VERB PHRASES AND NOUN PHRASES IN ENGLISH:
A PARALLEL APPROACH

LUIS QUEREDA RODRÍGUEZ-NAVARRO
University of Granada

While VPs have always been studied taking into account both their morphologic modifications (tense, mood, aspect, voice, polarity, etc.) and their syntactic complementation (intensive, intransitive, monotransitive, ditransitive and complextransitive), NPs, as far as I know, have not clearly been analysed taking into account this double perspective, since the analyses that have been carried out normally mix up both aspects. In this paper, I intend to show that if we want to understand the way NPs operate and the way they are structured, it is essential to make this distinction clear.

INTRODUCTION

There have been two different analyses for the English VP. One, which has been promoted, among others, by transformational grammarians, includes as elements of this structure both the verb and its complementation. The popular transformational division of the unit Sentence into NP and VP, which actually involves the underlying distinction Subject and Predicate, usually widens the idea of VP to more than one phrase. In TG literature, a VP can, in most cases, be subdivided at least into two more elements, the verb (realised by a VP) and its complement (usually realised by an NP, an AdjP or an AdvP). Some linguists other than TG grammarians recognise this unit, although they distinguish between the VP proper and the VP and its complementation. Huddleston (1984) suggests for this latter unit the term *extended VP*, whereas Allerton (1979) prefers the term *predicate phrase*.

There is a second analysis which restricts the term VP only to the verbal element of the sentence, without paying attention to its possible complementation; that is to say, the term is used to refer to the unit which has also been referred to in other grammars by the name of *verb* or *verbal group*, which is formed by two elements: the Main Verb and the Auxiliary System.

In contrast to general procedure, these two different approaches should be seen as complementary rather than as competing analyses. The first analysis favours what may be called a syntactic approach, the second, a morphologic one; in other words, the first analysis emphasises the external relations of the verb, whereas the second analysis prioritises the internal ones. If we want to understand the functioning of the VP in any language we will have to pay attention to both sides of the coin.

The VP has been extensively studied from these two perspectives: there are many studies which reflect the syntactic approach,[1] but there are also others which reflect the morphologic approach.[2]

The NP, on the contrary, has not been analysed in any of these two aspects in depth and the analyses that have been carried out normally mix up both aspects. But, if we really want to understand the structure of NPs, we have to distinguish the two approaches: On the one hand, the internal structure of NPs (its morphologic structure – the morphologic modifications affecting it); and, on the other, the external structure of NPs (its syntactic structure – the type of complements (complementation) which the NP controls).

The distinction between morphologic and syntactic dependents is basic to the understanding of phrasal structure in English. As has already been pointed out, morphologic dependents represent the internal modification of the Head and their function is to present the semantic content of the Head in different ways. Syntactic dependents represent the external modification of Heads and their function is to give extra information about them. They are external since these elements are not morphologically related to the structure they modify. The morphologic modifications in VPs are related to the verbal categories of tense, mood, polarity, phase, aspect and voice. The mood modification, for example, allows the speaker to present an action as factual (*He is living here*) or as non-factual, as a possibility (*He may be living here*). The morphologic modifications in NPs are related to the nominal category of number and to Determiners, by means of which the speaker can present the content expressed by the noun as +/- plural, +/-definite, +/- specific, +/- generic, +/- quantified, etc., as in *a boy/some boys, this book/any books, three lions/lions*. In contrast, the syntactic modifications of VPs are related to the syntactic categories of Subject, Object, Complements and Adverbials, which are realised by phrases such as NPs, AdjPs,

---

[1] Cf., for example, Francis, Hunston and Manning (1996); Levin (1995); Rudanko (1996); Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985:16.18-16-64); Allerton (1982); Downing and Locke (1992:2-3).

[2] Cf., for example, Quereda (1993), Quirk *et al*. (1985:3-4), Downing and Locke (1992:8-9).

AdvPs, PPs and, sometimes, even by tensed and non-tensed clauses. In the same way, the syntactic modifications of NPs are related to the syntactic categories of Modifiers, Complements and Appositions, which are realised by other phrases – NPs, AdjPs, AdvPs, PPs – and, sometimes, even by tensed and non-tensed clauses. Thus, in the example

My brother has been studying chemistry very hard lately,

the VP *has been studying* is externally and syntactically modified by the Subject (which expresses the agent of the action and is realised by an NP), by the Object (which expresses the goal of the action and is realised by another NP), and by two Adverbials (one expressing the way the action has been done, another expressing its temporal location, both being realised by two AdvPs). In the same way, in the example

Have you heard these dirty and malicious rumours that the couple are on the verge of divorce?

the Object of the sentence is realised by an NP, *these rumours,* which is externally and syntactically modified by a Pre-modifier and a Complement, which complete the meaning of the NP by specifying which was the rumour about and how the speaker valued it. These syntactic modifications are realised by complex structures different from NPs – coordinated AdjPs for the Pre-modifier and a *that*-clause for the Complement.

