

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE STRUCTURE OF NOUN PHRASES  
IN THE SPEECH OF FIFTH GRADE GIRLS

by

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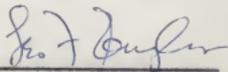
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

1.0 A small part of a larger program seeking norms for the speech of children in the public school of Manhattan, Kansas,<sup>1</sup> this study is an attempt to analyze the noun phrases used by fifth grade girls. What was recorded on tape was not formal, edited dialogue between two or three girls, but rather unorganized, rambling, natural talking, laughing, and noise, and of this what has been transcribed to manuscript are only the utterances of relatively distinct articulation. It is hoped that this study may present some significant information on the syntactic features of modification structures<sup>2</sup> handled by the fifth grade girls, and that it may also present a scientific method of analyzing real natural free speech by systematically tabulating and statistically classifying and categorizing the materials collected.

1.1 Purpose. The purpose of this study is two-fold: first, to analyze morpho-syntactically, in the girls' spontaneous speech,

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Engler and Elaine Hannah, "Toward Norms for the Speech of Children." Kansas State University Research Project 1964-65. These investigators tape-recorded the speech of boys and girls at first, third, and fifth grade levels in three public schools and transcribed the tapes to standard English orthography without punctuation to provide the basic data for the study. This paper is concerned exclusively with Manuscript XI A pp. 1-25 Fifth Grade Girls of the Engler/Hannah data.

<sup>2</sup>Modification structure refers to a construction whose constituents consist of a noun head and its modifying structure which can be a single determiner, e.g., "a boy" (Line 32), or a series of modifiers, e.g., "a (an) old sister who is sixteen" (Line 407). A modification structure may occur in any noun position in an English utterance.

their noun phrases and to learn something of their ability to use and expand modification patterns of English nominals; and second, to contribute to the theory of orders of modifiers with nouns in English and to the methodology of analysis of these constructions. Also, an attempt has been made to test the so-called DOCIQSASCOM<sup>3</sup> hypothesis and see if fifth grade school children really follow this order pattern in their language and at the same time find out how large a modification structure of noun phrase fifth grade girls are able to handle in their free speech. As the linguistics program aims at services, teaching and research, this study may be of some help to English teachers in preparing more effective and efficient teaching materials.

1.2 Scope. The data which is the basis of this study was made available through the kindness of Dr. Leo Engler and Dr. Elaine Hannah, faculty members of Speech Department of Kansas State University. This paper is concerned exclusively with Manuscript XI A pp. 1-25 Fifth Grade Girls of the Engler/Hannah data.

1.21 This study deals with the nominal constructions of the material examined. Thus in this paper the structure of every noun, every noun phrase and everything associated with the modification structure of nominal constructions in the recorded material will be considered. Since noun or noun phrase can be modified by some post-nominal modifiers which are also common in English, this study also includes the post-nominal modifiers in the recorded material.

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<sup>3</sup>See 2.32, p. 8.

1.3 Hypothesis. There is a system of orders followed by children in distribution of modifiers with noun head in nominal constructions. This order pattern is well represented by the acronym DOCIQSASCOM.

1.4 Null. There is no system; children place modifiers at random; or there is a system, but not well represented by DOCIQSASCOM.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 In the last forty years a number of linguists as well as grammarians have noticed that English has developed a fairly rigid system for arranging modifiers standing together in normal sequence without the need of coordinators between them, e.g., "Almost all the first ten very charming tall young school children like this candy," and "She has some long straight white hair on her head." But it should be remembered that there are restrictions on the order of occurrence of these pre-nominal modifiers, because a misplacement of the relative order of these modifiers may produce a non-sensical modification structure or an expression sounding non-normal to the native speaker of English. For this reason the placement of the pre-nominal modifiers has to follow the normal sequence. Whether the native speaker has ever heard a sequence like the two above examples of modification structure before or not, theoretically an expanded sequence of this sort is possible in English.

2.01 In this chapter, a description at length of the contributions of all the linguists and grammarians whose works are related to the description of the order pattern of pre-nominal modifiers is beyond the scope and purpose of this study, because what is undertaken here is by no means an exhaustive description of all the contributions in this field. However, it is rather

important to point out some representatives whose works are concerned with theory of establishing the order pattern of English modifiers which is relevant to this study. Other linguists and grammarians who also have contributed to the description of the order of pre-nominal modifiers will be listed chronologically in Footnote Four.<sup>4</sup>

2.1 Structural Analysis of the Order of Pre-Nominal Modifiers. Otto Jespersen first enunciated the theory of "word ranks" in 1924 and defined noun (or substantive) as primary in rank, the so-called adjective as secondary and adverb as tertiary. Thus Jespersen established three "ranks" for describing the modification structure of English Nominals. His examples are "very(III) good (II) wine(I)" and "much(II) good (II) white(II) wine(I)."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Leonard Bloomfield, Language, 1933, 194:196.

Charles C. Fries and Yao Shen, An Intensive Course in English for Chinese Students, 1946, p. 369.

Charles C. Fries and Yao Shen, The Structure of English: An Introduction to the Construction of Sentence, 1952, p. 213.

Audrey L. Wright, Practice Your English: Practique Su Ingles, 1953, 62:63.

H. A. Gleason, An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics, 1955, 142:147.

H. A. Gleason, Workbook in Descriptive Linguistics, 1955, p. 47.

Paul Roberts, Pattern of English, 1956, 81:95, 124, 127.

Paul Roberts, Understanding English, 1958, 202:203.

Robert Lees, "The Grammar of English Nominizations," IJAL, July, 1960, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup>Otto Jespersen, The Philosophy of Grammar, 1924, 96:100.

