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A Constituent Structural Analysis of the English Noun Phrase in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

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Abstract

This study analysed the constituent structure of the English noun phrase (henceforth, NP) in some selected Nigerian newspapers. The aim of the study was to carry out a structural analysis of the English NP in two Nigerian newspapers. One of the objectives of the study was to describe the NP modification in the selected newspapers. Another objective was to analyse the dependency relations between the headword and its modifiers in the NP, among others. The study applied the Dependency Grammar as its theoretical framework. The study is a qualitative research which made use of the descriptive research design. The two newspapers studied constituted the study's population. The sample size was twenty NPs which were based on the cover page stories of the two newspapers studied. The non-probability sampling technique was used to arrive at the study population. Some of the findings were that there was a predominant use of prepositional phrases (henceforth, PP) in modifying the NPs while the participle was the least used in modifying the NPs among others. The study concluded that there was consistency in terms of how the two newspapers modified the NPs. The study also noted that the constituents had clustering tendencies in the NP modifications in the two newspapers studied. The study observed that there were dependency relationship between the headwords and their dependents in the NPs in the two newspapers studied. The study therefore recommended that for the fact that consistent structures of the English NP as used by the newspaper producers were relatively consistent, newspaper producers should continue with the standard while encouraging readers of newspapers to familiarize themselves with the consistent structures to enhance understanding and readability.

Keywords: Constituent Structural Analysis, English, Noun Phrase, Newspapers, Nigerian.

Introduction

Language, be it written or spoken, is the life blood of human existence. It is the major medium of communication. Newspapers constitute one of the sources of communication between a journalist and its readers. The journalist uses language to inform and educate its readers. The language choices, form and style are key to achieve these objectives. The manner the subject which is usually a NP is described will contribute immensely to make meaning clearer.

It is very important to highlight two important variables while discussing the language of the print media. These are the house style and the language of journalists called journalese. These two factors are critical to the choice of the lexical items or grammatical structures which are appropriate to communicate intentions or messages by journalists. Chiluwa (2012) avers that journalists would prefer certain linguistic items to other available options. They do this to enable them accurately report deliberately what their intentions are while taking into cognizance such elements of journalism as clarity, politeness, brevity, decency, factuality or accuracy and simplicity (Baker, 2006; Rich, 1994). On account of the forgoing, journalists in their news reportage in Nigerian newspapers make use of profuse modified NPs in their news items. According to Crystal and Davy (1969), "the most noteworthy feature in the language of newspaper reporting is the presence of much more complex pre-and post-modification than we normally hear or write" (p.86).

In view of the foregoing, this paper examines the NP modification processes as contained in two newspaper reports and identifies the types of dependency relations which exist between the headword and its modifiers with regard to the modification relations and centrifugal or centripetal dependency in Nigerian newspaper reportage.

Statement of the Problem

The news reporter's major role is to inform and educate its readers. These two objectives can only be achieved through language. It is important to state that these news stories are about people, places and events. The people being reported on are the newsworthy personalities who carry out the events in these places. This news worthy personalities in the news reports are encapsulated in the NPs. How the NP is expressed or modified in a newspaper report becomes critical to both the newspaper reader and the news reporter.

In view of the above, this paper examines the constituent structure of the English NP in selected newspapers with the aim to highlight such structures for easy identification, readership and comprehension.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to analyse the structural formation of the NP as contained in two Nigerian newspapers and the dependency relations which hold the headword and the dependent modifiers.

The specific objectives are to:

1) Describe the English NP modification in the selected Nigerian newspapers;
2) Examine the different constituents of the English NPs in the selected newspapers; and
3) Analyse the dependency relations between the headword and its modifiers in the NP.

Research Questions

i) What is the NP modification in the selected Nigerian newspapers?
ii) What are the different constituents of the NPs in the selected newspapers?
iii) What is the dependency relations between the headword and its modifiers in the NP?

