

# Appositive Relations and Strategic Discourse Functions in Selected Nigerian Novels

Joseph A. Ushie, Ph.D.  
Romanus Aboh, Ph.D.

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## Abstract

Novel provides a wide range of grammatical possibilities which novelists explore to capture the diverse thematic concerns of their literary engagements. In spite of these possibilities, studies on the Nigerian novel have mostly concentrated on lexical processes, rhetoric and thematic explorations to the neglect of how Nigerian novelists explore grammatical items such as appositions to capture the multivocal preoccupation of their literary commitment. Anchored on the grammatical concept of appositions, this paper examines the strategic discourse functions appositive relations perform in the Nigerian novel. The analysis, which is both quantitative and qualitative, reveals that appositive relations are not just co-referential grammatical items, but strong discourse markers which are used to perform a range of discourse functions in the Nigerian novel.

**Key words:** Appositive element, anchor, discourse; Nigerian novelists

## Introduction

Due to Nigerian novelists' tendency to capture reality in detailed and precise manner, their works provide good and many examples of the use of appositive relations in all its varieties. Despite the multivocal functions to which appositive is put to use in the Nigerian novel, studies on the Nigerian novels have mostly concentrated on pragmatic features (Osunbade, 2010), pronominal reference as discourse strategy (Ogunsiji, 2008) and lexical strategies (Aboh, 2012). Moreover, the literary angle is mostly given to the analysis of the extant cultural influences on Nigerian writers' creative ambience (Okolo, 2008), Diaspora identity negotiation (Kehinde, 2008) and the Nigerian socio-political dislocations providing the materials with which its writers weave their art (Erritouni, 2010).

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Joseph A. Ushie, Ph.D. and Romanus Aboh, Ph.D.

Appositive Relations and Strategic Discourse Functions in Selected Nigerian Novels

This is despite the fact that Fowler (1981) has emphasised the significance of, and the intertwined bond that holds between language and literature. Thornborrow and Wareing (1998:50) aver that “...many people resist the idea of analysing the grammar of sentences of a poem or a novel, because they feel it destroys their enjoyment of the text as an entity.” But it does not follow that knowledge of grammar impede its “enjoyment”; it rather enhances its “enjoyment.”

The implication is that the neglect of grammar undermines language’s fundamentality to literature. This neglect is evident in the linguistic analysis of the Nigerian novel, most especially the aspect of apposition.

### **Focus of This Paper**

Thus, the focus of this paper is to first define the notion of apposition and then apply it to the interpretation of selected Nigerian novels. The aim is to analyse appositive structures according to the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics in terms of how they are deployed by Nigerian novelists of the 21st-century in dissecting diverse thematic preoccupations.

### **Apposition Relations - Multilayered**

On the surface, appositive relations appear as simple grammatical system of co-referentiality, but a close reading reveals multilayered interpretive discourse possibilities, especially when examined from the perspective of literary discourse. This position echoes the views of Kabilan, Seng and Kee (2010) that “To foster...deep understanding of the text, readers must have the ability to interact, engage and make meaning of information available in it.” Interaction and engagement with any given text is easier when considered from a discourse perspective. This is given that a number of grammatical items have been indicated to have different patterns of use when investigated from a discourse rather than a sentence perspective. Reading a text from a discourse angle guarantees an understanding of the dynamics of language use. In fact, Hughes and MaCarthy (1998) note that a discourse-based grammar makes a strong connection between form and function and aims to place appropriateness and use at the centre of

its description. Suffice it to say that the knowledge of grammar enhances an understanding of literary discourse.

### **Selected Novelists for This Study**

The novelists – Abimbola Adedokun, Vincent Egbuson, Helon Habila and Okey Ndibe – under the consideration of this paper belong to the generation of Nigerian novelists known as 21st-century Nigerian novelists (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu, 2009; Aboh, 2012; Lamidi and Aboh, 2011).



