



Al-Anbar University

College of Education for Humanities

English Department

Pre-modifiers in English

Written by

Ghufran Abed AL-Monem

Supervised by

Mr. Emad Haif Samir

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1-Abstract:

This paper studies pre-modifiers in English which form a difficulty for EFL students. The researcher tackles this topic because pre-modifiers have many components. These components are clear and easy, except that of adjectives which form an obstacle that faces EFL students .Adjectives are of many types and must be written in specific order, Therefore this study clarifies this order and explains the reasons behind this order.

Key words: syntax, Noun phrase, verb phrase, pre- modifier ,post modifier classification of adjectives, kind of semantic opposition , order of adjectives in English , zone of pre-modifiers.

2-Introduction

This paper presents an explanation of the order of pre-modifier in English nominal phrase. In English each sentence consists of noun phrase and verb phrase. The distinction between these items will be clarified by focusing on noun phrase, because pre-modifier is one component of this item. Noun phrase can be preceded by group of words which are pre-modifiers .The word that follows the head of noun phrase are post-modifier. Pre-modifiers consist of: Restricters ,pre determiners, Determiner, post-determiner, adjectives and Nouns

The difficulty derived from the item of adjective because this item consists of seven categories these categories are : Dimension ,physical property, Human propensity ,color ,age ,value and speed .

The research aims at clarifying the order of these categories talking about each one of them .This paper hypothesizes that there is a difficulty in ordering the adjectives before each head. The post-modifiers with their types will be mentioned briefly.

At the end of the research there are conclusions that this paper arrived at .

3-Noun phrase:

A noun phrase is a phrasal constituent whose head is a noun .NPS in English and most other languages can function as subjects ,primary and secondary objects of prepositions.

Quirk et al (1985, 1238-1350) describe the noun phrase and suggest a noun phrase may have different functions in the sentence, being subject and object. The simplest noun phrase consists of an article and a head. The head may be modified in two ways .It can be pre-modified or post -modified.

According to Stageberg (1981:187) is a component which consists of a noun and word groups which belong to the noun ,the noun itself is called the head word, or head and other words are modifiers of the noun .

Examples:

- The yellow tulips.
- The yellow tulips in the garden.
- The yellow tulips in the garden which where gaily blooming.

Quirk et al (1985:238-239) analyzes the structure of an NP from a functional point of view .As consisting of major components.

They are namely:

1 – The head: It is the main constituent which is preceded and /or followed by other constituent .It usually shows agreement with the other constituent for example:

- The man in the garden is my brother
- The men in the garden are many brothers
- The fat man in the garden who has a black coat is my brother

2 – The determiner

In English, many noun phrases begin with article s (a,an,the) or demonstratives are the most common types of determiner. English quantifiers (some, all, few, ect.) also function as determiners though in some other languages determiners and quantifiers belong to distinct categories.

Determiners typically provide information about definiteness , number (singular vs. plural) and in the case of demonstratives distance from the speaker. In some languages they also indicate other grammatical information such as (case) and (genre).

Determiners do not behave like typical adjuncts, because the choice of determiner is often limited by the grammatical and semantic properties of the head noun.

The determinative also includes three types of determiners which are classified as follow:

1-Pre-determiners: they include all the constructions which can take place before any central determiner in an NP, ex. (all, both, zero article, ect for example

Both those engineers attend the meeting.

2-Central determiners: they include the articles (this, some, etc) for example:

All the teachers know the rules.

3-Post determiners: they include the determiners which follow the central determiners and precede the pre-modifies, e.g numerals many, few, etc

The few old portraits are presented for sale.

4-Verb phrase

According to traditional definition of VPS as a group of verbs which together have the same syntactic function like a single verb for example (is reading ,may be listening ,has written). The structure of the VP in the S with SD is analyzed according to the following parameters; complexity, voice, modality and aspect.

According to stageberg (1981:189) a state that verb phrase can be defined as a group of word that belong with the verb and cluster around it .the verb called the head and complements of the verb "complements of the verb" ex: soon arrives

5-Pre-modifiers

A modifier is a word, phrase or clause which function as an adjectives or an adverb to describe a word or make its meaning more specific .It placed after determiners, but before the head of noun or noun phrase .

-There are many types of pre-modifiers.

A-Adjectives as pre-modifier

B-Participles as pre-modifier

C- Nouns as pre-modifier

D-compounds as pre-modifier

A -Adjectives as pre-modifier

Ex: We had a very pleasant journey this time.

-we booked a spacious room with really comfortable beds.

B –Participles as pre- modifier

Ex: The flying clouds looked like the polished strokes of a gifted artist on a surface of shining blue.