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

The Newspaper

The newspaper is one of the mass media channels of communication. It is the oldest form of the mass media (Omego & Nwanchukwu, 2013). The newspaper belongs to the print media. Sandman et al (1976) define the newspaper as an unbound, printed publication which is issued at regular intervals, that presents information in words often supplemented with pictures (cited in Ndimele & Kasarachi, 2006). Some scholars describe the newspaper as a particular media channel of communication that carries current information on societal happenings. Agba argues that for any publication to be called a newspaper, it must: (i) be published at least weekly; (ii) be produced by a mechanical process; (iii) be available to people of all walks of life (for a price); (iv) Print news of general interest as opposed to specialized topics; (v) be readable by the ordinary people who may not be well-educated; be timely, and (vi) be stable over time (Cited in Ndimele & Kasarachi, 2006).

For Nworgu (2010), newspapers may be categorized on the following criteria; circulation, size, and audience. He explains that on the basis of the circulation period, we have daily, weekly and bi-weekly newspapers. He further notes that the classification of newspapers using size will include broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. On the categorization on the basis of audience/reader, there are general interest (news) and specialized interest newspapers.

An examination of the features of a newspaper as provided by Agba and Nworgu (2010) show that the two newspapers being used for this study qualify to be called newspapers. The two newspapers are the Nation and the Punch.

The Phrase

A phrase is defined as a group of related words that is grammatically equivalent to a single word and does not have a subject and predicate of its own (Ndimele, 1996), Huddleston (2005) identifies the following as the different types of phrase depending on the head word: a NP, a verb phrase (henceforth, VP), a PP, an adjectival phrase (henceforth, ADJP) and an adverbial phrase (henceforth, ADVP). The focus of this study is on the noun phrase which could be modified by other phrases.

The Noun Phrase

A NP is a phrase whereby the head or main part is a noun. The head of the NP may be preceded by modifiers and these strings are called pre-head strings (Gupta, 2013). Gupta (2013) also states that the head may be followed by post-modifiers and these strings, he calls them post-head strings.

The structure of the NP

An NP is a group of grammatically related words which has a noun as the headword which is also obligatory. The other elements which may occur either before or after the noun are the modifiers which limit or specify the reference of the noun (Ndimele, 1996). Thakur (2007) identifies three-word classes that function as pre-modifiers in the NP structure in English. These are nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

The Determiner as a Pre-Head Modifier

A determiner is a word that can be used with a noun. It restricts the meaning of the noun in a way (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973). Examples of determiners are articles (a (n), the), numerals (one, two, third, fourth), demonstratives (this, those), quantifiers (all, both, many) and possessives (my, our, yours).

Post-Modifiers in a NP

While pre-modifiers are elements which precede the headword in a NP, post-modifiers are items that follow the headword in a NP (Phythian, 1980). The implication is that a full expression of the NP is made up of the following three elements: pre-modifiers, headword, and post-modifiers. This is expressed as (M) H (Q) structure of the NP where "M" stands as a modifier, "H" stands as a headword and "Q" as a qualifier.

Just like the pre-modifiers in a NP, there are classes of items which occupy the post-modifier slot. These are adjectives or ADJP, PP and relative clauses and appositives (Thakur, 2007).

Modifiers According to Dependency Relations

Dependency relation has to do with the syntactic relation that exists between the head of the phrase and its dependent elements in the phrase. According to Luraghi and Parodi (2008), an item called the dependent, depends on another item called the head (Cited in Priye, 2016). The focus of this study is the NP. Consequently, the study is concerned with the dependency relation between the head of the NP, which is a noun, and its dependents in the NP. In this regard, obligatory modifiers in government relations and optional modifiers in modification relations as well as modifiers in centrifugal relations and modifiers in centripetal relations shall be examined in this study.

Obligatory Modifiers in Government Relations

Laraghi and Parodi (2008) aver that government relation has to do with the dependency relation that exists between the governor and the governee where the governee which is dependent is an obligatory element (Cited in Priye, 2016). It is important to note that without these obligatory elements modifying the headword in the sentence, the construction may become ungrammatical. It is the determinants that perform this role in the NP. The modifiers in this class are few. The following are some examples: a, an, the, one, two, that, these, this, all, both, etc.

Optional Modifiers in Modification Relations

Optional modifiers in dependency relation are modifiers which are not obligatorily required in an NP (Luraghi and Paroth, 2008). Their absence in a sentence does not make the construction ungrammatical. The implication is that such modifiers are optional in the sentence. These optional modifiers are still in a modification relation with the headword in the NP because they are free in their occurrence in the NP. There are so many of such modifiers. The determinants are also part of this class (Cited in Priye, 2016).