Abimbola Adedokun

Courtesy: <http://www.ynaija.com/abimbola-adelakun-what-truly-ails-patience-jonathan/>

### **“A Weeping Literature, A Literature of Lamentation”**

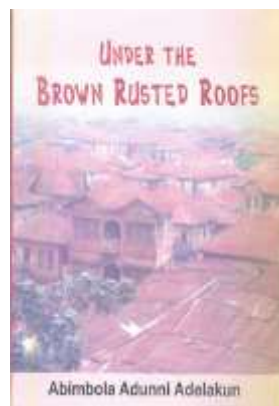
Writing on the literature of this generation of Nigerian novelists, Nnolim notes that it is “a weeping literature, a literature of lamentation.” The literature is a weeping one because it is “...a lamentation at the depths into which corruption in Nigeria has descended even in its educational engagements where parents and educators assist their children to thoroughly corrupt the system whose probity they are suppose and expected to uphold” (2012:159). Nnolim’s observation is an amplification of Mowarin’s (2009) earlier views. Mowarin sees 21st-century Nigerian poets as “lamentation poets” who lament the socio-political decadence, lack of visionary leaders, degenerating economy and the sickening educational system of their Nigerian

society. It then follows that a reading of the Nigerian novel is an appraisal of the socio-political decadence, ethno-religious foibles and eco-cultural disturbances that have rocked the Nigerian people and society in recent history.

### **Enchantment with Story and Form over Matter**

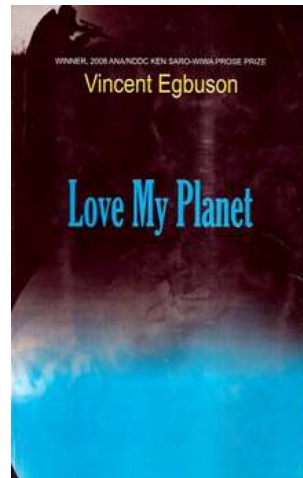
Linguistically, Onukaogu and Oyerionwu assert that “As part of their enchantment with story and form over matter, the new Nigerian novelist has demythologized literary tradition in his/her endeavour to experiment with presentation manner,” providing the Nigerian novel with “extreme stylistic, linguistic and structural sensibilities” (2009: 115). They also note that while some of these new novelists have maintained the stylistic and linguistic tenets of the older generations, many others have evolved a linguistic presentation which is nothing but “radical experimentalism” and departure from the preceding generations. Some apparent linguistic features of this generation of writers are transliteration, lexical adoption/innovation of indigenous expressions and appositive relations; the last which interests this paper.

### **Methodology**



Four novels by Nigerian novelists: Abimbola Adelakun’s *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* (2008), Vincent Egbuson’s *Love My Planet* (2008), Helon Habila’s *Waiting for an Angel* (2002) and Okey Ndibe’s *Arrows of Rain* (2000) – that indicate how appositions perform strategic discourse functions – were purposively selected. The paper adopts both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The quantitative method accounts for the type of

grammatical relations that make up appositions. The qualitative analysis is concerned with the interpretation of appositives in relation to the strategic discourse function they perform in the contexts of the sampled texts.



## Approaches to Appositions

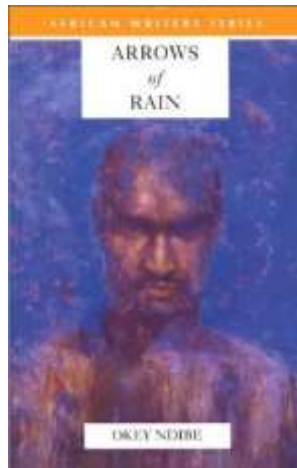
The relationship between language and literary discourse pursued in this paper is anchored on the grammatical concept of apposition. An appositive is a noun that follows a noun and function to identify the preceding noun or provide it with extra information (Citko, 2008).

