
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Semantic Analysis of Discourse Representations of ASUU-FGN Impasse in Nigerian Newspapers

Awoniyi Olalekan OGUNDEJI¹ ✉ and Happiness UDUK²

^{1,2}University of Uyo, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Awoniyi Olalekan OGUNDEJI, **E-mail:** awoniyioogundeji@uniuyo.edu.ng

| ABSTRACT

This study provided a semantic analysis of discourse representations of the ASUU-FGN impasse in Nigerian newspapers. It indicated the semantic tools that the Nigerian newspapers explored to confer discourse representations on ASUU and FGN in Nigeria. The data for the study were collected from five Nigerian Newspapers: *Leadership, Punch, The Guardian, The Nation and Vanguard*. The researcher selected one hundred published articles about the ASUU-FGN impasse. The researcher purposively sampled one hundred and fifty data from the one hundred published articles for the analysis, using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Cohesion, an Aspect of Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory. The study revealed that ASUU and FGN were represented with semantic tools such as reference, substitution, conjunction, reiteration, and collocation. ASUU was represented as pedophile (Leadership), dissident (Vanguard), opposer (Punch), advocate (Punch), warner (The Guardian), overworker (Punch), sensitiser (Punch), mobiliser (Punch), threatener (Leadership), and protesters (Punch) while FGN was represented as dictator (Vanguard), nonentity (The Guardian), abandoner, (The Guardian), deceiver (Vanguard), imposer (Punch), oppressor (Vanguard), renegade (Punch), punisher (Vanguard), ensurer (The Guardian), failure (The Nation), destroyer (The Guardian), and persuader (The Guardian). The study concluded that should the parties do the needful within their power, the negative representations of their images will be averted. The study, therefore, recommended that much language research exploring linguistic theories be conducted on the ASUU-FGN impasse in order to find lasting solutions to the acrimony.

| KEYWORDS

Semantics, Discourse Representation, Reference, Substitution, Reiteration, Collocation

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 09 August 2024

PUBLISHED: 28 September 2024

DOI: 10.61424/ijah.v2.i2.104

1. Introduction

Language cannot be separated from human life because language is used by humans to express feelings and ideas to one another through the sounds or symbols of the language in use. Language is a system of semantics accompanied by forms through which the meanings are expressed. Language consists of words that contain meaning. It is, therefore, a system of arbitrary, conventional vocal symbols used for human communication (Sapir 1921). Ogundeji (2023) submits that language is the tool of communication that conveys ideas, feelings, and thoughts to one another. In language, there are four skills; listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. The four language skills are related to one another and are classified into receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing). The language skills have similarities with discourse, which discusses the use of cohesion as a semantic tool.

Discourse is a relatively complex linguistic element because it has linguistic ranks comprising phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, clauses and sentences. In linguistic ranks, discourse is positioned as the largest unit of communication. Discourse is a combination of language units that express content meaningfully. Discourse is the most complete unit of language, which is higher than clauses and sentences. According to Osisanwo (2008), discourse is a language built on elements of cohesion. It has a clear-cut beginning and ending with grammatical and semantic sense.

Akande et al. (2003) state that cohesion is a factor that influences the discourse to be systematically comprehended. Discourse explores cohesion as a semantic tool, which language users should understand for comprehension. Cohesion forms a relationship with sentences within a discourse to make the discourse structured grammatically and semantically. It forms the semantic tie of a whole discourse. Cohesion is an important factor whose use conveys an exclusive and exact semantics of the information that the interactants intend. Cohesion is expressed through grammar and vocabulary. Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide cohesion into grammatical and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion includes tools such as reference, substitution, and conjunction. Meanwhile, lexical cohesion is divided into reiteration and collocation. The cohesive elements are structured to make a grammatical arrangement of language, forming the semantics of a discourse. Olateju (1998) states, in general, that any unit whose structure links together forms discourse and conveys meanings. All grammatical units of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are intentionally cohesive to make a syntactic structure for meaning negotiation. Coulthard (1977) states that the concept of cohesion refers to the linguistic means whereby texture is achieved. Texture is a system of semantics inter-dependence which newspapers in the world-over explore for meaning making.

Using articles from the aforementioned Nigerian newspapers, semantic tools of discourse representations of the ASUU-FGN impasse in Nigeria through cohesion will be analysed. The principles of reference, substitution, conjunction, and lexical cohesion propounded by Halliday (1976) will be applied to the articles to demonstrate the relevance of the cohesive elements that are present in the news discourse, which contribute to the overall meaning of the discourse for ASUU-FGN representations. Understanding how cohesion functions within the discourse to create semantic links could be beneficial to English users and help decode meaning negotiation in discourses.

