

EFL-200

Analysis of the English Words and Sentence Structure
Trimester 2/2017

Module 2A

Analysis of English Phrases

Name _____ ID No. _____

Chapter 5

Phrases

A phrase is the combination of at least two words that functions as a single unit in a sentence. It conveys some meaning though it is not as complete as the meaning of a sentence. The core meaning and the function of any phrase is denoted by the head of that phrase. According to their functions, phrases are divided into main categories: *noun phrase, prepositional phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase and adverb phrase.*

Noun Phrase

A noun phrase is the combination of a **noun** as the head of the phrase with its **modifiers** which may come *before* or *after* the head.

Noun Phrase with modifiers that precede the head

In this combination, modifiers that precede the head can be: *an article, adjective, demonstrative, quantifier, possessive, present participle, past participle, or noun.* In the following examples, the head nouns of the phrases are in **bold** words.

- ◇ an **eagle** (with article)
- ◇ these **dogs** (with demonstrative)
- ◇ many **people** (with quantifier)
- ◇ his **farm** (with possessive)
- ◇ Jane's **husband** (with possessive)
- ◇ the little **boy** (with article and adjective)
- ◇ heavy **rain** (with adjective)
- ◇ interesting **place** (with present participle)
- ◇ frightened **girl** (with past participle)
- ◇ night **market** (with noun)
- ◇ Jane's little old English **cottage** (with possessive and adjectives)

Noun Phrase with modifiers that come after the head

Usually, modifiers that come after the head nouns are in the form of **phrases** and **clauses**: *prepositional phrases* (preposition + noun/noun phrase), *present participial phrase* (Ving + ...), *past participial phrase* (V3 + ...), or *adjective clause*. In the following examples, phrases and clauses that modify the head nouns are underlined.

- ◇ the garden behind that building (with prepositional phrase)
- ◇ the man sleeping on the sofa (with present participial phrase)
- ◇ the house burnt last night (with past participial phrase)
- ◇ the man whom I met yesterday (with adjective clause)

Functions of Noun Phrases

The functions of noun phrases are equivalent to those of nouns. Therefore a noun phrase can be a:

- ◇ subject
- ◇ subject complement
- ◇ object
- ◇ object complement
- ◇ noun appositive
- ◇ * adverb

The underlined phrases in the following examples are noun phrases.

*Noun Phrase as a **subject***

- ◇ A large tile fell from the roof.
- ◇ Four people entered the room.
- ◇ The man who lives beside us is unwell.

*Noun Phrase as **subject complement***

- ◇ Paul is my nephew.
- ◇ She is a teacher of English.
- ◇ That is the wrong way to wire a plug.

*Noun Phrase as an **object***

As a direct object

- ◇ The plane left the runway.
- ◇ I bought a jar of coffee.
- ◇ Our teacher writes detective stories.

As an indirect object

- ◇ She told the chairman the bad news.
- ◇ I offered the girl beside me a drink.
- ◇ It gives people with disabilities more independence.

*Noun Phrase as **object complement** (the bold words are object)*

- ◇ He called **her** an idiot.
- ◇ They appointed **him** President of the Board of Trade.
- ◇ The unions made **Britain** the country it is today.
- ◇ I consider **Loki** my favorite cat.

*Noun Phrase as a **noun appositive***

- ◇ John, the man living next door, has gone to Korea.
- ◇ We went to Phuket, an island in the south of Thailand, last summer.

*Noun Phrase as an **adverb***

- ◇ My daughter will study in USA next year.
- ◇ Last summer, we visited Phuket, an island in the south of Thailand.

When function is focused, some types of phrases e.g. *gerund phrases* (Ving + ...) and *infinitive phrases* (toV1 + ...) can be categorized as noun phrases.

Noun phrase with a *gerund* as a head

- ◇ **Walking in the garden in the morning** is a good exercise.
- ◇ We should avoid **staying up late at night**.

Noun phrase with an *infinitive* as a head

- ◇ **To find the right one to love** is really a hard job.
- ◇ Love is **to share**.

Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase is headed by a preposition followed by a noun phrase. In the following examples the heads or the prepositions are in **bold** letters.

at the corner, **in** London, **around** the world, **to** the man standing there

Functions of Prepositional Phrase

Prepositional Phrase as Noun Modifier:

- ◇ The population **of** China is growing.
- ◇ The demand **for** British steel has dropped dramatically.
- ◇ Caroline is reading a book **on** Renaissance Painting.
- ◇ Look at the boat **with** the blue sail.
- ◇ Please hand me the pen **next to** the telephone.

Prepositional Phrase as Adverb:

- ◇ I've got **to** the doctor **on** Wednesday.
- ◇ **Before the war**, he played football **for** Leeds United.
- ◇ We met David **beside** the river.

