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## ► To cite this version:

Nadine Lucas. Stylistic devices in news, as related to topic recognition. Cognitive Poetics and Rhetoric, 2012, 11 p. hal-01067817

**HAL Id: hal-01067817**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01067817>**

Submitted on 29 Sep 2014

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## STYLISTIC DEVICES IN NEWS, AS RELATED TO TOPIC RECOGNITION

The abstractive power of human thought, underlying [...] both geometrical relations and grammar, superimposes simple geometrical and grammatical figures upon the pictorial world of particular objects and upon the concrete lexical “wherewithal” of verbal art, as was shrewdly realized in the thirteenth century by Villard de Honnecourt for graphic arts and by Galfredus for poetry.  
Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature* 1987<sup>1</sup> p. 135

It has been rediscovered that stylistic devices are used mainly to convey meaning at text level (Fahnestock, 1999). Meanwhile, cognitive stylistics and rhetoric developed in many directions, including rich studies in literature. Some authors put emphasis on perceptive constraints and relative contrast (Kwiatowska, 1997, 1998). Some stressed the relation between audience and issues reported in the press (Hamilton *et al.*, 2007). We propose here to relate different trends to study ordinary written material, news, but also to address scale in whole texts to develop cognitive rhetoric. This work deals with stylistic features that are linked to cognitive processes, specifically topic recognition in news articles. The challenge was triggered by expectations in computational linguistics and fueled an attempt to express objective properties to detect topic continuity in texts, irrespective of language, but following genre laws (Lejeune *et al.*, 2010).

Journalists are trained to write according to genre laws (Itule & Anderson, 2006). In news discourse, cognition is supported by a number of simple devices like repetition, but also higher level devices like quotation. Our approach relies on news discourse properties, as described and discussed on theoretical grounds by van Dijk (1988). Reported speech is meaningful for journalists and their readers to provide first-hand testimony on the events being reported and also to provide insiders’ comments on the situation, as opposed to the journalist’s comments and conclusions (Waugh, 1995; Bednarek, 2006).

Among the great amount of research on press articles, authors discussed quoted speech in terms of authority and critical discourse perspective (Casamiglia & Lopez Ferrero, 2003), or as related to argumentation (Smirnova, 2009). We will focus on text grammar linked to layout (Moirand, 2003; Lucas, 2004). The explicit use of ancient rhetoric figures as inscribed in material disposition is due to Fahnestock (2004).

The examples provided here are related to the H1N1 flu outbreak and pandemic in 2009 and were found on the European Community Medical Information System site<sup>2</sup> (Medisys). 140 pieces of news grouping 7 languages (English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Polish and Japanese) were manually checked, prior to design and test of computer programs to detect main topics. It seems obvious that language has an influence on analysis. However, size of text and density of style proved to be even more important in a study based on genre laws rather than lexicon and individual languages realizations. The importance of scale was discussed as a methodological issue with examples in French taken from popularized science articles (Lucas, 2009). We focus here on the scale variation in English news discourse. For the sake of clarity, the multilingual variation will be explained elsewhere.

When observing corpus, it is indeed difficult to give a single definition of topic. What is called “topic” in common words might vary according to types of disposition (mainly exposition vs argumentation) and according to the length of the paper. Readers tend to subdivide the news in a limited number of topics.

The main hypothesis we wish to illustrate is that each topic or subtopic in a piece of news is related with an information source, called here an informant. A pattern where both reported

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<sup>1</sup> original conference in Varsaw, 1960, *Poèzija grammatiki i grammatika poèzii* (in Russian)

<sup>2</sup> <http://medusa.jrc.it/medisys>

speech and topic closure coincide delineates the reported situation as opposed to the journalist's comments and conclusions (van Dijk, 1988).

Reported speech or RS fulfils more than one function, but it is always marked when it matters (Waugh, 1995). However, there is still a gap between semantic descriptions at text level and the detailed descriptions of the actual linguistic means to convey RS at sentence level (Marnette, 2005; Rosier, 2009). This is why we decided to draw attention to the stylistic devices used in texts, as revealing its structure.