2. Literature Review

According to Odebunmi (2006), semantics is a principal stakeholder in meaning enterprise. So, it will never gain the attention of linguists for research because there is no expression without the meaning of negotiation, for which cohesion remains one of its theories. To make semantic sense, a cohesive effect needs to be achieved in the discourse by the use of related lexical ties in the various components of the discourse.

Gonzalez (2011) investigates lexical cohesion in multiparty conversations. The researcher uses cohesion to analyse the data and observes that the dominant sources of cohesion in telephone conversations are repetitions. The researcher concludes that telephone conversations are lexically cohesive for meaning making. Malah (2015) explores lexical cohesion in academic discourse. The researcher investigates how cohesion contributes to generic coherence in applied linguistic research articles' abstracts. The researcher discovers that the major sources of cohesion in the abstracts are repetition, collocation, and hyponymy. The research concludes that cohesion contributes quota in the meaning negotiation of the literature. Malah (2017) researches on evaluating cohesion in Nigerian newspapers' genres. The researcher applies Eggins' (2004) model of cohesion to analyse editorials. The study reveals that repetition of synonyms and antonyms negotiates meaning making in the newspapers' editorials. The researcher concludes that repetition is beneficial to persuasive writing.

Atlay (2017) examines on raising awareness of lexical semantic relations in undergraduates EFL context. The researcher uses the strategy of associating a content word to its rational semantic relations and determines the meaning of the word. Gajir (2018) investigates the structural and textual signification of endophoric reference in Adichie's novel. The researcher uses Halliday's systemic functional linguistics to show the use of endophoric reference. The research reveals that both anaphoric reference and cataphoric reference constitute semantic tools that facilitate efficient retrieval of identities for referents and smooth flow of information. The study concludes that semantic tools stimulate explicit communication of intents.

Zamir (2021) investigates lexico-semantic relationships of nouns used in the Saraiki newspapers in Pakistan. The researcher uses the semantic relations observed in the nouns in Pakistan to create a corpus of two million words from the newspapers. The researcher makes a list of one thousand five hundred nouns from the corpus; tags the nouns; and categorises them semantically for identification in the lexical relationship. The researcher uses machine readable dictionary for computation. The finding reveals that ten lexico-semantic relationships frequently found among the nouns in the newspapers are essential for the development of lexical data in wordnet.

Fitriati (2021) investigates three types of relations: synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy in Rowling's novel "Harry Potter and the Deadly Hallows". The researcher employs content analysis to research meaning making in the novel. The finding shows that each type of lexical relation is overlapped and interconnected with one another for meaning negotiation. Ojetunde (2023) examines semantic relations in President Muhammadu Buhari's 2022 Independence Day Speech. The researcher uses the theory of meanings to determine how meaning association helps in unraveling the speaker's intention in a given discourse. The researcher identifies five lexical relations which represent the intention of the speaker in the speech. The researcher concludes that semantic relations are essential for the functional use of language because they help to convey meanings accordingly.

This study, therefore, uses cohesion to identify the semantic tools deployed by the selected newspapers for the representation of ASUU-FGN impasse.

3. Research Methodology

The researcher collected one hundred and fifty data (150) from one hundred published articles in the selected Nigerian newspapers: *Leadership*, *Punch*, *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, and *Vanguard*. The collected data comprised words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, which were coded/ grouped with the alphabet from A to K with a view to simplifying the data presentation. The researcher adopted Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Cohesion, an Aspect of Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory, for the descriptive and qualitative data analysis. The researcher described the grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion serving as semantic tools and identified the discourse representations associated with ASUU and FGN.

3.1 Scope of the Study

There are a plethora of semantic tools in English Language studies, but this study was restricted to the cohesion of Halliday and Hasan (1976), an Aspect of Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory. Semantic tools were used to describe and analyse the data collected in the five selected newspapers. The Newspapers were: *Leadership*, *Punch*, *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, and *Vanguard*. One hundred and fifty (150) data were collected from one hundred (100) published articles about ASUU-FGN impasse between 2019 and 2024 for the semantic analysis. The descriptive and qualitative research found out the semantic tools and discourse representations of ASUU-FGN in the selected newspapers.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Cohesion for analysis of the collected data. Cohesion is a set of semantic tools used to tie various components of discourse. Cohesion is divided into two main categories: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion.

3.2.1 Grammatical Cohesion

Grammatical cohesion is the surface marker of semantic links between words, phrases, clauses and sentences in a discourse. Grammatical cohesion is constructed by the grammatical structures in which each component ties to each other. Grammatical cohesion includes: Reference, Substitution, and Conjunction.

3.2.2 Reference

Reference functions to retrieve presupposed information in a discourse. It is an act of identification using linguistic elements. It indicates how the writer introduces participants and keeps track of them throughout the discourse. It, therefore, forms a systemic relation in a discourse.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) identifies two types of reference, exophoric and endophoric.

