THE ENGLISH NOMINAL PHRASE AND THE COMPLEXITY OF ITS SEQUENCE

BY

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BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, FACULTY OF ARTS, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF M. A. DEGREE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

JULY 2000

NOTE: Comma is required to separate "which had hijacked state power into its hands since 1966" for clarity.

(7) *the lady I met in the market's center

(8) The reminiscences of the Prime Minister were very amusing

(9) The retrenchments of the Governor were hard news.

NOTE: The reporter in (8) above has not explained whether it was the Prime Minister who had been reminiscing or someone had been reminiscing about the Prime Minister.

The way out for readers however being that where an of-phrase can be interpreted as objective, it will be so interpreted unless there is a counter-indication.

(10) The issue of lecturers' grant was discussed in the meeting.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented, in any previous application, for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated by indentation or quotation marks and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references.

Signed..... Date..30-08-2000

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "THE ENGLISH NOMINAL PHRASE AND THE COMPLEXITY OF ITS SEQUENCE" by Jimba Olayinka Esther meets the regulation governing the award of the Degree of Master of Arts of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

- This thesis is dedicated to:
- The Author and Finisher of my Faith JESUS Christ whose grace has made me successful in this course.
- The Entire members of Jimba's family.
- All friends and Brethren, late and present, who have been sources of encouragement to me in life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I gratefully acknowledge my debt of gratitude to God Almighty who is the Author of Life and by His marvelous grace enabled me to begin and end this course successfully.

I can hardly express in adequate terms my most sincere gratitude to Prof. J. S. Aliyu, my supervisor. He is a sympathetic counselor to me, caring and considerate. You are a father to me. I appreciate your valuable suggestions with regard to content as well as exposition. Despite his tight schedule, he read the drafts and followed the progress of my work step-by-step, until its completion. Thanks for your understanding and sympathy.

I am also indebted to Dr. A. A. Adebayo, my second reader, who also took the pain despite all odds to read through and correct my work. May God bless you.

My unreserved thanks and appreciation are due to all my classmates and colleagues in the Department of English for their encouragement, assistance and the challenges I received from them that stirred me up to finish this thesis.

My sincere thanks are due to staff and students of various departments of Ahmadu Bello University who all rendered help at one time or the other to make this work a success.

Words will fail me to express my appreciation to my father Mr. Micah J. Jimba, My beloved mother Mrs. Leah O. Jimba, my elder brothers Mr. Esekiel D. Jimba, Mr Solomon S. Jimba and their wives, my Elder sister Mrs. Janet I. Odeyemi and her husband and children, my younger brothers Olarewaju, Femi, Friday, Abiodun and my darling younger sister Bosede Jimba and all other relations for their indescribable love and support.

I appreciate the love, care, prayer and encouragement which I enjoyed from brethren in Apostolic Faith church Zaria and other stations. I am particularly grateful to Dr Z. O. Oyedokun and his family and all my fathers and mothers in the Lord.

My gratitude and appreciation are due once again to my beloved Sister Dupe Babalola for her prayers, encouragement, care, cooperation, and endurance during the course of this study. You are dearly beloved.

I am indebted to Sister Funmilayo Barnabas, my beloved Paul, and Aanu Barnabas for their consistent prayer and demonstrated concern.

Finally, my appreciation is due to my beloved Dr. O. M. Bamigbola. Thanks for your invaluable support through prayer, encouragement and advice.

Others who are not mentioned are appreciated. The Lord will reward you accordingly.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the structure of the English Nominal Phrase with particular focus on the complexity of its sequence. The study involved a detailed consideration of the various difficulties encountered by users in the understanding and usage of complex Nominal Phrases.

The study was based on the following assumptions:

(1) The complex ordering of nominal group has implication on their semantic effects.

(2) Users of English as second language have problem in the understanding and usage of the nominal group due to the complexity of its sequence.

(3) Some of the problems users have can be addressed through a comprehensive exploration and examination of linguists explanation of this group.

The observations confirmed these assumptions.

The findings from this study have contributed to the study and description of complex English structures particularly the nominal phrase.

The findings include the following:

(1) The complex ordering of the nominal group has a significant effect on their semantic effects in any discourse.

(2) Many of the difficulty users of English as a second language are faced with have to do with the understanding and usage of the nominal phrase.

(3) Some of these problems can be addressed through a comprehensive study and examination of linguists' explanation of this group and a

practical application of the guiding rules as stated in the works of these linguists.

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Abbreviations and Notational Conventions

[I] - Abbreviations

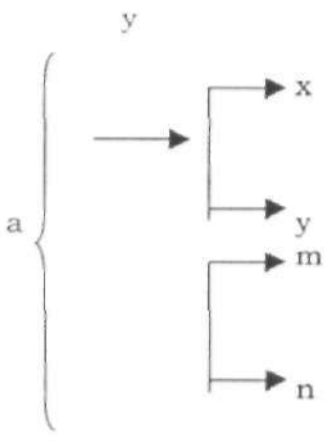
S	-	subject
P	-	predicator
C	-	complement
A	-	adjunct
H	-	head
M	-	modifier
Q	-	qualifier
dt	-	determiner
d	-	deictic
t	-	thematic element
n	-	numeral
a	-	article
a^p	-	particularizing article
a^g	-	genitive article
a^n	-	negating article
s	-	intensifying qualifier
q	-	nominal qualifier
i	-	plural qualifier
r	-	rankshifted qualifier
y	-	post-deictic qualifier
e	-	emphatic qualifier
NP	-	nominal phrase
VP	-	verb phrase
Pp	-	preposition
TG	-	Transformational Generative
TGG	-	Transformational Generative Grammar

[II] - Notational Conventions

/	-	obligatory pause juncture
*	-	non-occurring forms
( )	-	'optional' element
→	-	is realizable as
↛	-	is not realizable as
=	-	equivalent to
≠	-	not equivalent to

[III] - Systems

a → { → **x** ; → } there is a system x/y with entry condition a (if a, then either x or y)



there are two simultaneous systems x/y and m/n, both having entry condition a (if a, then both either x or y and, independently either m or n

[IV] - Structures

X + y	-	y follows x
X : z	-	x is further specified as z
X = a	-	x is added
(x)	-	x is optional

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The position language occupies in human existence makes it an object of fascination and a subject of serious inquiry for over 2000 years. From the earliest periods, there has been an object approach, with scholars investigating aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in a detailed and organized way. Such study of language is what is referred to as *linguistics*.

Many different approaches to linguistics emerged in the middle decades of the century. These approaches include – The Traditional Approach (Boadi et al 1968 and others), Structural Grammar (Gleason, 1955; Christopherson and Sandved, 1969), Stratification Grammar (Lamb, S. M. 1966; While, 1972), Word Grammar (Hudson, R. A. 1984), Functional Grammar (Halliday, 1985; Berry, M 1975), Systemic Grammar (Halliday, 1985), Transformational Generative Grammar (Chomsky, N. 1965) and others.

Attempt to study the grammatical status of perspectives have given rise to these different theories. It is important to realize that theories arise as a result of different individuals or groups trying to provide model patterns or principles to guide certain arts of which language is one.

The works of linguists who have earlier discussed the English nominal phrase spread through different Grammar groups. Some of these include: Jesperson, Otto (1974); Quirk et al (1973-95); Thomas, O and Kintgen Eugene, R. (1974); Blake, N. F. (1988); Boadi et al (1968); Hudson,

R. A. (1973); Zandvoort, R. W. (1972); Berry Margaret (1975); Stageberg, N. C. (1981) whose works will be reviewed in chapter two of this study.

It is a general awareness that language is always linearly manifested; that is, serial in presentation. Muir (1972), pointed out that in speaking or writing, items follows each other in temporal or spatial succession, for example:

She	waved	her	hand	to	the driver.
S	V	DO	P	P	IO

In models of grammar which view order as an abstract underlying property of sentences, the problem of accounting for the various possible ordering is handled together with all other aspects of structure, and is not considered as an independent issue for example Chomsky's Transformational Grammar. Any model of grammar, however, which is based on the premise that linear order is not an underlying property of sentences, but rather that ordering is predictable from the properties of words and their grouping relations must stipulate how unordered strings of words are converted into well formed sentences/utterances. For instance, it is meaningful to say

The man agreed to do the work

but not *Do the work to the man agreed.

In Word Grammar, for example, each lexical item is taken to be an instantiation of a syntactic category for example noun, verb, determiner, etc. and the categories in turn are all instantiations of the general category WORD (Hudson, 1973).

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many studies have been carried out on the use of English of various users in Nigeria. Ofuokwu (1982), Olaofe (1986), Olagoke (1981) have studied the language situations of students in different Nigerian Higher Institutions of learning.

Ordering is a very important aspect of the grammar of any language. As an important feature, ordering has influence on the syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and even phonological impression of statements, groups, and words. Different linguists have discussed the English nominal phrase. This study has made use of a lot of insights from the different grammars with the hope of clarifying some aspects that still create problems to users. This attempt is geared towards reducing the problems of misunderstanding, misinterpretation and misuse, which are common among users. The traditional grammarians for example proposed the ordering of the nominal group as:

(Determiner) + (Modifier) + x ....x + (Modifier) (Boadi et al 1968).

The 'x ... x' represents a slot, which has a vast choice of nouns. This choice may include nouns like:

Man, soldiers, family, servant etc.

The brackets indicate elements, which may or may not be present in any one group. In Boadi's explanation, the modifier following the head may consist of a prepositional phrase, (Boadi et al 1968).

Sledd (1959) also agreed with the above structure or sequence of a nominal phrase in his book A Short Introduction to English Grammar (Sledd, J. 1959 : 84).

The questions focused upon in this study include the following:

(i) What syntactic problems do the ordering of nominal phrases pose in grammar?

(ii) Does the ordering of nominal groups have any implication on their semantic effect or the understanding of the sentences in which they occur?

(iii) What are the possible solutions to the sequence problems of the English nominal group?

(iv) Which of the theories of grammar provide the best explanation for a better understanding of the sequence problems of the English nominal group?

1.2 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

This study makes the following basic assumptions:

(1) The complex ordering of nominal group has implications on their semantic effects.

(2) Users of English as second language have problem in the understanding and usage of the nominal group due to the complexity of its sequence.

(3) Some of the problems users have can be addressed through a comprehensive exploration and examination of linguists' explanation of this group.

1.3 AIMS AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

There are different views according to various schools of grammar with regard to the description and explanation of the nominal group. Some

attempt will also be made to indicate the points at which there are differences of opinion. Among the several schools of grammar, the researcher has made a selection of some of them and an in-depth study has been carried out on their various views about the nominal phrase and its sequence. This selection include:

(1) The Transformational Generative Grammar

(2) Structural Grammar

(3) Traditional Grammar and

(4) Functional Grammar.

Attempt has been made to consider mainly what their views are on the English Nominal Group with specific reference to the complexity of its sequence discussing from the complementary point of view.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Although a lot has been written by different linguists on the grammar of English language, there is the striking need to dig deeper into each of the elements of the language at the word or group level. This deeper search will expose more and more the behaviour of each element and the problems associated with it. Such problems can either be solved through further researches or become distinguishable to avoid confusion.

The need for such developmental research has prompted the interest of this researcher to analyze the English nominal group with special attention on the complexity of its sequence and students' mastery of its handling.

The choice of topic has become necessary due to the following reasons:

(1) Because of the vast scope of English language like any other human language, the problem of sequence in relation to complex nominal group has not been exhaustively discussed.

(2) Language is dynamic in nature, therefore, the need to review the stages of change and how this change affects the use and usage of language generally.

(3) The complexity of grammar as a whole requires that it be studied in depth in order to explain some of the guiding principles.

(4) This study will also enhance a practical application of the principles guiding specifically, the use of certain aspect of or in general language as a whole. That is, applying the rules or principles to usage and pragmatics.

The study was intended to enrich the knowledge of learners, teachers and writers as the structure of language cannot be over-emphasized in any linguistic work. To learners, some hidden difficulties pertaining to the nominal group will be exposed and the study will also serve to enhance better performance in the field of writing. This is in line with Blake's (1988) view that it is the noun group, which has traditionally carried the syntactic heightening, which some writers, have wished to achieve in their work.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The researcher has discussed and analyzed some of the problems associated with the complexity of the sequence of English nominal phrase. In this work, some of the theoretical issues raised by the grammatical thematic, constituency and dependency relations of words have been

discussed. Attempt has also been made to proffer possible solutions to some of the problems users encounter in their understanding and usage.

Furthermore, sampling was made by analyzing some essays written by some students from different departments of Ahmadu Bello University to examine users' proficiency in the handling of the English Nominal Group. Their reactions and performances form a good pointer to what the general handling of nominal group by user is.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Anacoluthon inconsistency in logic that is, syntactical inconsistency or incoherence within a sentence, (Little, W. et al, 1973)

This involves the shift from one construction, left incomplete, to another, sometimes for rhetorical effect. E. g. "You really ought –well, do it your own way."

Analogous Having a similar function but differing structure, (Little, W. op cit)

Hypercorrect Excessive proper

Paratactic Word or word group marking typically a relatively close, unchanging, and exclusive relationship such as that of professor or source

Grotesque Characterized by distortions or striking disagreement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the description of any language (English inclusive), the morpheme, which is the smallest meaningful unit in language, is one of the levels of analysis. The word is the next highest unit on the rank scale. Words form into groups.

According to Boadi et al (1981), group is a term applied to a sequence of words which 'belong together' grammatically.

The primary criterion for establishing whether a sequence of words used together function together as a group is said to be substitution. Where one of the words in the group (basically the essential word – THE HEAD) can be used in place of the group, without changing the grammatical structure of the whole, then the sequence makes up a group. For example:

Brave men don't easily give up

can be changed to – *Men don't give up.*

Another criterion for the establishment of groups is the possible addition of a formal marker such as *A* or *many* to the essential word. This will help to make clear whether a sequence was intended as a group or not (Boadi et al, 1981).

There are three classes of group in English: nominal group, verbal group, and adverbial group. Each of these groups performs the function of the essential word in the sentence in which they occur and is conveniently labeled after the class of that word.

A group can therefore be defined as one or more words, which carry out the function of a particular word class. The essential word upon which the other words depend is referred to as the HEAD of the group. Several grammarians in different perspectives have discussed the nominal group.

In the analysis of the nominal group, which is the focus of this research work, the group has been seen under two structures – the simple and the complex structure. However, much emphasis was placed on the complex structure in this study. The sequencing features of order in the nominal phrase have been discussed in relation to the complex noun group. How sequencing affects interpretation or meaning in sentences have also been examined. In doing this, the views of different grammarians have been reviewed.

2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE NOMINAL GROUP

The nominal group, just like the sentence can be classified into simple and complex structural pattern.

2.1.1 The Simple Nominal Phrase

Normally, a group as earlier said will contain a single word upon which the other words in the group depend. The nominal group could be made up of just the essential word or with a determiner or marker. In this case, the group has a simple structure. For instance: '*boy*' is a nominal group, with one element structure – This is referred to as the *h* element under the systemic analysis.

When nominal groups are made up of two elements, they still fall under the simple structure. The following are examples of such:

A lorry

The man

Young ladies

An elephant

Each of the above groups is made up of modifier (m) and head (h) elements.

2.1.2 The Complex Nominal Phrase

In a complex noun phrase, there are several components. Determiners and modifiers come before the head of a noun group. In other words, the order of a complex noun group to this level is –

Determiner - modifier(s) - head.

for example The small bucket

Gleason (1963:409) observed that "the English noun phrase has a complicated structure involving at least six distinguishable positions before the head, each fillable by a class or a set of classes of words or phrases."

