

English Noun Phrase Morphosyntax

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The book *English Noun Phrase Morphosyntax* is considered by the author herself “a descriptively oriented study of morphosyntactic aspects of what is traditionally called the **noun phrase** (NP)”, a study whose declared main goal is to guide even those readers which are “remotely familiar with English linguistics” (p. 11) along the intricate paths of this structure. Both these affirmations prove to be completely true by the end of the book; it is easy to notice that Daniela Hăisan selects, organises and comments on the material she uses in such a way as to facilitate comprehension. Fully aware of her target readers, and a good didactician, too, the author arranges the material logically, from simple to complex and from familiar to un-/less familiar. Moreover, she clarifies each key-term the first time she uses it, then summarizes all the concepts in a chapter at the end of it, and provides really helpful visual support in the form of classifications and tables so that the readers are taken unawares by their sudden realisation that even the seemingly least accessible grammatical issues make sense! Needless to say that such a result can only be achieved by covering the whole material in the order suggested implicitly by the author.

The book comprises a preface, five chapters, 7 appendices and a bibliographical list.

In the **Preface** section the author explains in a few words the aims of the study, the linguistic theories she builds it on, and the way in which she organises her material.

Chapter 1, *Introduction to Morphology*, lays the foundations for the whole study. The general characteristics of various **schools of grammar** are presented briefly in order for the reader to follow more easily the line adopted by the author in her presentation of the linguistic material: the **morphemes**, the **wordclasses/forms** (of which the *noun* insisted on in a more detailed manner as compared to the *verb*, the *adjective* and the *adverb*, since this is the wordclass that gives the *head* of the *noun phrase*), the **structure classes** (*determiners*, *qualifiers* and *prepositions*), and **the three ranks of words** as Otto Jespersen defines them in *The Philosophy of Grammar*, 1958 (1924), p. 96. (Cf. Hăisan, p. 39)

Chapter 2, *(Noun) Phrases*, addresses the concept of **phrase** to begin with, then introduces the key-term of the whole study: the **noun phrase**. This is allotted a greater deal of space (pp. 46-62) than the other phrases in English (*i.e.*, the *verb phrase*, the *adjective phrase*, the *adverb phrase*, the *appositive phrase*, and the *absolute phrase*), which are treated in 9 pages altogether. The reason for defining and exemplifying such other phrases here will become completely sensible later on, in Chapter 4. This is to say that Chapter 2 prepares, or anticipates, Chapter 4 to some extent, in that the phrases that may function as *modifiers* are clarified by contrast with such structural concepts as *determiner* and *head* in order to make it unnecessary to do so when the focus is on various types of *modifiers* alone.

In **Chapter 3**, the structural class of **determiners** is set out in detail: *articles*, *demonstratives*, *quantifiers* (*exact* and *non-exact*), *possessive determiners*, *wh-determiners*, and *semi-determiners*. Their position and whether they are mutually exclusive or not in the NP structure are two of the issues insisted upon here.

Chapter 4 approaches the structural class of **modifiers**, those used in noun phrases being duly insisted on. According to their position relative to the head-noun, these are grouped into: **premodifiers** (*adjectives*, *participles*, *nouns*, *classifying genitives*, *adverbs*, *even phrases* and *clauses* embedded in the structure of the NP) and **postmodifiers** (*prepositional phrases*, *adjectives*, *adverbs*, *reflexive pronouns*, *relative clauses*, *non-finite clauses*, *other types*). Looking at the terminology used here to describe the linguistic phenomenon of **modification**, we understand why such concepts as *form classes* other than the *noun*, and *phrases* other than the *noun phrase* were absolutely necessary to introduce earlier: had they not been explained in Chapter 2, it would be difficult to keep the presentation simple, and clear, and to the point now.

Chapter 5 is meant to get all the detailed theoretical issues dealt with so far to a superior level: that of the syntax of the simple sentence. The syntactic functions of / the slots occupied by a noun phrase in a simple sentence (*i.e.*, *Subject*, *Subject Complement*, *Direct Object*, *Object Complement*, *Indirect Object*, *etc.*) are explained and illustrated with examples in the same manner as before, with clues of a predominantly visual nature (tables, bold and italic fonts). Here, too, out of the same great care and attention to detail, the author mentions

other phrases that may occupy positions similar to those occupied by the noun phrases. In other words, this chapter is a mini-treatise on the syntax of the simple sentence - the next logical step in a syntactic analysis that goes beyond the level of the phrase.

The theoretical support the author uses comes from an extremely wide range of both traditional and modern grammar studies. However, this does not impede the readers' processing all this material: it rather helps them understand the complexity of the issues presented. The ideas of some famous linguists and philosophers of language, members of the universal structural, functional-systemic/discourse, TGG, and other theories of grammar, such as Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, Chomsky, Jespersen, Hjelmslev, Crystal, Halliday, Downing and Locke, Berk, Falisnki, Kollnand Funk, etc. are mentioned along with those of some Romanian linguists of English, such as Bantaş, Duţescu-Coliban, Graur, Manoliu, Măciucă, Pârlog, Teodorescu. In this way, the author manages, once more, to give her study a personal touch. Her carefully selected examples provided at each and every step to endorse the theoretical ideas, the competent comments that she makes - as if anticipating the reader's queries and possible misunderstandings, the crossreferences that she inserts throughout the whole book, the conclusions that she draws all along, the summaries and the exercises she suggests in the sections called "Chapter # X in a Nutshell" and of "Further Practice", respectively, at the end of each chapter, the 7 appendices that come to complete the text, all contribute successfully to Ms. Hăisan's reaching her intended aim stated explicitly in the Preface: that of covering "most of the issues that have become prominent in the field, with a special focus on some of the aspects that might prove problematic for EFL students [...]" (Hăisan, p. 11) as far as the morphosyntax of the noun phrase is concerned.

Far from being tedious, as grammar studies generally are, this book is an excellent and entertaining reading, both for students, and, we may add, for the professionals who want to revise quickly such issues without spending time looking for explanations in tens of other specialised books on the same topic, books which Daniela Hăisan's well organised and balanced work is based on.

In conclusion, Daniela Hăisan's *English Noun Phrase Morphosyntax* is a book worth reading, using and keeping on the bookshelf by all those concerned with the fascinating in-depths of the English language.

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