Although a much fuller investigation needs to be made, I am going to see how we could approach the analysis of NPs taking into account this double perspective. I am going to analyse NPs together with VPs so that we can get a clearer picture of this approach.

MORPHOLOGIC ANALYSIS OF VPS

The internal structure of the VP is the Auxiliary System + the Main Verb. The Main Verb – that is, the Head of the VP – is always realised by a verb, usually lexical, in its base form (*play, run, think*, etc.). The function of the Main Verb is to be the bearer of the semantic content of the VP and to establish the different relations with all the other elements in the sentence. It therefore expresses the core meaning implied by the whole VP. Broadly speaking, it can represent a state (*This table **weigh**s 20 kilos*), an action (*He **jump**ed the wall*), or a process (*The weather is **chang**ing for the better*).

The Auxiliary System – that is, the Dependent element of the VP – is slightly more complex, since it can be realised in different ways:

-   by a zero element with no realisation at all (**Ø + Head**), as in *They **play** football every day*,

- by an inflectional morpheme (**-ed₁ + Head**), as in *They **played** football every day*,

- by an auxiliary verb (**modal verb + Head**), as in *They **may play** football every day*,

- by a combination of auxiliary verbs and inflectional morphemes (**[-ed₁ + may + have -ed₂ + be -ing] + Head**), as in *They **might have been playing** football every day*.

The function of the Auxiliary System in English is to modify the Main Verb. It helps to specify, in a certain way, the general meaning of the Main Verb, introducing a variety of semantic nuances which are related to the verbal categories of tense, mood, polarity, phase, aspect and voice. If there were no Auxiliary System, we would all talk in the typical way people do when they imitate the way Indians are supposed to talk English: "*I eat yesterday", "I eat already", "I not eat tomorrow"*. It is the Auxiliary System that is responsible for these sentences being: *I ate yesterday, I have already eaten* and *I won't eat tomorrow*.

The Auxiliary System is then a complex element formed by the combination of at least six basic binary and non-recursive modifications, which are tense, mood, polarity, phase, aspect and voice. They are binary in the sense that they are all realised by two terms, a marked and an unmarked one (i.e., modal and non-modal, progressive and non-progressive, etc.), and they are non-recursive because there is no possibility of a VP's being marked twice with respect to each modification. These modifications, which have been analysed as constituents of the Auxiliary System, allow English speakers multiple possibilities of modifying the general meaning of the Main Verb grammatically. This can easily be seen if we consider that tensed VPs in English are remote or non-remote, modal or non-modal, negative or non-negative, phased or non-phased, progressive or non-progressive, and passive or non-passive.

But, what is the grammatical relation between these elements? We have to accept that in the existing literature this relation has not been clearly defined. In an example such as:

The police must have been questioning the suspect

questioning has normally been considered the Head, but the relation between *must*, *have* and *been*, between themselves, and also as regards the Head *questioning* has never been very clear. Some analyses, which follow quite traditional approaches, take the 'geographical' approach – i.e., position – to establish that *must* depends on *have*, *have* depends on *been*, and *been* depends on *questioning*. I definitely disagree with this analysis. I think that the English tensed full VP is formed by the combination of the six modifications that form part of the Auxiliary System, and a verb, usually lexical, which functions as the Main Verb. Although most linguists consider tense as an obligatory modification, and mood, polarity, phase, aspect, and voice as optional, all the modifications included

in the Auxiliary System have the same status. Tense is as obligatory or as optional as mood, phase or aspect. Tense, like any other modification, may or may not be explicitly realised in the VP. Thus, in the VP of the following example:

The police always question suspects,

none of the modifications is marked: There is no mark for tense, mood, polarity, phase, aspect or voice. But, although this verb form is clearly unmarked, all the modifications are somehow present in the VP both semantically and functionally. This can easily be proved since this VP means what it means and functions in the context it functions because it is an unmarked form. Although tense is not morphologically marked, it is not difficult to relate the context of this VP to a present habitual situation. Although there is no mark for mood, this sentence is easily recognised as a simple statement. The fact that there is no mark for polarity tells us that the statement is affirmative, etc. If this VP is compared with that of

*Suspects **could not have been being questioned** by the police*,

it can be seen that now the lexical verb *question* is morphologically marked by the six modifications. It is marked by the remote *-ed₁* morpheme, the modal verb *can*, the negative particle *not*, the phase form *have -ed₂*, the progressive form *be -ing*, and the passive *be -ed₂*. But, the fact that this VP has some auxiliary words and inflections that the other does not have does not make it more meaningful. It expresses different nuances of time reference, modality, aspect, etc., but that is all. In any VP, there may or there may not be marks for the different modifications. This does not mean, however, that unmarked VPs have a different structure from marked ones. The structure is always Auxiliary System + Main Verb. The Auxiliary System may have a zero realisation, or may be realised by inflections and/or auxiliary words. But the absence of a modification is as meaningful as its presence. English has a binary system of marked and unmarked forms that combine among themselves to express different shades of meaning. Thus, the difference between VPs such as *question* and *could not have been being questioned* is not that the latter and not the former has tense, mood, polarity, phase, aspect or voice modifications, but that the former is non-remote, non-modal, non-negative, non-phased, non-progressive and non-passive, whereas the latter is remote, modal, negative, phased, progressive and passive.

