



PHRASES: NOUN AND

VERB PHRASES
Communicative English Grammar

What is in a phrase?

- In everyday use, a phrase is often defined as a group of words. Therefore, from this point of view a phrase must consist of two or more words.
- In grammar, the technical term **phrase** is used even if there is only one word.
- See the following:
 - **Books**
 - The **books**
 - The history **books**
 - The American history **books**
 - The American history **books** on the table
 - The American history **books** on the table that I borrowed from the library.
- A phrase always has **a main word (head word)** and is usually modified by several words which **precede** or **come after** the word.

Some notes about phrases:

1. A phrase may contain another phrase within it. It can also be modified by a clause. See the following:
 - They had a very exciting experience in Australia.
 - Several new buildings in this campus have been damaged by the earthquake.
 - The girl that I met yesterday is a singer.
2. Phrases are defined by their structure, but they are also characterized by their potential functions.

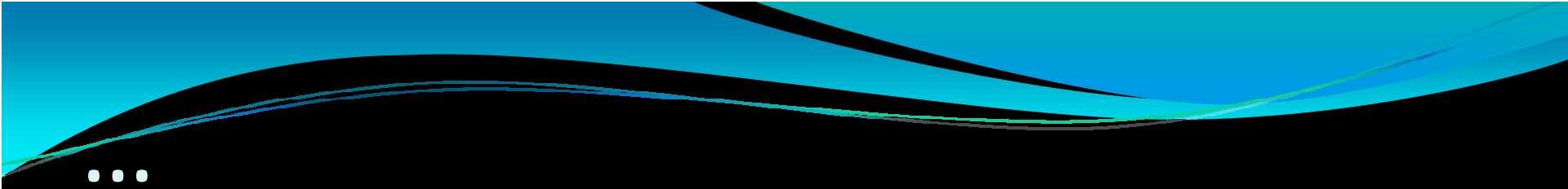
Noun Phrases:

- A Noun Phrase has a noun as its head.
- Since phrases usually consist of more than one word, there will be some typical structures for different types of phrases.
- For NP, **four major components** typify the building block:
 - The determinative
 - Premodification
 - The head
 - Postmodification
- When forming a NP, these components **must occur in a fixed order**.

- The *determinative* determines the reference of the noun phrase in its linguistic or situational context.
- *Premodification* comprises all the modifying or describing constituents before the head, other than the determiners.
- The *head* is the word around which the other constituents cluster.
- *Postmodification* comprise all the modifying constituents placed after the head.

See the following diagram:

[NP diagram.docx](#)

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- Depending on the context of situation, we choose determiners and modifiers according to our needs in identifying and specifying the referent of the NP.

Sometimes we need several determiners and modifiers to clarify the referent (*all my books in that box*); sometimes we need none at all (*Ben*).

- See the following:
 - [Some Examples of the Noun Phrase in English.docx](#)

Other important issues:

- Appositives:
 - Beben, a very popular guy in this campus, has been elected as the head of the students association.
- Coordination:
 - Tom and Bob are football players.
 - You can choose tea or coffee for your drink.
 - He is a smart and charming character.
 - Formal and functional analysis is important to understand a structure of a sentence.

Functions of NP:

- Subject
- dO
- iO
- sC
- oC
- *Complement of a preposition
- *Premodifier of a noun or noun phrase
- *adverbial

See the following:

The latest certified horror story involved a Delta Air Lines Jumbo jet that drifted 60 miles (about 100 kilometers) off course over the North Atlantic and came within 100 feet (30 meters) of colliding with a Continental Airlines jet on Wednesday.

(*The International Herald Tribune*, July 3, 1987, p.4, taken from *The Washington Post*)

Identify the NPs, their structures and functions

Verb Phrases

- In a **VERB PHRASE (VP)**, the Head is always a verb.
- The VP has two main constituents:
 - **the auxiliary**
 - **the main verb (the Head)**
- The main verb, influenced by the subject and the existence of the auxiliary, can appear in four different forms:
 - **Base form**
 - **-s form**
 - **-ing participle**
 - **-ed form (past participle)**
- The auxiliary must appear in the following sequence:
 - Modal auxiliary
 - Perfect auxiliary
 - Progressive auxiliary
 - Passive auxiliary

See the following:

- [VP constituents diagram.docx](#)
- [Some Examples of the Verb Phrase in English.docx](#)

Multi-word Verbs

- Multi-word verbs are combinations of a verb and one or more other words.
- In certain respect they behave as a single word.
 - The man gave up smoking two years ago.
 - Beben has broken up with his secret lover.
 - Oh God, we're running out of gas.
 - Tom has been looking after his mother for several years since his father died.
- Three important terms to remember:
 - **Phrasal verb**
 - **Prepositional verb**
 - **Phrasal-prepositional verb**

Questions, please?