

Nouns and Noun Groups

Definition of Noun Group and Noun

A noun group is a linguistic sequence which may function as subject, object, subject complement, complement of a preposition or in a PossG structure, or as dependent element of another noun head.

The Nouns are the heads in the structure of a NG.

They have the following properties:

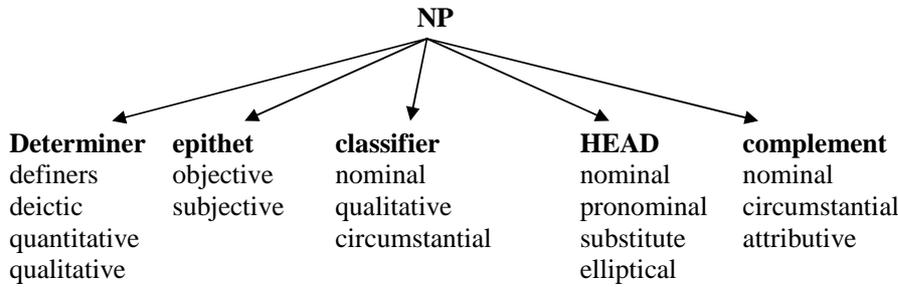
- a) Typical nouns refer semantically to those aspects of our experience which we perceive as “things” or “entities”: concrete entities, names of actions, relationships, emotions, qualities, phenomena and many other classes of entities.
- b) The categories of number, gender and case are generically applied to nouns.
- c) The distinctive dependents are: determinatives, AdjGs, NGs, PGs, PossG and clauses.

Pronouns are also nouns, sometimes even being used to stand in place of a whole NP.

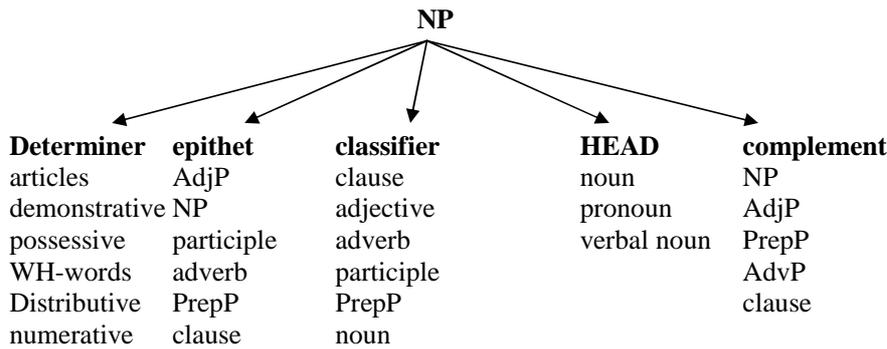
Sometimes no noun is present in the NG and the head element is realised by a word expressing one of its attributes as in “*the poor*” or an *-ing* form

Non-elliptical noun groups, then, have a noun as a headword and may optionally have other elements dependently related to it and placed before and/or after it: pre-head and post-head dependent elements.

In fact, we describe the structure of the English NG in terms of four basic elements: **Head, determiner, modifier (epithet and classifier) and complement.**



Not all the elements occur in every NP. These functions must be realised by particular linguistic forms, such as the ones in the diagram.



If we combine these choices, the structure of a NP is describable, in abstract, on two separate levels of analysis, though in communication they are realised simultaneously and in combination.

Text:	that	short	summer	course	we attended
Function:	Determiner	Epithet	Classifier	HEAD	Complement
Class of unit:	Demonstrative	Adjective	Noun	Noun	Rel. Clause

The correct expression and understanding of a NP depends not only on the semantic information conveyed by its elements, but on the syntactic relations between the elements.

Between the head of a NP and the other elements there is one basic logical relationship: that of subordination.

1. Pre-head dependents

1.1. Determiners

They are used to identify a headword functioning deictically or simply as quantifiers, that is, they serve as definite or indefinite reference or to give information about quantity and proportion.

There are five main kinds of determiners:

1. the *articles* a (an) and the;
2. the *demonstratives*;
3. the *possessives* and *PossG*;
4. the *numerals* and
5. the *indefinite* determiners.