Therefore, if we want to describe VPs precisely, we must specify the way the six modifications are realised, whether they are realised by their marked or unmarked forms. For example, the VP of a sentence such as *They **had been working** hard* should be analysed as remote, non-modal, non-negative, phased, progressive and non-passive; the VP of the example *I **have had** many chances to do it* as non-remote, non-modal, non-negative, phased, non-progressive and non-passive; and that of *They **might not have been sent** by now* as a remote, modal, negative, phased, non-progressive and passive.

Summing up, the morphological structure of the English full tensed VP should, therefore, be formulated as:

$$[(\text{Ø,-s } / \text{ -ed}_1) \ (\text{Ø } / \text{ modal verb}) \ (\text{Ø } / \text{ not}) \ (\text{Ø } / \text{ have -ed}_2) \ (\text{Ø } / \text{ be -ing}) \ (\text{Ø } / \text{ be -ed}_2)] + \textbf{lexical verb}$$

All the modifications are equally important. None of them plays a more outstanding role than the others. All the modifications modify the Head of the VP at the same level. So they are in a coordination relation: The Head is the Main verb, and the Head is modified by the marked or unmarked form of these modifications.

The order in which these modifications occur is always fixed. Tense is always attached to the first element and Polarity to the first auxiliary, with operator *do* if there is none. The inflectional morphemes present in the phase, aspect and voice modifications are always attached to the following verbal form, and the Main Verb is always the last element in the VP.

MORPHOLOGIC ANALYSIS OF NPS

What are the morphological modifications in the English NP? As I said in the introduction, this is a question that I cannot answer for the time being. But, if we assume an analysis parallel to that presented for the VP, the structure of the NP could be the Determining System + Head.

The Head of the NP is usually realised by a noun (or pronoun) in its base form (*game, boy, lion*, etc.). The function of the Head is to specify the entity that the NP refers to, and it is the element that is responsible for the different relations with all the other elements in the NP and in the sentence. It therefore expresses the core meaning implied by the whole NP. Using Downing and Locke's words, "[t]his is the central element of a NG structure which refers … to a substantive entity experienced as a 'thing', and which is realised typically by a noun or a pronoun" (1992: 408). Broadly speaking, it can refer to concrete entities such as persons (*man, sister, boy*), objects (*table, house, pen*), animals (*cow, tiger, bird*), places (*restaurant, London*), institutions (*government, department*), materials (*iron, glass*), and also to names of actions (*driving, laughter*), relationships (*marriage, oppression*), qualities (*beauty, speed*), emotions (*happiness, joy*), phenomena (*rain, death, luck*), concepts (*justice, truth*), and many other classes of entities.

The Determining System is slightly more complex, since it can be realised in different ways:

- by a zero element with no realisation at all (**Ø + Head**), as in *Oil is very expensive*,

- by an inflectional morpheme (**Head + -s**), as in *Girls are always more open to new ideas*,

- by a determining word (**Determiner + Head**), as in ***That car*** *is very fast*,

- by a combination of a determining word and an inflectional morpheme (**Determiner + Head + -s**), as in ***The boys*** *played football*,

- by a combination of more than one determining word and an inflectional morpheme (**Determiner + Determiner + Head + -s**), as in ***The three critics*** *agreed*,

- and, sometimes, by a phrasal structure and an inflectional morpheme, as in *They caused* ***far too many problems***.

The function of the Determining System in English is to modify the Head of the NP. It helps to specify, in a certain way, the general meaning of the *noun*, introducing a variety of semantic nuances which are related to the noun categories of number, determination, specification, quantification, etc. The Determining System is, then, a complex element formed by the combination of some binary and non-recursive modifications**.** They are binary in the sense that they are all realised by two terms, a marked and an unmarked one (i.e., plural and non-plural, specific and non-specific, generic and non-generic, definite and non-definite, quantified and non-quantified, etc.), and they are non-recursive because there is no possibility of a NP's being marked twice with respect to each modification. These morphologic modifications, which are the constituents of the Determining System, allow English speakers mu ltiple possibilities of modifying the general meaning of the Head grammatically. This can easily be seen if we consider that NPs in English are plural or non‑plural, specific or non‑specific, generic or non‑generic, definite or non‑definite. Compare the following ways in which an English speaker can present the entity designated by BOY: *a boy, the boy, boys, the boys*, *three boys, too many boys*, etc.

This description of the NP, parallel to the one I have offered for the VP, seems to me quite appropriate. But in contrast to that of the VP, this description of the morphologic elements of the English NP is far from complete. And it is incomplete at least in three ways:

(a) We need to know the essential and obligatory semantic features common to all nouns in English.

(b) We need to know the precise elements that form part of the Determining System.