Prepositional Phrase as Subject Complement:

- ◇ Your dinner is **in** the microwave.
- ◇ The other gift is **for** Susan.
- ◇ We stay **with** a man named George.

Prepositional Phrase as Object complement:

- ◇ I believe my car **in** the garage now.
- ◇ We suspect our son **on** the tree.

Verb Phrase

A verb phrase is a combination of a verb as the head with other components e.g. noun, prepositional phrase, adjective, or adverb. Verb phrases are classified by different types of the head verbs into 4 main groups. In the following examples, verb phrases are underlined and the verbs are in **bold** letters.

*Verb phrase with **Be***

- ◇ Our parents **are** kind. (Be + adjective)
- ◇ The meeting **is** upstairs. (Be + adverb of place)
- ◇ The party **is** tonight. (Be + adverb of time)
- ◇ Our boss **was** not in. (Be + prepositional)
- ◇ Your cats **are** under the bed. (Be + prepositional phrase)

*Verb phrase with **linking verb***

- ◇ The man **seems** upset. (Linking verb + adjective)
- ◇ It **became** a strange party. (Linking verb + noun phrase)

*Verb phrase with **intransitive verb***

- ◇ My father **has gone** to work. (Intransitive verb + prepositional phrase)
- ◇ George **walks** very fast. (Intransitive verb + adverb)

*Verb phrase with **transitive verb***

- ◇ The man **sold** his house. (Transitive verb + object)
- ◇ My dad **bought** me a new car. (Transitive verb + IO + DO)
- ◇ We **elected** Sam our leader. (Transitive verb + object + object complement)

Adjective Phrase

An adjective phrase is a combination of an adjective plus its modifiers or adverbs e.g. *very, pretty, rather, quite, much, more*. In the following examples the adjectives are in **bold** letters and the rest are their modifiers.

so **cool**, quite **hot**, pretty **good**, rather **fat**, much **better**, more **beautiful**

Adverb Phrase

An adverb phrase is a combination of an adverb plus its modifiers or adverbs e.g. *very, pretty, rather, quite, much, more*. In the following examples the adverbs are in **bold** letters and the rest are their modifiers.

so **slowly**, quite **fast**, pretty **well**, rather **soon**, much **earlier**, more **quickly**

Note:

Prepositional phrases may function as adverbs when they add more details about places or time to verbs, thus they may also be regarded as adverb phrases.

Chapter 6

Phrase Analysis

The Hierarchical Structure of Phrases

The hierarchical structure of a phrase can be analyzed by the Chomsky's *phrase structure rules* and usually displayed by a tree diagram.

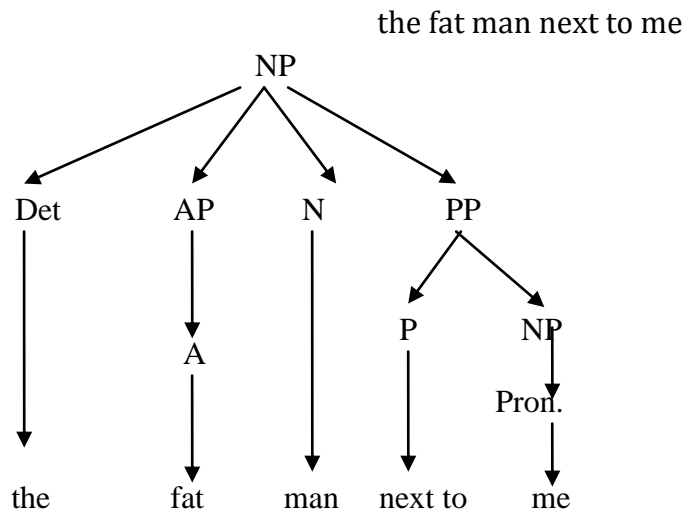
The Phrase Structure Rule

S	⇒	NP VP
NP	⇒	(Det) (AP) N (PP)
VP	⇒	V (NP) (PP) (Adv) (CP)
PP	⇒	P NP
AP	⇒	Adj (PP)