Many of these determiners can be pronouns.

A NG may have none, one, two or up to three determiners.

Scheme of the English Noun Group

Pre-determiner	Central determiner	Post-determiner	Modifier	Head	Complement
<i>all</i>	<i>a/an</i>	<i>one, two,...</i>	- Adjectives	- Nouns	- some
<i>both</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>first,</i>	- Nouns	- Clauses	adjectives
<i>double</i>	<i>this, that,...</i>	<i>second,...</i>			- NGs
<i>such</i>	<i>my, your,</i>	<i>next</i>			- PGs
<i>what</i>	<i>his,...</i>	<i>last</i>			- Clauses
<i>half</i>	<i>every</i>	<i>past</i>			
<i>two-fifths</i>	<i>each</i>	<i>further</i>			
	<i>no</i>	<i>many</i>			
	<i>some</i>	<i>(a) few</i>			
	<i>any</i>	<i>several</i>			
	<i>enough</i>	<i>more</i>			
	<i>either</i>	<i>much</i>			
	<i>neither</i>	<i>little</i>			
	<i>what</i>	<i>plenty of</i>			
	<i>whose</i>	<i>loads of</i>			
	<i>which</i>				
	<i>wh + ever</i>				
	<i>Peter's</i>				

Many of the determiners are mutually exclusive as only one of them can appear in a noun group. Thus, definite and indefinite articles are mutually exclusive. Pre-determiners cannot appear together either, nor can ordinals and quantifiers.

1.2. Modifiers

The main function of a modifier is to describe a headword. So a modifier is an element that depends on the head. It is a “one-way dependency”.

Adjectives are the most common modifiers in English. However, adjectives may have their own modifiers as in “*a definitely necessary person*”.

Determiners precede modifiers except when the modifier is preceded by *how, so, too* as in “*so fine a story!*”

It is also frequent in English the modification of a noun by another noun, as in *the brick wall*.

The possessive determiner can also be realised as a possessive group (PossG) as in “*the boy’s parents are in Canada*”.

This PossG or genitive takes the sentence position normally occupied by determiners. However, a PossG may also function as a modifier: Contrast these two examples: “*the young Mozart’s symphony*” and “*a disabled children’s hospital*”

About the analysis of the PossG, if we consider that possessive ‘s is similar to *of* in “*the house of Peter*”, then the ‘s must be treated as a head.

2. Complements

Complements are also dependent elements of a head. A complement expands the semantic contents of the noun.

In English adjectives are not so common in post-head complementation as in pre-head modification.

However, the indefinite pronouns (*somebody, everybody...*) accept post-complementation. *Present, proper* and some adjectives ending in *-able* and *-ible* have different connotations when used predicatively, as in “*the present members*” and “*the members present*”. In the same way, a few a-adjectives (*available, ablaze, afloat, absent, etc.*) and *concerned* and *involved* do not strictly occur attributively (pre-head modification).

In broad terms, complementation may be realised by an adjective or AdjG, a noun or NG, a PG and a finite or non-finite subordinate clause.

There is another question: the relative order of the elements of a NP. Why is the canonical order as follows?

(Determiner) + (epithet) + (classifier) + HEAD + (complement)
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The reason is that the closest intrinsic relationship is that between the head and the classifier, that is why this is placed immediately before the head as in *Persian rugs* or *radio programme*.

The next degree of permanence is that of the inherent modifier, the epithet, as in *beautiful Persian rugs*.

If the NG also contains a determiner this is placed before the epithet. Such is the unmarked order from right to left, from most permanent to least permanent features, which yields:

A large oil tanker not **an oil large tanker*
A wonderful patriotic speech not **a patriotic wonderful speech*.