C – Nouns as pre-modifier

Ex: she wanted to buy an air ticket, but no passenger flight was departing on that day finally, she asked for an online booking a device

D – Compounds as pre-modifier

The office has a group of hard –working executives.

Modification in systematic way

A-Sentence Modifiers

A sentence modifier is an adverbial that modifies, as its head, all the rest of the sentence, and is often set a part by terminals,- rising , sustained , or falling .

Ex:Naturally, he behaved at the party.

Here are examples of seven structures in which sentences modifiers are commonly found

1 – Single –word adverbial:

-Luckily, I knew how to swim.

2 – Clause adverbial:

-Since the door was closed, we climbed in the back window.

3 – Prepositional phrase:

-In fact, the contract invalid.

4 – Absolute structure

-The guests having departed, we resumed the normal household routine.

5 – Infinitive phrase

-To keep dry in a tent, you should be provided with a fly.

6 – Participial phrase in -ing :

-Considering the circumstances, he has lucky to escape alive.

7 – Relative in –ever:

- Wherever she is, I will find her.

B – The noun phrase: pre-nominal modifiers

The noun phrase consists of a noun head together with all the modifiers that accompany it, before and after.

Ex: All many old school friends of other days who have passed away.

C. The noun phrase: prenominal modifiers

Modifiers of the noun head word may be placed after the head word, as well as before it.

1 – The apartment downstairs.

2 – The apartment, large and empty.

3 – The apartment, spotlessly clean.

Forms of post nominal modifiers

1 – Modified adjective: a bare adjective modifying a noun often occurs in the pre nominal position, but an adjective in the post nominal position is usually modified by a qualifier.

- The mail man, exuberantly happy, whistled merrily.

- He had never seen a woman more lovely.

2 – Compounded adjectives: when two or more adjectives modify a noun, they can occur after the noun

- The mail man, weary and wet, trudged along in the rain.

- A woman old and gaunt stood at the door.

3 – Uninflected word: nouns may be modified by some of the uninflected words that are often adverbial

- The people upstairs

- The poker game now

4 – Adverb: An adverb may modify a noun that precedes it.

- The blue dress particularly

5 – Noun phrase Adjectival: A noun phrase may modify a preceding noun

-The party last night

-Our vacation next summer

6 – Prepositional phrase adjectival

-The bend in the river

7 – Participle or participial, ing , Adjectival

-The woman weeping was escorted to the door

8 – Participle or participial phrase, -ed adjectival

-They refused to pay the money demanded

9 – Infinitive phrase Adjectival, to ----

-I have a lesson to study

10 – Relative clause adjectival: a noun may be modified by a relative clause.

-The trees that had mistletoe were half dead

11 – Appositive adjectival: the final post nominal modifier that we shall study is the appositive.

- A college newspaper

5-Post modifiers

A noun that can be modified by other words often (adjectives) placed after the noun head.

There are many types of post modifiers:

1 – Relatives clauses:

Ex: the parent wanted to meet the boy who was going but with their daughter.

2 – Prepositional phrases

-A nice young woman in jeans was watching me.

3 – Non-finite clauses equivalent to relative clauses

-They wanted to meet the boy going out with their daughter.

6-Classification of adjectives:

What are the kinds of adjectives?

Dixon(1982:34) Adjective as a part of speech can be classified into seven kinds. This division is based on semantic, syntactic and morphological criteria these types are;

Dimension: The most common adjectives of this type are ; small ,long ,short ,fat .

Physical property: This category implies many adjectives such as hard, soft, hot, Small, Heavy.

Human propensity: this type contains many adjectives such as jealous, kind, happy, ect.

Color: The adjectives of this category are limited and clear such as black white red, ect.

Age: The most common adjectives are Old, New, Young.

Value: It include adjectives such as good, bad, fine.

Speed: This type of adjectives contains a limited number of adjectives the most common of them are fast, slow and quick.

7-Kind of semantic opposition

Lyons (1968:460-470) distinguishes three kinds of semantic opposition which are antonym ,complementarity ,Conversions .The first two of these kinds of opposition are antonym and complementarity .In the second component the denial of one term indicates the assertion of the other such as single and married .whereas complements provide absolute descriptions antonym pairs –such as large and small are always relative to some implicit norm . For instance the small elephant is large. The animal is small with respect to the elephant norm, but large with respect to some wider norm.

While antonym pairs occur in comparative constructions establishing a converse relation .for instance if 'A' is smaller than 'B' then it can be said that 'B' is larger than 'A'

According to Dixon (1982 :19) the dimension pairs show one clearly unmarked member , the variation of marking for physical property with antonym pair occupies high rank .this means that "hot " un marked with "cold " and" rough "unmarked with "smooth "

Also unmarked members of dimension pairs can occur with measure phrases ,while this characteristic can not be used with physical property .