The constructions below are examples of appositional relations:

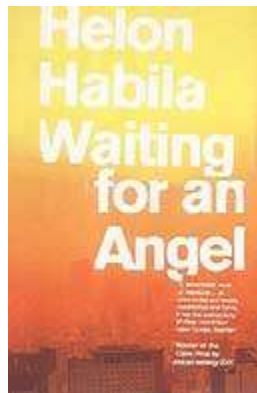
- a. Adie, *my neighbour*, is a lecturer.
- b. The best dancer, *Biwom*, was a kindergarten teacher.

In (a), *Adie* and *the best dancer* in (b) are called the anchor, and *my neighbour* and *Biwom* are respectively known as appositive elements. The anchor is always the first element and the apposition is therefore a postmodifier of the anchor, i.e., it provides additional information to the preceding noun or noun phrase, as in example (b). The modification in the above constructions belongs to the class of appositives known as non-restrictive appositions. The implication is that restrictive appositions, such as the phrases in (c and d) are excluded from the discussion, since they will need a different attention.

- a. her Mother *Akpana*
- b. the adjective *beautiful*



Since Hockett (1955), the debate on the syntactic composition and function of non-restrictive appositional constructions has remained an intriguing one. The debate is about the relation between its two parts, the anchor and the apposition. de Vries (2006; 2007; 2009), for example, assumes apposition has the same syntactic structure as coordination. However, Citko (2008) argues against de Vries' assumption. He notes that apposition is a functional element within the nominal entity that provides additional information about the preceding noun or noun phrase.



Sopher (1972) would prefer semantic and formal criteria in the categorisation of appositions. He considers that “the apposition elements may belong to different syntactic classes” (1972:401). He also considers that apposition differs from both subordination and coordination. However, a contradiction can also be observed in Sopher's definition due to the fact that when he refers to the appositional elements, he speaks of *head group and appositional group*, which, in a way, implies subordination. For Sopher, the elements in apposition constitute a functional unit; both are on the same syntactic structure. If one element is eliminated and only

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Joseph A. Ushie, Ph.D. and Romanus Aboh, Ph.D.

Appositional Relations and Strategic Discourse Functions in Selected Nigerian Novels

the other element is left, the utterance in which they are inserted will not change. The implication is that both elements are interchangeable and there is a semantic relation of co-reference between them. It then follows that when they are functioning as subject, “they concord with the verb in singular” (Penas, 1994:85). Interestingly, Sopher’s definition of apposition establishes the differences between apposition and other syntactic relations in the grammatical system.

Quirk et al (1985; 1990) take us a step further in the description of apposition. They put forward syntactic and semantic criteria in their definition of apposition; their criteria are not distinctively different from those used by Sopher. They note that “(1) each of the appositives can be omitted without affecting the acceptability of the sentence; (2) each fulfils the same syntactic function in the resultant sentences; (3) it can be assumed that there is no difference between the original sentence and either of the resultant sentences in extra-linguistic reference” (1985:1302).

In tune with Quirk et al.’s (1985) study, Meyer’s (1987) focuses on syntactic and pragmatic characteristics. Meyer, like Quirk et al, includes more semantic relations between the elements in apposition. Semantically, according to Meyer, the relation may be co-referential (“My father, John”), hyponymous (“a tree, an oak tree”), synonymous (“a priest, a man of the clergy”) and attributive (“My sister, a tax accountant”) (1987:103). The examples given above justify the claim that appositive relations are mainly composed of noun phrases. The criteria established by Meyer to define apposition are the following:

*Semantic constraint:* U1 and U2 are coreferential, hyponymous, synonymous, or attributively related; *pragmatic constraint:* U2 supplies new information about U1; *syntactic constraint:* either U1 or U2 are juxtaposed or they must be able to be juxtaposed without the resulting sentence becoming unacceptable (p. 120).

Quirk et al.’s criteria will be used in this paper because their criteria are more suitable for the texts under the consideration of this study. Moreover, the analysis of appositive relations will follow two patterns: first, it will identify appositives as grammatical entities that belong to the same syntactic class – the noun phrase.