Often in English, it is possible to combine several simple facts into one simple sentence with the use of a very complex noun phrase. This is made possible by expanding and elaborating the phrase to a considerable degree.

for example *All of the five quite old buildings there at the bend of the country's most famous river* are factories

Greenberg (1977) compared this possible expansion of noun phrase with infinity in mathematics; whereby the natural numbers constitute an infinite set because given any number, one can always name the next higher number. In simpler way, in the noun phrase, adjectives may be added without limit. Hence the number of possible noun phrases or sentences is

infinite although each individual instance must of course be finite in length (Greenberg, J. H. 1977, PP 40-2)

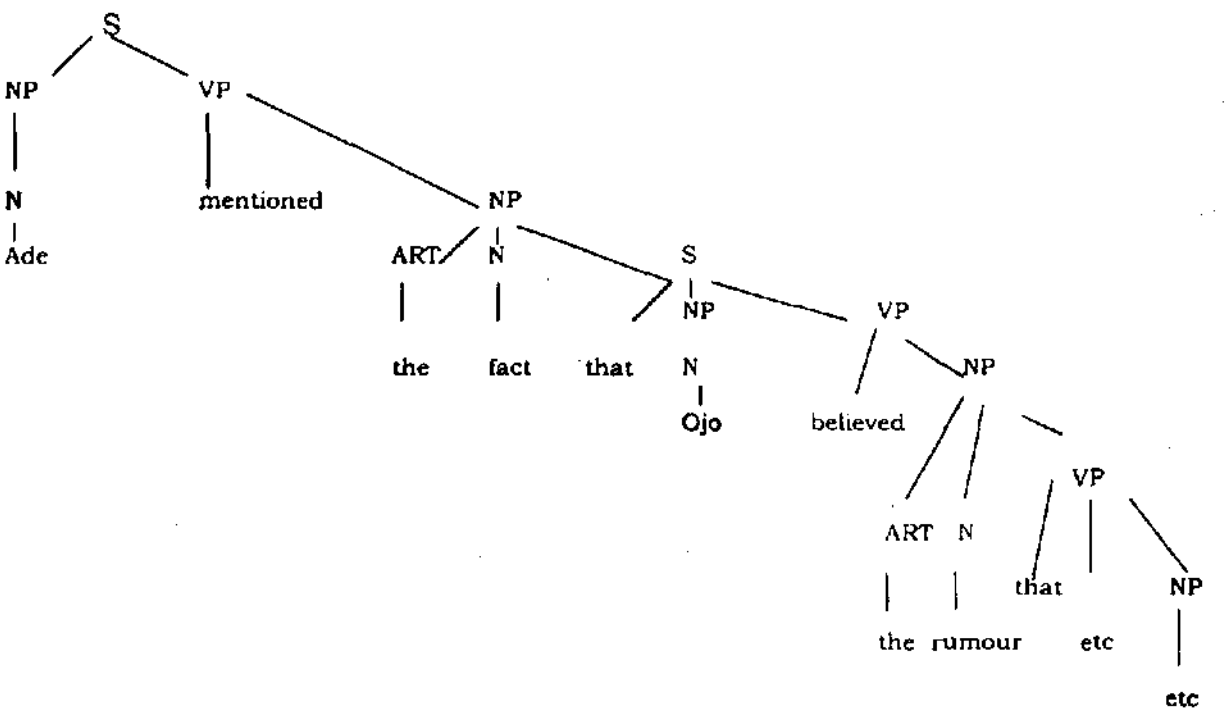
This is what the Transformational Generative Grammarians explained as recursiveness, that is, the rule, which expands sentence, and the rule, which expands noun phrase.

Jacobs et al (1968) represents these rules with

S ⟶ NP AUX VP

Np ⟶ ART N (S)

These rules, they said, could be applied one after the other, to each other's output, in a derivation, which can be made as long as is desired. This is presented in the following diagram



Obilade (1976) in his discussion of the nominal phrase in West African Pidgin English used Halliday's systemic model to explain the various

meanings expressed in the nominal phrase and how they are given grammatical expression. He defined the nominal phrase in terms of its constituents (modifiers, head, and qualifiers) and in terms of a higher unit, the clause (that is, where in the structure of the clause an NP functions).

In his work, he identified two types of NPs (i) the complement type (ii) the non-complement type. The complement type he said functions at both subject and complement positions within the structure of a clause. This kind according to him is introduced by one of two "complementizers": `that' and `for'

For example:

(i) He told me *that he will not come* (complement position)

(ii) *That he will not come* is a lie (subject position)

(iii) *For someone to lie like a small child* is a shame (subject position)

The non-complement type of NP according to Obilade (op cit.) does not contain a complementizer. It is typically endocentric and may or may not contain a relative clause depending on its classification as simple or complex.

For example: the *good boy*

He further observes that the complex non-complement type NP contains a relative clause, which functions as a qualifier.

For example: *my friend who lives in London*

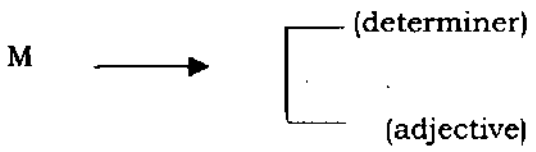
Obilade (op cit.) further pointed out that:

> A non-complement type of NP may be analysed in terms of its primary structural elements and also in terms of its secondary structural elements

He agrees with Chomskyan description of the NP. The elements of the primary structure he said are head, modifier, and qualifier.

While he divided the primary structures of NP into simple and complex, he classified the complex NP structure as those involving one or both of the following: (i) linking (ii) rankshifting. His explanations of both terms are based on Halliday's assertion.

According to him, the secondary structural elements are simply more elaborate specifications of the primary structural elements. For example, the secondary elements of the NP at M are dt and x, which he systematized as:



By the above he means that the system dt/x has an entry condition M, so that if there is a modifier in a nominal phrase, it is realized either as the element dt or x.

The dt can be further broken down into more delicate levels of analysis.

i (initiator)

a (article)

d (deictic)

n (numeral)

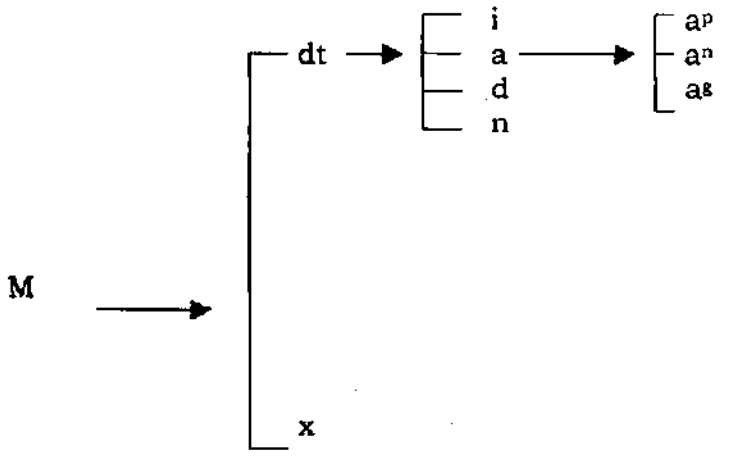
while the element a (article) could further be broken down into:

a^p (particularizing article)

a^n (negating article)

a^g (genitive article)

Thus having the following system:



Examples in English include:

x	-	big
i	-	all
ap	-	the
an	-	no
ag	-	my
d	-	this
n	-	two

The reason for the complexity of some nominal phrase as earlier stated is an attempt by writers to reshape several simple sentences to come within NP structure and form a single statement.

Writers cannot do without the good mastery of the above technique. In the magazines and newspapes examined for this research work, different writers used a lot of complex nominal phrases. Although it should be mentioned that the researcher also observed as did Quirk et al in their examination of Noun Phrase structure in relation to variety, that on the whole, the number of simple NPs are more than the complex NPs in the

general writings of English language users. However, a lot of examples of complex NP can be sighted from the magazines, newspapers and other materials examined in this research work. The following are some of the extract from the publications:

(1) Admiral Mike Akhigbe, former Chief of General Staff, last week denied *claims by Maryam Abacha, the wife of the late dictator, that members of the provisional Ruling Council, PRC, were hands in glove in atrocities perpetrated by her husband, General Sani Abacha.*

The italicized nominal phrase can be broken down into the following simple structures:

(i) Claims were made by Maryam Abacha

(ii) Maryam Abacha is the wife of the late dictator

(iii) The claims were that members of the PRC were hands in glove in atrocities

(iv) The atrocities were perpetrated by her husband

(v) Her husband was General Sani Abacha

(2) Jenkins acknowledges that *his findings, presented in early December to a seminar at Georgetown University's Centre for strategic and International Studies* offer little hope of a respite from the current epidemic of assassination, bombing and hijackings.

It can be understood from the italicized phrase above that:

(i) Jenkins made some findings

(ii) His findings were presented in early December

(iii) *The findings were presented to a seminar*

(iv) *The seminar was at Georgetown University's Centre for strategic and International Studies*

(3) In March, *Aboki Galadima, one of the leading citizens of the town,* had complained at a press conference, about *the state government's flagrant disregard of the feelings of the indigenes by hurriedly appointing Isa Mohammed as successor to Isa Mohammadu the late emir.*

From the second italicized NP in the above statement, the reader can deduce that:

i. *The state government has flagrant disregard for the feelings of the indigenes*

ii. *The state government hurriedly appointed Isa Mohammed*

iii. *Isa Mohammed is a successor to Isa Mohammadu*

2.1.2.1 The Determiners

The determiners are further divided into pre-determiners, central determiners and post determiners (Quirk, 1985). Pre-determiners refer to all items, which can precede any central determiner (including the zero article) in a noun phrase. These include:

(i) *all, both, half*

as in '*all* (the) girls', '*both* those cars', '*half* an hour'

(ii) the multipliers: *double, twice, three times etc,*

as in: '*double* the sum', '*twice* my salary'

(iii) the fractions: one third, one-fifth etc.

as in '*one –third* the time'

(iv) such, *what*

as in '*such* a surprise!'

'*what* a fine day!'

The pre-determiners are mutually exclusive. In other words, there will only be one pre-determiner in a group.

for example It is possible to have – The happy man

and - This happy man

but not - *The this happy man

In the case of (i) above, since the items themselves are quantifiers, they do not occur with the quantitative determiners *every, (n)either, each, some, any, no, enough.*

The central determiners are mostly the articles. These include the definite and indefinite articles; *the* and *a/an* respectively. The type of article used in a noun phrase depends on the noun class to which the head belongs. That is, different noun classes require different articles.

A count noun never occurs in singular form without a determiner, but non-count nouns do appear without determiners, as in:

A car was passing by

A Lizard is a reptile

Water is liquid

Traffic was passing by.

The summary of the distribution of articles against classes of noun given by Quirk et al (1985:253) is as follows:

Singular	Definite	The book	the furniture
	Indefinite	a book	Furniture
Plural	Definite	The books	
	Indefinite	Books	

Figure 2.1 Distribution of articles against Classes of Noun

Other central determiners include *this, that, every, each, no.* They also form a set of closed class items that are mutually exclusive with one another. In their occurrence with noun classes, *no* has all three possibilities.

for example *no* pen, *no* pens *no* music
(singular) (plural) (non count)

but for this, either and enough (we have incomplete paradigms) or rather, their use will be determined by the number and form of the noun head.

According to Leech (1975), the only situation in which a noun phrase has no expressed determiner is where it has a 'zero article'. This refers to cases where the nouns in those phrases do not require the use of articles. For example:

Mistletoe a very common climber is a type of flower.

In the above, the head of the NP (mistletoes) does not require the use of an article.

The post determiners follow pre-determiners or central determiners (if such determiners are present). They are qualifiers, which precede any adjective and other pre-modifying items. They include:

(a) Cardinal numerals – Under this group, '*one*' co-occurs with singular count nouns for example my *three* children

while the others co-occur with plural count nouns (that is, *two, three* etc.) In many contexts, *'one'* may be regarded as a stressed form of the indefinite articles and may sometimes replace it

as in 'I would like *a* photocopy of this article'.

' I would like *one* photocopy of this article'.

Thus, the indefinite article normally cannot co-occur with *one*, but the definite article can:

**a one* book
the one book
the two books } he gave me

(b) Ordinal numerals and 'general ordinals'. The ordinals co-occur with count nouns and usually precede any cardinal number in the noun phrase, as in

the *first* two days

another *four* months

(c) Closed-class quantifiers. In this group which include *many, (a) few, several, much, (a) little* – there are restrictions on the use of much with singular and many with plural nouns. The corresponding open-class post-determiners are widely used instead. Thus, much is typically used in a non-assertive sentence like:

I don't have *much* time.;

Bu in an assertive sentence, *plenty of, a lot of, lots of* are used.

for example I have *a lot of* time.

(d) Open-class quantifiers for example *a large number of* people

Sledd (1959) gave the outline of the possible determiners as follows:

	Predeterminer	Determiner	Post Determiner	Noun
For example:	all	the	good	women

He points out that most post-determiners are adjectival and that their relative order is essentially fixed. That is, they precede the noun and may in turn be preceded by adverbials of degree (Ibid.)

According to Sledd (op cit.) and other traditional grammarians, the traditional limiting adjectivals occupy the fourth position before the final nominal.

for example *the three very fine stone walls*

Another slot of possessive form of a noun could be added to the sequence by either substituting the possessive of some nouns for the determiner as in

Ade's three very fine stone walls

or secondly by placing the possessives of other nouns after the determiner for example

the mason's three very fine stone walls.

In this second case, the determiner is taken with the possessive and a series of adjectivals could still be constructed between them as follows.

the industrious old mason's three very fine stone walls

Sledd (1959) viewed like Quirk et al (1985) that the pre-determiners are various but limited in number. His own examples are also similar to what Quirk (op cit.) classified as "close-class quantifiers" which include *many, such, what, all, almost, nearly, not quite.*

for example *such a girl*

nearly all the girls

His proposed order of modifiers before noun is therefore fully stated as:

(1) pre-determiner (2) determiner (3) limiting adjectival (4) adverbial of degree (5) descriptive adjectival (6) noun adjunct (7) nominal (a noun)

The grammatical function of determiners is to signal the beginning of a nominal group. Not all nominal groups of course begin with determiners as will be seen in some latter examples. In particular, plural nouns and non-count nouns may occur without a determiner.

Sledd (1959) has a similar view. He pointed out that nouns while denoting things which can be counted as separate units regularly take both a (an) and 'the' in the singular, and sometimes take 'the' in the plural.

for example *a house, the house, the houses*

Nouns denoting masses which can be divided or united but not numbered as aggregated of separate units may take 'the' in the singular – for example the flesh (they have no plural). On the other hand he said, both nouns like *flesh* and the plural of nouns like house also occur without 'the' and nouns like house also occur without 'the' while nouns like *flesh* never take a or an (Sledd, 1959).

2.1.2.2 The Modifiers

In principle, there can be as many modifiers as one wishes before a head, though in practice, there are unlikely to be more than three. Modifiers consist of single words, though their meaning can be specialized through intensifiers for example the *little* girl. Modifiers are used to modify

the head directly or indirectly. Often, however, one or more of the modifiers may modify one of the other modifiers in the group. As in

The very pretty little girls
(very modifies pretty)

while the whole expression *very pretty* modifies the noun-head.

The sequential pattern of items in a noun phrase is regulated. If for example there are several adjectives between the article and the noun, they fall into order classes. Thus adjectives denoting size and shape precede adjectives of colour (Greenberg, 1977 : 12)

Thus we can say:

"a big red bucket"

but not * *"a red big bucket"*

In the view of Boadi et al (1981), the term modification in general stands for a structural relationship. Boadi and others are of the view that modifiers are not necessarily just helping words. This they explained would imply that the head is always the most important word in the group and the modifiers 'less' important'. Although the modifiers are subordinated to the head, the head of the nominal group is identified not in terms of importance but because it is the only word in the group which could replace the whole group in a sentence without affecting the sentence structure. Other words in the group are referred to as modifiers.

Modification has a considerable effect on meaning. For instance the group *'a criminal lawyer'* a more exact term than *'a lawyer'*. Grammatically, the latter may always be substituted for the former, but semantically, it is clearly not so. However, this effect is not uniform, rather much depends on the nature of the head and of the modifiers.

