



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Arts

AN OVERVIEW OF POST-MODIFIERS USED FOR NOUN PHRASE IN ENGLISH SYNTAX

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT

Post-modifier, in the present study, has been used as an equivalent to an English modifier that modifies the head of a noun phrase by coming after it. The aim of this study is to understand the configurations of commonly used post-modifiers in English syntax. The findings of this study showed fifteen types of commonly used post-modifiers. From utilitarian perspectives, the outcome of this study will help an English learner understand and use English post-modifiers better in their speech and writing.

Findings:

The findings of this study revealed fifteen types of commonly used post-modifiers as shown in Figure-1. Post-modifiers normally occurring after head noun in noun phrases are of mainly four types: lexical, phrasal, and clausal (finite and non-finite) which have been further classified into their respective sub-types below. The following are brief accounts of each of them.

1. Lexical Post-modifier: Lexical post-modifier occurs in the form of a single word and it modifies the noun head of an NP by coming immediately after it. There are mainly three types of lexical post-modifier: adjective, particle, and reflexive as elucidated below.

(a) Adjective: An adjectival post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, useful in a sentence like 'I want to read something useful.' the word useful is modifying the noun head something by coming after the head.

(b) Particle: A particle post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, below in a sentence like 'The examples below have been taken from Vedic literature.' the word below is modifying the noun head examples by coming after the head.

(c) Reflexive: A reflexive post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, myself in a sentence like 'I myself will go to invite him.' the reflexive word useful is modifying the pronominal head I by coming after the head.

2. Phrasal Post-modifier: Phrasal post-modifier occurs in the form of a phrase and it modifies the noun head of an NP by coming immediately after it. Phrasal post modifiers are mainly of three types: nominal, verbal, and prepositional as elucidated below.

(a) Nominal: A nominal post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'A wall six feet high will be too difficult to climb.' the nominal phrase six feet high is modifying the noun head wall by coming after the head.

(b) Verbal: A verbal post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The dress to be fitted needs ironing too.' the verbal phrase to be fitted is modifying the noun head dress by coming after the head.

(c) Prepositional: A prepositional post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'He has already sent me a list of suitable books.' the prepositional phrase of suitable books is modifying the noun head list by coming after the head.

3. Clausal Post-modifier: Clausal post-modifier occurs in the form of a clause and it modifies the noun head of an NP by coming immediately after it. Clausal post-modifiers are mainly of two types: finite clause post-modifier and non-finite clause post

modifier. The following are sub-classifications of the two clausal post-modifiers.

(a) Wh-clause post-modifier: A Wh-clause post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after it (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The girl who was smiling is his sister.' the Wh-clause who was smiling is modifying the noun girl by coming after it.

(b) That-clause post-modifier: A That-clause post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The reason that he gave me was illogical.' the That-clause that he gave me is modifying the noun head reason by coming after it.

(c) Unmarked clause post-modifier: An unmarked clause post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The reasons he found lacked concrete evidence.' the unmarked post-modifier he found is modifying the noun head reasons by coming after it.

(d) Appositive clause post-modifier: An appositive clause post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The fact that you lied proved good in bringing them together.' the appositive post-modifier that you lied is modifying the noun head fact by coming after it.

(e) As clause post-modifier: As clause post-modifier modifies a head adjective by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'You look as graceful as she does.' the As clause as she does is modifying the adjective graceful by coming after it.

(f) Than clause post-modifier: Than clause post-modifier modifies a head adjective by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'He was taller than I had expected.' the Than clause than I had expected is modifying the adjective tall by coming after it.

(g) Infinitive non-finite clause post-modifier (INFC): Infinitive clause post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after the head noun (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The man to fix that is Joe.' the Infinitive clause to fix that is modifying the head noun man by coming after it.

(h) Present participle non-finite clause post-modifier (PRNC): Present participle clause post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after it (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The girl flying the glider is my sister.' the Present participle clause flying the glider is modifying the head noun girl by coming after it.

Past participle non-finite clause post-modifier (PSNC): Past participle clause post-modifier modifies a head noun by coming immediately after it (see figure-1). For example, in a sentence like 'The last car sold at the auction is mine.' the PSNC sold at the auction is modifying the head noun car by coming after it.

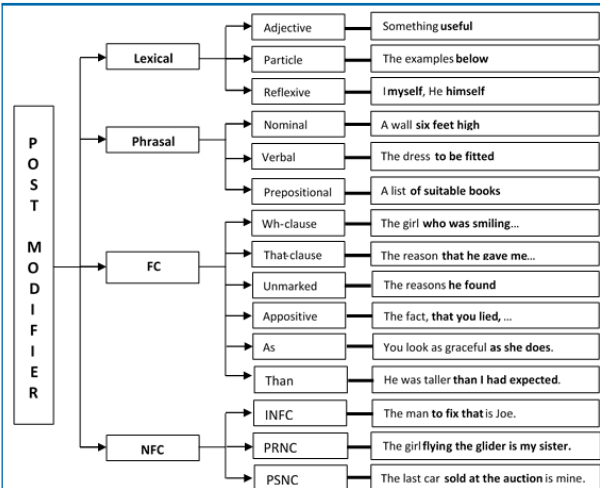


Figure: 1

Abbreviation: SC=subordinate clause, INFC=infinite clause, FC=finitive clause, NFC=non-finite clause, PRNC=present participle non-finite clause, PSNC=past participle nonfinite clause, INFC=infinite non-finite clause

CONCLUSION:

This short communication can be viewed more as a utilitarian product rather than a theoretical discourse as it tried to understand the configurations of commonly used post-modifiers in English syntax. The findings of this study showed fifteen types of commonly used post-modifiers. Since a good number of learners especially *beginners* and *intermediate learners* fumble in using post-modifier modifiers in their speech and writing, the overview made above will prove worthwhile from pedagogical perspective.

REFERENCES

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