### **Syntactic Characteristics of Appositions**

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Joseph A. Ushie, Ph.D. and Romanus Aboh, Ph.D.

Appositive Relations and Strategic Discourse Functions in Selected Nigerian Novels

275

While some syntacticians argue that an appositive relation may be found in linguistic units higher than the phrase, others are in agreement that it is a type of relation that takes place mainly between phrases. And they make their definition more specific by stating that it is to be found for the most part in noun phrases. After examining the sampled corpus, the paper agrees with the summation that appositive relations are to be found mostly in noun phrases. They could be found in noun clauses, though. The construction:

The fact that I am a student in the University of Ibadan is not a coincidence.

is an example of an appositive relation. The noun clause, *That I am a student in the University of Ibadan*, is appositive to the anchor, *The fact*. This is not quite an issue as noun clauses perform similar functions with noun phrase. The aim of this section is to prove that appositive elements are common with noun phrases. For the purpose of this paper, the appositive relations in the data are italicised; this will help to distinguish the anchor from the appositive element, more so to enhance a better understanding of the grammatical system of appositives.

The apposition may have a proper noun (example 1), a noun phrase with premodifiers (example 2) or a personal pronoun (example 3), and a demonstrative (example 4) as anchors:

1. ... Iya Abiye, *the traditional midwife* (*Rusted Roofs*, p.11)
2. ...when the military dictator, *Abacha*, died... (*Angel*, p.32)
3. Did I not tell *you*, Mr Lati, that this woman... (*Arrows*, p. 39)
4. *This* – is the brightest student this school has ever had – a girl (*Planet*, p. 81).



**Table 1: Syntactic classes of apposition**

	<i>Angel</i>	<i>Arrows</i>	<i>Planet</i>	<i>Rusted Roofs</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
NP + NP	49	40	65	66	220	85.6
NP + Prep	5	6	4	4	19	7.3
NP + Clause	-	-	3	5	8	3.1
Adj. P+Adj P.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adj P + NP	1	-	-	1	2	0.7
Adv P + Adv P	4	3	-	-	7	2.7
Adv P + Prep	-	-	-	-	-	-
Prep + Adv P	-	-	-	1	1	0.3
Total	59	49	72	77	257	

NP = Noun Phrase

Prep = Prepositional Phrase

Adj P = Adjective Phrase

Adv P = Adverb Phrase.

Table 1 provides the breakdown of the syntactic items that make up appositives. It indicates that appositive relation is found in 85.9% of the examples of noun phrases and only 14.1% in other types. The table clearly demonstrates that besides the fact that adjectival phrases do not function as appositions, appositive relations barely exist between different syntactic elements. The appositive relation between the adverbial elements is basically semantic. It also illustrates that there is an appositive relation between noun phrases and prepositional phrases. This is simply because both phrases are headed by nominal entities. This is why it has 7.3%, next to the appositions with noun phrases on Table 2. Moreover, this category performs pragmatic functions, that is, they provide contextualised additional information to the NP, the anchor, in the current discourse situation. An example from the corpus is quoted below:

5. The Akinyele's lived in *Tolani Estate, a Federal Government Housing Project* in Ikeja (*Angel*, p. 43).

Syntactically, the structures which the elements in the apposition present may be simple or complex. The anchor may stand alone, as in (6) and the appositive element could be a combination of pre and post modifications as in (7).

6. ... *Luka*, the family's second driver took her back to school (*Planet*, p. 103).

7. *Soni*, a *sloe-eyed young man whom everybody called Mr. Ways and Means*... (*Arrows*, p.87).

Example (6) is an instance of simple appositive relation. One striking formal characteristics of this type of apposition is the absence of a determiner before the anchor. In such examples, as indicated in the data, a semantic relation of attribution exists between the two elements. The anchor, the data indicates, is always a proper noun, which is used to indicate blood ties, mostly. The second category indicates complex apposition, that is, there is an accumulation of determiners, pre-modifiers, post modifiers, and coordination (example 7). In other cases, the complexity is due to the fact that there is an accumulation of appositions (examples 8 and 9) or the appositions are juxtaposed (example 10).