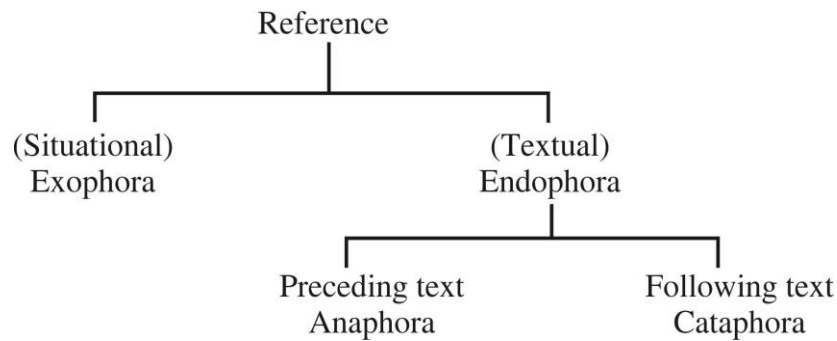


Figure 1: types of reference adapted from Halliday and Hasan (1976)

Exophoric reference refers to information from the immediate context of the situation, while endophoric reference refers to information that can be retrieved from within the text. Endophoric reference is the focus of cohesion theory. Therefore, it is the focus of this study.

Endophoric reference is sub-divided into anaphora and cataphora.

Anaphora is a reference that points backward to the previously mentioned information in discourse. It is a language unit deployed to refer to the social actors after which they are mentioned.

Cataphora is a reference that points forward to the information to be later mentioned in a discourse.

Demonstrative Reference keeps track of information. It is termed location proximity reference. However, this study discovers that the demonstrative reference is not only restricted to location proximity but also incident identification (what). Such reference as: these, this, those, that, here, or there.

Comparative Reference keeps track of similarities and differences of presupposed information through direct reference using comparative adjectives to make comparisons between two or more entities.

Substitution is a reference whose function is to link semantic meanings within discourse. Substitution or ellipsis differs in that substitution operates as a linguistic link at lexico grammatical level. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), substitution or ellipsis is used when "a speaker or writer wishes to avoid the repetition of a lexical item and it is able to draw on one of the grammatical resources of the language to replace the item".

Nominal substitution is the substitution whose linguistic markers are "one" and "ones" depending on the number of the noun to be substituted.

Verbal Substitution has a verbal group as a substitute. It is marked with "do". Sometimes, the verb "do" is used with "so" and therefore forms "do so" to substitute verbs. Also, Halliday and Hasan (1976) point out that "do" often operates with the reference items "it" and "that" but still has the main function as a verbal substitute because of its grammatical role.

Clausal substitution substitutes an entire clause with "so" as the substitute marker.

Conjunction is a joining word that is capable of linking various language units together. It can join words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and texts to make them a single unit for meaning making. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), conjunction is a cohesive tie between clauses and sections of discourse in such a way as to demonstrate a meaningful pattern between them. Conjunction, therefore functions as a semantic cohesive tie within the discourse in four categories. These categories are: additive, adversative, causal and sequential.

Lexical Cohesion is the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary. There are two basic classes of lexical cohesion: reiteration and collocation. **Reiteration** refers to the repetition of lexical item or occurrence of a synonym of some kind in the context of reference, that is, where the two occurrences have the same referent. Reiteration encompasses Repetition, Synonym, Superordinate, and General Noun whose referential relations manifest in the same referent, inclusiveness, exclusiveness, and unrelatedness, respectively. They all function to reiterate previous items in an identical or modified form. They are cohesive agents that signal co-referentiality.

Collocation is a combination of vocabulary items that co-occur in a text in the form of Adjective + Noun; Verb + Noun; Noun + Noun. This is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur. This is the company that keeps words in context. It is the use of a word that is in some way associated with another word.

4. Results and Discussion

The study interpreted the collected data from the aforementioned Nigerian newspapers to identify the semantic tools that the newspapers explored to allot discourse representations to ASUU and FGN in Nigeria. The data were presented and analysed thus:

4.1 Personal Reference

The table below shows the use of personal reference, which is sub-divided into anaphora and cataphora in relation to the study's variables:

Table 1: Personal Reference

Person	Singular		Plural	
	Subject	Object	Subject	Object
1 st Person	I	Me	We	Us
2 nd Person	You	You	You	You
3 rd Person	He, She, It	Him, Her, It	They	Them

4.1.1 Anaphora

The awkward use of anaphora in news reports apportions representations to the mentioned social actors, such as ASUU or FGN. Consider these:

Table 2: Anaphoric Reference Data Presentation

Data	Newspaper	Discourse	Representation
A1	Vanguard, December 23,2019;pg 10	...we did not hear anything from them, and when they came back in July 2019, it was now a story that government has made up his mind that it is IPPIS	FGN as Dictator
A2	The Guardian, January 10,2020;pg 3	President Muhammad Buhari yesterday declared that the Federal Government will henceforth, pay more attention to improving personnel and infrastructure of the nation's universities to produce quality graduates. It assured that the government would give education a top priority in the country's development goals.	FGN as Nonentity
A3	Leadership, February 17,2020;pg 40	Lecturer who is married but engaged in relationship with students is wicked. It should be prosecuted.	ASUU as Pedophile
A4	Vanguard, December 23,2019;pg 9	... ASUU cannot cripple the system ...who are ready to work among them will teach.	ASUU as Dissident
A5	The Guardian, January 9,2020;pg 33	Buhari does not fund university education as expected. He is becoming worse in his administration and we shall engage it ...	FGN as Abandoner

Halliday and Hasan's (1976) argued that language users deter reference from behaving in a specific sense. The language users use references in discourse to suit their semantic purpose in their own right.

In A1 "his" refers to "The government". It does not align with grammatical rules. "Its" should have been used if strict adherence to the grammatical rule would be observed because "government" is a neutral nominal. However, the anaphoric reference "his" is structured to function for a deliberate semantic implication and interpretation. The reference "his" is grammatically used to retrieve presupposed information about masculinity, which connotes ruggedness. The use of "his" as a referent for "government" in the context endows the qualities of masculinity to FGN against the interest of ASUU. The semantic tool, therefore, represents FGN as dictator (Vanguard).

A2 epitomises the deliberate use of language by the users with a view to producing targeted semantic interpretation. The violation in the use of reference has resulted in the meaning negotiation, which allots negative representation to the referent, "President Muhammad Buhari...it assured..." The use of the impersonal pronoun "it" as an anaphoric reference to the Nigerian President gives the impression of absurdity against Mr President. "It" is used as a transgender for the person whose gender is yet determined. Also, it is either used for inanimate entities or lower animals. The anaphoric reference "he" is appropriate and should have been used to give normal semantic implication, which is devoid of reference to abuse and negative representation. As anaphora "it" is contextually explored to present the President, its semantic implication represents the President as a nonentity (The Guardian) having little or no interest in the development of education in Nigeria.

In A3, " Lecturer...it ", the use of anaphora "it" is a deliberate use of reference. The newspaper uses the anaphoric reference to show that the married lecturer who indulges himself in the unethical practice of dating female students is an inanimate entity in the human flesh. The impersonal pronoun "it" as an anaphoric reference connotes that the married lecturer dating female students is a big fool and deserves not to be referred to as a human but a lower animal. The anaphora, therefore, semantically represents such a lecturer as an inhuman pedophile (Leadership).

Vanguard personifies ASUU, exploring anaphoric reference in the objective case "them" for tracking the union, "ASUU". Grammatically, "ASUU" and "them" do not collocate because "ASUU" is a union that does not keep company with selective reference in plurality. Rather, its supposed reference is static to "it" in both objective case and subjective case. However, for semantic purposes, "them" is used to denotatively give meaning to ASUU as a

body of many scholars. Leaning on the context of occurrence, "ASUU...them" presents members of ASUU as one crippling education and, as such, represents the union as a dissident (Vanguard).

In A5, "Buhari...He... administration...it..." indicates awkward use of anaphoric reference, initiating semantic ambiguity and allotting negative discourse representation. "It" can track "Buhari", "He", and "administration" in the discourse. Tracking "Buhari" or "he" with the anaphoric reference "it", "Buhari" or "he" is semantically represented as insensitive abandoner of education (The Guardian).

4.1.2 Cataphora

The cataphoric reference sampled for this study comprises "it", "he" and "them". The cataphoric reference is technically used for meaning negotiations. Consider these in table 3:

Data	Newspaper	Discourse	Representation
B1	Punch, February 9,2020 pg 16	Since it began opposition, government agencies have held countless meetings with ASUU .	ASUU as Opposer
B2	Vanguard, November 30,2022; pg 12	He talks with both sides of mouth. Dr Chris Ngige cannot be trusted.	FGN as Deceiver
B3	Punch, December 23,2019; pg 9	We hope that it shall be restored. The credibility of the university system had been taken away.	ASUU as Advocate for autonomy
B4	The Guardian, October 14,2022; pg 17	We are telling the general public to hold them responsible. Strike is the final option but the language government understands.	ASUU as Warner

In B1, "it" tracks ASUU in the second sentence. It tracks information that is later mentioned. It is, therefore, a cataphoric reference that allots discourse representation to ASUU as opposer (Punch) of the FGN because its action in the clauses is the "opposition".

