The Portrait of Students' Work in Analysing English Noun Phrase within the Text at English Department FBS Universitas Negeri Padang

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Abstract

Grouping words into phrases is one of the problems faced by English students in using the language. Noun phrase is a basic constituent of a sentence is seen very problematic. The paper tries to explore how well second year students of English Department analyse noun phrases and their problems in doing it. There were 30 students chosen through proportionate stratified sampling as the sample. The text designed consisting of 20 noun phrases were distributed to the sample to be analysed. Each noun phrase was generally analysed into three aspects, namely, identifying type/component, its function within a sentence, and role of each element. The analysis was by scoring and putting them into percentage. Then, they were categorized into *excellent, good, average, poor,* and *very poor.* The result shows that about 60% of sample failed to analyse noun phrase correctly. Their way of analysing noun phrase was in *poor* level on identifying type/component (45%), its function within a sentence (40.16%), and the role of each element of noun phrase (43%). The problem was mainly students' lack competence in identifying the part of speech and its function for each point.

Key Words: *students' ability, analysis, noun phrase, text*

A. INTRODUCTION

Syntax is one of crucial subjects that need to be comprehended in learning English. Many people still need to comprehend syntax, since it helps people in knowing the structure of phrases and sentences. Fromkin et al (2000: 174) states that syntax is the structure of phrases and sentences; the system of rules in the syntax of language that determines the way in which words are combined to form meaningful phrases and sentences. It is supported by Hoff in Anggraeni (2013:82) that syntax is the component of grammar that governs the ordering of words in sentences. By learning syntax, someone is expected to know exactly how phrases and sentences are formed in meaningful way. In short, learning syntax will help people in modifying and combining several phrases and sentences in order to express thought based on grammatical rules.

A phrase is the smallest component of syntax. It can consist of one or more words that are linked in a systematic order. English has various kinds of phrases, such as adjective phrase (AdjP), noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adverb phrase (AdvP), and prepositional phrases (PP) (see Wheeler, 1998). Each on them has the head except

prepositional phrase. In PP, preposition is called relator of the phrase. Here are examples of each category (the bold type are the head except prep is relator):

NP	VP	PP	Adj.P	Adv.P
my friend;	*joint him soon;*	*on the shelf*;	*very easy*;	*very beautifully*
Det.(Poss) N	V Pron Adv	Prep NP	Deg Adj	Deg Adv

The coverage of syntax mentioned can be seen in any kind of text. The students can use text as a medium which enables them to practice English in written form. Text is defined in any different way, firstly as any passage spoken or written, of whatever length, that does form a unified whole (Gleason, 1998:277) and Thornbury (1999: 71), and as a combination of lexical and grammatical device, which shows cohesiveness and coherence in order to make sense of utterances (Marina: 2006).

Related to its type/component, noun phrase can be seen in many different ways. Noun Phrase may be only noun (*books*). In another way, noun phrase can be found in determiner plus noun (Det + N) such as *some materials*, determiner plus adjective plus noun (Det + Adj + N), like *an interesting idea*. Determiner plus noun plus prepositional phrase (Det + N + PP) like *the man at the station* is another type.

One word phrase automatically has a role as a head (such as *Helen),* while the phrase consisting of more words has a head and modifiers (MacFadyen, 2009). Related to the role of each element, noun phrase is divided into two components, the head (H) and Modifier (Mod). The students have to understand basic knowledge about noun as the core (the head) of noun phrase. Greenbaum & Nelson (2002:66), Kroeger (2005:86), Börjars & Burridge (2010: 168), Vu (2010:3) have similar ideas about the concept of noun phrase. It is a group of words which have noun *head* and numbers of associated *modifiers,* including adjective (*small, red, lovely*), adjective phrases, adjective clauses, possessive adjectives (*my, his, her, their*), adverb (*very, extremely, usually*), determiners (*the, a, an*).

Furthermore, the position of noun phrase within a sentence is very important to analyse. The position shows the function of a noun phrase. Due to its importance in the language use, a noun phrase has various functions, namely as a subject, object, complement and object of preposition. Knowing each of them represents students one's competence in using it.

Noun phrase is quite difficult for the students to analyse. Noun phrase is a basic constituent of a sentence is seen very problematic for the students. In part of speech, words can function as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, pronouns, prepositions or interjections. Most errors made in students' written work is that the students often confuse between noun, adjective, adverb and verb forms (English Language Centre n.d.). In detail, the students cannot completely differ whether a word belongs to noun or verb, noun or adjective, adjective or adverb, etc in a sentence. However, a word can be classified as a different part of speech depending on its position in a sentence.