8. I was helping *Nancy, the cook and waitress*, who had gone to the ... (*Angel*, p. 95)

9. "You, a *Ph. D holder, a Doctor of African literature* serving a university dropout to terrorize your mother land?" (*Planet*, p.330)

10. ... *Mulika, the daughter of Kudi, Bili's friend*... (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 67)

11. Remember *him: conscientious doctor, dutiful father, loving husband*, and to me, a *perfect role model* (*Angel*, p. 52)

In (8), the appositive elements are conjoined by 'and', at the same time, each of them forms an apposition with the noun phrase which immediately follows it. That is, there is an apposition within an apposition. This kind of apposition is exploited when writers are interested in describing bipolar identities. In (9), the third element is in apposition to the second element and both the second and third are in apposition to the anchor; the same thing applies to examples (10 and 11). Although these appositions are not very common in the sampled texts, they are very central to writers' strategic use of appositions while dissecting contentious issues. The attempt so far is to authenticate the claim that appositive relations exist mostly between elements of the same syntactic class. Having achieved one of the objectives of this paper, we progress to the

second objective – to account for the strategic discourse functions of appositives in the Nigerian novel.

### Discourse Functions of Appositives in the Nigerian Novel

Quirk et al (1985, 1990) categorised non-restrictive appositions into six sub-types. Out of these six sub-types, four are most prominent in the data: appellation, identification, restrictive and exemplification. However, these appositive relations are modified in certain instances to correlate with the data. The table below presents the frequency and the percentage of the above-named functional categories of appositive relations. They shall be discussed in turn; the interpretations proffered here are basically context-specific.

**Table 2: Functional categories of appositions**

<b>Apposition Types</b>	<i>Angel</i>	<i>Arrows</i>	<i>Planet</i>	<i>Rusted Roofs</i>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Appellation	23	23	40	28	114	46
Identification	4	3	10	18	35	14
Restrictive	5	5	10	4	24	10
Exemplification	28	14	18	13	73	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>246</b>	

### Appositions of Appellations

Quirk et al (1985; 1972) note that in appellation there is a unique reference between the two appositives. Both appositive noun phrases are commonly definite and the second is typically a proper noun. As Table 2 illustrates, the highest percentage of examples, 46%, are those that belong to the category of appellation. Besides pointing to the semantic ties that hold between the appositive elements, the preponderant use of appositive appellations, which is composed mainly of people's names, is used to characterise discourse participants in the novels in line with their fictional role. While appellations are used for characterisation, they, as the data show, are also used to establish blood ties (examples 12, 13, 14 and 15).

12. He was handed over to her and as she began to wash, *Iya Agba, Alhaji's mother came* ...(*Rusted Roofs*, p. 14).
13. Later, arraigned before the full council of my family: my irate table-banging father, my weeping mother, and *my kid sister, Olive*... (*Angel*, p. 109)
14. *Ala, the earth goddess* (*Arrows*, p. 150).
15. '*Anabella, the Kozi girl* working as a maid in that big storey building... (*Planet*, p. 33)

The above examples illustrate the blood relationship that exists among the characters in the novels. In (12) *Iya Agba* is a Yoruba expression for a grandma. The appositional element tells of the family tie that holds between *Iya Agba*, the anchor and the protagonist, Alhaji, whose wife is delivered of a baby. Interestingly, the use of the appositive element is not just to illustrate the familial tie, but principally to project a cultural practice akin to the Yoruba people of western Nigeria; where it is the norm that when a child is born, it is the oldest woman in the family who is saddled with the responsibility of inducting the child to the world. This is the reason *Iya Agba* is waited for in order to conduct the rite of induction. Example (13) appositively signals the mutual relationship that exists between the narrator and the kid sister, Olive.