2.2 Semantic Analysis of the Order of Pre-nominal Modifiers. In 1956 Hook and Mathews, in dealing with the order of single-word adjectives, pointed out the tendency to move from the general to the specific in the placement of modifiers when two or more single-word adjectives modify the same noun head. That is, limiting adjectives generally come first, then descriptive. If, however, a limiting adjective gives location or identification of the noun, it comes closest to the noun. In their example "The seven tall German soldiers emerged quickly," the, seven and German are all limiting modifiers. Because German has the function of identification, it comes closest to the noun head, soldiers. According to Hook and Mathews, descriptive adjectives are also arranged roughly from more general to more specific. In their example "large red barn" the size modifier is first in order and then the color modifier, because red, the more specific word, follows large, the more general word.<sup>6</sup>

### 2.3 The Order Classes of English Pre-nominal Modifiers.

Probably the most extensive discussion of the order feature of the single-word modifiers in an English nominal phrase was given by Archibald A. Hill in 1958. He provided the basic theory of order classes for describing the word order of single-word modifiers. His book, which is directly relevant to this study, is entitled Introduction to Linguistic Structures: From Sound to Sentence in

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<sup>6</sup>J. N. Hook and E. G. Mathews, Modern American Grammar and Usage, 1956, 110:121.

English (New York, 1958). In it, from page 175 to 190, Hill introduced a model phrase and numbered each modifier and described it according to its closeness to noun head:

VI	V	IV	III	II	I	N
all	the	ten	fine	old	stone	houses
/ɔh1 + ʔə + ten + fayn + owl + stɔwn + hawziz/						

The characteristic stress pattern of this phrase is a series of secondaries preceding the primary stress on the noun head. The characteristic juncture pattern of this noun phrase is a series of plus junctures /+/. In such an expanded sequence, each class of modifiers as designated has its fixed position with other classes of modifiers in correlation. It seems the pre-nominal modifiers are bound to follow this normal sequence, for otherwise the structural meaning of this phrase is affected.

2.31 Based on this model phrase, Hill defined six big groups of modifiers as six order classes:

Group I is the type of noun modifier to which all the uninflected noun forms belong.

Group II is roughly described semantically by saying that its membership consists of the color adjectives; the age group, old, new, young; and the shape-size group, big, huge, little, small, tall, high, thick, slim, thin, fat, and stout.

Group III, according to Hill, contains all the modifiers whose position is not defined.

Group IV contains the type of modifier which includes numerals, ordinal and cardinal.

Group V contains adjectives, (that is, the articles and demonstratives), and possessive forms of pronouns and of nouns.

Group VI contains the type of modifier which includes adjectives rather than adjectives, since none of them is compared, i.e., all, both and half.

2.32 Following Hill's systematic analysis of the order classes of single-word modifiers, in recent years there has grown among linguists, an acronym, DOCIQSASCOX, which is a cover label for a hypothetical order pattern for the placement of pre-nominal modifiers in accordance with the normal English speech habits. These abbreviations represent Determiner, Ordinal, Cardinal, Intensifier, Quality, Size, Age, Shape, Color and Material modifiers. Basically this order pattern will serve as the model for this study, but we see immediately that it is inadequate in that it fails to account for, among other things, Nationality.

2.4 Summary. The work of Hill, like that of Jespersen as well as that of Hook and Mathews, can not be summarized in a few words or paragraphs. One who wishes to judge its value should spend considerable time upon it, so what has been reviewed here is only a small part of the order system which is relevant to this study.

## CHAPTER III

## PROCEDURE

3.1 The Engler-Hannah Procedure.

3.11 These investigators tape-recorded the speech of children in the public school system of Manhattan, Kansas. They found three elementary schools in the system which were representative of the cross section of the socio-economic strata of the community, and at each school had teachers choose eight boys and eight girls from each of three grades, first, third and fifth, whom they considered "normal", who were from 90 to 110 IQ on the Otis scale, and who had no record of identification for speech or hearing problems. At each school they used two rooms for recording, with hidden microphones. The first room, called "holding room", was equipped with a table and sets of plastic toys. The second, called "interview room", was equipped with a table, three chairs, and a set of pictures from the adult TAT test. First, eight boys were brought from the first grade classroom to the holding room and allowed to play with the toys and to converse. Then two of these boys were taken to the interview room, leaving six to converse in "free field". The two interviewees were shown the TAT pictures and asked to discuss them, but the interviewer stayed out of the conversation as much as possible. After ten minutes, the interview was terminated, the boys returned to the holding room, and two more boys interviewed. When all eight boys had been interviewed, the group was returned to the classroom and eight

first grade girls installed in the holding room, and the process repeated, then third grade boys, and so on. The result was over thirty hours of tape of the speech of 144 children, half in free field and half in the structured interview situation.

3.12 The tapes were transcribed in orthography, without punctuation, but including "ums and ahs", lapses, "noise" and innovations. The manuscripts were coded to correspond with the tapes and to indicate holding or interview, boys or girls, and grade level. Scanners then listened to the tapes again while watching the manuscripts, and marked the manuscripts at places corresponding to pauses heard in the speech on the tapes. The material between every two marks was called a segment, and corresponded roughly to a phrase, clause, or sentence, and was transferred to a 3x5 card provided with blanks and labels corresponding to a linguistically oriented model for the grammar of English, based on slot-filler display.

### 3.2 The Hsu Procedure.

3.21 Inspection of Slots for Noun Phrase-fillers. With the slot-filler idea, the author is able to identify the noun heads and their modifiers in a nominal structure in any position in a segment. Through the kindness of Dr. Leo Engler and Dr. Elaine Hannah, the author used (1) a working tape copied from the original one, (2) the manuscript morphologically transcribed from the original tape and (3) the punch-cards to each of which a segment is transferred.