B2 deploys the third person singular pronoun "he" to trace an agent of the government, Dr Chris Ngige. "He" is, therefore, a cataphoric reference. The action identified with the performer, for which the cataphoric reference "he" presents, determines the discourse representation of the FGN as deceiver (Vanguard).

B3 uses the third person singular pronoun "it" to cataphorically reference "the credibility of the university system". ASUU, as a performer of action for nursing hope about the restoration of the university system's credibility, is thereby represented as an advocate for universities (Punch).

B4 employs the third person plural pronoun "them" to cataphorically reference "the government" in the following sentence. Using "them" is deliberate negotiating, meaning to inform that the government is run by a number of machineries. This ranges from Ministries of Education to Labour and Employment as well as the Presidency. Action "telling the general public to hold the government responsible," which is associated with the use of the cataphoric reference "them" represents ASUU as warner (The Guardian).

4.1.3 Demonstrative Reference

Demonstrative reference keeps track of presupposed information and information to be later mentioned. It is termed location proximity reference. However, this study discovers that the demonstrative reference is not only restricted to location proximity but also incident identification. Such reference as: these, this, those, that, here, or there are used in the selected newspapers to convey information about the ASUU-FGN impasse, which in turn allots representations to ASUU and FGN. Let us consider these in table 4 below:

Data	Newspaper	Discourse	Reference	Location Proximity	Incident Indication	Representation
C1	Punch, December 21,2019; pg 2	... in the university , I am supervising ten undergraduates, two masters, and one PhD...I am overworked. There is no way one will not break down	There	University		ASUU as Overworker
C2	Punch, February 9,2020; pg 16	... the government said it held countless meetings and explained how the IPPIS accommodated the lecturers' interests. These meetings involved OAGF, VCs, NUC...	These	meetings		FGN as imposer
C3	Punch, February 12,2020; pg 2	The government is saying that we want to pay our lecturers and university workers directly; that is the summary of IPPIS.	That		FGN decision to pay lecturers directly	FGN as dictator
C4	Vanguard, February 10,2020; pg 13	ASUU raised alarm over alleged fresh plots by the government to trample on the rights of its members nationwide. This came as the University of Ilorin expressed readiness to join forces with the union national body to fight the federal government.	This		FGN's plots to trample on ASUU welfare	FGN as oppressor

C1 uses "there" as a demonstrative reference pointing back to "... the university". It is the headword marking circumstance and presenting lecturers as overworked through the use of the semantic tie "there". The semantic tool "there" links the three classes of the discourse and represents ASUU as an overworker (Punch).

C2 employs "these" as selective, possessive, and demonstrative reference modifying the headword "meetings". It is the selective near plural form of demonstrative reference. The near plural modifier "these" references the presupposed "countless meetings" in the preceding clause. The semantic tool ties all five clauses in the discourse to allot representation to FGN as imposer (Punch).

C3 uses "that" as a selective, far, and demonstrative reference. It is a singular headword indicating the FGN's decision on the deployment of IPPIS as a payment platform for ASUU members. The semantic tie "that" is used to link the three clauses of the discourse for meaning negotiation, which represents FGN as dictator (Punch).

C4 explores semantic tool "this," which marks selective, near, and singular demonstrative reference. "This" as semantic tie demonstrates reference to FGN's plots to trample the welfare of ASUU in the preceding sentence. It serves as a coin of two sides, allotting representation to FGN as oppressor (Vanguard) and ASUU as dissident (Vanguard).

4.1.4 Comparative Reference

Comparative reference keeps track of similarities and differences of presupposed information through direct reference using comparative adjectives to mark comparison between two or more entities. Consider these in table 5:

Data	Newspaper	Discourse	Comparative Reference	Representation
D1	Vanguard, February 10, 2020; pg.13	Our members are better informed now	better	ASUU as sensitiser
D2	Leadership, February 15,2022; pg 5	The mobilisation for this strike is stronger than what government should toy with	stronger than	ASUU as mobiliser
D3	Punch, July 8,2024; pg 3	The government whose plans starve academics is not different from military government	different from	FGN as dictator
D4	Leadership, November 30,2023; pg 5	Buhari-led administration is more deceitful	more deceitful	FGN as deceiver

D1 uses the comparative adjectival "better" as a comparative reference to compare the attitudes of ASUU members to information related to their welfare in the past and at the time of making the utterance," Our members are better informed now". "Better informed now" is a statement suggesting meaning that attitude of some members of ASUU in the past was negligence. The utterance "our members are better informed now" gives representation to ASUU as sensitiser (Vanguard).

The comparative reference "stronger than" simply shows a comparison of ASUU efforts on mobilisation for strikes previously and the made effort on mobilisation for the next strike. Having embarked on stronger mobilisation for the strike, ASUU is represented as mobiliser (Leadership).

D3 employs "different from", a comparative reference to compare the administration in a democratic era with military rule on matters concerning ASUU. The reference represents dictator (Punch).