Modification is strongly tied to referencing in noun phrase. Much about this will be discussed in latter section. Modifiers are basically divided into pre-modifiers and post modifiers. The pre-modifiers, to many grammarians, refer to all items placed before the head, other determiners, notably adjectives (or, rather adjective phrases) and nouns

for example some *very expensive office* furniture

Other types of pre-modifiers are said to include:

(i) Participle

for example They never found *the missing* report

(ii) Genitive for example I visited the *fisherman's cottage*

(iii) Adverbs and other phrases

for example We have *round-the-clock service*

(iv) Sentence

for example She has asked *I don't know how many people* to the party

Note – ii – iv above seem less frequently used (Quirk, 1985)

2.1.2.3 Relative Sequence of Premodifiers

When a head has more than one premodifier, the question of relative order arises. For instance:

Why should we have – a thin dark face

or - a dark thin face

But only – a cardboard detergent carton

and not - a detergent cardboard carton

The longer the strings of premodifier the more complex the problem becomes. Under certain circumstances, the writers and speakers will

naturally arrange premodification semantically, that is, according to their communicative intention. However, there is no total freedom.

Some important facts that should be noted regarding the sequence of premodifiers are as follows:

(1) When two nouns premodify, one which corresponds to the heads as object to verb will follow one relating to materials, means, instrument, space, or any comparable adverbial relation:

We will have – a cardboard detergent carton (that is, the carton contains detergent.

But not * a detergent cardboard carton (*The carton contains cardboard.

a jet passenger aircraft

* a passenger jet aircraft

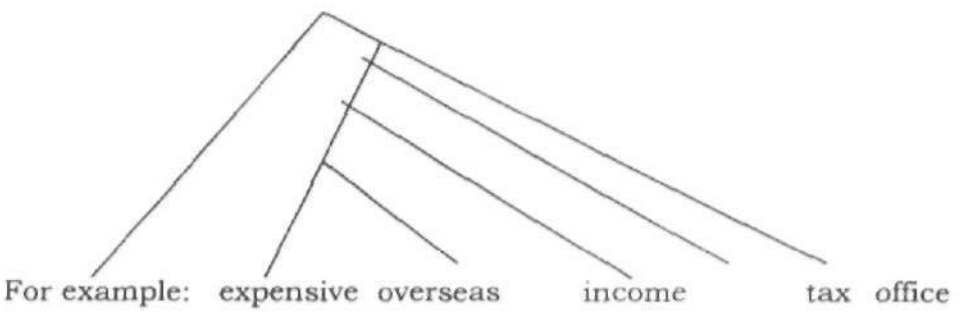
Note: When an adverbial + verb sequence has prior institutionalize status, the unit may be premodified by an object.

For example: a vegetable pressure cooker (which cooks vegetables by pressure)

(2) It is possible for the noun premodifier to be premodified by either an adjective or a noun. When it is the latter case, a recursive premodification can occur.

For example: *Overseas income tax office* furniture.

If an adjective is introduced to the above noun phrase, which is already clumsy and improbable, the adjective has to come immediately after the determiner and would normally be interpreted as relating directly to the head *furniture*.



In a newspaper however, we find expressions such as

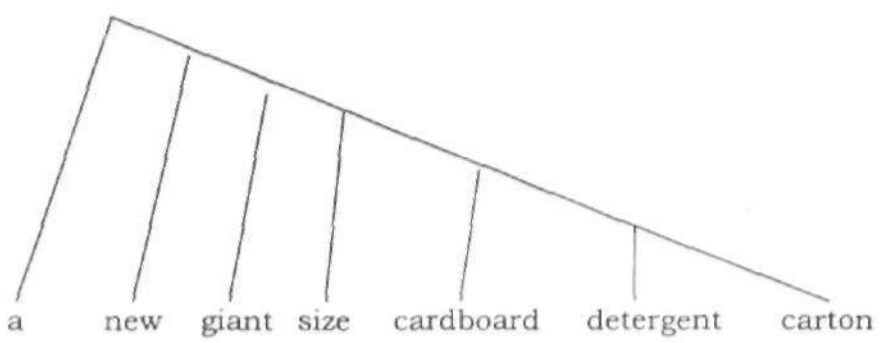
The food price rise warning system ('food' modifiers 'price')

There is room for ambiguity with multiple noun modification. Let us consider:

A new giant size cardboard detergent carton (here, size does not premodify cardboard and cardboard does not premodify detergent)

The relationship in the above is complex.

A reader who is unfamiliar with the subject concerned and who is not equipped to tolerate the radical reduction in explanations of premodification will find this obscure.



2.1.2.4 The Post Modifiers

The post modifiers determine to a great extent the explicitness in the noun phrase. Even the pre-modification in noun phrases in

most cases can only be interpreted in terms of post modification and its greater explicitness. For instance;

Some tall college girls will be interpreted as

Some girls who are tall and who are (studying) at a college

and *an oil man* – will be interpreted as:

a man who sells oil

a man who delivers oil

a man who produces oil

a man who investigates oil

a man who advocates oil

To resolve ambiguity in the case of oil man or big toe, one sense is selected in a specific context. However, this explicitness is lower in cases of post modification by nonfinite –ing clause and still in cases of prepositional phrases post modifiers.

That is, reduction in the explicitness in the noun phrase is closely related to the linguistic and situational context, (Quirk, 1985).

Sledd (op cit.) in discussing the post-modifiers said that the prepositional phrases follow the nouns they modifier (Ibid PP117) for example *boys at school*. However, he observed that the same position may be filled by:

1. Particles: as in *the referee reporting* (was explicit)
2. Marked infinitive: a time *to laugh*
3. Clause introduced by relative: the tree *that fell*
4. Clause introduced by subordinating conjunction:

The night *after the captain arrived*

Like Quirk, Sledd (op cit.) commented that in the analysis of such statements as the above examples and the classification of their parts, discussion must proceed systematically if confusion is to be avoided. He illustrated this by analysing "what goes with what" in his book A Short Introduction to English Grammar (1959:118). As he pointed out, though *"the night after the captain arrived"* is a nominal group when it is considered as a unit, in deeper analysis, only the first of its two parts:

(1) *the night*

(2) *after the captain arrived*

is itself a nominal phrase (because it occurs in nominal positions). While *"after the captain arrived"* may be called adjectival.

However, continuing the analysis, it could be noted that *"after"*, although occurs in an adjectival sequence, is a subordinating conjunction, while *"the captain arrived"* may be broken into two parts, of which the first, *"the captain"*, is a nominal phrase and the second, verbal. Therefore, Sledd (op cit.) points out that the members of prepositional classes combine systematically in larger sequence and may be classified as nominal, verbal, adjectival, etc. The multiple classification are not contradictory, since a whole sequence may be substitutable in positions where some or all of its members could not occur, and its members, on the other hand, may fill positions from which the sequence could be barred (Sledd, 1959).

Sledd (op cit.) further observes one other very important sequence, which can substitute, in some positions, for a single nominal. This, he said, is the sequence containing two nominals, one of which is usually said to be in apposition with the other. He gave examples of appositive nouns as *folio,*

man (Ibid, PP119). He said that the phrases in which they occur (for example *a folio)* are appositive phrase; and the entire sequence fill positions which might be filled simply by nominal phrases like *the book, the farmer* etc.

Examples of such sequence are:

The book, a large folio was very heavy

The farmer, a lazy man was poor

One or both of the two nominals in sequences of this kind Sledd said, is usually a noun and that the same personal pronoun would usually be substituted for both the nominals; (that is, 'It' for 'book' and 'folio' and 'he' for 'farmer and man).

2.1.2.5 Types of Post modification

(a) Post modification by finite clauses

There are two major types of finite clauses used as noun phrase post modifiers:

1. Relative Clauses for example The news *that appeared in the papers this morning* was well received
2. Appositive Clauses for example The news *that the team had won* calls for a celebration.

The difference between (1) and (2) above can be made clear by trying to substitute *that* with *which.*

(1b) The news *which appeared in the papers this morning* was well received.

(2b) The news *which the team had won* calls for a celebration.

(**Note** that 'which' cannot replace 'that' in 2b above showing that the post modifier is not a relative clause but appositive.

(b) Post modification by –ing clauses

According to Quirk et al (1985), it is possible to use all three types of nonfinite clauses – -ing participle, -ed participle, and infinitive clause as post modifiers in noun phrases.

for example (i) The person *writing reports is my colleague*

(ii) The soldier killed during the riot is a hero.

(iii) The man to help you is Mr. Jerry.

The example in (iii) above also shows that Post modifiers in noun phrases allow correspondences with relative clauses where the relative pronoun can be subject, object, or adverbial and, to a limited extent, complement

Note: Post modifiers in noun phrases allow correspondences with relative clauses where the relative pronoun can be subject, object, or adverbial and, to a limited extent, compliment.

(c) Post modification by Prepositional Phrases

Just as the finite and nonfinite clauses allow the reduction of sentences into noun phrases, prepositional phrases also make possible the reduction of post modification. This is evidenced in the following series:

The car was standing outside the station

The car which was standing outside the station

The car standing outside he station

The car outside the station

Prepositional phrase is by far the commonest type of post modification used in English language.

for example this book *on grammar*

the meaning *of this sentence*

a tree *by a stream*

2.1.2.6 Ambiguity and Constraints on Multiple Post-modification

The instances of multiple modification so far considered have raised problems of style. It is notable also, that careful ordering of constituents in a noun phrase is essential to communicate effectively. The following for example, differ in meaning and not mere stylistic variants:

the man *in black talking to the girl* (1)

the man *talking to the girl in black* (2)

Quirk and others are therefore of the view that it is reasonable to use the of-phrase rather than the genitive so as to avoid discontinuity (with unwanted grotesque ambiguity); thus (3) below but not (4).

the ears of the man in the deck chair. (3)

- *the man's ears in the deck chair* (4)

In some cases, (referred to as occurrence of **push down elements** by Quirk et al (1985), where multiple post-modification involve the modifying clause being embedded in a clause, careful ordering becomes necessary. for example *I will read the memo (which) Pat hopes (that) John will send to you.*

In the above statement, *which* is object in the relative clause

which.... John will send you

When a relative pronoun is subject under analogous condition, the conjunction *that*, which remained optional is obligatorily absent. Thus:

I will read the memo (which) Pat hopes will be sent to you

and not - *I will read the memo (which) Pat hopes that will be sent to you*

Note also that when the adjective is 'temporary', non-finite and verbless post modification is less acceptable.

For example: The boy (that) we thought *was ready* is not, afterall.

? The boy (that) we thought *to be ready* is not, afterall.

? The boy (that) we thought *ready* is not, afterall.

Quirk et al (1985:1299) also note that:

> Clause embedding in post modification can sometimes result in anacoluthon through the insertion of the personal pronoun, especially in speech.

Thus:

?* I'm going to a party *that* I don't know when it will end

?* The computer *which* you said you would teach me how it works has now arrived.

?* There is in this country a trend *which* I don't know how strong it is toward a disintegration of the traditional party system.

In the above example, the relative clauses are deviant since they introduce a double pronominalization of the antecedent (*that, which, it).* He further suggested that avoidance of the deviance will involve rather radical reorganization as follows:

I'm going to a party which will end I don't know when. (1a)

I'm going to a party and I don't know when it will end. (1b)

The computer which you said you would teach me how to use has now arrived. (2a)

The computer the operation of which you said you would teach me has now arrived. (2a)

There is in this country a trend which I don't know the strength it has toward a disintegration of the traditional party system. (3a)

There is in this country a trend of which I don't know the strength toward a disintegration of the traditional party system. (3b)

There is in this country a trend of whose strength I don't know toward a disintegration of the traditional party system. (3c)

There is a problem, if the clauses concerned are made paratactic.

For example: *I'm going to a party; I don't know when it will end.*

Again, confusion of the finite with the non-finite forms of embedded clause produces hypercorrect deviant sentences.

for example **This is the man whom we thought was not coming.*

(That is the man whom we thought to be difficult)

Lyons, J. (1968) in Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics explained ambiguity from the point of view of constituent structure. In any case, if there are two grammatically acceptable structures or more than one possible semantic interpretation of the phrase, it is ambiguous. Such ambiguity he said can be resolved by specifying their constituent structure. He considered all the noun phrases in English of the form A + N_1 + N_2 (A =

adjective, N = noun). When trying to resolve ambiguity therefore, it is either as A + (N_1 + N_2) or (A + N_1) + N_2. In Lyons' (op cit.) view, the bracketing A + (N_1 + N_2) is acceptable if the first noun can combine with the second (that is, *fruit market*) and if the adjective can combine with the second noun *new market* and if the adjective can combine with the second noun *new market* in

(1) *fresh fruit market*

(2) *new fruit market*

The bracketing (A + N_1) + N_2 is acceptable if the first noun can combine with the first noun (*fresh fruit*).

2.2 THE HEAD

This is the word around which the other components cluster and which dictates concord and other kinds of congruence with the rest of the sentence outside the noun phrase.

Take for example the following sentences:

The young man running across the road is my cousin.

The young man driving the blue car is my cousin.

I saw the young man who came here yesterday.

All the ideas expressed in the sentences above revolve around the word *'man'*.

2.2.1 The Notion of Head Word in Noun Phrase

The words, which act as head in noun phrase, constitute a distinguishable class generally referred to as the nominals or nouns.

However, they fall into several types in forms such as **noun, proper name,** and **pronoun**.

For example: The little *dog*; my food (common noun)

Old *Charles* (proper noun)

Poor *you*; t*hey* both (pronouns)

According to Sinclair (1972) nominal groups are structured round headwords. The type of modification and qualification depends on the selection of the headword, of which he said like other linguists are three classes (a) common nouns (b) pronouns and (c) proper nouns. In his view, adjectives are rarely headwords, (Sinclair, 1972: 142).

The class of words known as noun constitute an open class since any form may be regarded as a noun if it conforms to the defining criteria, the most important of which is the co-occurrence with a modifier as well as with a qualifier.

Nouns enter into a two-term number system. These are:

(i) singular; (ii) plural

Singular indicates that only one item is being spoken of while plural denotes more than one.

for example The *boy* attended the party (singular)

The *boys* attended the party (plural)

In the description of Halliday (1961) and his co-functional grammarians, nouns also enter into a two-term system of case. These include:

(i) common; (ii) genitive

The distinction between these two is by a particular lexical marker. The common case is the unmarked while the genitive case is marked.
For example, while the singular form of a regular noun "boy" is unmarked, the plural form "boys" is marked by –s ending.

2.2.1.1 Multiple Heads

It is however possible to have more than one head in a noun phrase for example *table and chair* as in:

the beautiful new *table and chair*

What is sticking here is that the reduced explicitness naturally makes ambiguity possible. Since we can coordinate two noun phrases, only one of, which is pre-modified, the resulting sting will suggest that the modifier apply to both heads if it comes first.

For instance – *He writes long papers and books*

In these circumstances, ambiguity can be reduced only by reordering, by introducing separate determiners etc.

He writes books and long papers.

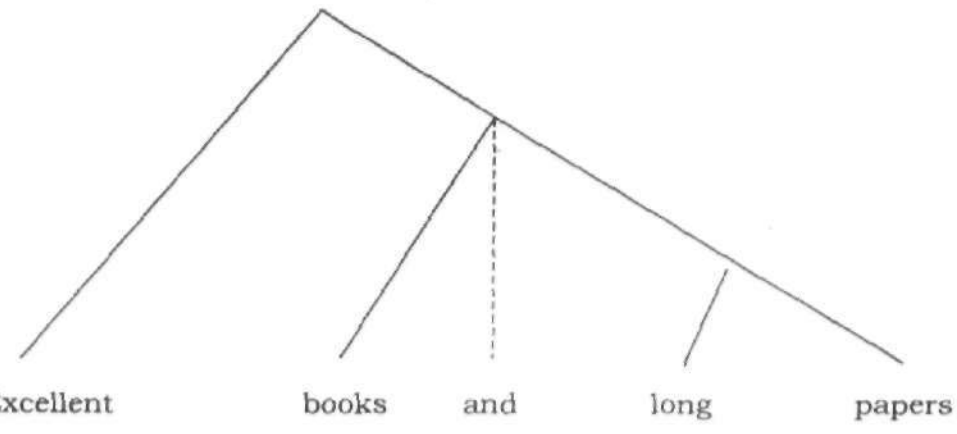
He writes some long papers and some books.