This paper tries to explore how well second year students of English Department analyse noun phrase and their problem in doing it. In addition, they are supposed to be able to identify and analyse the noun phrase and use the rules correctly because they have passed Morphology and Syntax (Morsynt) subject.

There are several studies related to noun phrase. The first study was conducted by Sari (2012) with the title *A Syntactic Analysis of Noun Phrase in the Text of Developing English Competencies Book for X Grade of Senior High School*. In this study, she analysed Noun Phrase syntactically and explained more clearly about each parts of Noun Phrase related to the text of developing English competencies book. She found the constituent of NP within 6 constructions and the structural ambiguities in NP.

The second study was conducted by Putra (2012) with the title *Students Ability in Arranging Words into Noun Phrase with Pre-Modifiers.* This was a study of the third year English Department students' ability that were in semester January-June 2011/2012 in constructing noun phrase. In the study, they found that more than half of the sample of the population was not able in arranging noun phrase with pre-modifiers. It can be proved by the averaging score of the students which was only 46, 12. In short, the corrections and improvements are needed.

Another study is done by Wahidah (2011) entitled *A Syntactical Analysis of English Noun Phrase in Sentences of Opinion Column at The Jakarta Post Newspaper on Saturday, February 19th, 2011 Edition*. In this study, she analysed the Noun Phrase syntactically in sentences of opinion column at the Jakarta Post newspaper. There were 37 data issued on Saturday, February 19, 2011. She found five patterns used in sentences of opinion column and seventy nine English noun phrases in sentences.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The subject of the research was second year students of English Department. They were in the third semester students who were currently studying Morphology and Syntax. There were 90 students from three classes of non-educational study program (NK1, NK2 and NK3). The sample was taken by using proportionate stratified random sampling technique, by which 20% of the students from each class were chosen randomly (see Gay, 2012). They were 30 students. The test in form of text was an instrument to collect the data. It was designed by providing it with 20 noun phrases. These were asked to be analysed based on the indicators of identifying their types/components, functions within a sentence and the role of each element. To get the data of identifying the type/component of Noun Phrase, the sample was assigned to use tree diagram approach to analyse, such as common noun (N_C or N); proper noun (N_P); personal pronoun (Pro_P); possessive pronoun (Pro_S); Det N; Art Adj NP; (N Poss) N). For the function within a sentence, the indicators are *subject (S), object of verb (OV), object of preposition (OP)*, and *complement (C)*. For the role of noun phrase element, they are *head (H)* and *modifier (M)*, especially *pre-modifier (Pre-Mod)*. To know the students' problem in analysing noun phrase are the confusion of part of speech, incompetence of identifying the function of NP within a a sentence, and getting the correct place of head and modifiers (especially pre-modifier).

The analysis of data was by scoring the ways of students' analysis on each kind of data and putting them into percentage. For the correct answer, the score was 10 and for the incorrect answer, the score was 0. It was going on with putting them in percentage using the formula based on Sudjana (in Putra, 2012).

P= (F/N) x 100%

Where: P= Percentage of the answer

F=Frequency of the students who get correct answer

N= Total number of the students

Then, the mean score is counted by the following formula:

$$M = \frac{Sx}{N}$$

Where: M= mean

Sx= the sum of the scores

N= the sum of students

Then, they were categorized into *excellent, good, average, poor* and *very poor* as follows.

Table 1. Range of Student's Score (Pedoman Akademik UNP, 2014)

Percentage of Score	Grading Criterion
81-100%	Excellent
66-80 %	Good
56-65%	Average
41-55%	Poor
0-40 %	Very Poor

The problems faced by students were analysed descriptively.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Results and Findings

The result findings can be seen in the following table. It shows the description of students' achievement in noun phrase analysis in based on its type/component, role of each element, and its function within a sentence.