3.22 Eight Categories Necessary for Classifying the Material. In the material examined here, in addition to the lone nouns or noun phrases appearing in (1) Sub 'subject slot', (2) Obj 'object slot' or (3) Com 'complement slot', there are several other situations in which the lone noun and noun phrases occur. For the sake of classification, those which cannot be classified as belonging to Sub, Obj, or Com will be classed according to their function in the sentence pattern. Thus in the material some lone nouns or noun phrases are classed as (4) Seq 'sequential sentence elements', because in certain expressions, or in answering questions, the fifth grade girls often used minor sentence forms consisting of only a noun or a noun phrase: the occurrence of the short sentence form is owing to the preceding utterance. In the material also some lone nouns or noun phrases are classed as (5) Spe 'special sentence elements', because their appearance in the speech is in a situation of redundant expression or exclamatory expression. Also in the material there is a type of nominal construction occurring in the post-verb position which is introduced by a prepositional marker. Some of these constructions function as a complement, e.g., "Dr. Casey's in troubles." (see Line 261); and others as a modifier of verb, e.g., "A guy sold his eyes for seven hundred fifty dollars." (see Line 264). Since the fifth grade girls used this type of nominal construction so often in their speech, it will be considered as a category in this study and will be arbitrarily called (6) AAP 'adjectival and/or adverbial phrases'. In the material there are also some fragmentary

elements which have no connection with the functional slots, because some of the sentence elements are missing, so they are put in (7) Mis 'miscellaneous category'. The last category includes the nouns or noun phrases with post-nominal modifiers appearing in the subject slot or object slot or complement slot, so this category is called (8) Post 'post-nominal modifiers in Sub, Obj, or Com'.

3.23 Five Sections within Each Category. The lone nouns and noun phrases in each category are divided into five sections as necessary. (a) Zero Modifier Section to which the lone nouns without modifier belong, e.g., "football" (see Line 340). (b) One-element Modifier Section to which the noun phrases with just one modifier belong, e.g., "her age" (Line 509). (c) Two-element Modifier Section to which the noun phrases with two modifiers belong, e.g., "your little girl" (Line 34). (d) Three-element Modifier Section to which the noun phrases with three modifiers belong, e.g., "some other little details" (Line 336). (e) Four-element Modifier Section to which the noun phrases with four modifiers belong, e.g., "this little old fat lady" (Line 404).

3.3 Measures of Study. Ten steps are considered necessary for the study of the fifth grade girls' language.

(1) To ascertain from the manuscript (XI A pp. 1-25), the structure of all noun phrases, and everything associated with the structures of modification, by underlining them.

(2) To check each underlined part on the manuscript with working tape and to see if there is any mistake in transcription

or identification of nouns or noun phrases; and to make certain there is no syntactic ambiguity of the modification structure underlined.

(3) To transcribe each underlined modification structure or lone noun on a 3x5 card and mark on each of the cards at the top an abbreviation, i.e., Sub, or Obj, or Com, or APP, or Seq, or Spe, or Mis, or Post (Sub, Obj, or Com), so as to show to which category it belongs.

(4) To mark every modifier in a noun phrase with one of the relevant abbreviations, i.e., Ppd, Pd, D1, D2, D3, Ln, Lc, O, C, I, Q, S, A, Sh, Cn, Co, M, Nm, Aps, Cl, P, Pa, Inf, Ad, Aj, Ø. These abbreviations are explained in 4.1. Each of these serves to designate one single type of modifier used by the fifth grade girls in their spontaneous speech.

(5) To arrange thus prepared cards into eight categories and rearrange each category into five sections as mentioned in 3.21 and 3.22 above.

(6) To transfer thus classified material to 8½ x 11 sheets under each relevant category for tabulation. Thus the Appendix for this study is prepared.

(7) To tabulate all the materials collected according to the purpose of this study so as to reveal the distribution situation and the frequency of each type of modifier used by the fifth grade girls.

(8) To describe each category found in tabulation on the basis of morphosyntactic characteristics of fillers so as to show

the fifth grade girls' ability in regard to the use of modifiers in nominal constructions.

(9) To point out the language problems found in the fifth grade girls' spontaneous speech from the grammatical point of view.

(10) The concluding chapter is a summary of findings and conclusions regarding the hypothesis of this study.

3.4 Summary. Through careful examination of the material, a total of 237 nominal constructions (197 noun phrases and 40 lone nouns) have been selected from the total 577 utterances in the manuscript examined. These selected nominal constructions have been classified into eight categories and five sections in each category. Thus a workable system for examining each type of modifier in the noun phrase has been prepared in the Appendix.

## CHAPTER IV

## DISTRIBUTION OF MODIFIERS

4.0 This chapter is mostly concerned with the distribution of nominal constructions in each relevant category and with the frequency of use of various types of modifiers by the fifth grade girls in two hours of their spontaneous speech. This will be described by figures calculated through careful tabulation of the material examined. All the tables in this chapter are based on the data in Appendix which has been carefully analyzed and classified into various relevant categories for the purpose of this study. The terms and their abbreviations used in this paper are listed and briefly phrased, as necessary, in the following:

D1 (Type-1 determiner or the so-called possessive) includes 's, my, his, her, its, their, your, and our.

D2 (Type-2 determiner or the so-called article and demonstratives) includes the, this, that, these, those.

D3 (Type-3 determiner) includes a/an, each, every, some, any, many, most, little, much, several, few, another, either, neither.

Pd (pre-determiner) means that by position the modifier which occurs before a determiner is called pre-determiner, e.g., all in "all his insides" (Line 202).

PPd (pre-pre-determiner) means that by position the modifier occurring before pre-determiner is called pre-pre-determiner, e.g., too in "too much of a fuss" (Line 451). The modifiers nearly and almost often are used in this position.

Dob (double determiner) means there are two determiners in the modification structure, e.g., "the baby's heart" (Line 52).

Tri (triple determiner) means that in the modification structure there are three determiners which may be of the same kind, e.g., "my mom's dad's name" (441), or of the order pattern, "almost all the...".

Lm (limitative modifier), e.g., "twin boys" (420), and "any other kids" (431).

Lc (limitative class), e.g., "a pot of gold" (269).

O (ordinal) includes first, second, third, etc.

@ (cardinal), e.g., one, two, three, etc.