He writes long papers as well as books.

It is possible to jointly pre-modify noun-phrases with separate pre-modification, as in:

Books and long papers excellent books and long papers if spoken with one tone unit, this noun phrase can be interpreted as having the structure:

(Excellent ((books)) and (long Papers))



If we wish to coordinate noun phrases both of which are pre-modified, we must introduce either prosodic or punctuation separators, or separate determiners, if maximal clarity is require:

For example Excellent books, and long papers

Some excellent books and some long papers

The order can be reversed:

Long paper and excellent books

Like Quirk et al (1985) noted, when co-ordination takes place within a single noun phrase, it is often possible to postulate ellipsis within the noun phrases.

There is further co-ordination, which allows no ellipsis at all. Thus

They made (Salmon) and (Cucumber) sandwiches

(Spacious) and (well-furnished) apartment to let

Cannot be interpreted as

They made (salmon) sandwiches) and (Cucumber sandwiches)

(Spacious) and (well-furnished) apartment to let

When coordinated heads are preceded by a determiner, the usual interpretation is that the determiner applies to each of the conjoins

For example *A (Knife) and (Fork) = A knife and fork*

Quirk et al (1985) gave the explanation of combinatory and segregators coordination of noun phrase using the examples below:

John and Mary make a peasant couple

**"John makes a pleasant couple and Mary makes a pleasant couple"*

When coordinated heads are preceded by a determiner, the usual interpretation is that the determiner applies to each of the conjoins

For example *(Knife) and (Fork)* ----- a Knife and Fork

Quirk et al (1985) noted also that if modifiers are coordinated, there may be ambiguity according to whether the construction is understood to be segregators.

For example: *He specializes in selling (Old) and (valuable) books.*

He explained that the above may mean 'books' which are old and valuable' (combinatory meaning) or 'old books and valuable books (segregatory meaning))

Quirk's also asserts that:

> If a phrase containing modifiers coordinated by "and" has a singular count noun head, only one interpretation, the combinatory interpretation is possible. But if it has a plural head, there are four possible segregatory interpretations for noun phrases containing conjoin? (Quirk et al 1985:962)

For example:

The meeting on Monday and the meeting

or – The meetings of Monday and the meeting on Tuesday

or – The meeting on Monday and the meetings on Tuesday

or – The meetings on Monday and the meeting on Tuesday

Every time an extra conjoin is added (as in the meetings on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday) the number of interpretations is doubled.

*The ambiguity can be avoided, if desired, by the use of the none elliptical equivalents.

Another kind of ellipsis is said to take place when one or more modifiers are included in the conjoins. The units thus coordinated are neither words nor phrases, but the intermediate units that is, nominal expressions

Those (Mince Pies) and (Danish Pastries)

Those delicious (Mince Pies) and (Danish Pastries)

Those delicious (mince pies) and (Danish Pastries) that you bought.

- *My elder brother and Sister*, may be interpreted so
- *My elder brother and my elder sister*
- *Or my (elder brother) and my Sister*

2.2.2 Qualified Heads

It is possible to have beside a noun phrase as *the girls that he knew*, one in which the head is made quantitatively indefinite with the pre-determiner *such*, the relative pronoun that being replaced by *as* ;

for example *such girls as* he knew were at the party.

As many girls as he knew.....

Consider also: *More girls than* h knew were at the party.

Fewer girls than he knew were at the party

2.3 COMPLEMENTATION

As earlier mentioned, noun phrase typically functions as subject, objects and compliments of clauses and as complement of prepositional phrases. The noun phrase can act as both subject and object complement.

2.3.1 Subject Complement

When a noun phrase act as subject complement, it normally follows the subject and the verb. In this case, it will have concord of number and gender with the subject.

For example: *His friends call him Jerry*

Note: unlike the object, the complement cannot become the subject of a corresponding passive clause. For instance:

His friends call him *Jerry* (object Complement)

can be changed to - He is called *Jerry* by his friends (Subject Complement)

but cannot be changed to

Jerry call him his friends .

without disrupting the meaning or structural acceptability of the statement.

If the subject complement is a pronoun, there is a distinction between subjective and objective forms; the subjective form is more prevalent in formal usage.

Subjective	**Objective**
This is *he* (formal)	That's him

Often, subject complement may be realized by a genitive noun phrase: for example

That writing must be *Tom's* (Subjective genitive)

That textbook is *mine* (Possessive genitive)

The idea was *Kenny's* (Genitive of attribute)

2.3.2 Object Complement

When noun phrase act as object complement, it could become a subject in passive clause.

For example: My friend kicked *the ball.*

The reverse is possible as below:

The ball was kicked by my friend.

2.4 THE GENITIVE

The Genitive construction according to Quirk et al (1985) consists of two noun phrases with one noun phrase marked for the genitive case by inflection and the other a succeeding and subordinate NP unmarked for case in which the genitive NP is embedded with a determinative function (that is, functions like a definite determiner) .

The grammatical status of the genitive NP is different from that of the 'of phrase' in that the former has the function of a definite determinative, whereas the latter functions as a post modifier with the super-ordinate NP either definite or indefinite. Quirk et al (1985) pointed out some factors, which should guide user in the choice either 'genitive' or 'of construction'. These factors are discussed below:

(a) **Lexical factors:** The genitive is favoured by those gender classes which are highest on the gender scale (that is, where the first Noun is a personal name, a personal noun, and a noun with personal characteristics - animal nouns and collective nouns) On the other hand, the of-construction is normally required with **inanimate** (concrete in particular nouns) For instance, it is better to say,

Helen's car	not	*the car of Helen
the lady's car		*the car of the lady

(This is only acceptable when there is post-modification of the whole NP, or part of it)

for example The car of the lady he hoped to marry (it was only a matter of time)

the student's score not *the score of the students

In the case of inanimate nouns, we may have:

the roof of this house not ?*this house's roof

It should be noted however that there is a group of inanimate nouns which permit the genitive, especially geographical nouns and nouns denoting location and time

For instance we and do have:

Nigeria's population - the population of Nigeria

The world's economy – the economy of the world

last year's profit – the profit for last year.

Apart from gender related factor of the N_2 (second noun in a genitive construction) specific lexical noun heads like *edge, length* etc also influence the choice of construction. The 'personal connection' of the genitive can be seen in a scale whereby the N_2 that have the closest relation to the people of the country are most likely to be acceptable in the genitive:

For example: Nigeria's economy – the economy of Nigeria (a)

*Nigeria's map – the map of Nigeria (b)

? Nigeria's climate – the climate of Nigeria (c)

(?) Nigeria's roads – the roads of Nigeria (d)

(b) **Relational factors:** The relation between the two nouns in the choice of construction. In particular, partitive constructions of the quantitative and qualitative types never have a genitive variant (Quirk et al, 1985).

It will therefore be wrong to have:

a water's glass but rather *a glass of water*

*This research's kind this kind of research

(c) **Objective and subjective relation**

The variable 'direction' of predications which correspond to NPs premodified by 'of' contributes greatly to the complexity of these expressions and has a bearing on the correspondence with the genitive. The following for instance have left-to-right predication:

(1) the imprisonment of the criminal ~ (someone) imprisoned the criminal

(2) a man of courage ~ The man has courage

while in 3 and 4 we have right – to – left predication

the arrival of the train
the rains arrival
} ~ the train arrived (3)

the funnel of the ship ~ the ship has a funnel (4)

One can assume a verb-object relationship in (1) and (2) above (that is, OBJECTIVE Relation) while (3) and (4) show a subject – verb relationship (SUBJECTIVE relation). The use of a premodifying genitive 'object' is uncommon and unnatural, with the objective relation except where the head is a deverbal noun as in (1) above thus:

the imprisonment of the criminal ~ the criminal's imprisonment

But it is ungrammatical to use 's genitive for the following:

A man of courage	not	*Courage's man
The love of money		*Money's love
Men of science		*Science's men.

On the other hand, there is usually correspondence between the subjective of-phrase and the genitive. The relation is common with most types of heads, whether the subject predicate relation is overt or not.

Take for example

The arrival of the train ~ the train's arrival

the activity of the students ~ the students activity

However, there are some subject constructions which do not allow genitive correspondence.

for example the joy of his return but not *his return's joy

(His return gives joy).

The objective relation is usually expressed with the of-construction, and the subjective relation with either the of –construction or the genitive (except in some exceptional cases).

There are some verbs, which would scarcely yield a noun phrase in which the subject could be expressed without the object. Take for instance the verb *possess*

? The man's possession worried me (5)

? The possession of the man worried me. (6)

If a reader/hearer knew (from the context) that the man was subject, he would be inclined to ask 'what does he possess?' English speakers would be inclined not to interpret the italicized portion of (7) and (8) below as noun phrases.

(7) The pills came into *the possession of some children* (that is, some children possess pills)

(8) Some Children came into *possession of the pills*

The above is so because there would not be a sentence having any of them as subject and preserving the subject-relation in the of-phrase.

*The possession of some Children surprised me.

In the following of-constructions where the subjective relation is indicated by the article (the care/control of), the genitive alternative is obtainable.

For example: : *The prisoners are in the charge of the warder* (9)

The pupils are in the control of Joseph (10)

The prisoners are in the warder's charge (9a)

The prisoners are in the Joseph's control (10a)

Contrarily, *The pupils are in Joseph's control* (10a)

The objective relation cannot be expressed by the genitive without change of word order and the of-construction requires the complex preposition "*in charge of*" without article.

The pupils are in charge of Joseph (11)

Joseph is in pupils' charge (11a)

It is also good to note, as pointed out by Quirk et al (1985) that in nouns with regular plural, the formal distinction between the genitive plural (boy's), the genitive singular (boys') and the common gender plural (boys) does not exist in the pronunciation /b]iz/.

Therefore, in order to prelude ambiguity, a speaker must avoid the use of the genitive of nouns with regular plural unless the number appears from the context.

For example: the two boys' teacher)

(d) **Syntactic Factors**

In the course of expansion of NP, the postmodification of the head is likely to be understood as non-restrictive:

For example: the arrival of a friend, which had been expected for several weeks

In order to avoid awkwardness, discontinuity, or ambiguity, a writer must use the genitive

For example: A friend's arrival which had been expected for several weeks

(e) **Communicative Factor**

Another condition that should guide the use of genitive or of-construction as pointed by Quirk et al (1985) are factors like end-focus and end-weight that important constituents towards the end of the super-ordinate NP.

When N_2 has a higher communicative value than N_1, the speaker should use the genitive (N_1's N_2)

For example: The Governor said that, among the global problems that face us now, the chief one is the world's economy (economy is in focus).

Whereas the of-construction (N_2 of N_1) is preferred when the thematic distribution is the reverse.

For example: He went on to say, however, that in order to succeed we must first tackle *the economy of the industrialized nations*, which is the bases for *the sound economy of the world*. ('world' is in focus)

The above factors are said to singly or in combination influence the choice of the of-construction or genitive NP.

Before a post-genitive can be said to be correctly used the postmodifier, must be definite and human.

See for example

An opera of Richard's not *an opera of a singer's

An opera of my friend's *an anchor of the ship's

Similarly the noun which is being post-modified must be essentially indefinite' that is, must be seen as one of an unspecified number of items attributed to the postmodifier.

Thus: A son of the doctor's has arrived.

not *The Son of the doctor's has arrived.

Based on the condition that the head must be indefinite, the head cannot be a proper noun. Thus, we cannot have

*Emeka of Mrs. Nelson's

*Emeka of Mrs. Emeka

But rather Mrs Nelson's Emeka

NOTE: It is only when the head is already established in the linguistic context that one could refer to:

The/that son of the doctor's (that is, that I mentioned)

Note also the differences in the meaning of the following set

a painting of my Sister's (that is, done by my sister or belonging to my sister)

a painting of my sister (representing my sister)

a painting by my sister (done by my sister)

a painting of my sister by my brother (representing my sister and done by my brother)

Note: Acknowledgement of the above will help solve problem of misuse.

2.4.1 The Group Genitive

The group genitive is that in which the genitive marker is affixed to the last item of the postmodification, in particular prepositional phrases.

For example: *The King of Egbeda's claim*

but not **The King's of Egbeda claim*

2.5 THE POSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF NOUN PHRASE IN SENTENCES

The noun phrase occurs in different positions in English sentences.

2.5.1. Noun Phrases as Subject Complements

Noun phases act as complements in sentences just as adjective do. In those cases, they introduce an identification of the subject as in the following:

John was *the doctor* [that I mentioned].

He felt *a fool.*
The smell seamed *a danger* to health

2.5.2 Noun phrases as Direct Object Complement

Direct objects are typical of Noun phrases, [Quirk et al, 1973]. The following is an example

The man killed *the goat.*

The order of the above statement could be reversed making the direct object to become the subject in a passive form for example

The goat was killed (by the man)

In this case, as indicated above, it is usual to omit the by-phrase, often because [i] It is irrelevant or unknown, as in.

The commissioner was attacked last night *during the party*

[ii] because it is redundant in the context, as in

Jerry fought Jones last night *and Jerry was beaten.*

However, the passive transformation is blocked when there is conference between subject and object, that is, when there are reflexive, reciprocal, or possessive pronouns in the noun phrase as object.

for example *John could see himself in the mirror*

**Himself could be seen in mirror*

We could hardly see each other in the room

**Each other could be seen in the room.*

The other woman wiped the table.

**Her hands were wiped by the other watress.*

Note * Means that those forms are not acceptable.

2.5.3 Noun Phrases as Indirect Object

Noun phrases also act as indirect object as in

The headmaster	gave	Edward	*a new book*
S	V	IO	DO

The above sentence could be rewritten as:

The headmaster gave a new book to Edward

2.5.4 Noun Phrases as time adjunct

Noun phrases which include deictic words *last, next, this,* and *that;* the quantifying words *some and every;* and nouns [heads] are often used as time adjunct.

for example I saw him *last Thursday*

It has rained a lot *this year*

2.5.5 Noun Phrases as Qualifiers

Sometimes, noun phrases are used in the position before adjectival and adverbial and are therefore, regarded as qualifiers. Such include:

For example:

a lot, a great deal, a little, kind of, sort of, a bit (Stageberg, 1981:168)

2.6 DISCONTINUOUS MODIFICATION OF NOUN PHRASE

As Quirk et al [1973[rightly said, it is not uncommon for the noun phrase to be interrupted by other items of clause structure

For instance there could be a time adjunct between the head and post-modifier as in the following:

You'll meet *a man tomorrow carrying a heavy parcel*

A striking examples is

I was given *a nice glass of coffee* but in *an ugly glass.*

According to Quirk et al [1973], most discontinuities originate from interposing a parenthesis or the finite verb of the sentence [where the noun phrase is subject] between the head and the post-modifier. The motive is usually either to correct a structural imbalance as in

The story is told *that he was once a boxes;* or to achieve a more immediate clarity.

For instance:

The woman is at the Door, *who sold me the ticket and told me the play doesn't begin till three*

This is an occurrence that can make the identification of noun phrase difficult for language users and therefore make this section pertinent to this study.

2.7 NOUN PHRASE TAGS

Noun phrase tag is usually added to indicate an opposite case [usually in informal speech]. This helps to clarify the meaning of a pronoun within it. For example:

They're all the SÀME, these PoliTicians [1]

The tag generally occurs in a separate torn unit, with a rising tone. It can be inserted parenthetically as in [2] below or placed finally as in [1] above.

He's got a good future, your brother, if he perseveres (2)

For some instances [or rather, dialects] an operator is added to the noun phrase for greater explicitness.

for example He likes Jokes now and, *Jim does.*

2.8 SEQUENCING FEATURES OF ORDER

In any sentence, group of words or more than one word, there arises the question of order. There also arise the question of the sequence of the members of complex groups or sentences.