In everyday forms of social communication people tend to use uncomplicated NGs, whose logical order of elements cannot be changed:

*I've just had a dental operation and am trying to catch up with my Christmas cards.
Hard, since we're frantically busy with work at the office.*

In contrast to these examples of simple structures, any element of a NG can be realised recursively, and generate expressions such as:

Recursive determiner: *all those six other animals*

The logical order of determiners is that of pre-central (partitive) determiners + central determiners (articles, possessives, demonstratives) + post-central determiners (numerals)

Recursive epithet: *long, uninteresting and very difficult texts*

The normal sequence contains no more than two epithets, though a longer sequence is possible. They can be coordinated asyndetically or syndetically with *and*, *or*, *but* or *yet*. There is a tendency for subjective, attitudinal adjectives to precede objective, qualitative ones. Some other sequences have been mentioned:

- 1) Deverbal before denominal: *an attractive, ambitious woman*
- 2) Size, age, shape and colour: *a large, modern, rectangular, black box*.
- 3) Short before long adjectives: *a small, pretty, well-kept garden*.
- 4) Well-known before less common adjectives: *a peculiar antediluvian monster*.
- 5) Dynamic adjectives at the end: *a sudden, loud, ear-splitting crash*.

This preferred order is motivated by the end-weight principle and by the speaker's desire to emphasise his attitude to the quality rather than the quality itself.

Recursive classifier: *an east European trade department official*

Classification proceeds leftwards from general to specific. Sometimes there is left-branching subordination, as in *newspaper advertisement agency employees*.

Recursive complement: *nothing very interesting to report*

In general, more information is expressed by the complement of a NG than by the pre-head elements. This is due to its realisation by groups and clauses more than by words and by its greater facility for expansion by different units. The relationship between these units can be coordinated or subordinated.

There is also a preferred order for complements:

- 1) Appositions immediately after the head.
- 2) The longer units are placed last.
- 3) The emphasised units are placed last.

Functions of the Nominal Group

In clauses, NGs can realise any structural element except the Predicator. They can be inserted in PrepGs as complements of the preposition and in NGs as modifiers or complements of the head element.

NGs as clause elements

- S:** The best player available was a Spaniard
- Od:** The committee engaged the best player available.
- Oi:** They offered the best player available a high salary.
- Cs:** Tom Smith seemed to be the best player available.
- Co:** Everybody considered him the best player available.
- A:** He signed the contract last week.

NGs as group elements

- Complements of a preposition: They paid a high price for the best player available.
- Modifier of a noun: The best-player topic was not present at the meeting.
- Complement of a noun: Jack Wilkins, the golf player, earns a high salary.

The potential complexity of the NG structure, combined with its functional flexibility and frequency of occurrence, makes this class of unit the most important class of structure at phrase level.

The ideas of mass, countable, indefinite and definite.

The system of countability

In English, when we use a NG, the language obliges us to make it clear whether the referent is perceived as a discrete, **countable entity**, either one or more than one, or as an indivisible, non-countable, **mass entity**.

The count/mass distinction is expressed in English by morphological and syntactic means.

First method: denoting a mass entity by a given word such as **travel** or **rain** or **food**, and an associated count entity or phenomenon by a different word, such as **journey**, **shower** or **meal** respectively. The mass or count feature is at the same time reinforced by the fact that each of the two classes of noun is used in different sets of syntactic or morphological patterns, which are mutually exclusive:

We made a journey vs. *We made a travel.

Travel broadens the mind vs. *Journey broadens the mind.

A second way of marking the mass/count contrast is purely grammatical. By definition, the **semantic notion of countability correlates with the grammatical category of number**. Count nouns refer to things which are perceived as “one” or “more than one”, and are represented linguistically by the formal singular/plural contrast.

Grammatical markers of uncount NGs:

1. The singular form of the noun with zero determiner: I always take coffee with milk.
2. The singular form of the noun preceded by all: I say this in all sincerity.
3. The singular form of the noun quantified by much, little, a little: There isn't much room in our apartment.

Grammatical markers of count NGs:

1. The singular form of the noun preceded by a(n): I'm looking for a new job.
2. The singular form of the noun determined by each or every: Each day is different.
3. With number contrast marked on the noun: lion/lions.
4. Invariable or plural form of the noun preceded by a plural determiner: few opportunities, these aircraft, those sheep, several series.
5. Plural number concord with the verb or pronoun: People like to be happy, don't they?