(c) We need to know the grammatical relation obtaining between all the elements constituting the Determining System.

In order to have a complete description of the Determinin g System, we need to know the essential and obligatory semantic features common to all nouns in English, since the realisation of these semantic features will be the morphologic

constituents of the NP, functioning in a similar way to morphologic verb modify-cations. The linguistic evidence on which we should base our hypothesis is that these morphologic elements are dependent elements that do not constitute any grammatical structure by themselves, they are words or inflections, whereas the other types of Modifiers form part of several different structures – AdjPs, NPs, PPs, AdvPs and clauses.

What are the essential and obligatory semantic features that define that "substantive entity experienced as a 'thing'?" Downing and Locke (1992: 403-510), who provide a very comprehensive semantic study of the NP in English, say that when we name a 'thing', we usually add some information about it that shows how we 'experience' language or perceive the 'thing'. The defining, determining and quantifying items of information that are supposed to form the Determining System particularise or select the noun referent from others in the surrounding context. For Downing and Locke, the basic function of Determiners is to particularise and so help to identify the noun referent in the context of the speech situation. Determiners identify a nominal entity by telling us which or what or whose it is, how much, how many, what part or degree of it we are referring to, how big or frequent it is, how it is distributed in space or time. The grammar of English forces NPs to be presented as indefinite, definite or generic. This is done syntactically by the use of specific and non-specific determinatives.

Some of the most important contrasts that we can find in the English NP are the following:

(a) +/- **Plurality**. Entities can be presented as a single unit (-plural) or as more than one entity (+plural): *the book* vs. *the books*, a *book* vs. *some books, this book* vs. *these books*, etc.

(b) **+/- Countability**. Entities can be presented either as an uncountable entity (*peace, love*) or as a countable object (*a book, three birds*). This opposition is reflected in English not only by the distinction of the contrast between singular-plural in countable nouns in contrast to noncount nouns, but also by the use of different determination (*a* vs. *some, zero det* + noun without plural morpheme vs. *zero det* + noun with plural morpheme, etc.).

(c) **+/- Definiteness**. Entities can be presented as definite or indefinite units. Definite reference presents the entity as something that can be somehow identified, either in the text or in the situation or in our common knowledge of the world at large: *the streets of Granada, these houses,* etc. Indefinite reference presents the entity as something that cannot yet be identified as something known to the reader or listener, from anything that has been previously said in the text or from general knowledge: *walking along a street, buy any book*, etc.

(d) **+/-Genericness**. Entities can also be presented in a general, global sense (*I like chocolate/oranges*) or with a concrete reference (*I like this orange/ the books she gave me yesterday*).

(e) **+/-Definite quantification**. The number of entities can be presented with an exact reference (cardinal/ordinals: *seven, two hundred, the second, the last*) or with an inexact reference (indefinites: *many, a lot, a few, some*).

(f) **+/-Distance**. Entities presented as definite can also be presented as being near or not near the speaker in space or time. This specification is proper to demonstratives. They can be presented as realities within the reality of speaker/addressee as in *this book, these reasons*, or as realities outside their present reality as in *that book, those days*.

(g) **+/-Specific selection**. Entities can also be presented as specific (*Put the butter in the fridge; You must decide which method best suits your purpose; the sun; the moon;*), or as non-specific ones (S*he is looking for a nice Spaniard to practise Spanish; The winner will visit all the premises; Use whatever method you can*).

If these are some of the essential and obligatory semantic features common to all nouns in English, what are the precise elements that form part of the Determining System? We certainly have to include the following elements:

(a) Number: realised by the plural morpheme, whichever formal realisation it may take.

(b) Reference: realised by determinatives:

> Articles: *Ø, a, the ...*
> Demonstratives: *this, that, these, those ...*
> Possessives: *his, their, Carmen's, my little sister's ...*
> Relatives: *what, which, whose, whatever ...*

(c) Quantification: realized by determinatives:

Exact:	Determinatives: *both, half, either, every ...*
	Cardinals: *one, two ...*
	Ordinals: *first, second ...*
Non-exact:	Quantifiers: *much, some, any, many, more, most, little, few, what* (*exclamative*) …

To this typical list of determinatives, I should add at least a list of words which have traditionally been classified as adjectives, but which modern descriptions of the English NP are starting to include as Determiners. Downing

and Locke (1992: 440) call them adjectival determinatives, and classify them as follows:

similarity:	*same, identical*
difference:	*other, different*
totality:	*complete, whole, entire, total*
familiarity:	*familiar, well-known, famous, notorious*
usuality:	*odd, regular, usual, normal, customary*
particularity:	*certain, main, particular, chief, original*
uniqueness:	(a) *sole, solitary, only, (the) precise*
	(b) superlative adjectives: *the best, the smallest*

The semantic function of these words is closer to that of Determiners than to that of Modifiers since they have a selective particularising function, whereas Modifiers have a more qualitative function.