I (intensifier), e.g., rather in "rather long hair" (194).

Q (quality modifier), e.g., good, bad, poor, cute, beautiful, etc.

S (size modifier), e.g., big, small, tall, large, etc.

A (age modifier), e.g., young, old, etc.

Sh (shape modifier), e.g., fat, thin, slender, etc.

Cn (condition modifier), e.g., silent in "a long silent dark night".

Co (color modifier), e.g., red, white, yellow, etc.

Nm (noun modifier), e.g., "car tags" (464), "county treas-  
urer's office" (465).

Aps (appositive construction), e.g., "you guys" (70), "girls, you know" (177).

Cl (clause modifier), e.g., "My grandma knew a man that was  
a millionaire" (394).

P (prepositional phrase), e.g., "a girl in the car driving" (402).

Pa (participle), e.g., "a girl in the car driving" (402).

Inf (infinitive phrase), e.g., "We have something to do." (111).

Ad (adverbial), e.g., "There is two alike." (130), "a long time ago" (342).

Adj (adjectival), e.g., "I have some relations overseas...." (398)

$\emptyset$  indicates the modifier in the noun phrase was indistinguishable, e.g., "         heart" (76).

4.1 One-element Modifier Section. In the material examined here, 140 noun phrases have only one-element modifier: 22 of the noun phrase structures occur in subject slot, 32 occur in object slot, 30 in complement slot, 31 in adjectival and/or adverbial category, 13 in sequential sentence category, 6 in miscellaneous category. In post nominal modifier category, 1 occurs in subject slot, 3 occur in object slot, and 2 in complement slot. Regarding the number of each type of modifiers used in these 140 one-element modifier section, see Table 1. below.

Table 1. One-element modifier

Items	Number of Noun Phrases Occurring in								Total	
								(with post-modifier)		
	Sub	Obj	Com	AAP	Seq	Spe	Mis	Sub		Obj
	22	32	30	31	13	6	1	3	2	140
D1	8	10	2	5			2			27
D2	12	8	9	18						47
D3	2	10	17	3	10	1				43

Table 1 (cont.)

		Number of Noun Phrases Occurring in											
		(with post-modifier)											
Items		Sub	Obj	Com	AAP	Seq	Spe	Mis	Sub	Obj	Com	Total	
Number of Each Type of Modifier	Lm				1	1						2	
	O				1			1				2	
	C		2		1							3	
	I												
	Q												
	S												
	A												
	Cn			1									1
	Co			1									1
	Nm				1	2							3
	Aps									1			1
	Cl										2		2
	P					1							1
	Pa												
	Inf										1		1
	Ad				2							2	4
∅								2				2	
<b>Total</b>												<b>140</b>	

4.2 Two-element Modifier Section. In the material 44 noun phrases have two-element modifiers: 7 of these noun phrases occur in subject slot, 12 in object slot, 7 in complement slot, 3 in adverbial and/or adjectival category, 4 in sequential sentence category, 4 in miscellaneous category. In the post-nominal modifier category, 1 occurs in subject slot, 3 in object slot, and 1 in complement slot. Regarding the number of each type of modifiers used in these 44 noun phrases, see Table 2 below.

Table 2. Two-element modifier

		Number of Noun Phrases Occurring in										
		(with post-modifier)										
Items		Sub	Obj	Com	App	Seq	Spe	Mis	Sub	Obj	Com	Total

Table 2 (cont.)

	Number of Noun Phrases Occurring in										
	Items	(with post-modifier)									Total
		Sub	Obj	Com	App	Seq	Spe	Mis	Sub	Obj	
	7	12	7	3	4	2	4	1	3	1	44
(Dob)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)						(8)
Pd	1	2	1	1	1						6
D1	7	3	2		1	2	1				16
D2	2	5	1	1			3				12
D3		3	4		3				1	1	12
Lm		3		1							4
Lc					1		1				2
O											
C	1										1
I		2									2
Q											
S	2	3	4	1	1	2	1				14
Cn											
Co			2								2
Nm	1	1					2				4
Aps					1						1
P	1			1				2	3	1	7
Pa									1		1
Cl									1		1
Ad				1							1
∅		2									2
<b>Total</b>											<b>88</b>

4.3 Three-element Modifier Section. In the material, 12 noun phrases have three-element modifiers: 2 of these occur in subject slot, 2 in object slot, 2 in complement slot, 2 in adjectival and/or adverbial category, 1 in miscellaneous category. And in the post-nominal modifier category, 3 occur in object slot. Regarding the number of each type of modifiers used in these 12 three-element modifier, see Table 3 on the following page.



4.5 Lone Noun Head with Zero Modifier. In the material examined here 40 noun heads have no modifier: 8 occurring in subject slot, 9 in object slot, 4 in complement slot, 9 in adjectival and/or adverbial category, 2 in sequential sentence category, 5 in special sentence category, and 3 in miscellaneous category. (See Table 5.)

Table 5. Lone noun heads (without modifier)

Items	Number of Lone Noun Heads Occurring in							Total
	Sub	Obj	Com	AAP	Seq	Spe	Mis	
	8	9	4	9	2	5	3 /	40

4.6 Summary. The total number of noun phrase structures appearing in each functional slot or category has been calculated as follows: 32 noun phrases occur in subject slot, 46 in object slot, 39 in complement slot, 36 in adjectival and/or adverbial category, 17 in sequential sentence category, 2 in special sentence category, 11 in miscellaneous category. In the post-nominal modifier category, 2 occur in subject slot, 9 in object slot, and 3 in complement slot. (See Table 6.)

Table 6. The distribution of noun phrases in each category

Items	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Total
Subject Slot	22	7	2	1	32
Object Slot	32	12	2		46
Complement Slot	30	7	2		39

Table 6 (cont.)