The system of definiteness

In English, the grammar obliges the NGs to be presented as **indefinite**, **definite** or **generic**.

An entity is considered as “indefinite” if there is nothing in the discourse or the situation or our general knowledge of the world which identifies it for us. If an entity is “definite”, this

entity can be identified within the text (endophorically) or outside the text, in the situation of from general knowledge (exophorically).

Definite nouns = given information.

Indefinite nouns = new information (not known to the addressee).

The system of definiteness is expressed syntactically by the use of specific and non-specific determiners, in particular, by the **definite, indefinite and zero articles**.

	Mass or Uncount	Singular count	Plural count
Definite	The butter	The man	The men
Indefinite	- butter some butter	A man	- men some men

Generic NGs refer to entities as representatives of their whole class, in abstract statements about their typical characteristics or habitual activities.

Each of the articles can also be used when we wish to make a generic statement about a whole class of entities, but they express genericity from different points of view:

- 1) a(n) + singular count noun: *They say an elephant never forgets.*
 - a) Any individual member of a class of entity as typical of the whole class.
- 2) The + singular count noun: *They say the elephant never forgets.*
 - a) The referent of a noun as a single undifferentiated whole class of entities.
- 3) Zero + plural count/mass noun: *They say elephants never forget / charity begins at home.*
 - a) All or most members of the class of entity possess the characteristic that is predicated of it.

These structures are not freely interchangeable in all generic statements. For instance, the generic use of “the” and “a” is formal in style. The loosest and therefore most frequent type of genericity is that expressed by the zero article with plural nouns.

Singular count nouns are not normally presented as generic with the zero article. The following, however, are sometimes used with zero to denote common activities or phenomena associated with the count noun:

Places: *He’s in hospital.*

Times: *I like driving at night.*

Meals: *Breakfast is my favourite meal.*

Transport: *Let’s go by plane*

Set phrases: *arm-in-arm, side-by-side, face-to-face.*

Number

The grammatical category of number requires that every noun should be understood either as "singular" or "plural" to participate in subject-verb concord and pronominal reference.

So, **singular** means:

1. The quantity "one" for count nouns: *This suit fits me and I'll buy it.*
2. The unique referent for most proper nouns: *Tokyo was full of tourists when I visited it.*
3. Undifferentiated mass for uncount nouns: *The milk was sour and I bought it only yesterday.*

And **plural** means;

1. The quantity "two or more" for count nouns: *Three students are hoping you will see them.*
2. The unique referent for some proper nouns: *The Azores are administered by Portugal but they are nearly a thousand miles away.*
3. Individual operational units with plural composition: *I thought my binoculars were in this drawer but I can't find them.*

So, number is not only a morphological modification of the noun, but a purely morphosyntactic and even semantic category.

Plural formation

The vast majority of English nouns are count, with separate singular and plural forms. The singular is the unmarked form and plurals are formed in a regular and predictable way:

a. in SOUND:

- Add /iz/ if the singular ends with a sibilant as in *horse, blush, church, prize, mirage* or *language*.
- Add /z/ if the singular ends with a vowel or with a voiced consonant other than a sibilant as in *day* or *bed*.
- Add /s/ if the singular ends with a voiceless consonant other than a sibilant as in *cat* or *cap*.

b. in SPELLING:

Normally we simply add *-s* to the singular as in *horses* or *prizes*. But the *-s* rule requires some amplification and modification for many nouns:

- i. If the singular ends with a sibilant the plural ending is *-es* as in *boxes, bushes* or *switches*.
- ii. If the singular ends with *-y* this is replaced by *-i-* and the plural ending is then *"-ies"*. But *-y* remains if it is preceded by a vowel or if it is a proper noun: *days, boys, the two Germanys*.
- iii. Some nouns which end with *-o* add *-es* in the plural: *echoes, embargoes, heroes, potatoes, tomatoes, torpedoes, vetoes*, and in a few cases there is variation as in *buffalo(e)s, cargo(e)s, halo(e)s, motto(e)s, volcano(e)s*.