We argue that cognitive principles apply to help readers find similarity under various guises, and that scale is precious. As geographers put it "to talk about scale, is to admit that not only size changes, whenever size changes". Contrast values also change when size changes, marks are not the same. In text, for instance, plain word repetition can be found in short news, and also in long news, but if repetition is massive in long news, then it is no longer salient, and no longer useful to get a global view of the text content. Word repetitions still structure subtopics, but then, a new device such as epanalepsis emerges at discourse level, preventing details to blur the global picture.

## News discourse types

There is a very wide range of proposals for text types, not all authors agree on what should be called argumentation, exposition or explanation and so on, nor do they agree on the number of categories that should be considered (Moirand, 2005). We do not intend to settle the question but will give examples to illustrate our categories in the journalistic genre.

### Exposition and topic

Expository text is a plain text where the main content is given first then detailed later. Usually, in news, there is a short passage called closure aimed at comparison or prospective at the end.

#### Example 1. Expository news

##### ***China has 100 cases of swine flu: state media***

*China has 100 confirmed cases of swine flu, state media said Tuesday, as data from the World Health Organization showed the disease had spread to 73 countries.*

*"The health ministry has reported... that so far, China has 100 confirmed cases of A(H1N1) flu," said a news report on state television CCTV.*

*The report said the 100 cases were in mainland China, which does not include Hong Kong or Macau.*

*China confirmed its first case of the illness -- which has killed 139 people in six countries -- on May 11, but it has so far recorded no deaths.*

*According to the latest data by the WHO, 73 countries have officially reported a total of 25,288 cases.*

In more technical terms, the news is divided in two coordinated segments, one is developed (boxed in example 1) and the second is not. In the main topic, two parts are found, topical head (or theme) and development (or rheme). These two parts are not of equal length. The development is usually much longer than the topical head.

Example 1 illustrates a pattern where reported speech signals the main topic. The box delineates the main event or episode, as opposed to the background provided by the journalist (van Dijk, 1981, 1988). The scattered mark giving cohesion to the main topic is the quotation verb *said*. The informant is the same under various names, as the reader understands the generic term *state media* refers to specific *state television CCTV* issuing a *news report*.

An expository news ends with coordination of a comparative member, a segment allowing a change in perspective. The coordinated topics are asymmetrical, in size (Lucas, 2000; Lucas & Giguet, 2005). A different form of quotation introducer, *according to*, is found in the last part of the news as opposed to *said* in the main topic and this time the informant is the WHO.

A expository news very often follows a rhetorical pattern called *incrementum* (Fahnestock, 1999, 2004). Behind this technical name is a simple rule, often used in the journalistic genre. Information is given from a local standpoint, here the country (China), and later encompasses a more global standpoint, here the world.

### Argumentation and topic

In the following example, two topics are presented in an argumentative construction. Instead of simply stating facts, the author presents them as related. The topics are also balanced in size. The first topic in Example 2 is an argument related to the title, a short passage (2 paragraphs), with the explicit statement that no further information is available. The rest of the news (4 paragraphs) brings a new topic, shifting attention from province to nation. The informant has changed in the second topic. This may seem rather similar to the expository type. However, information is presented as if the national total were caused by the local situation: *The latest death in Saskatchewan brings the total number...*

Example 2. English. Two balanced segments, argumentative news

***Saskatchewan records its 1st swine flu death***

*Last Updated: Sunday, June 28, 2009 | 5:02 PM ET*

*Saskatchewan has recorded its first swine flu-related death, provincial health officials said Sunday.*

*A woman in her 40s with serious underlying health conditions died from the illness, said Karen Hill, a spokeswoman for Saskatchewan Health. No further details were disclosed.*

*The province has 685 laboratory confirmed cases of H1N1 flu virus, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada.*

*The latest death in Saskatchewan brings the total number of people who died in Canada after contracting the virus to 25.*

*There have been 7,775 confirmed cases of swine flu in Canada, the agency said Friday.*

*Swine flu has spread around the world and the World Health Organization declared it a pandemic influenza virus earlier this month.*

Switching from provincial to national scale provides a parallelism in construction (number of deaths, number of affected people), not a mere *incrementum* (Fahnestock, 1999).