Items	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4	Total
AAP Category	31	3	2		36
Seq Category	13	4			17
Spe Category		2			2
Miscellaneous Category	6	4	1		11
Post-nominal Modifiers in	Sub Slot	1	1		2
	Obj Slot	3	3	3	9
	Com Slot	2	1		3
Total	140	44	12	1.	197

4.61 It is noted that in the total 197 nominal constructions, 268 modifiers have been used by the fifth grade girls in the two-hour sample of their speech. In order to see a whole picture of the distribution of each individual type of modifier, Table 7 is so prepared as to provide the total number of each type of modifier used in the children's speech. Of the total 268 modifiers, 2 are PPD 'pre-pre-determiner', 10 Pd 'pre-determiner', 48 D1 'type-1 definite determiner', 60 D2 'type-2 definite determiner', 63 D3 'indefinite determiner', 6 Lm 'limitative modifiers', 2 Lc 'limitative class', 3 ordinals, 7 cardinals, 2 intensifiers, 17 size modifiers, 2 age modifiers, 3 color modifiers, 2 condition modifiers, 11 noun modifiers, 2 modifiers of apposition, 7 clause modifiers, 8 prepositional phrases, 1 participle, 1 infinitive phrase, 1 adjectival, 4 adverbials, and 4  $\emptyset$ . In addition, there are 3 constructions of triple determiners and 8 constructions of double determiners. (See Table 7 on the following page)

Table 7. Total number of each  
type of modifiers used in the 197 noun phrases

Items	Table 1 <u>140</u>	Table 2 <u>44</u>	Table 3 <u>12</u>	Table 4 <u>1</u>	Total <u>197</u>
(Tri)			(3)		(3)
(Dob)		(8)			(8)
PPd			2		2
Pd		6	4		10
D1	27	16	4		47
D2	47	12	1		60
D3	43	12	9	1	65
Lm	2	4			6
Lc		2			2
O	2				2
C	3	1	1		5
I		2			2
Q					
S		14	3	1	18
A			1	1	2
Sh				1	1
Cn	1		1		2
Co	1	2			3
Nm	3	4	4		11
Apr	1	1			2
Cl	2	1	3		6
P	1	7	1		9
Pa		1			1
Inf	1				1
Adj			1		1
Ad	4	1	1		6
Ø	2	2			4
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>268</b>

Number  
of  
Each Type  
of  
Modifier

## CHAPTER V

## ANALYSIS OF FIFTH GRADE GIRLS' LANGUAGE

5.0 This chapter is concerned with the language ability and the language problems of the fifth grade girls in regard to the use of modifiers in the noun phrases in the two-hour sample of their spontaneous speech.

5.1 Examination by Model of Order. In order to demonstrate the fact that these fifth grade girls are able to follow the order system of pre-nominal modifiers, some typical example phrases of expanded sequence in the recorded material should be examined by the model of order in the following:

Line No.	Modification Structure	Model of Order
(189)	1 2 "the first graders"	12 DOCIQSASCOM
(34)	1 2 "your little girl"	1 2 DOCIQSASCOM
(194)	1 2 "rather long hair"	1 2 DOCIQSASCOM
(404)	1 2 3 4 "this big old fat lady"	1 234 DOCIQSASCOM

In addition to these four examples, there are some other noun phrases of expanded sequence in the material, which are beyond the scope of the model of order DOCIQSASCOM. They are also in the normal familiar word order of English pre-nominal modifiers and

they will be examined by the model order DOCIQSASCOM as well as the orders described in 4.0 as follows:

Line No.	Modification Structure	Model of Order
(202)	1 2 "all his insides"	1 2 Pd.DOIQSASCOM
(431)	1 2 "any other kids"	1 2 D.Lm.OCIQSASCOM
(336)	1 2 3 "some other little details"	1 2 3 D.Lm.OCIQSASCOM
(438)	1 2 "his dad's name"	1 2 D1.D1.OCIQSASCOM
(441)	1 2 3 "my mom's dad's name"	1 2 3 D1.D1.D1.OCIQSASCOM
(292)	1 2 3 "a little tinker toys"	1 2 3 DOIQSASCOM.Nm
(465)	1 2 3 "the county treasurer's office"	1 2 3 DOIQSASCOM.Nm.Nm

The modifying structure in each of the noun phrases examined in this section is in normal familiar English word order. The first example noun phrase suffices to show the fifth grade girls are able to expand the sequence from "this lady" to "this big old fat Lady". As far as that much of word order in the modification structure used in their speech is concerned, they seem to follow the sequence nicely and precisely.

5.2 The Placement of Some. In the material examined there is an interesting use of some in a modification structure by the fifth grade girls, e.g., "My mom has been married probably twenty some years." (Line 406). The speaker of this utterance has the ability to substitute for an exact number she does not know, the limiting modifier some which suggests an unknown number. Note that the statement, "She has been married some twenty years," is not the same. It means about twenty years, whereas the girl's "twenty some years" means more than that much, perhaps considerably more.

5.3 Noun Modifier. In the material there are 11 cases of compound construction. That is, two nouns stand together; the one first in order is a noun modifier which modifies the noun following it, e.g.,

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| "the <u>county treasurer's</u> office" (465) | " <u>farm</u> set" (110)        |
| "the <u>Beverly Hillbillies</u> " (386)      | " <u>car</u> tags" (464)        |
| "a little <u>tinker</u> toys" (292)          | " <u>school</u> crossing" (273) |
| "the <u>tape</u> recorder" (331)             | "the <u>fire</u> engine" (217)  |
| "a <u>railroad</u> thing" (282)              |                                 |

In English one characteristic feature of using noun as modifier is that English can use more than one noun to modify (or restrict) a noun head, but the one first in order modifies the combination of the other two nouns which follow it. The first example phrase in this section indicates that the fifth grade girls have no difficulty in using noun modifiers to make compound constructions of this sort of sequence.