2.8.1 What Effect Sequencing has on Meaning and Interpretation.

Co-ordination provides some points of interest in relation to multiple modification. For example;

Children who have *speech that is impaired*

In such cases, the following occur:

(a) More than one modification is applicable to a single head.

for example The man *in the corner painted red*

In this case 'painted red' modifies the whole of the preceding complex noun phase. The problem of ambiguity arises with the difficulty of knowing which of the phrases is directly modified.

Without a conjunction or punctuation, the ambiguity cannot be resolved.

Thus: *The car in the corner, painted red*

(b) A modification is applicable to more than one head as in the earlier example

He writes long papers and books

and [the man woman] [in [the corner]]]

(c) Complex structures as in:

(1) The man and woman in the corner talking to John

(2) [The [Man and woman] [in [the corner] nearest the door]]) (talking to John))

In example (2) above ambiguity is a bit removed from the last post modifier (taking to John) because the door could not be talking to John. Nevertheless to take ambiguity farther, the use of a finite relative clause is possible (...who are talking to John).

Frequently, careful ordering of constituents in a noun phrase is essential to effective communication.

for example the man in black talking to the girl

the man talking to the girl in black.

2.8.2 Discontinuity in Noun Phrase

Quirk et al (1985) has observed that in most cases, the part usually affected by discontinuity is the post-modification of noun phrases, and the units often postponed are the appositive clauses. However, other post-modifying clauses, and even phrases, can also be postponed.

The following examples are cited from the various publications used in this research.

(1) He believed *that* in the final analysis *countries yield only to pressure*

(Time OCT. 8, 1977; 55)

(2) They could not bring themselves to admit *that* possibly *their government had not been so immoral and stupid as their folklore had it.*

The postponement in each case results in a 'discontinuous' noun phrase, which is italicized in the examples.

Discontinuity in some cases results from the postponement of post-modifying phrases of exception.

All the girls are tall *except Bose*

Every body was afraid but the sergeant.

Cases of internal discontinuities within a noun phrase occur. Writers purposely move parts of an NP to achieve end-focus. This is done without actual insertion of elements that do not form part of the noun phrase as a whole

For example: *the election* in June this year *of a new democratic Civilian President.*

The structural format of the above is SVAO

Compared with SVOA

the election of a new democratic civilian president in June this year

In the first statement a new democratic civilian president has been shifted to give first place to "in June this year" purposely because the speaker intends to give end-focus or marked focus to "in June this year"

Writers make use of 'internal discontinuities' through a varied ordering of constituents of NP to such specific informational goals. This is suported by Quirk et al 1985.

(i) "The handing over to the Civilian in May 1999 by General A. Abdusalam" "VOAS"

(The above statement is in quotation marks bearing in mind the constraints of permuting the sequence of sentence element and to indicate the greater freedom within the noun phrase).

(ii) General Abubakar Abdusalam handed over to the Civilian in May 1999 (SVOA) - sentence correspondence.

Focus can be given to constituents corresponding to all four of the elements in an SVOA sentence. Or instance, the writer in order to snit different informational goals can write as follows:

(iii) Gen. Abdusalan's handing over to the Civilian in may 1999 (SVOA)

(iv) The handing-over by General Abdusalam in May 1999 to the Civilian (VSAO)

(v) General Abdusalam's may 1999 handing – over to the Civilian.

While Quirk gave the SAOV form, which is questionable, the researcher has decided to use the SAVO form

It is good to point out in this study that in most cases, what motivates a writer to reorder the constituents within a noun phrase or interrupt them by inserting other sentence elements may be either or both:

(a) to achieve stylistically well-balanced sentence in accordance with the norms of English structure; particularly to achieve END-WEIGHT. For example, it is good for a writer to avoid forming a sentence with a long subject and a short predicate. Thus a writer would prefer (i) below to (ii)

(i) *The news* is true *of the rumbling over new cabinet* (TELL June 7, 1999)

(ii) *The news of the rumblings over new cabinet* is true.

(iii) He rapidly collected *the bag* from the criminal *that he had been searching for all the day.*

The adjunct "from the criminal" will not only interrupt the syntax if it followed the verb immediately "collected from the ciminal" but the ordering in (iii) above matches in a highly satisfying way the mounting communicative flow:

He rapidly collected the bag

It was collected from the criminal

He had been searching for it all the day.

Following Quirk's explanation, at the **thematic end** we have in the above, the rapidity of collecting the bag; at the **rhematic end** the long duration of search; and **in transition** – at the point of noun phrase continuity – we have the ironic juxtaposition of 'the bag' and the criminal.

There are cases when the writer places a pronoun in apposition for the purpose of emphasis.

For example: *The President himself* made the announcement .

(1)

Did you yourself drive the car? **(2)**

Instead of The president made the announcement himself? (1b)

Did you drive the car yourself? (2b)

NOTE however, that the above postponement in 1 and 2 are possible only if the noun phrase in apposition with the pronoun is the subject. It will be ambiguous therefore to have.

*I gave Femi the letter himself

In place of - I gave Femi himself the latter (The noun phrase in this case is an object)

Writer may prefer to postpone the second element to a position immediately following the operator rather than to the end of the sentence. This is especially true with "all", "both", and "each" (Quirk et al 1985).

For example

(1) *The candidates* had *all* been carefully selected.

(2) *My brothers* don't *either of them* eat much.

(3) *They* are *none of them* very ambitious.

* (2) and (3) above are said to occur in informal cases.

2.9 NOUN PHRASE REFERENCE

Many things are involved as far as referencing is concerned in noun Phrase. The kind of reference a particular noun Phrase has depend on its

determination elements as the modifiers which play a restricting role in the identify of the head.

Certain determiners are used to signal that a noun phrase is referentially equivalent to a previous noun phrase

The

This – These

That – Those

The noun phrases may have identical heads.

For example, *A student* was arrested last night for an alleged traffic offence.

The police released *the student* after a brief investigation (Quirk et al, 1985: 702-703).

The traditional distinction between definite and indefinite articles provides a strong basis for clarifying fact or leaving them obscured through the use of terminology. The definite article 'the' expresses definiteness (has specifying function) while the indefinite articles 'a, an' may or may not be special in reference.

for example (a) *A young girl ran* across the road

(b) *This is a mirror* on the table

The reference in `b' above is more definite than in `a' because the reference in earlier b is undoubtedly to a specific mirror. However, the specifying function is not determined by the article, by the context and situation.

But in the expression:

I cannot write without a pen,

the reference is genuinely non-specific (the pen could be any pen).

Another term associated with referencing in noun phrase is modification. This could be restrictive or non-restrictive. When the reference of the head is a member of a class, which can be identification, is through the modification supplied, the modification is said to be restrictive (Quirk, 1985)

The little girl running away, who cried because you touched her when you came into the room is my Damilola Jimba.

The girl, in the example given above, is only identifiable as Damilola Jimba provided we understand that, it is the particular girl who is little, running away and who cried. It is only when there are other girls present, little, or who were not crying that such modification would be necessary. Thus, destructiveness indicates a limitation on the possible reference of the head. (Quirk et al, op cit.)

Alternatively, the referent of a noun phrase may be viewed as unique or as a member of a class that has been independently identified. In that case, any modification given to such a head is additional information, which is not essential for identification. This is referred to as non-restrictive.

For example:

Bako Sule, *who is running away,* stole a book.

In the statement - *come and meet my younger daughter,* the speaker's daughter is identified as being one out of two daughter in the family and also as younger than the other daughter. This shows example of restrictive pre-modification. If, on the other hand, a man (in a monogamous society) says:

Come and meet my beautiful wife.

The pre-modification is non-restrictive since *wife* will not admit restriction (being treated as unique).

In the view of Quirt et al (1985), almost any head that can be restrictedly modified is also susceptible of non-restrictive modification.

For example:

The tall man, who is a veterinary doctor, is Oladele Bamigboye.

In the above, the only information offered to identify Oladele Bamigboye is the allusion to his tallness; the mention of his profession is not offered as to aid identification but for additional interest.

Other nouns, which have non-restrictive post-modification, include those with generic reference:

For example:

The giant panda, *which is to be found in the remote part of China,* lives exclusively on bamboo shoots.

Proper nouns do not need restrictive modification since they have the normal denotation. However, Quirk et al (1985) pointed out that when the proper noun temporarily takes on features of a common noun, restrictive modification is possible.

For example: *The Janet that is in Chicago*

The Helen who came here last week

By contrast, non-restrictive modification is possible with assertive heads.

For example:

Someone, who sounded like you mother, called to say she wanted to see you.

Non-specific determiners like any, all and every usually have only restrictive modification.

For example:

Every book, which is written by pirates, should be banned.

It is possible however, to find non-restrictive as well as restrictive modification, as in:

All the Students, who had returned from their vacation, wanted to take the exam.

The major differences between restrictive and non-restrictive modification are:

1. Modification at its 'most restrictive' tends to come after the head: as in

Any person who *wishes to see me* must make an appointment.

while by contrast, non-restrictive modifiers often take the pre-modifying position to reflect the wish that it be taken for granted and not interpreted as identifier.

2. Restrictive modification tends to be given more prosodic emphasis than the head, with a built in contrast, as in.

Grace is my younger sister

Non-restrictive modification, on the other hand, tends to be unstressed in pre head position.

For example: My *beautiful* wife

In post head position, its 'parenthetic' relation is endorsed by being given a separate tone unit (frequently with reduced prominence and narrow pith range); or, in writing, by being enclosed by commas (Quirk et al, (1985).

On another dichotomy, modification in noun-phrase structure may also be seen as permanent or temporary, such that item placed in pre-modification position are typing given the status of permanent or, at any rate, Characteristic features (Quirk op cit.).

They further explained that this does not mean that post-modification position is committed to either temporaries or permanence, those adjectives which have to be predicative have a notable temporary reference, (Quirk Ib id).

The following are example of such:

The *Courteous* man (Permanent reference)

The man is *ready* (temporary: having reference to a specific time).

In this sense, just as some modifiers are too straggly identified with temporary status to appear in pre-head position, so there can be modification constrained to per-head position because it indicates permanent status. For instance, the toe which is characteristically (and permanently) big in relation to the rest is called *'the big toe'* and we cannot say of it **The toe is big* without destroying this permanent characteristic and making the expression seam to refer only (for example) to a temporary swelling. On this same level of comparison falls *the original* (first, earliest) *version* and *His work is quite original*_ (of a new type). The latest permits adverbial indication of time span such as *Now, Allays* etc.

The form *all* + noun with no article usually has generic reference. For example:

All men are created equal (generic reference)

while All the men in the mine wore helmets (specific reference)

However, it should be noted that it is possible to have All + noun which is not necessarily generic For example,

I will see All (the) students at 2.p.m.

2.9.1 Noun Gender and Referencing

One of the areas which appear problematic in the postmodification in noun phrase is the achievement of concord between the relative clause and its antecedent, that is, the preceding part of the noun phrase of which the relative clause is a postmodifier. Concord is on the basis of a two – term 'gender' system, personal and non-personal (Quirk et al, 1985). This applies to the wh-series

Take for instance the following:

'Richard, who is beginning to be considered as one of the world's best coaches ..."

Abiodun, who

The boy who

The human being who

The brave who

London, which

The cat which

The human body which

The unicorn which

From the above it is clear that 'personality' is ascribed basically to human beings but extends to creatures in the supernatural world (angels, elves,

etc.), which are thought of as having human characteristics such as speech. However, pet animals can be regarded as 'personal' (at least by their owners)

For example, *Whisky, who was barking, frightened the Children.*

On the other hand, human babies can be regarded (though rarely perhaps by their parents) as not having developed personality:

for example This is the baby which needs inoculation.

In cases where ships take the personal pronoun she, the relative pronoun is regularly non-personal

For example:

Is she the ship, which is due to leave for a Caribbean cruise tomorrow?

Collective nouns are normally treated as personal when they have plural concord and as non-personal when they have singular concord:

The committee who were responsible for the decision...

The committee, which was responsible for the decision...

With coordinated antecedents of mixed gender, the choice of relative pronoun sometimes poses problems. However, this does not arise when zero relative is possible

For example:

the people and things she likes most

the people and things that amuse her most

With wh-pronouns, the principle of proximity is to be favoured (that is,. agreement of the clause with a closely preceding noun phrase in preference to agreement of the clause with a closely preceding noun phrase that functions as subject).

2.9.2 Apposition and Referencing

Apposition refers to a relation between noun phrases, that is, identity in reference of items. It involves the linking of units of the same rank.

For example: *Janet, my best friend, lives in Chicago.*

Different Grammarians have defined freedom which apply to apposition. Some of the conditions for correct apposition include the following.

(i) Each of the appositives can be separately omitted without affecting the acceptability of the sentence.

(ii) Each fulfils the same syntactic function in the resultant sentence.

(iii) It can be assumed that there is no difference between the original sentence and either of the resultant sentence in extra-linguistic reference.

Consider the following examples:

A classmate, Helen Kolo, is on the telephone (1)

A classmate is on the telephone (1a)

Helen Kolo is on the telephone (1b)

Note that the apposition in (1) above meets the three conditions: that is, the resultant sentences are acceptable; Both noun phrases are subject of their sentence; Since Helen Kolo and a classmate are conferential in (1), we can assume the reference of the two resultant sentence to be the same. Any apposition that meets the 3 conditions is termed as full apposition. But in the case where any of the condition is not met, such apposition is referred to as PARTIAL apposition.

Quirk et al also went further to explain other forms of apposition that are obtainable in Noun phrases. Such include strict apposition.

for example Swimming, his best hobby, has brought him many friends.

Weak apposition

His best hobby, swimming, has bought him many friends.

Nonrestrictive apposition

(1) Mr. Wilson, an auditor, will arrive tomorrow.

(2) *Mrs Stella Obasanjo, wife of the president,* is expected to be present at the West African Regional finals of the yearly 'Face of Africa' contest billed for the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Abuja.

The lexical items and syntactic construction in apposition allow for potential ambiguity.

One of such aspects that can be ambiguous is the case of using negative reformulation that is, where the modifying appositive is not a synonymous expression.

For example: Funmilayo, not my best friend, refused the invitation. Without context, the above sentence is potentially ambiguous is writing.

It could either have negative appositive meaning

that is, Funmilayo, who happens not to be my best friend, ...

or a denial sense meaning:

It was Funmilayo who refused the invitation, not the other person. The writer must try to avoid such ambiguity by using more precise formulation.

Apposition sometimes occur for the purpose of exemplification that is, when the second appositive exemplifies the reference of the more general term in the first appositive. Such appositives are often indicated by such items as "for example", "such as", "including", "for instance", "say".

for example We visited *several cities*, for example *Ibadan and Lagos*.

(i) *Many cities*, such as *Ibadan and Lagos*, have very high population.

(ii) Many people, including *my sister*, passed the exam.

Exemplifying appositives are sometimes open to ambiguity between exemplification and identification, if no indicator is present. For instance:

(1) Famous men – Bill Clinton, George Bush, Nkrumah – have visited Nigeria.

The above construction can be interpreted to be that the men referred to in the second appositive are not the only famous men who visited Nigeria, but are mentioned as examples of such visitors. On the other hand, the relationship could be interpreted as one of identification that is, that the second appositive is a closed list of the men who have visited Nigeria. However, if an indicator is inserted, the exemplification will be unambiguous.

Below is another example from one of the newspapers:

(2) What was unexpected was how often skills not directly related to ELT were mentioned: *primary teaching skills, speaking to large groups, diplomacy, resourcefulness in making materials from nothing, and experience as actor/director and as counselor.*

From the above, the reader is not sure if the skills mentioned were the only ones referred to as not directly related to ELT.

2.9.3 Noun Phrase pre-modification by nouns

Nouns pre-modifier are often so closely associated with the head as to be regarded as compounded with it.

for example *The cupboard door*

However, do in cases appear to be in a reduced-explicitness relation with prepositional post modifiers:

Note: Not all noun pre modifiers have prepositional phrase analogues: for example *The actor-producer* - rather means that - James cracker was both actor and producer

2.10 VIEWS OF DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF GRAMMAR ON NOMINAL GROUP SEQUENCE

In the discussion and analysis of any grammatical term, the choice of method and terminology for analysis often depend on the grammarian, and basically the school of grammar to which he belongs. Thus, different grammarians have discussed the English Nominal Group using various dimensions and terminology.