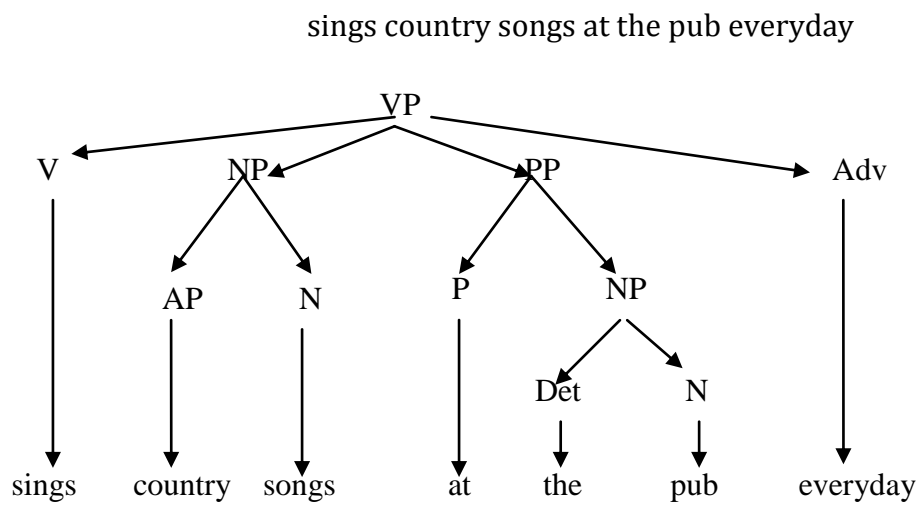
- NP = noun phrase
- VP = verb phrase
- PP = prepositional phrase
- CP = complementizer (sub-clause)
- AP = adjective phrase
- Det = determiner
- N = noun
- V = verb
- P = preposition
- Adj. = adjective
- Adv. = adverb

Examples of Phrase Analysis

Noun phrase Analysis

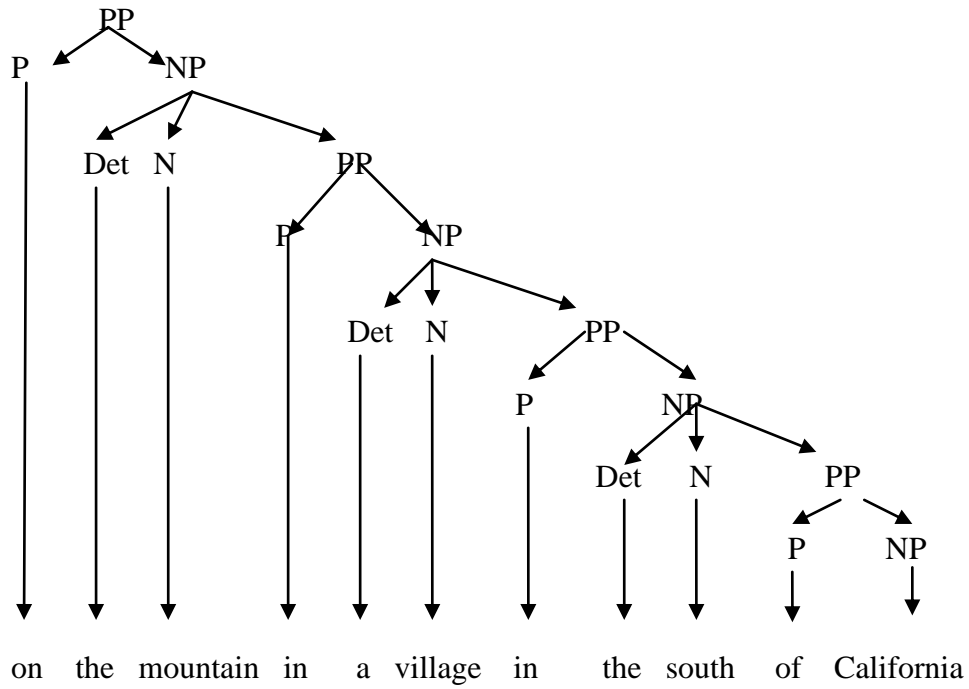


Verb Phrase Analysis



Prepositional Phrase Analysis

on the mountain in a village in the south of California



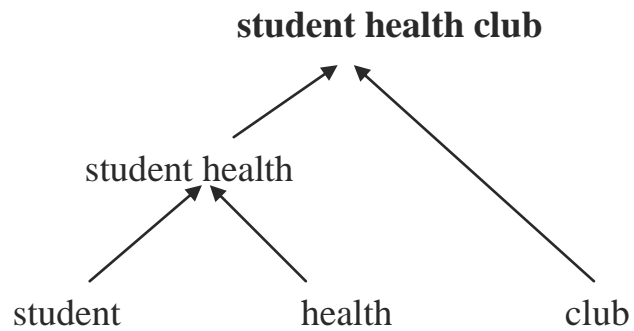
Note:

Prepositional phrases are considered as infinite of rule as they can occur unlimitedly in a series of one phrase.

Analysis of Ambiguity in the Meaning of Phrases

Some phrases may provide ambiguous meanings. The two diagrams below show two internal structures that lines under the two possible meanings of the phrase “student health club”.

Meaning a) “a **club** that work on students’ health matter”



Meaning b) a **health club** that belongs to students