If my approach is right, these, together with the Head (*noun*), are the elements that form part of the structure of the NP proper. Obviously, the list that I have presented here has to be discussed in a more detailed way. Words like *different*, *famous, odd, usual* or *well-known* could be excluded, and words like *former* and *latter*, quality partitive constructions such as *a kind of, a sort of, a type of*, or quantity partitive constructions such as *an item of, a piece of, a bit of* could be included.

All the other elements – Pre-modifiers, Post-modifiers, Complements, and Appositions – do not form part of the morphology of the NP. As we will see later on, they form part of the syntax of the NP, that is to say, of its complementation. In the same way as Subjects and Objects do not form part of the VP, Modifiers and Complements do not form part of the NP. Although it is not always easy to establish a clear difference between Determiners and Modifiers (Modifiers and Complements), they are semantically and syntactically different. They differ basically in that:

(a) Semantically, the most significant function of Determiners is to locate the noun in a specific context. This context may be defined according to spatial or temporal coordinates: textually, extra textually, or in terms of the speaker's or the reader's cognitive background. Thus, their function is that of helping to determine the identity of the noun: ***Neither*** *solution was acceptable; Pour them* ***some*** *wine*.

Modifiers are much more descriptive and are used to qualify the noun expressing more information about it. They describe the entity qualitatively (*She was a* ***tall blonde*** *woman,* ***slightly overweight but still handsome***). They help to define, describe and identify the referent of the head noun still further (*Several of the women* ***who spoke in the debate*** *represented trade unions; So Mary had given instructions* ***that he was not to be let in***).

(b) Determiners are much more closely linked to the Head than Modifiers. This means that it is more difficult to move or to remove Determiners than

Modifiers. For example, in the NP *the white rose*, we can move the Modifier *white* or drop it, and the clause will still be grammatically correct. Determiners, on the contrary, cannot normally be moved or deleted:

(i) *The white rose is for you*
The rose is for you
The rose is white
* White rose is for you
* Rose is the

Of course, we can move some Determiners in examples like:

(ii) *This white rose*
The white rose is this

and delete them in examples such as:

(iii) *The/these white roses are very nice*
White roses are very nice

But, there are some important differences in examples in (i) and examples in (ii) and (iii). In (i), the movement of the Modifier *white* changes neither the reference of the noun *rose* nor its meaning. When the Modifier is dropped, we miss some information but we still refer to the same *rose*. In (ii), in contrast, the movement of the Determiner can only be done if another Determiner (*the*) is introduced. This means that we are not really moving the Determiner; what we are moving is the NP, as can be seen in:

The white rose is thi → *The white rose is this on* → *The white rose is this rose*

In (iii), the dropping of the Determiner produces a change of reference: With the determinatives *the/these*, the reference is [+ definite] and [-generic]. If we drop the Determiner, the reference is [-specific], and [+ generic]. So, we are not deleting the Determiner, but changing it. In the first case, we have an NP with a definite specific Determiner, in the second we have a generic NP with a Ø Determiner. This means that the two clauses represent two different examples.

(c) Modifiers accept expansion quite naturally; Determiners, on the contrary, very rarely accept it and, when they do, we normally understand that the Head has been omitted to avoid repetition. Coordination and subordination are more natural in Modifiers than in Determiners: AP and AP, PP though PP (cf. *the Federal Government policy against racial segregation; newspaper advertisement agency employers; fresh Polish pork loin chop instead of lovely English pork back spare ribs; a very lovable, if rather dirty, small boy*).

(d) As I have already said, Modifiers are typically realised by phrases or clauses, and when they are formed with only one word, they should always be analysed as phrases in which only the Head is present. Determiners, on the contrary, are normally realised by words. Compound determinatives (*a few, a little, many a, what a,* etc.) are treated as an indivisible unit, and therefore determinatives such as *a few* should be treated the same as a simple unit like *few*.

The last question I should try to answer to finish this introductory view of the Determining system is the grammatical relation between the different elements conforming the Determining System. Unfortunately, there is not much information about this aspect of English grammar. Here, I am going to comment on two points: (1) Quirk *et al.*'s distinction between predeterminers, central determiners and postdeterminers (1985:253-264), and (2) the existence of certain phrasal structure within the Determining System.

The distinction between pre-, central and post-determiners is a distinction which is set up on the basis of their position in relation to each other: Pre-determiners precede central determiners, which are followed by post-determiners. But this classification can be misleading in a number of ways. In the first place, both predeterminers and postdeterminers very often appear without the need of central determiners, and in a function that is very similar to that of central determiners. Compare:

__All__ activity is generated by the Mind in its normal waking or sleeping state
__All the__ waiters were suave and deferential, but her waiter had an edge

The ground covered by __both__ books is fairly similar
He thought, there'll be reports on __both the__ inquests

The mother had had __three__ children who were living with her
__The three__ children are now attending the local village school

This system led to __many__ problems to be appealing
I will describe the solutions I found to __the many__ problems encountered on the way

Secondly, predeterminers can very often be placed in other positions and their different position does not alter their function in the sentence. Compare:

We carry no weapons, the guns are __all__ in Taymouth Castle
My nephew is an avid reader, and his books __all__ come to me
The boys __all__ liked him
His three children have __all__ made their own way in the world
Past attempts to remove the old leaders have __all__ failed

The friendly owners __both__ speak English
His parents will __both__ cry if he writes that he cannot come home

*These books are **both** related to the exhibition presented at the Musée national d'art moderne*

In the third place, the classification into pre-, central y post-determiners is also misleading because the term *central* is ambiguous since it implies something else apart from position. For position only a term like mid-determiners would have been better. The adjective *central* is very often linked to the idea of the most essential or important part of something (*His ideas became central to modern drama training*; *the central characters in the film*, etc.). And central determiners should not be considered as more important elements than other types of determiners. In fact, as happens with verb modifications, Determiners modify the *noun*-Head at the same level. Every determiner specifies the noun in a specific way, and these specifications are all contextually necessary to the delimitation of the Head. Thus, in

   all the five books

all, the, five and the plural inflection -*s* modify *book* at the same level and each one defines the meaning which *book* has in this NP. *All* gives the idea of totality to the NP and *the five books* form a whole set and every item in this group is included; *the* presents the idea of *book* as definite and specific; *five* adds an idea of quantification giving the exact number of the items included in the group; and, finally, the plural inflection –*s* corroborates the idea of plurality expressed in the determiners *all* and *five*. In this respect, the relation between *all, the, five* and –*s* and *book* is similar to that of *must, have –en, be –ing* and *work* in *must have been working*.

Therefore, I claim that Determiners modify the Head of the phrase at the same level. There is no phrasal structure in the Determining System, or rather, there is no phrasal structure between the different modifications (Determiners) in the Determining System, because I have to admit that there is phrasal structure with certain quantifiers. Some quantifiers accept premodification and form Quantifier phrases:

   [Rather [too many]] students] have failed the exam
   [Almost all] the other boys

Some other Determiners can accept some type of modification, although phrasal structure is not so frequent with Determiners other than quantifiers:

   My [*first ever*] *visit to England*
   ** My **ever** visit to England*
   *My **first** visit to England*

The existence of these examples of phrasal structure does not in any way contradict our hypothesis about the grammatical relations between the elements in the Determining System. Despite the fact that some Determiners may have

modifications, every Determiner modifies the Head at the same level and, as happens with VP modification, we can consider that the relation between the different Determiners is one of coordination. The existence of Quantifier Phrases does, however, contradict our hypothesis about the morphological realisation of elements in the Determining System. Not every Determiner is a word or an inflection. As always happens in grammar, we will have to accept that there is a gradient from pure grammatical elements to some more lexical like. This also happens in the Auxiliary System in which the gradient goes from pure auxiliary verbs to semi-auxiliary, and where catenative verbs, which are sometimes semantically synonymous with auxiliary verbs, have to be considered lexical-like.

SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF VPS

It is nowadays widely accepted (systemic grammar, dependency grammar, case grammar, functional grammar) that sentences revolve around their verb. Of the obligatory elements in a sentence, the main verb is the one that wholly or largely determines what form the rest of the structure will take. This means that, in technical terms, a sentence is a verbal expansion, and the VP is its head, with all the other phrases somehow subordinate to it. Verbs are the words that hold sentences together. Even though it is not difficult to find a verbless sentence, the definition of the unit 'sentence' requires the existence of a verb in every sentence.

On account of this, the unit sentence can be divided into two elements: a Head, which is realised by a VP, and the rest of the dependents. The VP may have more than one dependent. The two most important dependents are the Subject and the Object, which are normally realised by NPs. Apart from their different syntactic function and semantic role, Subjects and Objects differ in their position (Subjects usually complement VPs in pre-position, whereas Objects usually appear in post-position), and in their relation to VPs (Subjects but not Complements control VPs forms, like in ***John likes** Mary/**People like** Mary vs. John likes **Mary**/John likes **people***).

Clauses have been classified taking into account both the type of Subject and the type of complementation their VPs can take. As far as their possible Subjects, or the possible relation between Subject and Complement, clauses have been classified as follows:

- *Impersonal clauses* are clauses whose verbs do not require any participant. In such cases, the Subject function may be assumed by the prop word *it*, which has little or no semantic content. Prop *it* mainly occurs in sentences signifying (a) time (*Maybe it is already too late, it's already midnight*), and (b) atmospheric conditions (*Is it raining? It's freezing down there*).

- *Existential clauses* are clauses with a semantic Subject regularly postponed, and where the Subject position is occupied by an existential *there* (**There** *is no limit to the number of ways to raise money*).

- *Reflexive clauses* are clauses that need an Object (realised by a reflexive pronoun) that is co-referential with the Subject (**Mrs Thatcher** *prides* **herself** *on her reputation as an 'Iron Lady'*).

- *Passive clauses* are those that allow different order of Subjects and Complements with the help of the passive modification (*John gave Mary a book/Mary was given a book/A book was given to Mary*).