2.10.1 Traditional Grammar

The traditional grammarians place emphasis on correct usage. Traditional grammar precedes what is now regarded as the scientific approach to the study of language. According to Crystal (1971), in traditional grammar, syntactic categories are described using features which have been identified in classical languages such as Greek and Latin. On the

basis of these features, a universal grammar is worked out which is used as a descriptive model for all language, which the traditional grammarians wish to describe.

Most of the terminology they used such as subject, predicate, object, noun, verb, adverb, adjective etc. are still much in use today. However, these terms have assumed clearer definitions and descriptions in modern grammars. Traditional grammar recognizes also units such as sentence, clause, phrase, word and their relationships. These are given formal and notional definitions.

To them, a phrase would be classed as a noun phrase because it 'functions as' or 'does the work of' a noun in a sentence (Lyons, 1968). In their view therefore, the phrases of the form adjective + noun have the same distribution in the sentences as nouns; for example, *poor John, new house,* can be freely substituted for *John* and *house* in any sentence.

One of the criticisms against the traditional description of these units is that they are sometimes ambiguous and confusing (Dineen, 1967 and Newsome, 1961).

2.10.2 Structural Grammar

The structural Grammar associated with Gleason, 1955; Christophersen and Sandved, 1969) is tightly connected with the notion of Immediate Constituent (IC) analysis. The theory rests on the assumption that elements of any string are often combined in a logical order. It consists of a hierarchical arrangement of elements.

Roberts, P. (1962) explaining the idea of Immediate Constituents said that they are constituents in the sense that they constitute, or make up, the sentence. They are immediate in the sense that they act immediately on one another (that is, the whole meaning of the one applies to the whole meaning of the other). He added that a group of words are a constituent of something if they go back to some division point, but if not, they are not.

In relation to noun phrase he explained, that the ICs of the determiner and the noun are the group after it.

For example:

The old man who rented the room upstairs likes the movie

The noun phrase above of which `man' is the headword is the subject of the whole verb cluster. Similarly, `who rented the room upstairs' is also an Immediate Constituent of `the old man.

Robert (Ibid.) also explained IC in relation to prepositional phrases. He said that a preposition and the object of the preposition (which may be a complex noun phrase) as in

by/the tree which my father had planted behind the house

could often be used to generate complex constructions in English language (Robert, op cit.)

In the following phrase for example,

by/the tree near the house across the road in the village

we see that the object of the first preposition `by' has its headword `tree' again modified by another prepositional phrase beginning with `near' and so on in the following fashion:

by/the tree near the house across the road in the village

the tree/near the house across the road in the village

near/the barn across the road in the village

the barn/across the road in the village

across/the road in the village

the road/in the village

in/the village

The above theory has its own criticisms. In Halliday's (1985:22) terms, IC analysis can be seen as the grammar which does not "allow more than two elements in a bracket". For instance, a simple IC analysis (terminating at the word unit) will have the following:

Old soldiers love games.

Halliday also points out that IC yields "maximum bracketing" as opposed to "minimum bracketing" of unit analysis (Ibid.)

The IC analysis is a rank-free analysis whereas the modern grammars allow minimum bracketing which will afford functional labeling of the elements of a nominal phrase.

The structural descriptions provided were not able, in an enormous number of cases, to provide an account of the kinds of structural information available to the native. Also, the complexity involved in phrase structure description proved truly extraordinary; many simple and easily discovered regularities were excluded and many essentially identical parts of the grammar had to be repeated several times (Fodor & Katz 1964 PP 138-151).

2.10.3 Transformational Generative Grammar

Noam Chomsky, the prominent proponent of Transformational Generative Grammar, explains the constituents of noun phrase using the phrase structure rules. One of the rules says that an NP need only consist of a noun that is, NP ⟶ N while the other rule says that NP consist of an article and a noun that is, NP ⟶ ART N. The two rules according to Jacobs et al (1968) may be combined into one indicating both possibilities – NP ⟶ (ART) N.

The parenthesis is said to mean that the enclosed constituent does not have to appear in every noun phrase.

Jacobs et al (1968) added that noun phrases may contain not only articles but sentences as well. For example

(1) Grace accepted *the idea that we could buy the book.*

To the TG grammarians, the fact that passive transformations can be applied to the structures of the above sentence as shown below, confirms the italicized string is a noun phrase.

(2) *The idea that we could buy the book* was accepted by Grace.

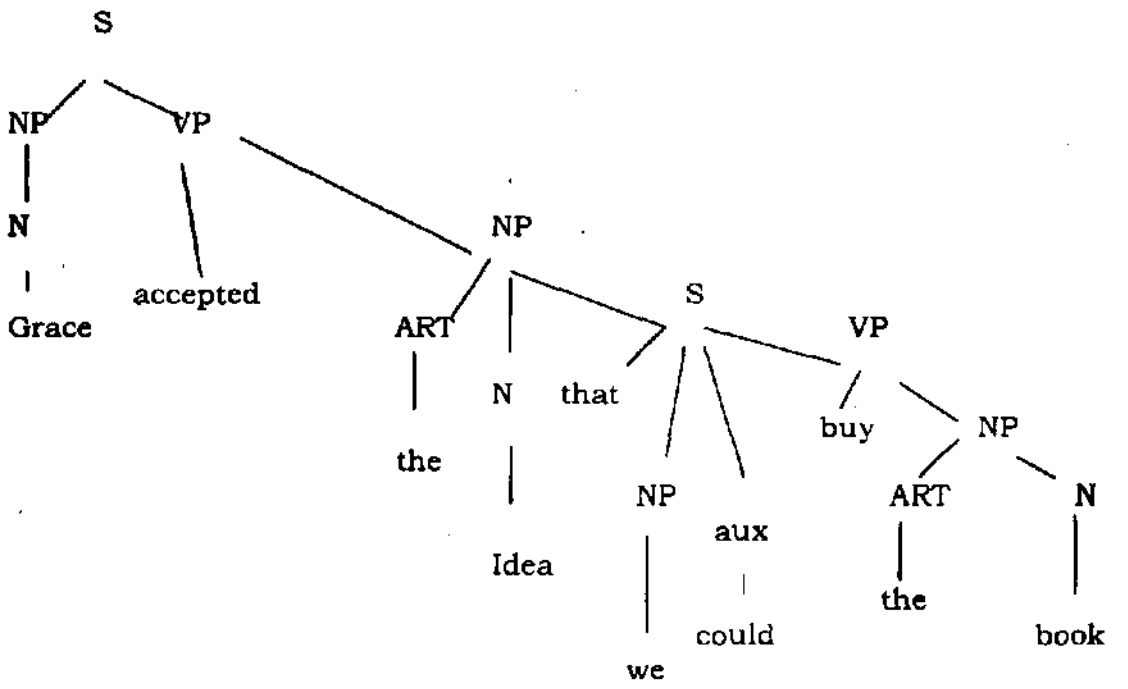
However, if the word `that' is excluded, the italicized noun phrase can be seen to contain the sentence:

We could buy the book.

The sole function of "that" therefore seems to be to indicate that the italicized string is an embedded sentence.

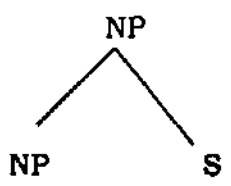
The phrase structure rule is then amended to show the possibility of a sentence following a noun. Therefore, the above sentence (1) will have this surface structure:

(1) Grace accepted *the idea that we could buy the book.*



From the above, it becomes clear that English contains a **recursive** sequence of rules – the rule that expands S, and the rule that expands NP.

The TG Grammarians also discussed the relative clause construction, which involves a noun phrase followed by a sentence. This is represented by



For example:

The drawing which won the award amused the teacher.

To show that the above is a noun phrase, the passive test is also applied. In this case, if one assumes that the word 'which' is merely an altered form of the sentence, then the sentence below can be realized.

The drawing won the award

In Fodor & Katz (1964), Chomsky's assumption as reviewed by R. B. Lee is that:

> The sentences of a language may each be analyzed into a linearly concatenated sequence of immediate constituents and this bracketing operation may be performed at various levels of generality to yield a hierarchical branching diagram.... any unit at any level is just a certain continuous string within some sentence or else a class of such strings drawn from different but grammatically equivalent sentences. Fodor & Katz (1964: 138 – 9)

Some authors have pointed out the difficulties associated with Chomsky's phrase structure grammar. Such problems have to do with questions of discontinuities, agreement, free constituent order, and the degree of branching.

2.10.4 Functional Grammar

To the functional grammarians, there are four classes of modifiers in the nominal group.

1. **Deictic modifier** - This refers to a modifier that specify, such are said to include: articles or determiners. For example *the, a, an, etc.; certain, some.....*

   In analysis, they are identified by placing (m) beside them.

2. **Epithet** - This name is used to refer to modifiers, which include all kinds of adjectival modifiers. According to this school, different kinds of epithet exist which include:

(a) the descriptive ones (e^a) for example *ugly, short, fat*

In analysis, small (e) is used to represent epithet and (a) is used for descriptive.

For example *An ugly woman*

m	m	h
d	e^a	n

(b) The colour epithet (e^b)

For example *Caroline is a fair Chinese lady.*

Garba is a gentle dark-skinned man.

m	m	m	h
e^a	d	e	n

(c) The classifier (e^c) They are nouns qualifying nouns as adjective. These can be of two types:

i. Those formed out of a noun- for example *British, Chinese, Boyish* (easily recognised by - -ish, -ese, -ly etc.)

ii Outright nouns (which do not undergo morphological processes of changing to adjectives)

for example *School bag*

m	h
e^c	n

A stubborn black English girl

m	m	m	m	h
d	e^a	e^b	e^c	n

The acceptable order in the case is that e^a should come before e^b and e^c at last.

Qualifiers

These according to the functional grammarian can be single words (likely to be adverbs)

For example *all the young men upstairs*
sm m m h q

It is pointed out in most cases, qualifiers are more than one word.

For example *All the young men (in the class)*
sm m m h q

In the above method of analysis since the immediate constituent of a group is words, the constituent of modifiers that has more than one word has an abnormality. In such cases, since all the 'words in the class' come together to make a unit, then they will function as a unit.

The functional grammarians further described the English nominal group using the term 'rankshift'. This term according to Sinclair (1972) is used to describe a stretch of language, which looks like a clause but behaves like a word. Such a structure is what is often referred to as rankshifted structure.

A rank scale is a bit of units arranged according to size. It is a special kind of hierarchy in which the relationship between adjacent units is the same all the way down the scale. The relationship of constituency that operates between the units is the basis of the concept of the rank scale. The relationship is such that a member of a lower unit can only occur in a higher one. But sometimes the unit functions in a unit with equivalent status or even of lower status rank scale. When this happens, it is said that the item that functions in this way is rankshifted. For example,

The student who won the award is a genius

The underlined unit is rankshifted because it functions within a phrase "The student who won the award".

The functional grammarians analysis of language in general involves the detail explanation of particular description. Thus, the scale of delicacy sets in. For example, the girl is a nominal phrase consisting of a modifier and a head: (HM); but at a greater level of delicacy, the exact kinds of modifier and head are specified.

Example (a) "the" is a determiner (dt)

(b) more specifically, it is a particularizing article (a)

(c) still more specifically, it is a particularizing article (a^p)

thus schematically progressing from the least delicate to the most delicate description and coming up with the following:

the = modifier ⟶ determiner ⟶ article ⟶ particularizing article

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The researcher has reviewed the works of past grammarians with specific reference to their view on the English nominal group and the problems associated with its sequence. Among the several grammars we have, few have been selected and their works reviewed. This has enabled the writer to set side by side the views of different linguists on the complexity in the sequence of English nominal group. However, analysis was based on one particular model – Quirk's model.

The prevailing views in this model were applied to the analyses of the nominal group as used in some articles of selected standard publications and some essays written by students of higher institution of learning particularly Ahmadu Bello University. This has served as a way of assessing users' proficiencies in the use of nominal phrase.

3.1 SOURCES OF DATA

The data used in this study include articles from selected foreign and local newspapers and magazines. Some essays written by students of Ahmadu Bello University were also used for the purpose of analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The data used in this study include extracts from magazines, newspapers, written text and test results.

3.2.1 Procedure for Data Collection

The texts that were used in this research are some extracts from standard Newspapers and magazines. The researcher has decided to choose some popular newspapers such as: The Guardian Weekly, The Guardian and Daily Times; and some magazines such as: Times, Africa Today, Tell and Newsweek. Some publications of each of these magazines and newspapers were examined. The choice of these magazines and newspapers is due to their social status and wide range of readers. Different quotations from different publications of these Newspapers and magazines were analyzed.

Other sources of data include essays written by students of some departments of Ahmadu Bello University. The selected departments include English Department, Department of Mass Communication, Sociology and History Department. The researcher has selected these departments for the purpose of this research work considering the fact that a high standard of English language usage is expected of students in those departments. Some of the data used for analysis will appear in the appendices at the end of this work.

3.2.2 Post Data Collection Test

To test the performance of students and detect some of the problems they encounter in the understanding and interpretation of complex nominal phrases, few students were selected from different departments of Ahmadu Bello University. A post data collection test was carried out using the available data to test the students.

A questionnaire was designed for the subjects to answer. The questions contained in the questionnaire are such that require the students to interpret some statements to show the level of their understanding of the nominal phrases contained in those statements. Such questions include:

1. What do you understand by this statement?
2. Make a list of the noun phrases in this passage and describe the structure of each.
3. In what two ways can you interpret the following statement?

3.3 SAMPLING

The number of texts used include some articles from two (2) publications of each of the selected newspapers and magazines – that is, The Guardian Weekly, The Guardian and Daily Times newspapers and Times, Africa Today, Tell and Newsweek magazines. Some essays written by students of the departments selected for this study (English, Mass Communication, Sociology and History departments) were examined. A test was conducted for some students in their second year in these same departments. The total number of scripts given out are 80, that is 20 for each of the four departments.

3.4 DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Using the model of description by Quirk et al (1985), the researcher examined the various problems posed by the complex English nominal phrase as evidenced in the selected text from the newspapers, magazines and students' essays used in this work.

Quirk and his associates are descriptive grammarians. Quirk's approach to the description of the various aspects of English language is detailed and exciting. He has examined language in such scholarly and satisfying manner that best explain the English language and his model can also be applied to the description of other languages.

The researcher chose this model with the expectation that using this model will help address most of the difficulties encountered by English language users in respect of the noun phrase. Extensive literature review was therefore done to establish the important contentions of the prominent grammarians. Samples of write-ups from newspapers and magazines were analysed to confirm which noun phrase structure is visible or not among those discussed by the grammarians.

In the analysis, the researcher had in mind some of the difficulties encountered by students on the interpretation and usage of nominal phrases as earlier pointed out in chapter two of this study. Such difficulties as earlier mentioned include among others:

(1) The selection of certain determiners by different sub-classes of noun, and in particular the choices within the sub-system of ARTICLES in the determiner system;

(2) Pronouns: Gender and ambiguity of reference;

(3) Certain post-head modifiers (interpretation)

From the observation of the researcher, most errors in users' writings occur as a result of confusion between the various sub-classes of nouns. On this basis some essays written by students were analyzed with focus on the appropriateness in the usage of nominal phrases. Some questions were

also given out to students and their answers were used to gauge the degree of mastery of certain noun phrases.

3.5 FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The structure of English language is best described or analyzed by discussing the word as a grammatical unit and the group as the next unit (referred to as phrase in several instances). Both terms, that is, group and phrase have been used interchangeably in this study. There are three basic groups in English: nominal group, verbal group and adverbial group.

The Nominal group has an obligatory element of structure, which is called the headword or head, for example:

The boy ran across the road.

Other elements like modifiers and determiners.