**Geometry**

The parallel between geometry and linguistics was drawn by Jakobson (1987: 135) who applied to entire texts. Perception principles apply to topic continuity recognition in news. Text is a woven construct. It is schematized as a two dimensions plane, where each layout constituent is supposed to be contained in a line or a block. This will help define top and bottom, left and right for the model needs.

In our writing tradition, texts are written from top to bottom and from left to right. This explains the meta-linguistic representations built on this tradition. If the text (an article) is subdivided in title and the rest, we see that either anthropomorphic or geometrical metaphors are guiding the description. We call top (or header) the beginning of the paper, the title; we call middle or text body the article proper and we call bottom (or footer) the beginning of the paper where typically the copyright is found.

News articles are subdivided in paragraphs, which are the immediate layout constituents in most cases. However, some long articles are divided in sections: this introduces the question of scale discussed below. Considering the most ordinary case in news dispatches sent by press agencies, paragraphs contain only one sentence sometimes two.

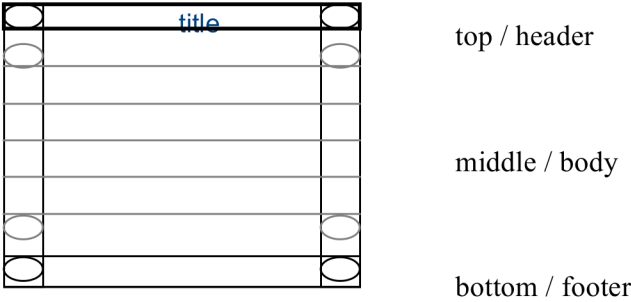


Figure 1. Geometry of text. The symbolic space of text and its “corners”

Next, if the text body is subdivided in paragraphs, then we suppose that each layout constituent (the paragraph is this case) is contained in a line. By convention, the beginnings of paragraphs are on the left side, and the ends of the paragraphs are on the right side (mentally,

but also in computer formalism, the lines are extensible to accommodate for any constituent actual length). The top and bottom as well as the left and right margins are seen on Figure 2. It should be clear that it is not the mere representation of layout but a mental frame to represent salient positions, top left, bottom right etc as marked by “corners” of the text and of the text body. Symmetry is considered by reference to this mental space.

The main difficulty, however, is linked with text size. Articles that are organized in sections, especially long papers organized in many sections do not behave exactly like brief news. Scale has to be considered and will be illustrated in the last but one section.

### Repetitions

Repetitions are studied since the ancient times (see *Silva Rhetoricae*<sup>3</sup>). Word repetitions (or literal repetitions) are easy to detect (and the more so by computer), but their function is not unique. Repetitions are studied at special positions, notably beginning and end of major layout constituents. The extent of the repetition is also linked with the length of text.

Figures of repetition are many. These figures are usually explained on verse (each verse is a line) but for our purpose we expand the frame and work on paragraphs or even sections that are the layout constituents of news. If we use the « geometry » of text constructions again to define technical vocabulary, we find repetitions used in a number of contexts.

The pair *stylistic anaphora* and *epiphora* is used relative to special positions: when something is repeated at the beginning of a given unit (verse or sentence or paragraph), it is called anaphora. When something is repeated at the end of a given unit (verse or sentence or paragraph), it is called epiphora. The link is established when form and position are constant in a text.



Figure 2. a) Anaphora at beginning (left side) b) epiphora at end (right side) of layout constituents

It is obvious that the spatial disposition (left and right) is to be understood modulo writing orientation. In English, anaphora is seen on the left side of the figure, in Arabic, it is seen on the right side of the figure.

More complex figures of repetition are also found in news. One that is fairly common is the anadiplosis or “redouble”, where the end of a line is repeated at the beginning of the next line (or *vice versa*). A less common figure, combined repetition or coenotes, features repetition of a line with the same beginning and ending pair.



Figure 3. a) Anadiplosis: same form at two opposite positions b) coenotes repeated unit wrapping

Repetitions are distributed unevenly in texts. Their actual distribution in any actual paper depends on style, and varies with scale. The way to measure stylistic variation can be seen by repetition of words, the simplest way. But it can also be based on repetition of a grammatical or discursive device, such as quotation. Moreover, it can also be seen in longer texts through the repetition device itself (is the repetition repeated at some distance?). Last, while the presence of repetition is the obvious and marked device, the absence of repetition can also be striking

<sup>3</sup> <http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Silva.htm>



(Jakobson, 1987; Kwiatkowska, 1998). But then the time dimension should be included to provide for expectation and surprise at change.