Comentario [T&M1]: Latin

Comentario [T&M2]: spanish

Comentario [T&M3]: latin

Comentario [T&M4]: spanish

Comentario [T&M5]: spanish

Comentario [T&M6]: latin

Comentario [T&M7]: latin

Irregular plural formation

Voicing

Several singular endings turn their voiceless consonants into voiced consonants. There are three consonants which undergo voicing in this way: /s/, /f/ and /θ/ but only the voicing of /f/ is reflected in spelling.

Some examples:

house → /haus/ — /hauzɪz/

knife/knives → /naɪf/ — /naɪvz/

mouth → /mauθ/ — /mauðz/

Other words with irregular plural formation:

Like *knife* and *calf, half, leaf, life, loaf, self, shelf, thief, wife, wolf*.

Like *mouth* and *bath, oath, path, sheath, truth, wreath, youth*.

Vowel change

In a small number of nouns there is a change of vowel sound and spelling; they are called "mutation plurals":

Foot → feet

Louse → lice

Mouse → mice

Goose → geese

Man → men

Woman → women

Tooth → teeth

Zero plural

Words for some animals

The nouns *sheep, deer* or *cod*, while being unquestionably count, have no difference in form between singular and plural:

This sheep has just had a lamb.

These sheep have just had lambs.

Nouns referring to some other animals, birds and fishes can have zero plurals, especially when viewed as prey:

They shot two reindeer.

The woodcock/pheasant/herring/trout/salmon/fish are not very plentiful this year.

Nouns of quantity

There is a strong tendency for units of number, of length, of value and of weight to have zero plural when premodified by another quantitative word (e.g. determiners):

How many people live there? About three dozen/Several hundred/More than five thousand/Almost four million.

Foreign plurals

Many nouns adopted from foreign languages, especially Latin and Greek, retain the foreign inflection for plural. In some cases there are two plurals, an English regular form being used in non-technical discourse.

- a. Nouns in *-us* with plural *-i* /ai/: *stimulus focus alumnus*
- c. Nouns in *-us* with plural *-a* (only in technical use): *corpus - corpora*
- d. Nouns in *-a* with plural *-ae* /i:/: *antenna formula*
- e. Nouns in *-ex, -ix* with plural *-ices* /isi:z/: *appendix index matrix*
- f. Nouns in *-is* with plural *-es* /i:z/: *analysis, basis, crisis, hypothesis, synopsis, thesis.*
- g. Nouns in *-on* with plural *-a*: *criterion phenomenon automaton.*

Nouns resistant to number contrast

Whether or not with inflectional regularity, number essentially involves the distinction between one and more than one. But as we noted above, there are singular nouns that cannot ordinarily be plural (e.g.: *meat*) and plural nouns that cannot ordinarily be singular (e.g.: *binoculars*).

Ordinarily singular

- ❖ Proper nouns: *London*.
- ❖ Uncount nouns: *cheese, solidarity*.
 - Abstract nouns in the plural indicate examples of the phenomenon concerned as in "*many injustices*"
- ❖ The noun *news* and certain other items ending in *-s*: *acoustics, physics, mumps, shingles, billiards, dominoes, fives*.
- ❖ Collective nouns such as *committee, council, government, team*.

Ordinarily plural

- ❖ Binary nouns which refer to entities with two parts: *binoculars, forceps, scissors, jeans, pants, trousers*.
- ❖ Aggregate nouns which refer to entities with an indefinite number of parts: *communications, data, goods, media, remains, troops*.
 - Many aggregate nouns are not plural in form, but concordance reveals their number: *cattle, people, police, offspring*.

Determiners

Common nouns in the dictionary refer to classes of things, but when used in discourse they need to be particularised. This is done by the first element of the NG, called the determiner. The basic function of this element is **to particularise and so help to identify the noun** referent in the context of the speech situation.

Remember that **determiners are an element of the clause structure; determinatives are the class of units that realise that element.**

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 following table summarises the three broad types of determination by which referent things can be particularised in English.