Various schools of grammar have attempted the explanation of these elements and their positioning as individual elements and as a group. These attempts of different authors are geared towards the explanation of what the rules guiding the use of nominal phrase should be. These attempts are geared towards helping users of English Language to understand the use of the English nominal phrase thereby overcoming some of the difficulties posed by its complexities.

This is in line with what Aliyu, J. S. (1999) suggested in his paper "Mass Failure in WAEC-Conducted Senior Secondary English Examination in Nigeria: Grammar as Road block to Candidates' Success". He is of the view that selected items for examining students in English language should reflect on communicative language use balanced with some recognition for the rules of the language.

The positions or views of some of these grammarians on the English nominal group have been reviewed in this work. For the analysis of the data used in this study, the researcher focused on Quirk's model of description and analysis. Emphasis was placed on the complex structure of the nominal phrase with focus on how sequencing affects interpretation or meaning in sentences.

The researcher also took into consideration the view of Quirk et al (op cit.) that modification is strongly tied to referencing in noun phrase. The selected texts were examined along this line.

Also, ambiguity characterizes complex noun phrases and to resolve them, one sense must be selected in a specific context. (Quirk, 1985). This ambiguity affects hearers and learners' understanding of statements. Students' difficulty and mastery were examined on this basis. Some essays written by students were analyzed for the purpose of examining their difficulty and pointing out the categories of ambiguity present in those write-ups.

The researcher also presented some statements containing nominal phrases to selected subjects and their responses to questions on those statements were also analyzed. A simple percentage of frequency of occurrence was used in reporting the researcher's findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examined the use of complex nominal phrase in written texts obtained from articles in the magazines, newspapers and essays written by students of higher institution of learning specifically, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The Nominal Phrase will be analysed based on the ambiguity discovered from the data.

This chapter focuses primarily on presentation and analysis of the data based on the various classifications of ambiguity as outlined by Quirk et al.

4.1 DIFFICULTIES POSED BY COMPLEX NPs

The researcher has examined in this study some of the aspects of complex NPs that pose problem to the users of English language. Most of these difficulties are faced undoubtedly by users of English as second language. It is hoped that discussing them in this research work will serve the purpose of helping users/teachers become aware of some of these problematic areas and take guidance from the discussion of the acceptable rules as discussed in this research work. Examples are drawn from the magazines, newspapers and write-ups selected for the purpose of this research work.

4.1.1 Non-Explicitness of Post Modification

For the interpretation of postmodifiers, the context is an important determinant. The researcher observed, in line with Quirk et al view, that users seen to have less problem with the finite relative Clause (because of the presence of the explicit tense (is /was). Explicitness is, however, reduced with

the use of nonfinite -ing clause (because of the absence of (is / was) tense and greater still is the non-explicitness with the use of the prepositional phrase from which the verb indicating a specific posture is absent.

Another instance of reduction in explicitness is the use of proform to represent a sentence.

Two of the test items given to subjects were directed at examining how problematic they find this aspect of nominal phrase. In one of these sentences, the non-finite –ing was used while in the other, prepositional phrase was used in which there was no verb indicating specific action.

Eighty- (80) subjects attempted the questions. The result is presented in table 4.1a and 4.1b below.

Table 4.1a Summary of Test Result on Interpretation of non-explicit phrases

Response Type	**No of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Type 1a	15	18.75
Type 1b	28	35.0
Type 1c	37	46.25
Total	80	100

From the table above, the subjects gave three different interpretations to the first statement depending on how they understood. The different interpretations are discussed below. These three different interpretations are classified as 1a, 1b and 1c. Out of the eighty subjects, 15 representing 18.75% interpreted it as 1a, twenty eight representing 35% interpreted it as 1b while 37 representing 46.25% gave type 1c interpretation.

Table 4.1b Summary of Test Result on Interpretation of non-explicit phrases (Item 2)

Response Type	No of Respondents	Percentage
Type 2a	30	37.5
Type 2b	24	30.0
Type 2c	15	18.75
Type 2d	11	13.75
Total	80	100

In response to the second question, 30 students representing 37.5% interpreted the statement as 2a, 24 representing 30% gave 2b type of interpretation to the statement, those that gave type 2c interpretation were 15 representing 18.75% while the remaining 11 representing 13.75% interpreted it as 2d.

Below are the different interpretations given to the two statements.

(1) The students sitting in the classroom saw the thief.

Was interpreted as:

The students sitting, not all those in the classroom saw the thief. (1a)

The students sitting in the classroom and not those sitting outside saw the thief. (1b)

The students were sitting in the classroom when they saw the thief. (1c)

(2) The bicycle man came here this morning.

was interpreted as:

The man riding bicycle came here this morning (2a)

The man who rides a bicycle came here this morning. (2b)

The man who owns a bicycle came here this morning. (2c)

The man on the bicycle came here this morning. **(2d)**

The above result is a confirmation of the fact that the two statements are opened to different interpretations because of the non-explicitness of the post modifier.

4.1.2 Wrong Selection of Determiners for Sub-Classes Of Nouns

One of the difficulties identified and examined in this study, as facing users of English language is the selection of appropriate determiners for each sub-class of noun. It was observed that users seem to have fewer problems with the count nouns, which is in line with what Quirk observed. This, the researcher agrees, is probably because they take all forms of the determiners – the definite (the), the indefinite (a, an) and zero articles. However, the researcher did not fail to examine some of the problems related to other sub-classes of nouns for which users need to make appropriate selection of determiners.

A question in the test conducted was directed at testing subjects' mastery of selection of determiners for non-count nouns for which often a zero article is better. Although on the whole, the number of those who chose the correct answers were more than those whose answers were wrong, it was observed that many of the subjects chose other options different from the zero article. Table 4.2 below presents the result.

Table 4.2 Summary of Test Result on Wrong Selection of Determiners for Sub-Classes of Nouns

Responses	Question 3	Percentage	Question 4	Percentage
Correct answers	48	60	18	22.5
Wrong Answers	32	40	62	77.5
Total	80	100	80	100

Out of the 80 students who answered question 3, 48 representing 60% percent chose the correct option while the rest 32 representing 40% chose wrong options. For question 4, only 18 students representing 22.5% percent chose the correct option while 62 representing 77.5% chose wrong options.

The result shows that most users have difficulty in selecting appropriate determiner for different sub-classes of nouns.

4.1.3 Functional Ambiguity

This aspect was examined by considering the essays written by students. The researcher observed cases of ambiguity, which have to do with functionality especially of verbs in some of the essays. For instance, cases where the subject is not expressed by for.... to and the verb can be used both intransitively and transitively. When the verb is used transitively, there are no semantic restrictions to exclude the antecedent from being interpreted as either subject or object.

The students were given the statement below to interpret.

The referee is the right man *to judge* (12)

The students gave different interpretations to the statement, which shows that they understood it in different ways. The following are some of the interpretations given by the subjects.

The referee is the one who is supposed to judge (12a)

The referee is the person who must be subjected to judgement (12b)

Table 4.3 Summary of Test Result on Interpretation of statement directed at testing functional ambiguity

Response Type	No of Respondents	Percentage
Type 12a	47	58.75
Type 12b	33	41.25
Total	80	100

From table 4.3 above, 47 subjects out of 80 representing 58.75% gave type 12a interpretation while 33 representing 41.25% gave type 12b interpretation.

4.1.4 Wrong Use of Restrictive Modification

Two statements were given to the subjects to which they were required to insert punctuation (specifically commas) if and where necessary. On the whole, 60 cases of deviations were recorded. These deviations were grouped into types a-d in table 4.4 below and the result is shown on the table.

Table 4.4 Errors Recorded on Wrong Use of Restrictive Modification

Type of Error	No of cases recorded	Percentage
(a) Unnecessary use of restrictive clauses	12	20
(b) Wrong use of restrictive clauses with non-nominal antecedents	10	16.7
(c) Use of non-restrictive modifications for non-assertive heads	18	30
(d) Wrong use of non-restrictive modification with non specific determiners	20	33.3
TOTAL	60	100

Twelve (12) representing 20 percent of the 60 cases of error recorded are guilty of the error of unnecessary use of restrictive clauses. 12 representing 16.7 are guilty of error type (b), which is the wrong use of restrictive clauses with non-nominal antecedents while 18 representing 30% are guilty of error type (c) - use of non-restrictive modifications for non-assertive heads. The responses of the rest 20 representing 33.3% are grouped under error type (d) on the table, which is the wrong use of non-restrictive modification with non-specific determiners.

4.1.5 The Genitive Article Related Ambiguity

Two questions were directed at testing the users' mastery and performance on the use of the genitive articles. From the response of the subjects, it appears that only few users at the level examined had problem in this area. Of the two questions attempted by 80 subjects, only one subject selected a wrong option for question 7. On the whole, the general response to those two questions was good.

Other cases of ambiguity that relate to misuse of the genitive article or its confusion with the of-phrase were observed in students' essays and some of the publications examined. Their occurrences are analyzed in table below:

Table 4.5 Other Genitive Article Related Errors

Types of Ambiguity	No of occurrence	Percentage
1. Wrong use of genitive with coordinate determinative noun heads and noun heads with appositive expansion	4	50
2. Use of genitive after postmodifications by finite clause	2	25
3. Wrong use of Post-genitive	2	25
TOTAL	8	100

The total number of errors recorded were eight (8). Four of these which represent 50% have to do with wrong use of genitive with coordinate determinative noun heads and noun heads with appositive expansion. Two representing 25% have to do with the use of genitive after postmodifications by finite clause while the remaining two resulted from wrong use of post-genitives.

4.1.6 Ambiguities Relating to Position and Varied Functional Relationship of Prepositional Phrases

Some cases of ambiguity that have to do with wrong positioning or misuse of prepositional phrases were found in some students' write-ups. Some prepositional phrases used by students can for instance be interpreted as having either appositional or non-appositional meaning.

Table 4.6 **Summary of Errors Relating to Position and Functional Relationship of Prepositional Phrases**

Type of ambiguity	No. of occurrence	Percentage
(1) Non-restrictive form of prepositional phrases	2	33.3
(2) Misplacement of prepositional phrase(s) in a noun phrase	4	66.7
TOTAL	6	100

From the above table, 6 cases of the type 6 error on the general list were recorded in the materials examined. 2 representing 33.3% are related to the use of non-restrictive form of prepositional phrases in noun phrases while 4 representing 66.7% have to do with misplacement of prepositional phrase(s) in a noun phrase.

4.2 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH MULTIPLE POST-MODIFICATIONS

Because of the wide expansion that the noun phrase is opened to, many problems related to ambiguity, discontinuity, and ordering are typical. The researcher examined the subjects with the aim of finding out some of the difficulties they have in handling nominal phrases with multiple post modifications.

4.2.1 Incorrect Ordering of Adjectives

The problem of ordering ranges from the arrangement of single word components in the NP to the arrangement of units. There is a conventional order for individual components of noun phrase for instance adjectives. Where

changes or reordering can be made, the rule guiding such reordering must guide the user to achieve grammaticality and acceptability.

In order to test users' mastery on the ordering of noun phrase elements particularly the arrangements of adjectives, a multiple choice question was given with only one correct option and other incorrect options of the ordering of adjectives. Table below 4.5 below shows the summary of the responses.

Table 4.7 Summary of the performance of subjects on test item on Order of Adjective

Response	No. of Subjects	Percentage
Correct option	19	23.75
Wrong option	61	76.25
Total	80	100

The responses of subjects show that majority of them 61 representing 76.5% do not know the correct order of adjective. Only 19 representing 23.5% got the answers correct.

4.2.2 Ambiguity Resulting from Discontinuity of Noun Phrase

The researcher agrees with the view of Quirk et al (1985), that in most cases, the part usually affected by discontinuity is the post modification of noun phrase and the units often postponed are the appositive clauses. In an attempt to reorder constituents of NP to achieve specific information goal, the resulting statement may be opened to ambiguity.

To test the subjects on this particular aspect, a question which requires them selecting an option with an ungrammatical and unacceptable order among five options with the other four being correct was posed to the students.

The five statements (options) have to do with shifting the position of some elements of a statement with one of the resulting format opened to ambiguity.

Table 4.8 Subjects' Performance on test items Relating to Discontinuity of Noun Phrases

Responses	No of Subjects	Percentage
Correct option	65	81.25
Wrong option	15	18.75
Total	80	100

Out of 80 subjects 65 representing 81.25% were able to detect the statement that is ambiguous. The other 15 representing 18.75% were unable to detect the ambiguity in that one option. They instead selected other options, which are in no way ambiguous.

4.2.3 Gender and Ambiguity of Reference

From the write-ups of students which were analyzed for the purpose of this research, it was observed that some of the students do not really know the appropriate relative pronoun that agrees with a particular noun or noun phrase.

The table below summarizes the number of errors recorded which are gender related.

Table 4.9 Errors Relating to Gender

Type of Error	No. Of Occurrences	Percentage
1. Lack of agreement btween relative pronoun and antecedent	3	37.5
2. Proximity related ambiguity (resulting from too much extension of phrase	5	62.5
Total	8	100

From the table above, eight errors were recorded which relate to this aspect. Three of the errors have to do with lack of agreement between relative pronoun and antecedent while five are proximity-related ambiguities.

It was observed in line with Quirk et al view that conflict in concord and attraction through proximity increases with the distance between the noun phrase head of the subject (when the postmodifier is lengthy). This occurs mainly in unplanned discourse. It is assumed that in edited write-ups or publications, such errors will be reduced as the writer or the editor will notice such error. As such, there are no examples of such errors sighted in the magazines and newspapers examined for the purpose of this research. The cases recorded are from students' essays.

4.2.4 Ambiguity Resulting from Apposition

As pointed out earlier in this research work, certain aspects in apposition (For example, using negative reformation) allow for ambiguity. The ability of students to detect such ambiguity was tested. A statement with negative

reformation that could be interpreted in two ways was given and each subject was required to give two different possible interpretations to the statement.

Question 11 in the test conducted was directed at testing this aspect.

Table 4.10 Summary of Test Result on Item testing Apposition Related Ambiguity

Response	**No of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Correct	24	30
Wrong	56	70
Total	80	100

Out of the 80 students who attempted the test, 56 representing 70% gave interpretations, which indicated that they had complete wrong understanding of the statement while 24 representing 30% interpreted the statement correctly. This is indicative of the fact that the statement is an ambiguous one.

4.2.5 Confusion and Misuse of Plural Attributive Nouns

It is good to point out that the use of attributive nouns in certain instances becomes problematic when in the plural form. This is because attributive nouns are normally number-neutral. Nouns that are plural in postmodification are singular in premodification

For example: decay of teeth ~ tooth decay

Although there was no such error noticed in the write-ups of students, which were examined for the purpose of this study, this does not rule out the fact that it is necessary for the researcher to point this out.

A question was given to examine the subjects on this aspect. The question required the students to select the appropriate option to fill an empty

space in a statement. Table 4.10 below presents the summary of the general response.

Table 4.11 Summary of Test Result on Confusion and Misuse of Plural Attributive Nouns

Response	**No of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Correct option	70	87.75
Wrong option	10	12.25
Total	80	100

Ten representing 12.25 of the 80 students selected a wrong attributive noun while the other 70 representing 87.75 got the answer correct.

NOTE that in expressions denoting age, time, weight, size etc, a hyphen is placed before the singular form.

For example: a girl (who is) five years old ~ a five-year-old-girl

a visit lasting thirty minutes ~ a thirty-minute visit

The use of singular holds even for some nouns that otherwise have no singular form.

For example: a sharpener for scissors ~ a scissors sharpener

a press for trousers ~ a trouser press

However, in quantitative expressions such as the following type, there is possible variation.

a ten day absence (singular)

a ten-day absence (hyphen + singular)

a ten days absence (plural)

a ten days' absence (genitive plural)

The choice of premodifying nouns in the plural rather than the singular should be based on such factors as that an entity has been institutionalized in plural form.