5.4 The Various Forms of Determiner. In the material examined it is noted that the very general determiners like a/an, some, the, this, that, my, his, your, etc., are so frequently used in their speech that no examples are here necessary, but the idiomatic combinations of various determiners are also used in their speech. Some typical examples will be given here:

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| "lots of fun" (7)              | "bunch of lettuce" (389)   |
| "a pot of gold" (269)          | "all of his ideas" (256)   |
| "some of our relations" (397)  | "too much of a fuss" (451) |
| "a little bit of a fuss" (451) |                            |

5.5 Function Noun. As the following examples show, the fifth grade girls are able to use many kinds of function nouns in their speech:

(1) Determiners as Function Noun

"Look at all of this." (201)

(2) Limiting Modifiers as Function Noun

"You guys can be next to the last." "Is it at the last." (29)

(3) Ordinal as Function Noun

"or at the first" (29)

(4) Cardinals as Function Noun

"We need another red one." (297) "Then you two first." (48)

"She is the one that picked us...." "the same one" (515)  
(304)

"Give me another one." (295) "Get two more." (48)

(5) True Adjectives as Function Noun

- "She is the fattest." (427)      "She is the smallest." (426)  
 "She is the biggest too." (425)

Note that they even use an intensifier as a function noun, e.g.,  
 "Oh my this is a real." (77)

5.6 Noun Phrases in the Position of Direct Object. In the material examined there are only three noun phrases appearing in the position of direct object, e.g., "Find me a car." (248), "Ask some of um (them) their names." (376), and "Show ya (you) about seven pictures." (213).

5.7 The Use of Coordinators. In the material examined it is noted that the fifth grade girls never used a coordinator like and between two or more modifiers which modify the same noun head. They only used the coordinator to connect two nouns phrases, or more, e.g.,

- "boy and girl" (422)      "those rings and stuffs" (387)  
 "a girl and a boy" (423)      "his hair cuts and everything" (444)  
 "because of the hair and the face" (483)  
 "a man or a boy or a lady or a girl in the car driving" (402)

5.8 Post-Nominal Modifier. In the material examined there are six types of post-nominal modifiers which appear in the fifth grade girls' speech: (1) single-word modifier, (2) prepositional phrase as modifier of a noun head, (3) infinitive phrase as modifier of a noun head, (4) participle or participial phrase as modifier of a noun head, (5) clause as modifier of a noun head, and (6) the appositive construction.

5.81 Single-Word Modifier. There are three cases of single-word modifiers which appear in the post-nominal position in fifth grade girls' speech:

"I have some relation overseas that's way ways (always) rich." (398)

"My little bitty baby will be sixteen years apart from my older sister." (409)

"There is two alike." (130)

In the first examples both the single-word modifiers are adverbials which are typical modifiers appearing in the post-nominal position in English and which seldom appear in other positions. The fifth grade girls picked up this type of modifier and used it in the usual position. But the second example "apart" is not commonly used in this particular structure of modification. According to the speech habit of adults the phrase "younger than" or "older than" probably would be used in this structure, or they might say, "There are sixteen years between my older sister and my little bitty baby." Perhaps by using the work "apart", the ten-year-old speaker was emphasizing how far she felt her little bitty baby was from her grown up sister in compartmentalized time or perhaps she did not have mastery of the use of the comparative degree and so used "apart" instead. In the last example, the modifier "alike" is an adjectival following the function noun "two" and modifying it. The modifier "alike" is the usual word in a structure of this sort, but in this example the ten-year-old speaker used a minor colloquial deviation in verb agreement. The model calls for "There ARE two alike," rather than "There IS two alike."

5.82 Prepositional Phrase as Modifier of a Noun Head. In the fifth grade girls' speech, there are seven examples of prepositional phrases functioning as modifiers of noun heads, e.g.,

"We can't tell if it is a man or a boy or a girl in the car driving." (402)

"I knew a guy in Manhattan or Topeka that has thirty-four million." (393)

"We have one boy in that one room." (379)

"Tell the boys in our class." (246)

"Nobody in the family but him likes it." (442)

"Here is a house with that \_\_\_\_\_." (226)'

"Are we \_\_\_\_\_ research about kids or something." (179)

The blanks in the last two examples represent passages which are indistinguishable on the tape.

5.83 Infinitive Phrase as Modifier of a Noun Head. In the material examined no example is found of an infinitive phrase modifying a noun head, but there is a modification structure whose constituents are a pronoun and an infinitive phrase as its modifier, e.g., "We have something to do." (111)

5.84 Participle or a Participial Phrase as Modifier of a Noun Head. In the material examined, only two examples are found, e.g.,

"everybody talking through that man" (308)

"a girl in the car driving" (402)

In the first example the speaker places the participle "talking" immediately after the pronoun "everybody" and has a prepositional

phrase follow the participle and modify it. In the second example the speaker places the participle "driving" after the prepositional phrase "in the car". The arrangement of the post-nominal modifiers in this sequence indicates the fifth grade girls are able to handle this sort of structure on a rather complex level.

5.85 Clause as a Modifier of a Noun Head. In the material, seven examples of modifying clause are found in the fifth grade girls' speech:

"You tell us all that you learned." (364)

"You know something we don't know." (360)

"I have a old sister who is sixteen." (407)

"My grandma knew a man that was a millionaire." (394)

"She is the one that picked us to come down here." (304)

"I have some relation overseas that's way ways (always)  
rich." (398)

"I knew a guy in Manhattan or Topeka that has thirty-four  
million." (393)

In the first example the clause that you learned modifies the function noun all. In the second example the clause we don't know modifies the pronoun something. In the fourth example the clause that was a millionaire modifies man. In the fifth example the clause that picked us to come down here modifies the function noun one. In the sixth example the clause that's way ways (misspelled "always") rich is intervened by the single-word post-nominal modifier overseas, and both of them modify the noun phrase some relation. In the last example the clause that has thirty-four

million is intervened by a compound prepositional phrase in Manhattan or Topeka; and both of these two post-nominal modifiers modify the noun phrase a guy. Of these seven examples only the second one is not introduced by a clause marker. Third example is the only one which is introduced by the clause marker who in the fifth grade girls' speech. The remaining five examples are all introduced by the clause marker that. In the third example sentence the ten-year-old speaker used a minor deviation in using a for an before the noun with initial vowel.