Modifiers in Centrifugal Relations

Centrifugal relation, according to Kahane and Osborn (2005), has to do with a situation whereby in a dependence relation, the headword which is a noun is followed by its dependents which are noun modifiers. In a centrifugal structure, the head (noun) which is the governor precedes the dependents which are the governees (pre-modifiers of the noun) (Cited in Priye, 2016). For example, John, *the brightest student in the class,* is my friend. The words in italics which are dependent modifiers are in a centrifugal relation with the headword "John," (the governor). This structure can be expressed thus: Head + Dependent = Centrifugal relations.

Modifiers in Centripetal Relations

Centripetal relations is the opposite of the structure of centrifugal relations. This means that the dependent (governee) precedes the head (governor) in a centripetal relationship. This dependent relation has the following structure: Dependent + Head = Centripetal relations.

Theoretical Framework

Dependency Grammar

Dependency Grammar (henceforth, DG) was formulated by Lucien Tesniere, a French linguist, in 1959 in his Elements de Syntaxe structurale. It is a modern grammatical theory which is based on the dependency relation. According to Kahane and Osbome (2015), the theory came up as the concept DG in the 1960s when Tesniere's ideas were being received and evaluated (Cited in Priye, 2016).

Dependency has to do with linguistic units, e.g. words which are linked to each other by direct links. The finite verb is considered to be the clause's structural centre in the clause. The other syntactic units which are words are directly or indirectly connected to the finite verbs by way of the direct links which are called dependencies. Furthermore, a dependency structure is always determined by the relations between the headword and its dependents. Dependency structures do not have a finite verb phrase constituent, (Kanane & Osbome, 2015). Tesniere's conception of syntax entails connections, centrifugal (head-initial) and centripetal (head final) structures.

The Theory of D.G is relevant to this work in three ways: (i) this study's focus is on the English NP modification in some selected Nigerian newspapers; (ii) the NP which is the focus of this paper does not contain a finite verb because it is made up of dependency structures which do not have a finite verb phrase constituent; (iii) dependency structure is determined by the relation between the headword (noun) and its dependents (pre-modifiers and post-modifiers

in an NP); and (iv) Tesnieres concepts such as centrifugal and centripetal structures shall be the tools for analysing the English NP modifications in the selected newspapers.

Empirical Review

Priye (2016) conducted a study on the NP modification in selected Nigerian newspapers. The study examined how the English NP is modified in four newspapers (the Sun, the Nation, Vanguard and the Punch). One of its findings is that dependents in an NP usually have modification and government relations as well as one of centripetal and centrifugal relations with the heads.

The study is related to this study because both of them are based on the modification of the English NP in selected Nigerian newspapers. However, the difference between the two is that this study's focus is on the two lead stories of the two selected newspapers unlike the previous study which focused on all the news stories in the selected newspapers. The previous study made use of four newspapers while this study made use of two.

Methodology

Research Design

This is a qualitative research which made use of the descriptive research design.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is some selected Nigerian dailies which are the Nation and the Punch. These are newspapers published on the same day being March 30, 2022. The objective of selecting these dailies published on the same day is to establish how NP modifiers are used in terms of their differences and similarities in presenting the same news stories. These newspapers were carefully selected based on national spread in terms of readership, reputation and credibility with regard to news reportage.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling method which is a non-probability sampling method was used for this study. The focus is on the national dailies. The national dailies selected for this study are the Nation and the Punch. Twenty (20) samples in all were selected from the two newspapers. Ten samples each were selected from the two newspapers based on the lead stories. The following is the range of the twenty samples: The Nation 1-10 and The Punch 11-20.

Methods of Data Collection

The researcher identified all the NPs in the two lead stories. Ten NPs each were purposively selected (because of space constraints) from the lead news stories for analysis.