### Quotation

Reported speech is deemed an expected component of news discourse (van Dijk, 1981, 1988). Since quotations are expected and marked, they are prone to signal topic and topic shift. Comment by the journalist can be considered as the absence of quotation, it is unmarked in English news. This is a genre law rather than a language related law. Indeed, journalists do not use first person pronoun.

Quotations are made of two main parts: reported speech, (also called quoted speech, or reported discourse) and the attribution, containing the informant's name (also called the speaker or the source). In the pattern described for English, the attribution slot also contains a relating part, either a reporting verb (e.g. *said*) or a conjunction (e.g. *according to*) and sometimes circumstances.

Example 3. DR in bold, attribution underlined seen at sentence level

***Saskatchewan has recorded its first swine flu-related death, provincial health officials said Sunday.***

### Discourse clues

When considering beginning and end of typographical constituents in news and whether the quotation attribution segment is found at those salient positions or not, patterns become very clear.

### Exposition

In expository texts, anadiplosis is the dominant figure.

Repetition of the attribution with change of position from end to beginning of the paragraph in a contiguous segment (or reverse) results in anadiplosis. Example 1 and 4 are expository texts where such a shift in the position of attribution, is observed relative to the paragraph.

Example 4. Expository text with anadiplosis

***Nicaragua confirms 5 new cases of A/H1N1 flu, raising infection toll to 33***

*MANAGUA, June 9 (Xinhua) -- Nicaraguan Health Minister Guillermo Gonzalez Tuesday confirmed five new cases of A/H1N1 flu, which brought the infection toll in the country to 33.*

*Gonzalez said the latest five cases were two in Managua, two in Masaya locality, and one in Granada locality.*

*The two cases in Managua were in the western zone of the capital, where most of the infection cases were confirmed, including the first case registered in the country.*

*"The newly confirmed patients are under treatment, isolated and controlled to cut the infection network," Gonzalez said.*

*Gonzalez said only eight schools have so far been suspended as preventive measure.*

*The minister said health authorities, with help from organizations and medical schools, will continue the "active search plan" to identify possible cases by visiting house by house.*

*Nicaragua has so far reported no death from A/H1N1 flu.*

In example 4, the attribution form *Gonzalez said* remains constant during the development of the main topic. It partly changes in the comparison segment *The minister said*. There is a semantic link a human reader understands the informant is the same.

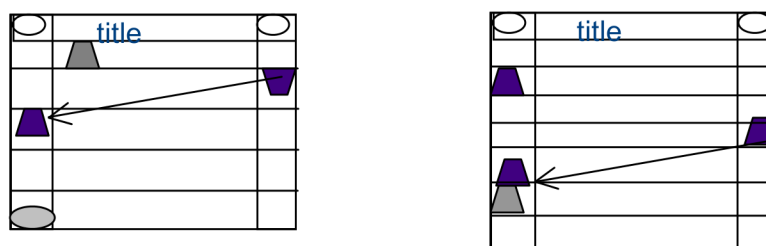


Figure 4. Attribution anadiplosis in expository news (Example 1 left and Example 4 right)

It is often the case however, that attribution repetition is not perfect, like in example 1 above. The same words are repeated, though not in the same local order inside the clause: *said the news report, The report said*. In figure 5, the form symbolizing attribution is turned upside down to indicate a change of order inside the repeated clause.

The attribution segment shifts position within paragraphs, while the attribution form is kept (informant literally repeated, here *report*, reporting verb *said*). In example 1, the verb *said* is also used in middle position in the first paragraph, with a different informant *state media*.

The value of these configurations is linked with the overall pattern. In expository news, the first paragraph often introduces the main informant in generic terms. Anadiplosis indicates the opening of a subtopic, a subordinated development attributed to an informant belonging to the same realm as the preceding one. Topic shift is linked with coordination of a comparative member, a segment allowing a change in perspective. In example 1, the attribution forms *China confirmed* and *According to the latest data* avoid attribution repetition and exhibit rewording instead. The same principle of rewording is observed in example 4.