5.86 The Structure of Apposition. In the material examined it is noted that the fifth grade girls are able to use the structure of apposition as the modifier of noun or noun phrase or pronoun, e.g.,

"a girl Vaughn" (437)

"you two" (48)

"you guys" (70)

"Girls, you know." (177)

"My little brother, he always waits for my mother." (469)

In the first example the ten-year-old speaker used a proper noun in apposition to the noun phrase a girl. In the second example the appositive structure is a cardinal number two which serves as a function noun to stand next to the pronoun you. In the third example the appositive structure is a plural noun guys which stands next to the pronoun you and identifies it. In the fourth example the appositive structure is a pronoun you which stands next to the noun girls; and the ten-year-old speaker used the noun girls as

direct address in this example, but in adult's speech this utterance could be spoken as "You girls know." In the last example the appositive structure is the pronoun he which seems to be redundant in the speech of adults. Perhaps the ten-year-old speaker used the pronoun he here in apposition for emphasis on brother.

5.9 Structural Ambiguity. In the material examined two ambiguous constructions occurred in the speech of the fifth grade girls, e.g., "this a heart" (65) and "those all real diamonds" (384). Since the intonation patterns of these two constructions are not clear, it is very difficult to decide their structures. There is no way to know whether the first example is a sentence pattern like "This is a heart," or "Is this a heart?" in which the IS is missed, or a noun phrase like "this (a) heart" or "(this) a heart" in which the ten-year-old speaker made a mistake of using two determiners "this" and "a" which are mutually exclusive in a modification structure. Regarding the structure of the second example, there are two possibilities: (1) it might be a sentence pattern like "Those are all real diamonds." or "Are those all real diamonds?". Perhaps the linking verb ARE is simply missed by the speaker. (2) it might be "all those real diamonds" in which all is a pre-determiner which might be misplaced by the speaker as "those all real diamonds".

5.10 Types of Inappropriate Morpho-phonemic Forms. In the material examined four inappropriate morpho-phonemic forms of morphological noun markers occurred in the speech of the fifth grade girls. It seems the fifth grade girls have difficulty in following the convention of using a with noun with initial consonant, and an

with nouns with vowel initial. In two cases they used the indefinite determiner a for an before a noun head with vowel initial, e.g., "a a old sister" (407) and "a ear" (166). In addition to this, in another two cases they used the indefinite determiner a before the plural noun head, e.g., "a doctors" (37), "a little tinker toys" (292). Should the -s be the inappropriate morpho-phonemic form or should it be the possessive form as "a doctor's..." or as "a little tinker toy's box, or wheel, etc."? The audible identification for this inflection is not clear. Hence, it is difficult to determine whether the inflection -s is the noun possessive form in these two cases, or the fifth grade girls simply used the singular determiner a and the plural morphological noun marker -s together in a modification structure.

5.11 Repetition for Correction. In the material examined here one peculiar situation in the speech of the fifth grade girls is that when they made an inappropriate grammatical innovation, they corrected the "mistake" by repeating two words instead of just the "wrong" one, e.g.,

"the girls the girl" (448)

"my old my older sister" (409)

Beside these two cases of repetition for correction, there are four cases of repetition which seem to be redundant expressions in the speech of adults:

"junior junior" (440)

"cabbage cabbage" (390)

"you guys you guys" (123)

"where my grandmother's uh grandmother's uh grandfather's"  
(339)

The reason why the fifth grade girls liked to repeat these words is uncertain. They might repeat them for emphasis, or for surprise, or for something else; but the last example seems to indicate that the speaker had difficulty making a decision whether it was her grandmother or grandfather. The speaker said twice the same thing, but the third time she changed to her grandfather.

## CHAPTER VI

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.0 From the material examined, 197 noun phrases (see Table 6) and 40 lone noun heads (see Table 5) have been selected, classified, and studied in this paper. In the total 197 noun phrases, 140 noun phrases have only one modifier in each, 44 noun phrases have two modifiers in each, 12 noun phrases have three modifiers in each, and only one noun phrase contains four modifiers. In the total 197 noun phrases, 268 modifiers (see Table 7) were used by the fifth grade girls in two hours of speech. Perhaps it should be pointed out that of all these noun phrases selected from the recorded material, a coordinator like "and" never occurred between two or more modifiers together in a noun phrase. That is to say the modifiers in all these large noun phrases are brought together in sequence without coordinators between them.

6.1 The Most Frequently Used Modifier. Of the total 268 modifiers, 10 are pre-determiners (Pd), 47 Type-1 determiners (D1), 60 Type-2 determiners (D2), and 65 Type-3 determiners (D3). In other words the fifth grade girls used 187 various determiners among the total 268 modifiers, over two-thirds of the total number of modifiers which they used in two hours. This also indicates that determiner is the commonest modifier in the children's language. As the noun phrases in the Appendix show, very seldom do they use two or three modifiers in addition to a determiner. Besides the determiners, they used 17 size modifiers which are the next high in frequency in the sample.

6.2 Word Order of Pre-nominal Modifier. Except "quality modifier" and "material modifier", all the other types of modifier covered by the order model DOCIQSASCOM were used by the fifth grade girls in their two-hour speech. The largest modification structure of a noun phrase in their speech contains four pre-nominal modifiers which are all arranged in familiar adult English word order (see 5.1). In addition, there are some other noun phrases containing two or three modifiers each, which are all examined by the order model DOCIQSASCOM (see 5.1). It is observed that the fifth grade girls seem to follow the order system of Adult English pre-nominal modifiers nicely and precisely. In the material studied, there is no evidence to show they placed the pre-nominal modifiers at random, as far as the modifiers occurring in the two-hour sample are concerned.