D4 uses "more deceitful" for comparison of the past and Buhari-led administrations on welfare of ASUU. The government of Buhari scores higher in deceit using partitive "more". The semantic tool of comparative reference represents FGN as deceiver.

4.2 Substitution

This study observes that Nigerian newspapers use three types of substitution: nominal, verbal, and clausal in the news reports about the ASUU-FGN impasse. The language used gives representations to the ASUU-FGN impasse directly or indirectly.

4.2.1 Nominal Substitution

Nominal substitution uses semantic markers "one" and "ones" depending on the number of the nominal to be substituted. Let us consider table 6:

Data	Newspaper	Discourse	Nominal Substitution	Substitute	Representation
E1	Leadership, February 17,2020; pg 11	We have had many policies in Nigeria that were reviewed before the new ones	many policies	ones	FGN as dictator
E2	Punch, September 6,2022; pg.9	ASUU President stressed that 2009 FGN/ASUU re-negotiated agreement was not implemented. The government now proposes re-negotiation of the re-negotiated one .	2009 FGN/ASUU re-negotiated agreement	one	FGN as renegade

E1 uses "ones" to substitute many policies. "Many policies" is nominal. The circumstance of the occurrence of nominal "many policies" and substitute "ones" represents FGN as a dictator (Leadership).

E2 deploys "one" to substitute the 2009 FGN/ASUU re-negotiated agreement, which is nominal. The semantic tool represents FGN as a renegade (Punch) because it backs down on the agreement between it and ASUU.

4.2.2 Verbal Substitution

Verbal substitution is marked as the verb "do". Sometimes, the verb "do" is used with "so" and forms "do so" to substitute verbs. Let us consider table 7:

Data	Newspaper	Discourse	Verbal Substitution	Substitute	Representation
E3	Punch, February 12,2020; pg 2	Federal Government had directed its employees, including university lecturers to register for the IPPIS..., like it did for personnel of the military ...	had directed	did	FGN as dictator
E4	Leadership, June 26,2023; pg 14	Federal Government has reneged on its promise to sign Nimi Briggs Agreement. This is how it does every time.	has reneged	does	FGN as Renegade

E3 indicates the use of verbal substitution. "Did" is a verb element used to substitute "had directed" a past tense and perfective aspect. The verbal group and its substitute form semantic tools that represent FGN as dictator (Punch). E4 marks the use of verbal substitution. "Does," a verbal substitute, is used in place of "has reneged", a verbal group that directly confers representation on FGN as a renegade (Leadership).

4.2.3 Clausal Substitution

Clausal substitution substitutes an entire clause with either "so" or "do so". Let us consider table 8:

Data	Newspaper	Discourse	Clausal Substitution	Substitute	Representation
E5	Vanguard, September 29,2022; pg 21	No one could believe that the government would invoke the policy of no work no pay until it did so	would invoke the policy of no work no pay	did so	FGN as punisher
E6	Leadership, May 21,2024; pg 8	ASUU has given government a two-month ultimatum to pay the members' withheld salaries. Osodeke said so on Tuesday during...	ASUU has given a two-month ultimatum to pay the members' withheld salaries	so	ASUU as warner

E5 uses "did so" to substitute the noun clause "that the government would invoke the policy of no work no pay" in the discourse. E6 uses "so" to substitute a sentence that rankshifts to noun clause "ASUU has given government a two-month ultimatum to pay the members' withheld salaries". The clausal substitutes represent the FGN as punisher (Vanguard) while ASUU is represented as warner (Leadership).

4.3 Conjunction

Conjunction as semantic tool represents ASUU and FGN. Let us consider the working schema of the conjunction and the table 9 below:

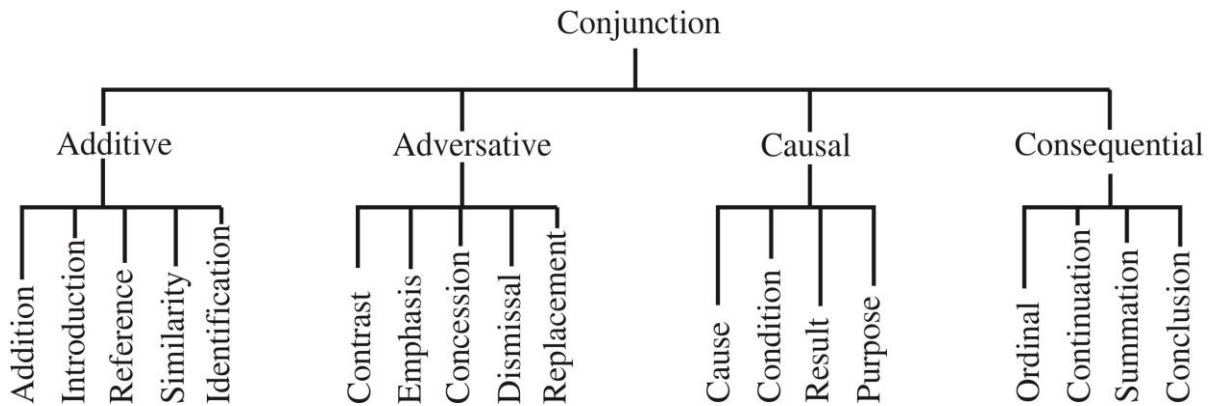


Figure 2: Working Schema of Conjunction (Source: Uduk & Ogundeji 2024)