The coordinated topics are sharply asymmetrical in size and scope in expository news.

### Argumentation

In argumentative news, the pattern involves order and form, repetition or rewording for attribution, rather than change of position.

The first argument in example 2 reproduced below is delimited by a negative sentence without attribution at the end of paragraphs. The two successive arguments are boxed.

Example 2 bis. English. Attribution lexical change in argumentative news

#### ***Saskatchewan records its 1st swine flu death***

*Last Updated: Sunday, June 28, 2009 | 5:02 PM ET*

*Saskatchewan has recorded its first swine flu-related death, provincial health officials said Sunday.*

*A woman in her 40s with serious underlying health conditions died from the illness, said Karen Hill, a spokeswoman for Saskatchewan Health. No further details were disclosed.*

*The province has 685 laboratory confirmed cases of H1N1 flu virus, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada.*

*The latest death in Saskatchewan brings the total number of people who died in Canada after contracting the virus to 25.*

*There have been 7,775 confirmed cases of swine flu in Canada, the agency said Friday.*

*Swine flu has spread around the world and the World Health Organization declared it a pandemic influenza virus earlier this month.*

In example 5 below, the first argument and last argument are boxed, leaving the transition paragraph in the middle. There is an expansion in the first argument marked by a change of reporting verb, *said* is replaced by *told*. This subordinated segment has an informant (dotted underline) that is more specific than the first one (*health officials / an official*) and the verb *said* is not repeated.

Example 5. Attribution lexical change and agreement in argumentative news

#### ***Number of confirmed H1N1 cases in Karnataka rises to 34***

*With a mother and her nine-year-old daughter who arrived in Bangalore from New York testing positive for H1N1 influenza on Sunday, the total number of confirmed swine flu cases in Karnataka has risen to 34, health officials said.*

*"The 43-year-old mother and her nine-year-old daughter arrived at Bengaluru International Airport from New York on July 6. The duo later went home and reported to Lakeside Hospital here with suspected H1N1 flu symptoms on Saturday. The samples were then sent to National Institute of Virology (NIV) Pune, where they tested positive on Sunday," an official told PTI.*

*The duo came by the same flight by which a four-year-old girl had arrived on July 6 and tested positive for H1N1 on July 10, officials said.*

*Of the total number of positive H1n1 flu cases so far, 30 have been discharged and advised to stay at home for a week while the other four are being treated at Lakeside Hospital, they said, adding 281 samples of suspected cases have been sent to NIV till date.*

*As many as over 2.30 lakh passengers have been screened for the pandemic in the state so far.*

The first argument is bounded by epiphora, repetition of an attribution form at the end of paragraphs. On the contrary, the relation between the first argument and the transition relies on contrast. Co-variant forms are found in last position. The semantic agreement between argument and transition is marked by pronominal attribution *they said*, though not at the end of the paragraph.



Figure 5. Attribution epiphora in argumentative news (example 2 and example 5)

Quotation is marked by stable lexical hints in some languages: English *said* is very frequent and repeated in news. But this is not universal, in Latin languages, reporting verbs are not repeated. Accordingly, in our meta-description, the variable quotations patterns are defined by a number of hints relative to the method attached to their detection. Means are limited in writing: the way to mark something is typographical, morphological and positional discourse wise.

In a language like English *said* is the canonical form for the reporting verb (few variants are found). Moreover, if a variant like *told* is found, it is used after *said*. The reporting verb is usually found at the beginning or at the end of sentences and paragraphs, next to the speaker's name. Therefore, in the attribution slot, the proper name of the informant can vary along the progression of discourse in English news. In French, where the reporting verb is not stable, the informant's name cannot vary to the same extent.

It is common that optional clause inversions or dislocation (change of phrase order, when seen at sentence level), are motivated by global level constraints. This is noticed even in short news, to allow for epiphora agreement at text level. Adding words or phrases is another means to achieve marking at global level in longer news.

Rhetorical figures are observed when simple repetition devices are combined with position and when they are combined together (anaphora and epiphora). Even more complex rhetoric effects are observed when not only words or letters are repeated but also linguistic operations, such as inversion or dislocation. Repetition devices are observed to underline rhetorical patterns, for instance to signal topic / argumentation continuity and delineate subtopics / arguments.