The apposition in (14) ideologically indexes the Igbo traditional belief system in gods. The appositional element, *the earth goddess*, does not perform a mere grammatical function of co-referentiality; rather it strategically provides illuminating insights to the Igbo of eastern Nigeria traditional belief in deities, their types and specific spiritual functions. The earth goddess is concerned with fertility but is also concerned with holiness. Anyone who has committed an "alu," abomination, cannot be buried in the earth. Thus the deity guards human conduct. Individuals try to be careful the way they live. "Ala" is considered the highest deity – after "Chineke", the Creator among the Igbo. Functionally, the appositive is an excursion to the spiritual ethos of the Igbo. In (15) the appositive element displays ethnic affiliations; it illustrates how people's identity is strongly tied to their ethnic origin.

Moreover, under the category of appellations, some of the appositive relations are used to describe characters' titles or positions in the society. These sets of appositive relations define the social roles of the characters: what they do and what they are known for. They are therefore used

to accentuate asymmetrical power relation among discourse participants in the discourse process (examples 16, 17, 18 and 19).

16. *Ayomi, an Executive Officer*, and his wife decided to attend the night service at...  
(*Planet*, p.24)

17. *Motara*, being the most senior wife, *the Iyale Agba*, took the first two days, Sunday and Monday (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 18).

18. ‘... *Alhaja Kudirat Abiola*, wife of the jailed business tycoon and politician, *Chief Moshood Abiola*, was shot dead today by unknown assassins...’ (*Angel*, p.161)

19. *Chief Willy Wakka*, the Senate President, was a stout man with a thug’s temper...  
(*Arrows*, p.189)

In (16), *an executive officer* gives specific information about the personality of *Ayomi*. Critically, the use of the phrase indicates that in spite of the highly placed position of Mr *Ayomi*, he could attend a church service at night. This is particularly the reason for the use of the appositive element in (16). Similarly, example (17) tells who *Motara* is: *the Iyale Agba* i.e. *Alhaji’s* most senior wife. Her position gives her certain privileges over her co-wives. The co-referential appositive element is significantly strategic, as the ways of life of a polygamous Nigerian family is brought to the readers’ knowledge. Specifically, it provides information on how a polygamous man manages his conjugal relationship with his three wives. Critically, it will breed trouble if a wife takes another’s turn. And if their husband gives undue attention to a particular wife, as in giving more days to her, she automatically becomes the enemy of her other co-wives. This is the case with *Afusa*, *Alhaji’s* second wife in the novel, *Rusted Roofs*.

Moreover, examples (18) and (19) are used to describe certain political resonances. In (18), for instance, the second element paraphrases the first and the second appositive element describes several characteristics of *Alhaja Kudirat Abiola*. The author refers to *Alhaja Kudirat Abiola* by using a network of complex but specific noun phrases, all the elements in the appositive relation refer to the same person. This complex network of appositive relations is used by the author to make specific reference to Nigeria’s political era (the military era of *Sanni Abacha*, to be specific) where *Alhaja Kudirat Abiola* was killed by unknown gun men as she was drumming support for the release of her husband, *Moshood Abiola* who was imprisoned by the late *Sanni Abacha* for declaring himself winner of the annulled June 12 Presidential election. In

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Joseph A. Ushie, Ph.D. and Romanus Aboh, Ph.D.

Appositive Relations and Strategic Discourse Functions in Selected Nigerian Novels

(19), the author relies heavily on the encyclopaedic knowledge of his readers with whom he shares the same background knowledge of some Nigerian politicians and their aggressive dispositions. The presentation of Chief Willy Wakka as someone with a thug's temper is to bring to bear the immaturity of some politicians so as to persuade the Nigerian voting population not to vote such men into electoral offices. Having examined some appositions of appellations and their discourse functions, the next section of this paper x-rays appositions of identification.

### **Appositions of Identification**

Appositive relations of identification do not indicate unique equivalence. The appositive element is more specific, identifying what is given in the anchor, which is typically an indefinite noun phrase. However, a similar relationship obtains if the first apposition is, or contains, a pronoun referring to the second appositive element. Next on Table 2 is the category of identification with 14%. In this category, uses of names are still found as appositive elements, but unlike those in the category of appellation, the names in the category of identification are used to assert individuality (example 20) and to describe the characters' capability (example 21).

