenges still exist and persist, highlighting the contradiction between progress and obstacles. The

adversative discourse marker "yet" enhances coherence by acknowledging existing contradictions and providing a more comprehensive understanding of the situation. In summary, the adversative discourse marker "yet" serves to highlight the contradiction between positive developments and persistent challenges, enhancing the coherence of the sentence.

Casual Discourse Markers

These markers indicate a cause-and-effect relationship between ideas, showing why something happened or is happening. Examples include "because," "since," "therefore."

Excerpt 11: This is a symbolic message **for** you to differentiate the chalk from the cheese in the religiously distorted world. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (*sic*) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 12: Take good care of your heart **because** that is your communicating point with God and must ever remain pure to know and flow with Him. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (*sic*) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 13: He never allowed himself **for** a moment to be carried away by anything. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (*sic*) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 14: This has terribly pushed many into crimes **for** survival. President Tinubu needs to engage the services of economic experts to strategise modalities... (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Excerpt 15: Youths are the strength of society and should therefore be a point of focus **for** all responsible governments. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Casual Discourse Markers function in the *Vanguard* newspaper article

In **Excerpt 11**, the causal discourse marker "for" introduces an explanation or purpose behind a preceding statement, enhancing coherence by providing additional context or justification for the symbolic message being conveyed. The sentence first presents the symbolic message, and then "for" introduces the reason why the message is being delivered. The use of "for" helps clarify the message's purpose and enhances coherence by offering additional context. This causal discourse marker helps readers understand why the message is being presented and reinforces the connection between the message and the context in which it is being shared. In summary, the causal discourse marker "for" in this sentence serves to introduce an explanation for the purpose of the symbolic message, enhancing coherence by providing a clear reason behind the message and aiding the reader's comprehension of its intended significance in the given context.

In **Excerpt 12**, the causal discourse marker "because" is used in a sentence to introduce a reason or explanation that supports the preceding statement. This helps establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the ideas and contributes to coherence by providing a justification for the point being made. In this sentence, "take good care of your heart because that is your communicating point with God and must ever remain pure to know and flow with Him." The causal link introduced by "because" helps the reader understand the rationale behind the assertion, as the heart being the communicating point with God justifies the importance of taking care of it. The casual discourse marker "because" enhances coherence by clarifying the relationship between the action of taking care of the heart and its significance in spiritual communication. In summary, "because" introduces a reason that supports the statement about taking care of the heart as the communicating point with God, contributing to coherence by explaining the rationale behind maintaining a pure heart to establish a strong connection with Him.

In **Excerpt 13**, the "for" causal discourse marker is used to provide a clear explanation or reason for a particular action, enhancing coherence by providing context and insight into the subject's behavior. In the sentence "He never allowed himself for a moment to be carried away by anything," the marker is used to explain the subject's refusal to be carried away by external factors. This causal link helps explain why the subject remained focused and steadfast, enhancing the text's coherence by offering insight into the motive behind the subject's actions. The use of "for" in this sentence enhances coherence by providing a clear reason and context for the subject's steadfastness, aiding the reader's understanding of the underlying motivation.

Casual Discourse Markers function in the *Punch* newspaper article

In **Excerpt 14**, the causal discourse marker "for" is used in sentences to establish a causal relationship between different ideas, enhancing coherence by indicating a reason or explanation. It helps clarify cause-and-effect relationships, guiding the reader through the logical progression of the content. In the context of the sentences, "for" introduces a reason explaining the cause behind a particular situation, such as the exploitation of many people into crimes for survival. The subsequent sentence suggests that President Tinubu should engage economic experts to strategize for a brighter Nigeria. The use of "for" enhances coherence by connecting the cause (pushed into crimes) with the proposed solution (engaging economic experts). This causal discourse marker aids readers in understanding the underlying rationale and motivations behind statements, contributing to a more coherent and organized presentation of ideas.