1. Partition	2. Deixis	3. Quantity
Fractional: half, a quarter, etc. Multiplying: double, treble, twice, three times, etc.	Definite: The Indefinite: a(n), some. Specific: this,...; my,...; PossP; wh-words, such. Non-specific: some, any, no, each, every, either, neither, all, both. Exclamatory: what (a)...!such (a)...	Cardinal: ten, two hundred, a dozen, a score,... Ordinal: first, second,... Non-exact: much, little, many, few, less, more, most, several, enough, some

Specific deictic determinatives

1) Demonstratives: *this, that, these, those*.

- a) These items particularise the noun referent by indicating whether it is **near or not** near the speaker, **in space or time or psychologically**.

2) Genitive determinatives

- a) **PossP**: In fact, it must be understood in a broader sense than that of the traditional term “possessive” as it can indicate **a subjective relation** (*Napoleon’s army*), an **objective relation** (*Napoleon’s defeat*), **a locative relation** (*Europe’s chief cities*), **an extent relation** (*A month’s holiday*), **a source relation** (the sun’s rays) and, finally, **a possessive relation** (*the dog’s tail*).
- b) Possessive determinatives: *my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their*.

Non-specific deictic determiners

These select entities by referring to

- i) Their **indefiniteness**: *a(n), some, any, no*.
- ii) Their **distribution**: *all, both, either, neither, each, every, another, other*.

Wh-deictic determinatives

Which and *whose* express specific selection. *What, whatever, whichever* and *whoever’s* express non-specific selection.

They are used in three types of structures:

1. Interrogative: *Which play would you like to see?*
2. Relative: *You’ll find plenty of traffic whichever road you take.*
3. Exclamatory: *What a pity! What nonsense!*

The word *such* identifies an entity by relating it or comparing it to another entity of a similar kind or a similar degree. Like exclamatory *What*, *such* also requires a(n) before a singular noun: I’ve never heard of *such* an animal.

Selection by quantity

A speaker may select or particularise an entity by referring to its quantity, which may be **exact** (*three friends*), **non-exact** (*many friends*) or **ordinal** (*the first friend*).

Selection by partition

A speaker may select or particularise an entity by referring to a fraction (*a quarter pound*) or a multiple (*twice a day*) of that entity.

Modifiers

After the defining, determining and quantifying items of information which particularise or select the noun referent from others in the surrounding context, we find **items that describe and classify its more permanent characteristics**.

At a general level of analysis we will consider these items under the broad function of "**modification**", just as determinatives were under the general function of "**determination**".

There are **two types of modifications**:

- 1) **Epithets**, realised mostly by **AdjGs** whose reference may be
 - a) **Objective**: epithets expressing objective qualities may "**describe**" an entity (*I bought a small bottle*) or "**define**" it (*I want the blue car*).
 - b) **Subjective**: epithets which express the speaker's or writer's subjective experience or attitude to the referent of the head noun. They can be **appreciative** (*Thank you for that lovely meal*) or **pejorative** (*I didn't like that horrible colour*).
 - i) Many adjectives can be used subjectively or objectively: *a provincial city / a provincial attitude* or even mixing up both uses in an **Impressionistic reference**: epithets which are objectively inherent in the entity but to which the speaker may attach a certain emotive or descriptive value: *the cold little town*.
 - c) **Non-inherent reference**: to refer to the manner of performing an action associated with the entity: *a light eater* (person who doesn't eat much), *a sound sleeper* (who has sound sleep), *a dying wish* (the wish of a dying person).
- 2) **Classifiers** limit the entity to a subclass by referring to:
 - a) Another entity: *army officers, a football club*.
 - b) A quality: *a poisonous snake, electric light*.
 - c) A process: *the rising tide, a growing population*.
 - d) A circumstance: *a round-the-world trip*.
 - e) A situation: *a devil-may-care attitude*.