The comparison of Figure 4 and Figure 5 evokes the distinction between *oratio obliqua* and *oratio recta* but links it to very plain perceptive criteria, far from the philosophy of language.

## Scale

Quotation configurations are not equally distributed throughout collections, and also unevenly distributed in individual pieces of news. The length of the news is an important criterion. It is linked with information density. In an elaborate news, information is packed in a limited space.

The model and the examples given above illustrated the case of short to medium agency news. In newspaper articles where paragraphs are longer, readers tend to group facts under larger units, they tend to recognize a small number of topics. They unconsciously follow stylistic signals encompassing groups of developments or groups of arguments. The cognitive subdivision requires a limited number of functional segments.

## Exposition



In longer news, longer developments use intermediate middle paragraph positions. If considering the attribution position within the successive paragraphs in example 6, one sees that it incrementally drifts during the sub-development until attribution reaches the opposite position. The result is that the development is signalled by the same words, top left and bottom right. This figure is called epanalepsis, "slow return". Since it signals the beginning and end of secondary topics in English, the word digression also seems appropriate (Figure 6). In example 6, the figure is seen in the second part of a paper, after the main topic described by the title has been exposed. The example shows the second exposition closed by a short topic, and the box delimitates the development and the epanalepsis figure.

Example 6. Epanalepsis or digression (boxed)

**Panday: Warner to blame for rift with Dookeran**

[...]

Chief Whip Hamza Rafeeq criticised the State's handling of the recent discovery of "swine flu" in the country.

*Rafeeq said he wanted the Ministry of Health to be more clear in its instructions to citizens and to the 179 passengers who entered the country on an American Airlines flight from Miami. Two passengers on that flight have, so far, tested positive for the Influenza A H1N1 virus.*

*He said the various calls by the Ministry for passengers to make contact were also resulting in confusion over the facts concerning the virus. Each call by the State, Rafeeq said, featured a different number of days that persons should wait before considering themselves clear of any symptoms.*

*"I am calling on the Ministry to state clearly how many days must pass without symptoms before persons are considered clear of the virus," Rafeeq said.*

*The former health minister said that this country is not prepared to deal with a "swine flu" outbreak. "The hospitals are not ready to handle it," Rafeeq said.*

*He added that although there is not yet cause for panic, citizens should treat the virus with seriousness and heed all health advisories.*

*"The consequences can be disastrous if the virus reaches epidemic proportions," he said.*

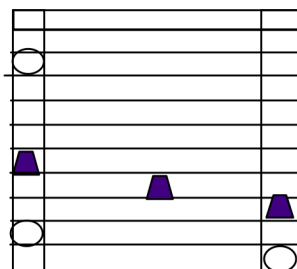


Figure 6. Digression in a secondary topic marked by a gradual shift of attribution position in a text subdivided in paragraphs and resulting in epanalepsis

In longer texts, passages become visible, being bounded by opening and closing sentences. The attribution segment is longer than a clause and expressed in a separate sentence found at the beginning of a section or a functional group of paragraphs. It describes the settings of a declaration as in example 7. The end of the expository passage is often marked in such articles by grouping two quotations around one attribution, a kind of attribution ellipsis for the second quotation, as in example 8.

Example 7. Opening paragraph in an expository passage, introducing an informant

*One of the patients, Nadia Lloyd-Lister, a student at the Tshwane University of Technology, suffered severe symptoms and had to be quarantined in hospital for three days.*

Example 8. Closing paragraphs in an expository passage

*"I was released from hospital on Monday, but I am under house quarantine for the next week," Lloyd-Lister said from her home in the Free State.*

*"I had to cancel my 21st birthday party, and I've had friends and family all trying to find out how I've been doing. They are more worried about me than I am."*

## Argumentation

Contrast and combined repetition (coenotes) are used in argumentative longer news or argumentative passages. In example 9, the last passage encompasses an argumentation marked by combined repetition with a transition unit in between.

Example 9. Lexical anaphora and epiphora (underlined), attribution (highlighted) and coenotes (inside box)

### ***Two ‘suspicious’ cases being tested for H1N1***

[...]