4 3.1 Addictive Conjunction

Additive is a cohesion that is used as a semantic tie in a discourse to provide more information. This comprises addition, introduction, reference, similarity, and identification. The language use fortifies meaning making in the discourse of ASUU-FGN impasse in the selected Nigerian Newspapers. Consider these:

D a t a	Newspaper	Discourse	Conjunction	Conjunction Type	Representation
F1	The Guardian, July 28, 2024; pg 7	Mamman admitted that the contending issues were inherited, the government was continuum, and would ensured the issues were resolved	and	Additive/Addition	FGN as insurer
F2	The Guardian, July 28, 2024; pg 7	Osodeke said this is the first meeting between the union and the government since the Tinubu administration...he however, noted that none of the 10 contending issues have been solved (sic)	however	Adversative /Contrast	FGN as a failure
F3	The Nation, June 27, 2024; pg 15	According to Osodeke, universities are collapsing due to government's failure to address outstanding issues with the union	due to	Causal/ cause	FGN as a failure
F4	Leadership, February 17, 2020; pg.2	... finally, he said that if government touches the salaries of ASUU members, they would take the action of no pay no work	finally	Sequential/ Conclusion	ASUU as threatener

F1 marks the use of the additive "and" which functions as a semantic link between the last two clauses of the discourse. It adds to meaning negotiation in the discourse by the introduction of assurance by the Minister of Education, Prof Mamman, to solve the contending issues between ASUU and FGN. The semantic tool represents the FGN as insurer (The Guardian).

F2 use "however" to convey contrastive meaning between the presupposed clause and the later mentioned clause in the discourse. The semantic tool "however" adversatively communicates meaning to note that the meeting was held without resolution. The semantic tie represents FGN as a failure (The Guardian).

F3 uses the causal element "due to" to convey meaning bothering the cause of universities' collapse. The semantics tie both preceding and following clauses together to represent FGN as a failure (The Nation).

F4 marks the use of the sequential conjunction "finally". The semantic element indicates the conclusion of the discourse with the speaker's position. It represents ASUU as threatener (Leadership).

4.4 Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion is the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary. There are two basic classes of lexical cohesion: reiteration and collocation.

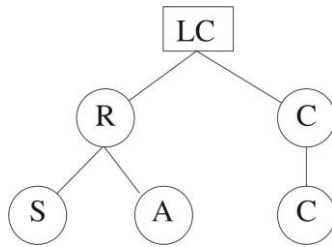


Figure 3: schema of lexical cohesion (Source: Uduk & Ogundeji 2024)

4.4.1 Reiteration

Reiteration is the repetition of lexical items in a discourse either directly or through the use of synonyms or antonyms.

4.4.1.1 Synonyms

Synonyms are words used to indicate nearly sameness of meaning. Sometimes synonyms are exact substitutes for words used in a discourse.

J1: Rally/Protest (Punch June 19, 2024; pg 11)

The Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU) Ago-Iwoye Chapter of the ASUU staged a peaceful **rally**... The **protest** was to create awareness over the impending nationwide strike by the union.

J2: Intimidation/Harassment (Punch December 23, 2019; pg 11)

On how to tackle cases of **intimidation** and **harassment** of students in tertiary institutions by lecturers, Ogunyemi said...

The synonyms, "rally/protest" and "intimidation/harassment" represent ASUU as protester (Punch) and harasser (Punch).

4.4.1.2 Antonyms

Antonymy is the term used to describe the oppositeness of meaning. Words that are opposite of each other are antonyms. Consider these:

K1: Destroyed/ Constructed (The Guardian, October 23,2022; pg.7)

It is easier **destroyed** than **constructed**. The government should not kill tertiary institutions as it did to public basic education.

K2: Force/ Persuade (The Guardian, October 23,2022; pg.7)

Ngige stressed that ASUU could not **force** anything on the government, informing that he would continue to **persuade** the union.

The Antonyms "destroyed/constructed" and "force/persuade" form semantic tools that represent FGN as the destroyer of university education (The Guardian) and persuader of ASUU (The Guardian).