Types of classification according to the classifier:

- 1) **Classification by nouns**:
 - a) They may be simple (*orange blossom*), PossGs (*a girl's school*), de-verbal (*fishing rod*), compound (*farmyard animals*) or short NGs (*Social Security contributions, an end-of-course party*).
 - b) Nominal classifiers are not normally pluralised: *trouser belt*; but plural forms are used when the referent of the classifier has come to be regarded as a collective noun as in *Olympic Games medal*. Present-day English shows a tendency towards such a pluralisation.
 - c) When the semantic relation between a classifier and a noun is very cohesive, they are sometimes fused as a **compound**: head waiter, record-player, software.
- 2) **Classification by adjectives and participles**:
 - a) Especially denominal adjectives and the present and past participle expressing process: *African politics, prehistoric remains, classical music, municipal*

authorities, medical students, fallen leaves, atomic energy, main road, social worker, heavy water, software.

b) AdjGs: a bored-with-life attitude.

3) **Classification by other classes of units:**

i) Adverbs: *an away match, a home match.*

ii) PreGs: *a round-the-town trip.*

iii) VGs: a live-and-let-live philosophy.

iv) Clauses: a couldn't-care-less attitude.

The **differences between the functions of determination, description and classification** are not absolute. All the pre-head elements of a NG contribute to the identification of the head in different ways: The determiner is mainly selective, the epithet qualitative and often gradable, while the classifier is taxonomic and normally non-gradable.

Here are some examples of AdjGs which may function as **epithets or classifiers**: *a criminal act / the criminal court; a cutting remark / a cutting instrument; a sleeping child / a sleeping compartment; a plastic smile/ plastic bombs.*

Finally, the epithet and classifier elements can sometimes assume **the role of the head noun** when this is not expounded. The NG is then described as elliptical and can always be filled out if necessary by the presupposed noun.

With epithets, the commonest are adjectives of colour and superlatives preceded by "the": *Which shoes shall I wear: the black or the brown?; He writes good novels, and this is the best so far.*

When the head noun is not expounded in a NG, the epithet is usually followed by the pro-form one/ones: *Some of our lectures are interesting, but I go to sleep in the boring ones.*

Certain adjectives are used elliptically to refer to entities outside the text which are not expounded because they are self-understood: *The future is in the hands of the young; The French and the English have not always been good friends.*

Not all abstract adjectives can function as elliptical NG heads, as some need the addition of the word thing: *The strange thing was that they never answered our letter.*

Adjectival classifiers can be used elliptically, though there is a general preference for the addition of substitute one/ones: *Gas cookers are cheaper than electric (ones).*

Complements

Extrinsic features, realised by the **complement**, identify an entity by something outside it, or add supplementary information not essential for identifying it. It must be noted that English prefers to place **the shorter, intrinsic features before the noun**, and **the longer units of extrinsic features after it**

The complement has two basic **communicative functions**:

- a) **to supply information** enabling the hearer/reader **to identify the entity in question**: "restrictive" or "defining" function: *That's the house where the President lives.*
- b) To add **supplementary information** about the referent when it has already been identified: "non-restrictive" or "non-defining" function: *That's the White House, where the President lives.*

To show the difference, non-restrictive units are usually written between commas, dashes or brackets and pronounced between short pause as separate information units.

Restrictive complement is similar in function to classifiers, particularly when this one refers to extrinsic features such as place, profession, material or process: *the corner house / the house in the corner; my doctor friend / my friend the doctor; a brick house / a house made of brick; a growing child / a child that is growing up.*

Nominal qualifiers

They can be realised by **three classes** of appositive units:

- 1) **Nominal Groups**: *My niece, a very pretty girl; the explorer Marco Polo; Chivalry, the dominant idea of the medieval ruling class; a cowshed or cowhouse; We Americans.*
- 2) **Nominal that-clauses**: *The fact that inflation is going down is a sign...; His suggestion that the meeting be postponed was accepted; there is no evidence that he committed the crime.*
- 3) **Nominal (interrogative-value) WH-clauses**: *The question / problem of who we have to vote for...; I have strong doubts about whether I ought to sign a contract...*

Circumstantial qualifiers:

They can be realised by **three classes** of units:

- 1) AdvGs: *This is the way out; The food there is good; A holiday abroad will make a nice change; One of my days off.*
- 2) Relative adverbial clauses: *She took her degree at the university where she was studying; The week when the exams took place...; The reason why I ask is very simple.*
- 3) PreGs: *The concert on Monday / by the municipal orchestra; The discussion about what we should do; My apologies for not writing to you before...*