According to berlin and kay (1969) as cited in Dixon (1982:19) clarifies the color adjectives are part of a complement . It includes eleven basic color terms with various hyponyms. Color term have different meanings when they come in comparative forms. This means that if the speaker says X is redder than Y he does not mean that Y is bluer, yellower than X .Y is redder than Y is said in cases where both of them are red, but with difference in the degree of brightness.

According to Lyons (1986: 465) the adjectives of dimension, position, and physical property can occur in antonym pairs.

There is difference between "How long is the stick" and "How short is the stick: the first sentence does not imply anything about the sticks length while the second carries an explicit expectation that the stick is fairly short .The unmarked member is used with neutral questions that do not have any particular presupposition. This permits us to ask this question .what is the length of the rode? It won't fit it because of its great length. The matter is different with" shortness" which is used to indicate a polar value.

8-Order of adjectives in English:

Dixon (1982:212) Discusses the order of adjectives by excluding several groups, such as those a "deep noun". He notes that there are other pre- modifier that follow adjectives those of "origin and composition " precede those of purpose and beneficiary "as in "oatmeal dog food "

For adjectives so defined, there is "a single preferred "left-to-right " ordering (1982:24).

Table (1) shows the order of pre-modifier in English

Restricter	Pre-determiner	Determiner	Post-determiner	Adjectives	Noun	Noun head
Examples	Examples	Articles	Cardinal number	Good Bad	Door school	
Especially	All	A ,an ,the	Ordinal number			
Just	Both	Possessive pronoun				
Merely	Half	Possessive of Names				
Nearly	Double	Demonstrative				
Even						
Almost						

A speaker can change the order if he feels that the qualities denoted from an unusual combination, for example "new slow "means "new but slow "

According to Quirk et al (1985: 60), based the account of pre-modifier is based on the results of the survey of English usage.

He set out four positional classes of pre-modifier: zone 1 (pre central) zone 2(central), zone 3 (post central) and zone 4 (pre-head) .

According to Biber et al (1999:598), pre modifier order is influenced primarily by part of speech, there are three positions in the order ,the following order of pre modifier preferred: Adverb+ color adjective+ participle +noun +head noun

According to British organization for cultural relations and British council based on the semantic categories of the adjectives, English adjectives follow this order:

1 – General opinion

2 – Specific opinion

3 – Size

4 – Shape

5 – Age

6 – Color

7 – Origin (nationality)

8 – Material (noun)

Rosato(2015:16) presents a modification to the previous analysis as shown below :

1 – Scope –talking (take all adjectives) ex: Nice, former alleged.

2 – Size.

Ex: big, Fat, tall, short.

3 – Quality

Ex: Beautiful, Ugly,Silly.

4 – Age

Ex: Old, new

5 – Shape

Ex: Square, round, rectangular.

6 – Color

7 – Origin

8 – Material

Cinque (1994:90) states that other adjectives which are called "operators" behave similarly to adjectives such as "nice". These adjectives include "former" and "alleged". They move more freely within a multiple –adjective NP.

For example :

1- the nice big short Indian bus 2- the big nice short Indian bus 3- the big short nice Indian bus .these phrase are samples of this kind "nice " in the first sentence modifies not just the bus ,but also all of its other adjectives that come after it .

9-Zones of pre-modifiers

There are four zones of pre-modifiers, asserted originally by Quirk et al (1985) and further treated by Fiest (2012). Therefore, when conducting deep structure analysis of nominal phrase pre-modifiers in English language .there are four zones that control the order of pre-modifier, and they are known as the following:

1 –**The classifier zones** (the pre head zones)

-The actual military grade fully automatic assault rifle

2 –**The descriptor zone** (the post central zone) the zone situated right before the last pre-modifier which precedes the actual head word.

-The actual military grade fully automatic assault rifle.

3 – **The epithet zone** (the central zone) is the zone of pre-modifiers which has two other pre-modifiers between it and the head word.

-The actual military grade fully automatic assault rifle.

4 – **The reinforce zone** (pre-central zone) it is zone that is the farthest from the head word from the noun head and it is preceded only by a determiner

-The actual military grade fully automatic assault rifle.

10-Conclusions

Pre-modifier is a subject that forms a difficulty that faces Iraqi students because the category of this item consists of many items. These combinations are easy to acquire or learn except the item of adjectives because this category consists of seven items and each one of them has its own order. The problem is that Iraqi learners don't have an idea of this order .Therefore this research is presented to tackle this problem. The adjectives must be written according to the principle of the arrangement of adjectives.

Following this principle students can re-arranged or write the adjectives in a correct order .The order of these adjectives according to this principle is as follows: Dimension, Physical Property, ,color ,Human propensity ,Age ,Value ,Speed .

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