Methods of Data Analysis

The study applied the constituent structure analysis and Tesniere's centrifugal (head initial) and centripetal (head final) structures in analysing the data for this study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The Nation, March 30, 2022

1. **"A** Kaduna-bound train" Source: The nation March 30, 2022, p.1.
2. "Eight people..." Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022, p.1.
3. "Amaechi, Who inspected the scene of the attack" Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022, p.6.
4. "The impact of the explosive, which appeared to have been planted on the track by the left rail towards Dutse station from Rijana,..." Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022, p.6.
5. "The vice president..." Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022, p.6.
6. "The Inspector- General of Police (IGP), Usman Baba,..."Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022, p.6.
7. "The passenger manifest..." Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022. 6.
8. "The Managing Director of the Bank of the Agricultural (BOA), Alwan Ali Hassan ..." Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022. p.6.
9. "The spokesperson of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Zamfara state, Yusuf Idris,.." Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022, p.6.
10. "A director of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) Kaduna Head Office, Abdullsa Kofa-Mata and a young female dentist, Chinelo Nwando,..." Source: The Nation, March 30, 2022. P.6.

The Punch, March 30, 2022

11. "The passenger manifest.." Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022, p.2.
12. "The kaduna State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, who confirmed the figures,..." Source: The Punch, March 30(p.2.)
13. "The identities of those..." Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022, (p.2)
14. "The Deputy Speaker of the House, Ahmed Wase, ..."

Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022, (p.2).

15. "The Chairman of the forum and Governor of Plateau state, Simon Lalong in a statement on Tuesday,.." Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022, (p.2).
16. "The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu," Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022(p.2).
17. "Another passenger, Mohammed Isa, who was shot in the arm..." Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022, (p.2).
18. "The Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Faruk Yahaya, who visited the scene of the attack..." Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022,(p.2).
19. "The Passenger manifest" **Source:** The Punch, March 30, 2022. (p.2).
20. "My sister, Zainab Aroal,..." Source: The Punch, March 30, 2022. (p.1).

Structural Analysis

Dependent Determinants as NP Modifiers

Out of the twenty (20) samples, seventeen (17) of them contain determinants which modified the headword. The definite article "the" as used by the news reporter shows that the readers knew the noun referents prior to the time of the report, e.g., the vice president while others are mentioned for the first time.

Adjectives as Modifiers in an NP

Five dependent adjectives are employed. The Nation has 3 while the Punch has 2. The dailies here made use of these adjectives in order to make the headword clearer. The adjectives function as a limiter e.g., "Eight" and specifiers such as "senior special", etc.

Nouns as Modifiers in an NP

There are noun pre-modifiers. The Nation used 4 (serial no l, 4, 7 and 10) and the Punch employed 6 (1, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 19). The nouns function as adjectives to shed light on the headword in order to make it clearer to the reader.

Participle as a Modifier in an NP

Only 2 participles (serial nos. l and 8) are used in modifying the headword by the news reporters out of the total sampled population. The participle specifies the "director".

Appositives as Modifiers in a NP

A total of 8 appositives are used to modify the NP. Both newspapers employed 4 each: the Punch employed 4(12, 14 to 18 and 20) and the Nation also used 4(6, 8, 9, and 10). Through the use of the appositives, clarity is achieved because an already mentioned noun is being given further explanation. The appositives are also important in revealing the referent's status in terms of occupation, power, religion and ethnic affiliations.

Prepositional Phrases as optional Modifiers in an NP

There are 28 PPs which modified the heads in the sampled text. The news reporters have used the PPs to shed light on the headword by way of identifying the locations of the events in the NPs e.g., "on the track by the left rail toward Dutse station from Rijaria" (serial no 4). The newspapers' use of the PPs is appropriate because they provide the reader with more details on the NPs. The Punch used 16 while the Nation used 12.

Relative Clauses as Modifiers in an NP

Out of the 20 samples examined for this study, the news reporters made use of 5 relative clauses as modifiers of the headword. The newspapers had used the RC as a modifier of the headword in order to make the headword clearer to the reader by giving additional information for clarity purpose. The Punch made use of 3 (serial nos. 12, 17 and 18) while the Nation used 2 (serial nos.3 and 4).

Examination of the Dependency Relations

In this aspect, the study examines the type of relationship that exists between the headword and its dependents. The essence of this is to determine the status of a modifier if it is an optional or obligatory element in the NP. Secondly, it is to classify a NP as being in a centripetal or centrifugal relationship with its modifiers in the NP.

Determinants as Obligatory Modifiers in Government Relations
An examination of the samples indicates that the determinants are obligatory in order to ensure that the sentences are well-formed. The government relation comes into play between the headwords and the pre-modifiers. Most of the nouns used by the newspapers are common nouns. The rule in grammar is that every common noun in the singular form should be preceded by a determinant. Both newspapers used 8 pre-modifying determinants each.