Table 2. Students' achievement in analysing noun phrase

Noun Phrase Analysis								
Noun Phrase based on the Type/component	Item with correct answer	Total	Noun Phrase based on the role of each element of noun phrase	Item with correct answer	Total	Noun Phrase based on its function within sentence	Item with correct answer	Total
N	111	46%	H	84	24%	Subject	211	54.10%
N_P	20	33%				Object	34	28.33%
Pro_P	12	40%						
Art + N	33	55 %	Pre-mod + H	171	62%	Complement	15	12.5%
Adj + N	15	50 %						
Art + Adj + N	27	45 %				Object of Preposition	19	12.67%
Det + N	52	43%						
	270	45%		255	43%	Percentage per item NP	258	26.90%

						Percentage from sentence analysis	1204,9	40.16%

Based on Table 2, it was found that students' achievement in analysing noun phrase based on the type/component, the role of each element of noun phrase, and its function within a sentence are below 50%. Students' achievement in analysing noun phrase based on the type/component is in poor level with the percentage 45%, based on the role of each element of noun phrase with the percentage 43% and based on function within a sentence with the percentage 40.16%.

In detail, the noun phrase analysis results were expanded as follows:
a. Students Achievement in Analysing Noun Phrase
   1. Based on its type/component
   The students achievement in analysing noun phrase based on its type/component could be seen from their written analysis. The appropriate analysis of noun phrase based on its type/component was in Datum 1 as follow:
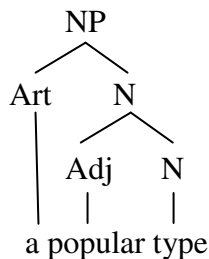   Datum 1

```
            NP
           /   \
        Adj      N
         |       |
      national  heroes
```
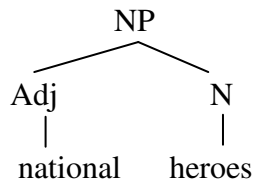
For datum 1, this was the correct analysis of noun phrase where construction of NP had the constituent of Adj (*national*) and N (*heroes*).
   Conversely, the student's inappropriate analysis of noun phrase below was drawn by in datum 2 as follow:
   Datum 2

```
            NP
           /   \
        Art     N
         |      / \
         |   Adj    N
         |    |     |
         a popular type
```
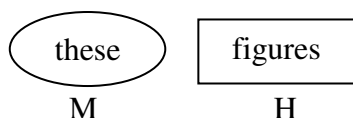
The analysis of noun phrase from Datum 2 was incorrect because construction of NP only had two constituents, namely Art and N; Adj and N were as constituent of N. Clearly, the appropriate analysis was Art + Adj + N constituents in construction of NP as follow:

```
              NP
            /  |  \
        Art  Adj   N
         |    |    |
         a  popular type
```
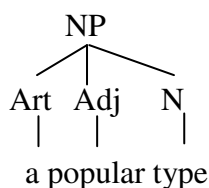
2. Based on the Role of each Element of Noun Phrase

The students' correct noun phrase analysis based on the role of each element was in Datum 3 as follow:
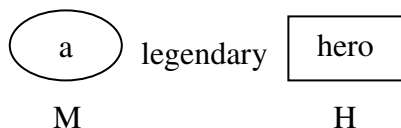
Datum 3

```
  ( these )    [ figures ]
     M            H
```

In Datum 3, the analysis of noun phrase was correctly drawn where the role of word "these" was modifier (M) and "figures" was head (H).

On the other hand, the incorrect analysis of NP in datum 4 was as follow:

Datum 4

```
  ( a )  legendary  [ hero ]
   M                  H
```

The analysis of noun phrase from Datum 4 was incorrect. It was claimed that NP consisted of M + H where the role of word "a" was as modifier (M) and "hero" was drawn as H without analysing the word "legendary". Actually, the appropriate analysis of noun phrase was "a legendary" as modifier (M) and "hero" was drawn as H as follow:

```
  ( A legendary )   [ hero ]
     M      M          H
```
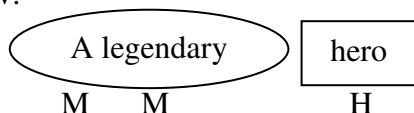
3. Based on its function within a sentence

The students achievement in analysing noun phrase based on the function within a sentence in sentence 1 as follow:

Datum 5

In some ways, legend resemble myths
          S   O

The analysis of noun phrase of Datum 5 was drawn correctly because the function of the word "legend" was as a subject and "myths" was as an object.

The noun phrase above was analysed inappropriately by the students as follow:

Datum 6

Over time, however, these figures have become national heroes
                      S   C

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In the analysis of datum 6, "these figures" functions as subject and "have become national heroes" functions as C. The appropriate analysis was that "these figures" functions as subject and "national heroes" functions as O as below.