Attributive qualifiers:

They can be realised by **three classes** of units:

- 1) AdjGs: *The body politic; the devil incarnate; from time immemorial; those present; the worst time possible; the other candidates, confident and well-prepared, all passed the test.*

- a) Qualifiers may express attributive meanings similar to those of the epithets: *a very beautiful woman / a woman of great beauty*. In the first case the communicative focus is the noun woman, in the second one the noun beauty.
- 2) Relative clause: *The news that you gave me cheered me up*.
- 3) Non-tensed clauses: *He wrote a book containing his memories of that period of his life; They travelled in canoes preserved for generations by a hard, shell-like water-proof plaster; the next train to arrive at platform 3 is...; We have no time to lose; The boss gave permission for the staff/us to take the day off.; Her greatest wish, to own a pony, was never fulfilled.*

Tasks on Noun Phrases

- 1) Which is the head noun? Why? Tests: Inversion, ellision, coordination, substitution, etc. (Radford, 89-105)
- 2) Three dependent elements: determiners which specify the reference, modifiers which modify the meaning and complements which complete the message. Which is which?
- 3) Is the canonical order (d + m + h + c) canonical?
- 4) Sentences with modifier: epithets which add new objective or subjective nuances and classifiers which specify to which category the referent belongs to.
 - a) unreasonable expectations of an improvement in conditions
 - b) some interesting books on astronomy that he had found
 - c) several remarkably good student essays on the theory of evolution
 - d) magnificent Renaissance paintings
 - e) a visit to the house where she had been born
 - f) my sister, who worked for the Government.
 - g) the blonde girl in red
 - h) a terrible dusty lost-and-found office
 - i) that rather tiny cedar wooden table where we wrote the letter
 - j) a gang of robbers with stockings on their faces
 - k) a tiny brick-floored room with wine-sodden tables and a photograph of a naked man
 - l) those extremely cold November fogs in Scotland
 - m) a tradition of rustic maiden aunt gentility
 - n) the morality of unborn, unimaginable Bloomsbury
 - o) the endlessly satisfying depths of her novels
 - p) the journey from Nottingham to London by train
 - q) the world's most famous vintage car run
- 5) Construct NGs with the structure shown below
 - a) Detnr:PossG + Mod:AdjG + Head:N + Mod:clause
 - b) Detnr:Detve + Detnr:Detve + Mod:N + Head:N
 - c) Detnr:Detve + Mod:AdjP + Head:N + Comp:clause
 - d) Detnr:Detve + Head:N + Comp:PG + Mod:clause
 - e) Head:N + Mod:PG + Mod:clause

Number

Plural formation

Which of the following nouns add /ɪz/, /z/ or /s/? Write the appropriate phoneme by the noun and explain the reason of your selection.

bag
bed
blush
cab
cap
cat
church
day
horse
language
mirage
pack
prize

Which of the following nouns add “-es” or “-s”? Write the appropriate grapheme by the noun and explain the reason of your selection.

horse
prize
box
switch
day
hero
potato
strategy

Explain the phenomenon of voicing through the transcription of these five words:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
house		
knife		
mouth		
half		
bath		

Vowel change, Zero plural, Foreign Plural

Indicate the plural form of these nouns and which type of plural formation they fall into.

Appendix →
Corpus →
Criterion →
Deer →
Foot →
Formula →
Goose →
Hypothesis →
Louse →
Man →
Mouse →
Sheep →
Stimulus →
Tooth →
Woman →

Check the following sentences. Are the NGs in them correct or not as regards number? If not, explain why.

- The committee have decided that the poll will take place on January 4th.
- My jeans is completely dirty!
- The Spanish team has played well but the Australian team played better.
- The police has no idea about who could do it.
- I do not like playing billiards. They are boring.
- Acoustics are the part of Physics which study the wave.
- The American troops is still in Iraq.
- The news are definitely preoccupying.
- The media is covering the royal wedding in detail.
- To cut this you need a scissors. Have you brought one?
- The Irish people has voted for the future.