Determinants as Optional Modifiers in Modification Relations
An examination of the determinants indicates 2 of the determinants (serial nos. 2 and 13) are not obligatory elements. The modification relation applies between the headword and the determinants which pre-modify the head. The 2 newspapers made use of one dependent determinant each as optional modifiers. The nouns are in the plural form which does not need an obligatory determinant in order to produce well-formed sentences. Therefore, the dependency relation still applies between the headword of the NP and its modifiers which are optional.

Nouns as Optional Modifiers of the head (Noun) in an NP
Nouns, though, usually function as the headword in an NP, they also carryout adjectival functions in an NP by being optional modifiers in an NP. The 2 newspapers used them as modifiers in modification relations. Such nouns are considered as optional because they can be removed from the sentence which will still be well-formed. The essence of using such optional nouns by the news reporters is to achieve clarity by the provision of additional information through the use of these optional nouns in the NP,

Appositives as Optional Modifiers of the Head (Noun) in an NP
Appositives as used in the two dailies are optional modifiers of the headword in the NP. If these dependent appositives are removed from the sentence, the sentences are still well-formed. In other words, there is a modification relation which exists between the appositives and the heads. The newspapers have used these appositives for the purpose of specificity. Both newspapers used four appositives each.

Prepositional Phrases as Optional Modifiers of the Headword (Noun) in NPs
PPs, as used by the two newspapers in their reportage, are optional modifiers in the various NPs. These are serial nos. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and no. 12 to 18. In other words, the PPs are dependent modifiers which are in modification relations that exist between the headword and the modifying PPs. It is important to note that the PPs may be omitted from the sentence which will still be grammatically correct. There are 28 PPs in all.

Relative Clauses as Optional Modifiers of the Headword in an NP
A relative clause is a rank shifted optional modifier in the NPs. The two newspapers used 6 of these dependent modifiers each (serial nos. 3, *4,* 12, 14, 17, 18). The Punch used *4* while the Nation applied 2. These relative clauses aid the journalists to clearly identify the referents in the news report. It is important to point out that these relative clauses when removed from the sentence do not affect the grammaticality of the sentence. Their presence only provides additional information to the reader to aid the reader to understand and appreciate the referents better. Hence, there is a dependency relation which exists between the post-modifying relative clause and the headword in an NP. There is a modification relation.

Participle as an Optional Modifier in an NP

There is just one (1) optional dependent participle used as an NP modifier in one of the two newspaper reports. Only the Nation used it in its news story. The participle is not an obligatory element, but optionally required. This participle is used by the journalist to describe the noun which is modified in the NP. This explanation is expressed in the sampled text (8). This indicates that there is a dependency relation that exists between the participle and the headword in the NP which has a modification relation.

Centrifugal Dependencies Analysis

Centrifugal dependencies reflect a syntactic structure whereby the head of an NP occupies the initial position which is followed by the post-modifiers in the NP. In other words, centrifugal dependencies involve a modification process whereby the modifiers follow the head of the NP. Hence modifiers such as the appositives, PP and the relative clauses are in centrifugal relation with the headwords in the NPs.

Centripetal Dependencies Analysis

Centripetal dependency modification has to do with a syntactic structure whereby the head of the NP is preceded by its modifiers which are called pre-modifiers. Thus, the following premodifiers, determinants, adjectives, nouns and participles are in centripetal relations with the headwords in the NPs.

Findings

Deductions and discussions in this study are made based on the objectives of the study. These formed the basis for the interpretations of the findings in this paper.

Research Question One

What is the modified NP in the selected Nigerian newspapers?

Based on the data presented, it appears there is a relative consistency in terms of how the NPs are modified by the two newspapers. The two newspapers have the same number of NP modifications in some areas. For instance, the sampled texts (serial nos. 1, 4 to 10 and 11, 12, 14 to 16, and 20) indicate that The Nation and the Punch newspapers made use of 8 obligatory modifiers each and one dependent determinant each (serial nos. 2 and 13) as optional modifiers. However, the modifications in other areas vary between + I or +2, or -1 - 2 as observed on the sampled texts. It is also observed that there is a preponderant use of PPs as dependent modifiers by the two dailies. This profuse use of the PPs as modifiers by the two newspapers is to achieve specificity, clarity and to provide more information on the headwords.