Over time, however, <u>these figures</u> have become <u>national heroes</u>
                      S   O

2. The Students' Problem in Analysing Noun Phrase

There were some problems found in analysing noun phrase. First, the problem was related to lack understanding of part of speech and its function. In relation to the type/component of a noun phrase, the students were lack understanding of the part of speech, even the noun itself. In addition, the students were lack in understanding determiner (Det) especially identifying which was categorized as quantifier, demonstrative, or degree. For example:

Datum 7

    <u>all</u> <u>societies</u>
    Adj   N

The analysis of noun phrase from Datum 7 was incorrect. It was claimed that the word "all" was analysed as Adj. Actually, the word "all" was determiner to show quantifier (Quant). It could be seen that the student were lack understanding of the part of speech and the function.

The correct NP analysis was as follow:

    <u>all</u>   <u>societies</u>
    Det   N
  (Quant)

In tree diagram, it could be drawn:

```
              NP
            /    \
        Det       N
         |        |
       Quant      |
         |        |
       all      societies
```
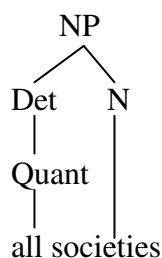
b. Role of the words

The students' problem in analysing noun phrase related to the role of each element of noun phrase was the lack ability of the students in identifying which word belonged to the head and which word belonged to the modifier, For example:

Datum 8

    <u>A</u> popular <u>type</u>
    <u>M</u>   H

The analysis of noun phrase from Datum 8 was incorrect because NP consisted of M + H where the role of word "a" was as modifier (M) and "type" was drawn as H without analysing the word "type". Actually, the word "popular" was also the modifier of the word "type". So, the appropriate analysis of noun phrase was "a popular" as (M) and "hero" was drawn as H as follow:

A   popular type
M   M   H

c. The function of NP within a sentence

Lack understanding in basic of word order affected how well the students in identifying the function of noun phrase within a sentence (as subject, object, object of preposition, and complement). For example:

Datum 9

But myths describe events from antiquity
    S   *O*

Based on analysis of noun phrase from Datum 9, "*events from antiquity*" functions as object. However, the appropriate function was that "*events*"as object and "*from antiquity*" as object of preposition (OP) as follow:

But myths describe events from antiquity
    S   *O*   *OP*

Actually, these three points above explained were related each other. The keypoint here was the understanding of part of speech and word order. When the student was able to determine the right part of speech on its right position and to identify the rules of word order, then the analysis of noun phrase would have any problem for the students.

3. Discussion

Based on the analysis results, the second year of English Department students did not aware in analysing noun phrase, especially analysing noun phrase based on the type/component, the role of each element of noun phrase, and its function within a sentence. Many students had difficulties to analyse noun phrase correctly. It was proved by the result which showed that there were more than 50% of the students who were not able to analyse noun phrase appropriately.

The fact that the students' low performed in analysing noun phrase carried out a question. One reason supporting this finding was the lack understanding of the student to identify each part of speech and its function for each point. Also, the external factor also might affect to the result of the noun phrase analysis such as the students' willingness to do test for this research. However, it was crucial for the students to master this material because it was one of essential component in learning English, also in Syntax study.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings, first it can be concluded that the second year of English Department students' achievement in analysing noun phrase are in low category.

In addition, there are more than half students (more than 50%) were not able in analysing noun phrase based on the type/component, the role of each element of noun phrase and its function of noun phrase correctly.

The students' problems they faced may be caused by the students' lack of understanding of part of speech and its function, and the phrase itself. It was found that the noun phrase analysis based on the type/component, the role of each element of noun phrase and its function of noun phrase within a sentence are seemed difficult for the student to deal with, even they have learned in Morphology and Syntax studies. Therefore, in order to be able to analyse noun phrase correctly, the students have to comprehend the basic knowledge of noun phrase itself and how it works in a sentence. More practices and exercises are really needed related in order to improve the ability to analyse noun phrase.

Furthermore, the students must pay more attention to the correct formula, the use and its function of each type of noun phrase within a sentence. So, the students can be aware to analyse noun phrase. For the lecturers, they have to prepare various kinds of exercises to improve the students' accuracy in analysing noun phrase and help the students out from their problem during analysing noun phrase. And for the next researchers, they can be more focused on finding the problems in analysing noun phrase in complete noun formation (Pre-Mod, H, and Post-Mod) because this research is only more concerned only to Pre-Mod and H formation of noun phrase.

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