20. 'I told myself, *I Chief Haruna Akanni Akeweje* is not an *omo ale*' (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 24)

21. 'That I, *Toundi*, *I Toundi*, afraid of failure?' (*Planet*, p.101)

In example (20), Chief Haruna Akanni Akeweje makes it clear to his discussants that he is not an *omo ale*. An *omo ale* is a Yoruba expression for a bastard. The implication of the emphatic appositive relation is that of identification. Chief Haruna Akanni Akeweje by appositioning his name legitimises his identity and clarifies, through an assertive strategy, that he is a free-born. Given his free-born identity, he has the right to be treated as one.

Similarly, in example (21), Toundi, through rational argumentative strategy, tells her friend that her sickness is not attributed to the fact that she is afraid of any examination. The affirmation of her capability is drawn from the epistemic knowledge that she is the best student in her school and has never failed any examination. The repetitive reference to "self" has a rhetorical effect. It is a discursive strategy of persuasion and rational argument which Toundi exploits to assert her

capability of passing any examination as well as to produce a mental change in her friend's, Yiba, perception of her illness. The analysis in this section indicates that appositive relations are substantial discourse strategies which discourse participants in the Nigerian novel employ to assert their individuality and capability hence identity. In the section that follows, restrictive appositions and their contextual functions are discussed.

### **Restrictive Appositions**

Quirk et al (1972) note that an important use of the first form of non-restrictive appositions is found with citations, names of books, films, etc. As Table 2 demonstrates, the category of restrictive relation has 10%, the least on the table. They, however, offer specific information about Nigerian writer's discourse strategy of showing-off their intellectual ability and level of education. Besides the fact that the appositives reveal positive self-categorisation, they capture, in the real sense, many Nigerians' speech behaviour which is characterised by allusions to books, icons and iconic events and newspapers, as a way of accentuating their eloquence. This they achieve by alluding to their favourite books, authors and newspapers (22 and 23).

22 ...His own novel, *Zero Laughter* was terrific: it towered over any novel by a Dagloban she had ever read (*Planet*, p 282)

23. ...at the Star, *Media's oldest newspaper*,...(*Arrows*, p. 126)

In (22), the author indirectly promotes another author's novel. Basically, the author of *Planet* effort is aimed at extolling novelists (this includes writers and practitioners of other art forms) above other professions. In the real sense, (since he himself is a writer) the author is engaged in self-glorification. This is not uncommon with most Nigerian writers. Unlike other developed nations, Nigerian writers can hardly make a living from creative writing. Majority of them are teachers, university professors and journalists (Griswold, 2002). What they do, given any opportunity, is to promote themselves. The same self-glorification is seen in example (23). The author of *Arrows* is a journalist. The appositional reference to a newspaper calculatingly connects the author's readers to journalism, a profession he adores. The set of examples

discussed in this section reveals how appositive elements are conduits for the negotiation of social affiliations. The last set of examples discusses appositions of exemplification.

### **Appositions of Exemplification**

In exemplification, the appositive element exemplifies the more general term in the anchor. Table 2 shows that appositions of this category have 30%, the second highest. In the data, exemplifications are used to supply additional information. This enables the reader to follow as well as understand the issues that are foregrounded in the narrative. Moreover, exemplifications give information about the ways of lives of Nigerians, about linguistic patriotism and about the general state of things. In the light of linguistic patriotism and identity display, exemplification can be conceived as the placement of indigenous expressions side-by-side with their direct or contextual English equivalents in the narrative process. Some examples are considered presently.