4.4.2 Collocation

Collocation is a company which words keep in order to negotiate meaning. Collocation means lexical items that are likely to be found together within the same discourse. Consider these:

L1: warning strike

Our plan was **warning strike**. (Guardian, October 23,2022; pg.7)

Adjective +	Noun
Warning	Strike

L2: the three week ultimatum

NEC has concluded to proceed to strike if the government does not give positive response after the expiration of **the three-week ultimatum**. (Leadership, November 15, 2021; pg.8)

Article +	Adjective +	Noun
The	three-week	ultimatum

5. Conclusion

The study identified grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion as semantic tools that the Nigerian newspapers used for discourse representations of ASUU-FGN. The newspapers explored reference (anaphoric, cataphoric, demonstrative and comparative), substitution, reiteration to represent ASUU as pedophile (Leadership), dissident (Vanguard), opposer (Punch), advocate (Punch), warner (The Guardian), overworker (Punch), sensitiser (Punch), mobiliser (Punch), threatener (Leadership), and protesters (Punch) while FGN was represented as dictator (Vanguard), nonentity (The Guardian), abandoner, (The Guardian), deceiver (Vanguard), imposer (Punch), oppressor (Vanguard), renegade (Punch), punisher (Vanguard), ensurer (The Guardian), failure (The Nation), destroyer (The Guardian), and persuader (The Guardian). The study concluded that should the parties do what is needed within their power, the negative representations of their images would be averted. The study, therefore, recommended that much language research exploring linguistic theories be conducted on the ASUU-FGN impasse in order to find lasting solutions to the acrimony. The study limited its data to published articles in the national dailies. It could have contacted leadership of ASUU and functionaries of FGN for some verification of discourse in the print media. Future researchers could go a step further to collect data from correspondences of ASUU and FGN addressed to each other. Also, future researchers can focus on discursive strategies both parties use to gain sympathy from the stakeholders who their impasse affected.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID ID: 0009-0009-1939-2749 awoniyioogundeji@uniuyo.edu.ng

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5843-9903 happinessuduk@uniuyo.edu.ng

References

- [1] Akande, A., Oyeleye, L., and Olateju, M. (2003). *Lexical Semantics: An Introduction*. Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- [2] Atlay, M. (2017). Raising Awareness of Lexical Semantic Relations in Undergraduates EFL Context, *Novites-Royal Research on Youth and Language*. Vol.11(1), 42-52.
- [3] Coulthard, M. (1977). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman.
- [4] Eggins, A. (2004). *Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. A&C. Black.
- [5] Fitriati, M. (2021). Lexical Relations in the Rowling's Novel: "Harry Potter and the Deadly Hallows". *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol.20(1), 233-245.
- [6] Gajir, T. (2018). *The Structural and Textual signification of Endophoric Reference in Adichie's Novel*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.
- [7] Gonzalez, M. (2011). Lexical Cohesion in Multiparty Conversations. *Journal of Language Sciences*, Vol. 33(1), 167-179.
- [8] Halliday and Hasan (1976). *Cohesion in English*. Routledge.
- [9] Ifechelobi, J. (2012). Meaning and the Second Language Learner. *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*. Vol.13(1), 230-242.
- [10] Jaroslav, P. (2011). The Use of Theory of Meanings and the Rules of our Language Game-Making. *Semantic Pragmatics*.
- [11] Malah, Z. (2015). Lexical Cohesion in Academic Discourse: Exploring Applied Linguistics Research Articles' Abstracts. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*. Vol.3(4), 291-299
- [12] Malah, Z. (2017). Evaluating Lexical Cohesion in Nigerian Newspapers Genres: Focus on the Editorials. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*. Vol.6(1), 240-256
- [13] Odebunmi, A. (2006). *Meaning in English: An Introduction*. Ogbomoso: Critical Sphere.
- [14] Ogundeji, A. (2023). Discourse Ideologies of Academic Staff Union of Universities in News Reports. *Nigerian Journal of Humanities*. Vol. 6 (2)
- [15] Ojetunde, C. (2023). Semantic Analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's 2022 Independence Day Speech. *UNIUYO Journal of Humanities*. Vol. 27(1), 123-139.
- [16] Olateju, M. (1998). *Discourse Analysis: Analysing Discourse in the ESL Classroom*. Lagos: Crossland Educational Services
- [17] Oisanwo, W (2008). *Introduction to Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics*: Ebute-Meta, Fetop Publishers.
- [18] Sapir, E. (1921). *Language: Introduction to the Study of Speech*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

- [19] Zamir, N. (2021). Analysing the Lexico-Semantic Relationships of Nouns Used in the Saraiki Newspapers: A Corpus Based Study. *Ilkogretim Online -Elementary Education Online*.20.1100-1108 <http://ilkogretim-online.org>. DOI:10.17051/ilkonline.2021-05.119