In **Extract 15**, the causal discourse marker "for" is used in a sentence to introduce a reason or explanation that supports the statement that youths are the strength of society and should be a point of focus for responsible governments. This marker helps establish a causal relationship between the ideas and contributes to coherence by providing a justification for the point being made. The sentence argues that the youth population holds significant potential and influence, and the causal link

introduced by "for" helps the reader understand the rationale behind the assertion. The casual discourse marker "for" bridges the gap between the statement about youths being the strength of society and the subsequent recommendation for governments to prioritize them, providing a logical connection between these ideas. In summary, the causal discourse marker "for" in this sentence introduces a reason that supports the statement about the strength of youths and their significance in society, contributing to coherence by explaining the rationale behind the recommendation for responsible governments to prioritize the youth population.

Continuatives/ temporal Discourse Markers

These markers provide information about the timing or sequence of events or ideas. They help to establish a chronological order or to show how ideas relate in terms of time. Examples include "first," "meanwhile," "subsequently."

Excerpt 16: We are the same. God had already answered your prayers there **before** you came here" for you to see how selfless he was in all his dealings. (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (sic) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 17: but after receiving the touch of God in different dimensions, including mere touching of EMMANUEL TV **while** praying, came to weep **before** God for forgiveness... (TB Joshua: Remembering exit (sic) of a world changer, Vanguard, June 2023)

Excerpt 18: President Buhari, **before** his election, boasted that the naira would have equal value with the US dollar. But sadly, the exchange rate rose from N197 at the official rate to N745 at the parallel market in 2023. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Excerpt 19: Agriculture has been the sector that sustains the country even **before** the discovery of crude oil in 1956. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Excerpt 20: President Buhari, **before** his election, boasted that the naira would have equal value with the US dollar. (Tinubu: Focus areas in 100 days in office, Punch, June 2023)

Continuative/Temporal Discourse Markers function in the Vanguard newspaper article

In **Excerpt 16**, the continuative discourse marker "before" is used in sentences to establish a temporal link between different ideas, enhancing coherence by indicating the sequence of events and providing context for the reader. In the given sentence, "we are the same," indicating a commonality between the speaker and listener, and "God had already answered your prayers there before you came here,"

indicating an event occurring prior to another event. This creates a temporal connection, helping the reader understand the sequence of events and their context. The use of "before" enhances coherence by linking events in chronological order, providing context for the reader, maintaining a logical flow of ideas, and smoother transitions between sentences.

In **Excerpt 17**, "while" and "before" are continuative discourse markers that contribute to the narrative's flow and coherence. "While" establishes a simultaneous occurrence, like praying and the touch of God through EMMANUEL TV, creating a clear temporal relationship. "Before" signals a transition, indicating a change in the sequence of events, like coming to weep before God for forgiveness. This logical order enhances coherence and allows the reader to follow the narrative progression more easily. These markers "while" and "before" are crucial discourse markers in maintaining the coherence of the sentence by clarifying the temporal connections between the actions described.

Continuative/Temporal Discourse Markers function in the *Punch* newspaper article

In **Excerpt 18**, the continuative discourse marker "before" is used in sentences to establish a temporal link between events, enhancing coherence by indicating the sequence of actions and providing context for the reader. In the given sentence, "President Buhari, before his election, boasted that the naira would have equal value with the US dollar. But sadly, the exchange rate rose from N197 at the official rate to N745 at the parallel market in 2023." This use of "before" helps the reader understand the sequence of events and the context in which they occurred, enhancing the text's coherence by linking events in chronological order. It also maintains a logical flow of ideas and smoother transitions between sentences.

In **Excerpt 19**, the temporal discourse marker "before" is used in a sentence to establish a chronological relationship between two events, indicating that one event occurred prior to another. This helps maintain coherence by providing a clear temporal connection between the sustained sector (agriculture) and the discovery of crude oil in 1956. The sentence highlights that agriculture played a significant role in sustaining the country's economy before the discovery of crude oil in 1956. The use of "before" enhances coherence by providing a clear time frame and context for the sustained sector's importance, highlighting that agriculture's role as a sustainer predates the discovery of crude oil, adding depth to the understanding of the country's economic history. In summary, the temporal discourse marker "before" in this sentence serves to establish a chronological relationship between the sustained sector (agriculture) and the discovery of crude oil, contributing to the understanding of the country's economic history.