- *Ergative clauses* are clauses that can have causative or affected Subjects indistinctly (*John boiled the egg/The egg boiled; John opened the door/ The door opened*).

As regards their possible complementation, verbs have usually been classified according to the number and type of Objects and Complements that follow particular verbs into *intensive* and *extensive* verbs. *Intensive verbs* are those that require a Subject Complement or a Predication Adjunct (*Jane **seemed** restless*; *The kitchen **is** downstairs*). *Extensive verbs* are subclassified into *intransitive* and *transitive*: *Intransitive verbs* are verbs that do not need any Object or Complement. Semantically, only one participant is involved in the action expressed by the verb (*Even after the sun **vanished**, amazement* **continued**). In contrast, *transitive verbs* are verbs that do need some Object or Complement. They can be subclassified according to the number and type of Objects and Complements they can take in as:

- *Monotransitive verbs* are those verbs that take one Object (*I saw <u>your picture</u> in the paper here just last week*);

- *Ditransitive verbs* are those verbs that take two Objects, a Direct and Indirect Object (*Mary sent <u>me</u> <u>a card</u>*) or a Direct and a Predicator Object (*I encouraged <u>the English boy</u> to move in one evening after he had taken me to a pub*);

- *Complextransitive verbs* are those verbs that take one Object and an Object Complement (*Nicole appointed <u>him</u> <u>a fellow of the Shakespeare Institute</u> in 1953*) or an Object and an Adverbial Complement (*Daniel put <u>the book</u> <u>on the table</u>*).

As can be seen, Subjects and Complements (Objects, Subject Complements, Predication Adjuncts and Adverbials) modify and complement the meaning of the verb. In

John has been eating crisps all the morning,

the meaning of EAT is modified by the following elements:

-   the Subject, which specifies the agent of the action (it is John and not any other person who has been eating),

-   the Direct Object, which specifies the patient of the action (it is crisps and not anything else that John has been eating),

-   the Adverbial, which specifies the time when the action took place (it has been all this morning and not yesterday evening).

These modifications are syntactic and external. They are realised by another type of phrases (NPs in our example). They clearly contrast with the way tense and number (-*s*), phase (*have* –en) and aspect (*be –ing*) modify the meaning of EAT, which modify the verb grammatically and internally.

SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF NPS

If VPs and their complementation should be analysed as different structures, we should do the same with NPs and their complementation, since the relation between syntactic modifications and Heads are very similar in both phrases. If we compare the syntactic behaviour of a verb like *decide* and a noun like *decision*, we can see that their complementation is very often the same. Thus, both can take a wh-clause as Object/Complement:

The decision who will proceed to A level will in effect have been taken at the end of the third year → *The Secretary of State for Scotland **decided** who should go to the party*

*And who makes **that decision** where we should go?* → *I **have decided** where I would like to spend our holiday*

Both can take at the same time an agent Subject/an agent Complement, a to-infinitive clause Object/Complement and a time Adverbial/Modifier:

The decision 18 months ago of the Spanish government to impose a ban on South African golfers ... → *The Spanish government **decided** to impose a ban on South African golfers 18 months ago*

*A **decision** by some 3,000 Protestant electors to desert the Ulster Unionist candidate* → *Some 3,000 Protestant electors **decided** to desert the Ulster Unionist candidate*

If the behaviour is the same, their analysis should be the same, and that is why I claim that syntactic modification in NPs is as external and peripheral as

syntactic modification in VPs. The inclusion of syntactic modifications in the NP widens the idea of NP to be more than one phrase. An NP includes in most of the cases other phrases and even clauses either as Modifiers or as Complements.[3] We should remember that the NP is the structure that best represents the status of phrases as units that lie somewhere intermediate between the rank of a clause and that of a word. NPs can normally be considered as an expansion of a word, a bloated word, as in:

[***The implacable justice***] *condemned him* → [***Justice***] *condemned him*

and, sometimes, they may be considered as a contraction of a clause, a shrunken clause, as Quirk *et al*'s example shows (1985:1238):

[*The tall girl standing in the corner who became angry because you knocked over her glass after you waved to her when you entered*] *is* [*Mary Smith*]

where the first NP which functions as Subject is the result of the reduction of the following sentences:

The girl is Mary Smith
The girl is tall
The girl was standing in the corner
You waved to the girl when you entered
The girl became angry because you knocked over her glass

The Head of any NP, besides the defining, determining and quantifying items of information that particularise or select the noun referent from others in the surrounding context, very often requires other elements that describe it in quite a different way. Even though further research needs to be done, syntactic modifications in NPs are usually classified taking into account their position as relation to the Head of the phrase into Premodifiers and Postmodifiers.