4.2.6 Incorrect Sequence of Premodifiers

In the write-ups of students, some cases of errors of wrong sequence of premodifiers were recorded. Two (2) cases of such errors were recorded in all the essays examined.

A test item was also given to further examine subjects on this area. This item required the choice of an option with the correct ordering of premodifiers with other wrong options. From table 4.11 below 42 representing 52.5% chose the correct option while the rest 38 of 47.5% chose wrong options.

Table 4.12 Summary of Test Result on Ordering of Premodifiers

Response	**No of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Correct options	42	52.5
Wrong options	38	47.5
Total	80	100

This indicates that users need to be acquainted with the rule guiding the arrangement of the premodifiers so as to help them avoid unnecessary errors.

4.2.7 Ambiguity resulting from Multiple Heads

It was observed that the presence of multiple heads in a noun phrase pose difficulties for users. In the test conducted for the purpose of this research, a question was directed at testing the subjects on their understanding of such noun phrases where there is more than one head in a noun phrase. It

was observed that the subjects gave diverse interpretations to the noun phrase depending on how they understood it. Subjects interpretations are classified under combinatory and segregatory interpretations.

Table 4.13 Summary of Test Result on Interpretation of Multiple Heads

Response	**No of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Combinatory Interpretations	44	55.0
Segregatory Interpretation	36	45.0
Total	80	100

From the result presented above 44 representing 55% of the 80 students gave combinatory interpretation to the statement while the remaining 36 of 45% gave segregatory interpretation to the multiple heads.

4.2.8 The Group Genitive Related Ambiguity

Subjects were tested on whether they could easily detect ambiguity in some a noun phrase in which a group genitive is wrongly used. The response of subjects are summarized in table 4.13 below.

Table 4.14 Summary of Test Result on Genitive Related Ambiguity

Response	**No of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Detected error	30	37.5%
Could not detect error	50	62.5%
Total	80	100

It was surprising to note that majority of the respondents did not detect the error in the statement. Only 30 making 37.5% of the total 80 students detected the error while the rest 50 representing 62.5% could not detect the error. This is suggestive of the fact that many users make similar mistakes in speech or writing.

4.2.9 Special Relations between Heads and Modifiers

The researcher also observed some other problems, which are related to coordinator in multiple modification.

Consider such phrases as:

Speech and language impaired children

Grammatically, hyphen will be required after language but it has been omitted since it would entail another one after speech as well.

Speech- and language-impaired children (This type of ellipsis indication is reserved for stiff and technical writing)

In noun phrases involving comparison, ellipsis also results into difficulties.

- For example: *?an equally serious or more serious situation than before*

The above wrongly suggests that we have a possible sequence:

- * *an equally serious situation than before*

Careless ellipsis may also result to such difficulty as:

?the similarity of his houses in Abuja and Kano

A more fully explicit form without ellipsis will help to show what has gone wrong:

The similarity of his house in Abuja to his house in Kano

To avoid misinterpretation, ellipsis must distinguish between identity of lexical items and identity of reference.

4.2.10 Discontinuity between Head and Modifier

Sometimes noun phrases are interrupted by other items of clause structure. For instance the placing of the time adjunct between the head and postmodifier in the following NP.

I met *a lady* this morning riding on a bicycle.

Writers must always be careful as to avoid discontinuity when employing this technique in their writing. It is sometimes advisable, in order to avoid discontinuity, to move the adverbial to initial position (Even though there may be nothing wrong with the above).

This we have:

This morning, I met a lady riding on a bicycle.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Introduction

This Chapter contains the Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations of the study.

5.1 Summary

In this study, the researcher has attempted an analysis of the English nominal phrase in relation to the complexity of its sequence. The choice of Quirk's pattern for analysis is based on the fact that his approach is not only up-to-date but that it also takes care of minute details. Quirk's explanation of the grammatical units has almost left no stone unturned for the purpose of helping users of English language to understand and know how and when to use them.

The researcher has made an attempt in this study to explain and analyze the English Nominal Phrase in a way that users will be able to understand the aspects that sometimes sound unfamiliar or difficult. This has been done with the use of common examples drawn from newspapers and students essays. By so doing, it is expected that this research work will contribute greatly to the understanding of English Nominal Phrase, which is believed to have a great syntactic strength.

For the purpose of easy reference, all the categories of ambiguity and deviations discussed in this study are presented in a master table below.

Table 5.1 List of the different deviations and errors observed in the articles and scripts examined in the study

Ambiguity/ Deviation type No.	Category of Ambiguity
1	Non-explicitness of post modification
2	Wrong Selection of Determiners for Sub-Classes of Nouns
3	Functional Ambiguity
4	Wrong Use of Restrictive Modification
5	The Genitive Article Related Ambiguity
6	Ambiguities Relating to Position and Varied Functional Relationship of Prepositional Phrases
7	Incorrect Ordering of Adjectives
8	Ambiguity Resulting from Discontinuity of Noun Phrase
9	Gender and Ambiguity of Reference
10	Ambiguity Resulting from Apposition
11	Confusion and Misuse of Plural Attributive Nouns
12	Incorrect Sequence of Premodifiers
13	Ambiguity resulting from Multiple Heads
14	The Group Genitive Related Ambiguity
15	Discontinuity between Head and Modifier

5.2 CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the findings of this research work that the English noun phrase is potentially very complex.

In this research work, the researcher has taken time to explain the relationship that exists between types of noun-phrase structure. Such relationship could be simple or complex. When the relationship is complex, users need to be careful in their usage or interpretation. These relationships are sometimes not necessarily complex in the surface but could still pose problem to the hearer or reader.

In writing specifically, users need to take extra care to make sure their readers are not presented with ambiguous statements, which could easily be misinterpreted. This is due to the fact that the paralinguistic signals which accompany speech such as gesture, and could help the hearer interpret some omitted elements and intentions are totally absent in written texts.

Also in speech or informal writings, elements of familiarity between speaker and hearer or writer and speaker play a remarkable role in the interpretation of non-explicit statements. In formal writings, such familiarity does not always exist. Therefore, the writer should be explicit enough in his use of language so as to avoid cases of misinterpretation. This is because reduction in the explicitness in any noun phrase is closely tied to the linguistic and situational context.

From the findings of the researcher, it is good to note that writer must avoid as much as possible discontinuity in their expression so as to guide against misinterpretation.

Most of the difficulties posed by the complexities of the sequence of Nominal phrase have been analysed, and exemplified in this study. Most of the difficulties faced by students at post secondary schools on the usage and interpretation of nominal group have to do with the following:

(1) The selection of certain determiners by different sub-classes of noun, and in particular the choices within the sub-system of ARTICLES in the determiner system;

(2) Pronouns: Gender and ambiguity of reference;

(3) Certain Post-head modifiers (interpretation)

In general, as earlier mentioned, most errors seem to occur as a result of confusion between the various sub-classes of nouns. This confusion is rendered all the worse by the fact that in English, many nouns may occur in both classes with different meaning, but others may not. Thus, by analogy we have the following pairs

A *man* is mortal.

= *Cobra is dangerous (embers)

Man is mortal (mass noun)

On several occasions therefore, one may hear users using a noun in a wrong form as above.

Also, the ranges of terms used by different grammarians in the discussion of nominal group confuse readers. Such terms include among others Nominal Phrase, Noun Phrase, and Noun Clusters.

In addition, the pilling up of various constituents in a noun phrase becomes clumsy and obscure thereby making understanding difficult.

Other confusions are between for example much, and many, a few and a little, and a few and (very) few.

For example *John had many books*

How many sweets did he give me

Not much.

It is hope that much has been said to help users of English language in general to overcome these frequent problems that confront them everyday.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

English speakers are often uncertain about the rules of concord. Prescriptive teaching has insisted rather rigidly on grammatical concord, with the result that people often experience a conflict between this rule and the rule of notional concord, which tends to prevail over it. When the proximity principle is followed in defiance of the other principles, the result is likely to be condemned as an error. Teachers of English language should, therefore, ensure to strike a balance between communicative language use and the recognition of the rules of the language.

Teachers of English language must be aware that the Nominal Group is an important aspect of English and any other language and because of its complex nature, specific attention must be placed on its teaching to help learners overcome the related difficulties.

From the findings of this study, the researcher is of the suggestion that the speakers of English language must avoid ambiguity in their expressions by selecting only one sense in a specific context where the phrase may be open to many interpretations.

In any discourse, there tends to be a progression from 'more explicit' to 'less explicit' expressions. The explicitness of the relationship, which the writer

wishes to draw between THE HEAD of a noun phrase and a post modifier is reduced with the use of nonfinite –ing clause and prepositional phrase. The knowledge of context is, therefore, required in the interpretation of such expressions. However, it should be noted that since the context may not be easily understood in short written texts, the writer will help his readers better by using the more explicit expressions.

This is what happens in the case of whereby "an oil man" can be interpreted in several ways.

A man who sells oil

A Man who delivers oil

A Man who produces oil

A Man who investigates oil

A Man who advocates the use of oil

Under a particular context, only one interpretation is possible.

English speakers whether at the lower or higher level should make use of the 'of-phrase' rather than the 'genitive' to avoid discontinuity in their expressions.

Careful ordering is very important in the element of any language. The researcher therefore, recommends that speakers and writers must have a good knowledge of the correct ordering of the elements of their language and more specifically the English language.

One of the ways in which English language users can avoid clash in meaning is by avoiding the use of personal pronoun in embedded clause in post modification. This knowledge will help both writers and speakers not to construct misleading statements.

Also, the researcher wishes to suggest to speakers that the avoidance of deviant relative clauses will help avoid the problem of double pronomilization.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitation of this study has to do with the number of publications used for analysis. Among the many magazines and newspapers published to the society, only few were examined in this study, as it will be impossible to examine all of them in a single study. Furthermore, most of the publications used for analysis in this study are standard considering the language use and audience. There are other publications, which are of lower standard, which are directed to average and lower language users. It is not impossible that more errors of ambiguity, which is one of the problems this research focuses on, will be more common in such publications.

5.5 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study, like others, provides a foundation for others who may want to undertake further grammatical study of the units of English or other languages. Other fertile areas for research still abound. Similar studies may be carried out to examine user's ability in secondary schools.

Since this research has identified areas that the model used could not handle, a different model could be used for such areas. A systemic functional analysis model and discourse analysis model can be a good area of concentration.

The model used in this research can also be applied to more languages, in order to assist the users and to test the ideal of its universal applicability.

It is also suggested that a contrastive analysis of Quirk's model and other grammatical models be undertaken in order to ascertain the relative effectiveness of his or the other models.

The researcher wish to suggest that as observed by Quirk et al (1985) that higher proportion of noun phrases with complexity are common in scientific writing, more research can be carried out focusing on the use of complex NPs in such field.

Other profitable areas not mentioned could also be explored.

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APPENDIX I

TEST ITEMS GIVEN TO SUBJECTS

Instruction: Answer all the questions below
SECTIO A

1. Make a list of the noun phrases in the passage below and describe the structure of each (i.e. simple or complex).

2. What position does each occupy in the sentence? (subject complement; object complement; indirect object; time adjunct; qualifier etc)

> The Defense Headquarters yesterday alerted the public that criminals could be operating in military uniforms. According to the Defense spokesman, Lt.-Col. Tella, the Army is worried that Soldiers have been implicated in crimes, adding that the public should demand identification from soldiers so as to forestall criminals disguised in uniform from committing crimes. The Defense spokesman said the military has its own way of dealing with soldiers involved in crime. First, he is arrested, tried, convicted, dismissed and then handed over to the police. It is possible soldiers could commit robbery in uniform; but the possibility is there that not everyone in military uniform is a personnel....
>
> "The handing over of the suspected soldiers does not disrupt police investigation. If you get a soldier, get his unit. Report him to the unit and hand him over. You don't just lock him up. You refer to his unit. And if his assumed unit cannot identify him, then he is fake. But if they do, you allow their process to finish before you lock him up."

SECTION B

Re-write the following statements to express in detail what the author intends to say in a way that a primary school child will understand what took place.

3. The students sitting in the classroom saw the thief.

4. The bicycle man came here this morning.

SECTION C

Select the appropriate option to fill the blank space in the statement below.

5. The guests were entertained with _____ at the party (wine, a wine, some wine)

6. The boy demanded for (a water, water, some water) when he woke up.

SECTION D

Insert punctuation mark (commas & full stop) if and where necessary.

7. Any candidate who scores below the cut-off point will now be admitted.

8. The book which he gave me is very useful.

SECTION E

Choose the appropriate option to fill the blank spaces

9. He was happy to drive _____ for the first time.

   (a) his father's car

   (b) the car of his father

10. The students were instructed to draw _____

   (a) the map of Nigeria

   (b) Nigeria's map

SECTION F

11. Which of the options below has the correct ordering

   (a) a heavy red beautiful limousine

   (b) a red heavy beautiful limousine

   (c) a beautiful heavy red limousine

   (d) a red beautiful heavy limousine

   (e) a heavy beautiful red limousine

SECTION G

12. One of the options below is ambiguous or rather not correct. Tick in front of the incorrect option.

    (a) Femi Himself gave me the letter

    (b) Did Femi himself give you the letter?

    (c) I gave Femi the letter himself.

    (d) Femi gave me the letter himself.

SECTION H

13. The following statement is open to more than one interpretation. Give two different possible interpretations to it to bring out the ambiguity.

    Funmilayo, not my best friend, refused the invitation

14. Choose the option that has the correct ordering among a-d below.

    a. an old giant size wooden cupboard

    b. an old wooden giant size cupboard

    c. an old giant wooden size cupboard

    d. an old size wooden giant cupboard

14. Interpret the following statement into detail.

    Tolu took her old and damaged shoes for repairs.

APPENDIX II

Samples of extracts and Sentences

Below is a sample of a short passage used to examine users' understanding and usage of the English Nominal Group.

> The Defense Headquarters yesterday alerted the public that criminals could be operating in military uniforms.
>
> According to the Defense spokesman, Lt.-Col. Tella, the Army is worried that Soldiers have been implicated in crimes, adding that the public should demand identification from soldiers so as to forestall criminals disguised in uniform from committing crimes. The Defense spokesman said the military has its own way of dealing with soldiers involved in crime. First, he is arrested, tried, convicted, dismissed and then handed over to the police. It is possible soldiers could commit robbery in uniform; but the possibility is there that not everyone in military uniform is a personnel. .....
>
> "The handing over of the suspected soldiers does not disrupt police investigation. If you get a soldier, get his unit. Report him to the unit and hand him over. You don't just lock him up. You refer to his unit. And if his assumed unit cannot identify him, then he is fake. But if they do, you allow their process to finish before you lock him up."
>
> (Source: The GUARDIAN, Wednesday, October 21, 1998 p4.)

Instruction to Subjects (Testees):

1. Make a list of the noun phrases in the passage below and describe the structure of each.
2. What position does each occupy in the sentence.

Samples of Sentences from Magazines, Newspapers and Students' Scripts

(1) Admiral Mike Akhigbe, former Chief of General Staff, last week denied claims by Maryam Abacha, the wife of the late dictator, that members of the Provisional Ruling Council, PRC, were hands in glove in atrocities perpetrated by her husband, General Sani Abacha.

(2) Jenkins acknowledges that his findings, presented in early December to a seminar at Georgetown University's Centre for Strategic and International Studies offer little hope of a respite from the current epidemic of assassination, bombing and hijackings.

(3) In March, Aboki Galadima, one of the leading citizens of the town, had complained at a press conference, about the state government's flagrant disregard of the feelings of the indigenes by hurriedly appointing Isa Mohammed as successor to Isa Mohammadu the late Emir.

(4) The election in June this year of a new democratic Civilian President marked the beginning of political independence in Nigeria.

(5) Richard, who is beginning to be considered as one of the world's best coaches was happy to witness his two daughters emerging winners in the hand ball competition of the just completed All Nation Sport.

(6) The Military class which had hijacked state power into its hands since 1966 registered in the basic laws of the country (1979,1985 and 1999) constitutions the order which most corresponds to its interest and that of his collaborate hegemonist. (The Guardian Tuesday June 22, 1999)