The use of the definite articles (determinants) by the news reports shows that the readers already know the referents. Some are top government functionaries, e.g., The Vice President, the Inspector-General of Police, etc. Some others who are not well known, the indefinite article is used to introduce them e.g., “A director of the National Board for Technical Education...,” etc. Other forms of modifications are the appositives, nouns and relative clauses. These modifiers actually shed light on the headwords.

Research Question Two

What are the different constituents of the NPs in the selected newspapers? The structural analysis shall be used to examine the clustering tendencies of the constituents in some of the samples.

Sample 3: "Amaechi who inspected the scene of the attack..."

i) Structural Analysis: H + RC + PP. This implies that, in an NP structure, the head may be followed by a relative clause and a PP as post-modifiers.

Sample 9: "The spokesperson of the All-Progressive Congress (APC) in Zamfara State, Yusuf Idris..."

i) **Structural Analysis:** Det + H + PP + PP + APP, This means that in an NP, determinant precedes the head, followed by PPs and APP.

Sample 12: "The Kaduna State commissioner for internal security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, who confirmed the figures...,"

ii) Structural Analysis: Det + N + N + H + PP + APP + RC

Sample 13: "The identities of those killed by the terrorist's..."

ii) **Structure Analysis:** Det + H + **PP** + PP. This means that in an NP, determinant precedes the head and may be followed by one or more PPs.

Sample 18: "The Chief of Army Staff, lieutenant General Faruk Yahaya, who visited the scene of the attack..."

iii) Structural Analysis: Det + H + N + N + APP + RC + PP. This is a heavily modified NP structure which has the determinant preceding the headword. The head is post-modified by one PP which is followed by two nouns that are also followed by an appositive, a relative clause and a PP.

The above *5* NP modification structures show that, in a news story, there are some constituents that have a particular clustering tendencies. For example, determinants more often than not are immediately followed by the headword as indicated on (ii), (iv) and (v) above.

Another NP constituent clustering tendency observed is that of the head being immediately followed by one or more PPs as found in (ii), (iv) and (v). The following constituent clustering tendencies are also identified PPs in a news story may be immediately followed by appositives as shown in (i), and (ii). Another constituent clustering tendency noticed is that of appositives immediately followed by a relative clause as captured in (i), and (v).

Research Question Three

What is the dependency relationship between the headword and its modifiers in the NPs?

In the course of this study, four dependency relationships were examined. The dependency relationships are government relations, optional modification relations, centrifugal relations and centripetal relations which are used to modify headwords that are used in this study. Determinants which are obligatory elements are modifying all the singular common nouns which are based on the modification relations where optional modifiers such as determinants, nouns, adjectives, PPs, etc., are dependent modifiers in modification relations.

The sampled texts indicate that determinants, adjectives, nouns, and participles as premodifiers are used to modify the headwords. This shows that centripetal relations exist while appositives, PPs, and relative clauses as post-modifiers are used to modify the headwords. This indicates that centrifugal relations are present in the sampled texts in this study.

Conclusion

The news reporter's major role is to inform and educate. How the NP is expressed or modified in a newspaper report becomes critical to both the newspaper reader and the newspaper reporter. The foregoing reasons have given the impetus for a detailed study of the language of newspapers in reporting news stories.

From the data presented, it is evident that there is a consistency with regard to how the NPs are modified by the two newspapers in their news reportage. Furthermore, the two newspapers made use of a similar number of NP modifiers. The study also noted that the two newspapers almost had the same range of modifiers. In some cases, it is either +1 or +2, or -I or -2 which is insignificant. The study asserts that the constituents have clustering tendencies in the NP modifiers in the two newspapers studied. The study also concludes that there are dependency relationships between the headwords and their dependents in the NPs. Another highlight of this study is that there is a profuse use of PPs. The NPs, as headlines, are barely modified or not modified at all in the two newspapers studied. The study, therefore, concludes that NPs in headline news stories are more often than not unmodified.

Recommendations

For the fact that the constituent structures of the English NP as used by the newspapers are relatively consistent which enhanced readership and understanding, this study recommends that news producers should continue with this standard while advising readers to familiarize themselves with the constituent structures to enhance understanding and readability.

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