In **Excerpt 20**, "before" is a continuative discourse marker to help to enhance coherence. It establishes a clear temporal relationship, indicating that the boasting occurred prior to the election. This helps maintain a logical flow of information. The sentence also provides context and a sense of order, ensuring that the reader knows when the boasting took place in relation to the election. This clarity prevents

ambiguity or confusion about the timing of the events. Furthermore, the word "before" can imply a causal connection, suggesting that President Buhari's boasting about the naira's value might have had some influence or significance in the lead-up to his election. This adds depth to the sentence and helps connect the two events logically, contributing to overall coherence.

Table 1:

Discourse Markers	Vanguard frequency	Punch frequency	Percentage
Additive	5	6	39.29%
Adversative	3	3	21.43%
Casual	3	2	17.85%
Continuative	3	3	21.43%
Total	14	14	100%

Discussion

The researcher analyzed discourse markers in Punch and Vanguard newspapers' articles published in June 2023 based on Halliday and Hasan's classification of discourse markers. They distinguished discourse markers into four categories: additive, adversative, causal, and continuative/temporal. Based on the analysis, the researcher found 28 discourse markers in two selected newspaper articles in June 2023. The dominant discourse marker is the additive discourse marker, with 39.29% and "and" is frequently used here. The second most frequent additive discourse marker is "also". These additive discourse markers (and/also) have two purposes: while "and" connects words, clauses, or phrases of equal importance in the selected articles from the newspapers, "also" is used to show agreement or something in common. The second most dominant discourse marker is the adversative discourse marker, with 21.43% and "but" is frequently used here, followed by "however" and "yet". In the selected newspaper articles, "but/however" introduces something contrasting with what has been mentioned before, while "yet" refers to a time which starts in the past and continues up to the present. The second least discourse maker is the continuative/temporal with 21.43%. In the selected newspaper articles, "before" means earlier than the time or event, and "while" is used to indicate that two separate clauses occur at the same time. The least frequent discourse maker is the casual discourse markers with 17.85%. In the selected newspaper articles, "for" is used to introduce clauses of result or decision, while "because" introduces clauses of cause and reason. The result showed that these newspapers made more use of Additive, fewer of Adversative, Casual, and continuative/temporal markers.

The study contributes to the field of discourse analysis by unraveling the subtle roles of discourse markers within Nigerian newspaper articles, emphasizing their critical significance in building coherent narratives and promoting effective communication within media discourse. The results of this research hold practical significance for media practitioners, journalists, and writers. Grasping the skillful application of discourse markers within Nigerian newspapers can empower media experts to improve the logical flow, readability, and persuasive influence of their pieces. The knowledge acquired from this study could shape media training

initiatives and establish standards for proficient communication within the Nigerian media sphere.

Summary

This research work explores discourse markers in Nigerian newspaper articles, specifically in Punch and Vanguard, published in June 2023. Discourse markers are essential tools for guiding readers through media texts, facilitating transitions, providing structural coherence, and enhancing engagement. By addressing the research objectives aimed at identifying discourse marker types, analyzing their functions, and determining dominant markers, the study unraveled significant insights into how these markers contribute to shaping media discourse and enhancing reader comprehension. The examination of discourse marker types, categorized according to Halliday and Hasan's classification, revealed a diverse variety of markers such as additive, adversative, causal, and continuative/temporal markers. This discovery underscored their integral role in maintaining text coherence and guiding reader interpretation, functioning as connective threads within the narrative fabric. Through quantitative analysis, specific discourse markers emerged as dominant within the selected corpus. These markers, positioned strategically throughout the text, wielded a substantial influence on shaping the discourse's trajectory and fostering a smoother flow of information. The identification of these dominant markers highlighted their significance in guiding reader comprehension, illuminating their contribution to steering the narrative's direction.

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