*Both cases were detected at the Diamond Diagnostic Centre [...]. Blood samples from the two persons have been [...] sent overseas for further tests, the Ministry said.*

*It noted that there is no confirmation at this time that the two cases are H1N1, but the move represents part of the Ministry’s Heightened Suspicion Index for the disease.*

*“The Ministry will continue to test persons who meet the criteria for the suspicion index, [...] and those who would have traveled to countries where the H1N1 virus was detected”, the statement said.*

*Health Minister Dr Leslie Ramsammy cautioned persons against unnecessary worrying, while assuring that his ministry [...]. While there have been calls to the Health Ministry regarding cases of the H1N1 virus in Berbice, the stringent surveillance system has failed to identify such, the release asserted.*

*The Ministry wishes to caution persons against listening to rumours regarding the disease which could result in panic. The Ministry will keep the public informed on the developments on a daily basis, the statement said.*

Figure 7 shows the general disposition of the piece of news. When looking at attribution slots, a phenomenon called rewording is observed. The informant name and reporting verb are reworded to avoid repetition, yet the quotation device is repeated and co-reference holds. It can be said that the grammatical quotation device is repeated but without literal repetition.

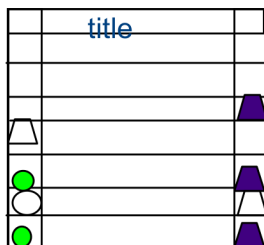


Figure 7. Argumentative news marked by coenotes with an unmarked line

In long argumentative news, attribution position is used as an agreement inside main parts. The first informant is marked by epiphora, the second is unmarked (not repeated), the last is marked by epiphora. Parts are also marked by circumstances.

Example 10 (reduced)

### ***Bolder actions required to curb spread of H1N1 virus***

*The Health Ministry needs to take more aggressive measures to curb the spread of the H1N1 flu in the country, a health expert says.*

[...]

*“It is the government’s duty to make sure that the managements of offices and other public spaces make more efforts to maintain the environmental hygiene,” he told The Jakarta Post on Sunday.*

[...]

*“The Health Ministry was only waiting until someone got sick [...] when it should have gone out to the community health centers and health posts to spread information on how to contain the spread of the virus,” he said, adding the H1N1 flu would spread even further in the future.*

*Tjandra insisted the ministry would continue with the measures it had been taking to contain the spread of the new strain of flu.*

[...]

*Hospital spokesman, Atma Wijaya, said Sunday the patient had just returned from Penang, Malaysia, although had did not know how the patient contracted the virus.*

[...]

*Atma said the patient was in good condition [...] as of Sunday.*

## Conclusion

The hypothesis that perception plays a role in cognition was illustrated with text geometrical figures showing layout linked with repetition. Examples show how position and form create a large number of contrasted patterns, with lexical or grammatical symmetry or dissymmetry. Considering the spatial and visual constraints of style sheds a new light on topic detection. This means that we tried and characterized journalists' habits or collective style rather than rules carved for a specific language.

The hypothesis that topic and quotation are linked in news discourse has been verified. Each new topic or new argument is attributed to an informant. Expository news signal different topics by positional clues, anadiplosis and epanalepsis are the main figures. Argumentative news signal different topics by lexical clues at a given position, epiphora or anaphora and coenotes are the main figures.

Subtopics in expository news are usually introduced by a change of local position, anadiplosis, observed on the attribution segment. The form of attribution retains constant words, but it can be related either to the informant or to the grammatical mark. Subtopics in argumentative news are signalled by agreement. Transitions in argumentative news are signalled by the lack of epiphora, hence attribution rewording.

Examples also show how position and form evolving along time create a larger number of contrasted patterns, time playing a role by triggering expectation and making for the perception of absence of an expected repetition. In news discourse, stylistic figures linked to quotation are grounded on perceptive patterns to structure functional passages of text. In English news, they show a very large number of equivalent means that seem to be linked with the many different brands and flavours of English worldwide. But no wonder if news can still be understood, human perception is flexible and prone to make sense of equivalent means to the same effect.

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Keywords: text, journalistic genre, cognitive rhetoric, stylistic devices, quotation, repetition, scale, topic recognition, argumentation, exposition