Premodifiers may either describe objective qualities (*the small window*) and subjective qualities (*a very interesting proposal*) of the entity itself or may indicate a particular subclass of the referent in question (*aggressive/prey/wild/ harmless/domestic animals*). They usually describe inherent, relatively permanent Attributes of the entity. Premodifiers are usually realised by AdjPs, but they can be realised by other types of phrases and also by clauses:

AdjP: *A very old lady*; *his incredibly rude behaviour*
-i ng / -ed: *His ever-growing ambition*; *very restrained comments*
Clause: *A do-it-yourself kit*; *an it's-nice-to-meet-you smile*
NPs: *The Federal government policy*; *Olympic Games medals*

---

[3] Cf. Francis, Hunston and Manning (1998), de Haan (1989), Fries (1999).

Postmodifiers also help to define, describe and identify the referent of the head noun still further. Postmodifiers are nearly always much longer than Premodifiers, because the kind of information they add is usually more extensive, and they are realised by phrases and clauses which themselves may have other phrases and clauses embedded within them. Postmodifiers are classified into Qualifiers, Complements and Appositions:

Qualifiers:
      Res. rel. clause: *The men **who wear/are wearing white raincoats***
      Non-tensed *-ing* clause: *The men **wearing white raincoats*** (The men who are wearing white raincoats)
      PP: *The men **with white raincoats***   (The men who are wearing white raincoats)
      AdjP: *The men **eager to do it*** (The men who were eager to do it)
      AdvP: *The men **there*** (The men who were there)
      NP: *The election **last May*** (The election that was held last May)

Complements:
      PP: *The destruction **of Rome*** (Someone destroyed Rome)
      Clause: *Her insistence **that we should go***   (She insisted that we should go)
      Non-tensed inf. clause: *Her wish **to win the race*** (She wishes to win the race)
Appositions:
      NP: *The opera **Carmen***
      NP: *Peter, **the bank manager***
      Non-rest. rel. clause: *His theory, **which is really nonsensical**,...*
      Appositive *that-clause*: *His suggestion, **that we should stay calm**,...*

THE ANALYSIS OF SYNTACTIC MODIFICATIONS

If we claim that the NP proper is formed by the Determining System and the Head, how should we analyse the structure that is formed by the NP and its complementation? As was said in the introduction, Huddleston (1984) distinguishes between VP and Extended VP. Following Huddleston's analysis, in an example such as

My brother has been playing football in the morning,

we have to distinguish between the VP, which includes the verb and its morphologic modifications (*has been playing*), and the Extended VP, which includes the VP and its complementation (*has been playing football in the morning*). Since sentences are verb expansions and Subjects form part of VP complementation, it is not necessary to keep the distinction between VP and extended VP. An extended VP is really a Sentence. But I think that we could talk of Extended NP

and NP to make the distinction between the NP proper and the NP and its complementation. In an example like

> *The very monotonous drone of voices was now audible*,

the Subject of the sentence is realised by an Extended NP (*The very monotonous drone of voices*), which is formed by an NP (*The drone*), a Modifier realised by an AdjP (*very monotonous*) and a Complement realised by a PP (*of voices*). In the same way, I think that the useful distinction between main and subordinate clauses, which is normally and successfully applied at sentence level, should also be applied at phrase level and we should distinguish between main and subordinate phrases. A main phrase is one that is a direct constituent of a clause, while subordinate phrases are those that are part of other phrases. Therefore, Extended NPs have a main phrase functioning as Head of the Extended NP and some subordinate phrases which form part of the complementation of the NP proper. In this respect, we can claim that an Extended phrase is that phrase which has as its Head a phrase of the same type.

CONCLUSION

Further investigation is needed in both directions so that we may have a more precise study of noun morphologic categories and a more precise study of the syntactic elements that are involved in the NP. But, I am sure that, if we want to understand the structure and functioning of NPs, this is a possible line of research to follow.

REFERENCES

Allerton, D.J. 1979. *Essentials of grammatical theory. A consensus view of syntax and morphology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Allerton, D.J. 1982. *Valency and the English verb*. New York: Academic Press.

Downing, A. and P. Locke. 1992. *A university course in English grammar.* New York and London: Prentice Hall International.

Francis, G., S. Hunston and E. Manning. 1996. *Collins COBUILD grammar patterns 1: Verb*. London: HarperCollins.

Francis, G., S. Hunston and E. Manning. 1998. *Collins COBUILD grammar patterns 2: Nouns and adjectives*. London: HarperCollins.

Fries, P. 1999. 'Post nominal modifiers in the English noun phrase' in P. Collins and D. Lee (eds). *The clause in English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 93-110.

Haan, P. de. 1989. *Postmodifying clauses in the English noun phrase: A corpus-based study*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Huddleston, R. 1984. *Introduction to English grammar.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Levin, B. 1995. *English verb classes and alternations: A preliminary investigation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Quereda Rodríguez-Navarro, L. 1993. *A morphosyntactic study of the English verb phrase*. Granada: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Granada.

Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G.N. Leech and J. Svartvik. 1985. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.

Rudanko, J. 1996. *Prepositions and complement clauses: A syntactic and semantic study of verbs governing prepositions and complement clauses in present-day English*. New York: State University of New York Press.