24. She got up to go the *amu*, *the big water put kept in the backyard*, to collect rain water... (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 10)
25. ...because they would marry *oyibo*, *white man*, not bush African. (*Arrows*, p. 100)
26. The Akinyele's lived in *Tolani Estate*, *a Federal Government Housing Project* in Ikeja (*Angel*, p. 43).
27. *The owner of the school*, *a very wicked man*,...(*Planet*, p. 90)
28. Later, *much later*, *after your confession*, I had asked you,... (*Angel*, p.80).

In example (24), the appositive element is the novelist's deliberate objective to introduce her readers to the art and craft of her people. *Amu* is a Yoruba expression for a special water pot made of mud. The water in *amu* is usually cold. In most Nigerian sub-cultures, *amu* is used to keep drinking water. In fact, every household in the Bette-Bendi tribe of northern Cross River State, Nigeria has clay-made water pot, what they call *ushang*. Similarly, in (25), the apposition *white man*, explains what *oyinbo*, an Igbo expression for a white person, means. The selected novelists demonstrate a predilection of completely substituting English expressions with indigenous ones, and they go ahead to provide specific information to those indigenous expressions. In this light, Onukaogu and Onyerionwu (2009:116-7) argue that the use of appositive relations "is a tribute to linguistic patriotism... they could conjure a disciplined



allegiance to their roots.” If the positions of Onukaogu and Onyerionwu are anything to go by, the use of appositions in 21st-century Nigeria novels is a testimony of identity display.

In (26), the second appositive element paraphrases the anchor. The appositive performs a “social-linguistic” function, that is, it provides information about the social standing of the Akinyele’s. In Nigeria’s social ranking, those who live in estates are considered the rich of the society. While those who live in government housing estates are seen as top government officers; those who live in private estates are regarded by society to be really rich. This is the motivation for the use of the appositive in the novel: an indication that the Akinyeles belong to the upper class of society. Moreover, in (27), the appositive element is a noun phrase which attributes a characteristic to the anchor which is also a noun phrase with a common noun as its head. It is used to describe a school owner who, not minding the effects of gas pollution on school children, removes them from the third floor of the school building to the ground floor where gaseous wastes are deposited. The use of the attributive appositive is to rail against school owners who establish schools just for profit, not with the aim of providing quality education which the country yearns for. In (28), the appositive element, *after your confession*, describes a specific time. The elements are synonymous, meaning that they can be interchanged. This is one of the instances of adverbial phrases functioning as apposition. It also consolidates the claim that appositions exist mostly between elements of the same syntactic class. However, the character, Lomba, uses it to persuade, remind his listener, Alice, of their relationship, and the need to invigorate it.

## Conclusion

This paper focused attention on interpretive and situationalised analysis of appositive relations and their strategic functions in selected Nigerian novels. The characteristics which differentiate apposition from other relations within the grammatical system have been analysed. It is observed that it is a type of relation which is mainly found in noun phrases. These noun phrases have the same function within the clause in which they are inserted. They are mainly used to characterise, name and identify people, express people’s ideology and everything the novelists consider necessary. In this way, the novelists transmit information, display their

identity and express their points of view and also, in some cases, help the reader to follow the arguments that are raised.

By using apposition, the novelists foreground a certain aspect of the discourse, an aspect which has great significance in the interchange of ideas. Pragmatically, the appositive element, the analysis suggests, is generally an explanation of the first. It usually adds information that the character or narrators consider necessary in encoding their points of view. In some cases, the appositive element avoids possible ambiguity.

The analysis also reveals that as much as the writers are conscious of projecting their indigenous identity, they also have their non-Nigerian readers in mind. The information supplied by the appositive element takes the non-Nigerian along in the exploration of subject matter and in the flow of meaning; making it clear that appositive relation, studied from a discourse rather than a sentence-based perspective, enhances the interpretation of the Nigerian novel.

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Joseph A. Ushie, Ph.D.  
Department of English  
University of Uyo  
Nigeria  
[joseph.ushie@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.ushie@gmail.com)

Romanus Aboh, Ph.D.  
Department of English  
University of Ibadan  
Nigeria  
[romeaboh@gmail.com](mailto:romeaboh@gmail.com)