6.3 The Placement of Post-nominal Modifiers. In the material examined, there are three modification structures which contain two post-nominal modifiers (see 5.82, 5.85). In each of these three modification structures, the fifth grade girls automatically placed the post-nominal modifiers in adult word order, though they may not know that in English all the post-nominal modifiers share the general characteristic of competing for a close relation to the noun head they modify. However, there is a system for placing the post-nominal modifiers. If both the prepositional phrase (or single-word modifiers, including adjectival, adverbial, and verbal modifiers) and the modifying clause occur in the same modification structure, the prepositional phrase (or single-word modifier) always comes close to the noun head then followed by the modifying clause.

6.4 Common and Persistent Deviations from the Model. In the recorded material it is observed that the fifth grade girls do not consistently observe the adult convention involving subject/verb concord where the third person singular marker is used on verbs with third person singular subjects, nor are they consistent in their choice of a or an before words beginning with vowels, where the adult model calls for an.

6.41 The concord deviation could well be a geographical dialect phenomenon, since the writer has heard a number of speakers of professorial rank, mostly of Oklahoma origin, use "there is" with a numeral greater than one, as the girls did in, e.g., "There is two alike." (130). On the other hand, one seldom hears a well-educated adult from any geographical dialect use "He don't..." which the writer hears quite commonly among American children.

6.42 Since individual speakers are not identified in the data, it is difficult to determine if the use of the indefinite determiner a before a word beginning with vowel is common to all the girls or an idiolect phenomenon. Since it occurred only twice in the two-hour sample, we might conclude that these occurrences were simply lapses, or possibly a single case of imperfectly learned language pattern or pattern learned from a faulty model. The same could be said of the two instances noted of use of a with plural noun.

## APPENDIX

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(Lone Nouns and Noun Phrases Selected from  
Manuscript XI A, pp. 1-25 Fifth Grade  
Girls of Engler/Hannah Data)

## LONE NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES IN SUBJECT SLOT

## Lone Nouns (zero modifier) Section

ma (442)	mom (444)	dad (447)	mom (444)
speech (448)	guys (123)	guys (123)	mom (442)

## One-Element Modifier Section

D1	D1	D1
your husband (460)	my mother (469)	my name (377)
your husband (483)	my grandma (394)	my dad (435)
her age (509)		
D2	D2	D2
the speech (492)	the girl (424)	the girl (449)
the woman (253)	the boy (81)	the girls (3)
th	that thing (162)	that thing (148)
the kidney (259)	the speech (429)	the girls (448)
the things (109)		
D3	D3	D3
a guy (264)	what tags (463)	

## Two-Element Modifier Section

D1 D1	D1 D1	Pd D1
my dad's name (438)	his dad's name (438)	all his insides (203)
D1 S	D2 O	D2 Nm
my little sister (192)	the first graders (189)	the tape recorder (381)
my little sister (197)		

## Three-Element Modifier Section

D1 D1 D1

my mom's dad's name (441)

D1 S Nm

my little bitty baby (408)

## Four-Element Modifier Section

D2 S A Sh

this big old fat lady (404)

## LONE NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES IN OBJECT SLOT

## Lone Nouns (zero modifier) Section

\*one (106)

speech (487)

problems (260)

\*one (315)

football (340)

hair (194)

\*one (60)

things (217)

dentine (277)

## One-Element Modifier Section

D1

my place (493)

his boy (439)

your tags (459)

D2

the heart (249)

the ears (313)

that trick (312)

D3

a boy (32)

a girl (34)

D1

their names (193)

your ears (101)

your taxes (459)

D2

the boy (435)

the girl (435)

the inside (169)

D3

a move (108)

\*\*a ear (166)

D1

his eyes (264)

your cars (314)

his haircuts (444)

D2

those rings (387)

the truth (139)

D3

a blouse (197)

a minute (284)

\*The reason to select "one" as lone noun here is because it functions as noun in the slot.

\*\*Regarding "a ear", see 5.10 for discussion.

## One-Element Modifier Section (cont.)

D3	D3	D3
a boy (35)	another hair (295)	any difference (238)
C1	Cn	C
black hair (466)	straight hair (195)	two girls (35)
		two girls (46)

## Two-Element Modifier Section

I S	I $\emptyset$	Pd D1
rather long hair (194)	real _____ jeans (197)	all of his ideas (256)
D1 S	D2 $\emptyset$	D3 S
your little girl (34)	these _____ kidneys (74)	a little girl (116)
D2 Lm	D2 D1	D3 Lm
the other stuff (79)	the baby's heartbeat (52)	any other kids (431)
the other girls (91)		
Pd	D3	D2 Nm
a little bit of a (rather a) fuss (451)		the Beverly Hillbillies (386)

## Three-Element Modifier Section

PPd Pd	D3	PPd Pd	D3
too much of a fuss (451)		too much of a _____	(450)

## LONE NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES IN COMPLEMENT SLOT

## Lone Nouns (zero modifier) Section

fun (495)	arms (29)
boys (355)	February (30)

## One-Element Modifier Section

D1	D1	
my project (279)	your name (455)	
D2	D2	D2
the road (326)	that thing (152)	that thing (159)
the truth (326)	the school (273)	the railroad (278)
the smallest (426)	the fattest (427)	the biggest (425)
D3	D3	D3
a boy (445)	a boy (443)	a boy (463)
an ear (165)	a heart (153)	a liver (160)
a miracle (144)	a senior (208)	a film (288)
a school (274)	a speaker (221)	a policeman (285)
* <u>a</u> doctors (37)	a real (77)	lots of fun (7)
a bunch of lettuce (389)		
I	I	
just slides (288)	just pictures (289)	

## Two-Element Modifier Section

D1	S	D2	S	Pd	D1
your little girl (503)		the little ones (293)		some of her relations (395)	
D3		D3			
a short month (30)		another red one (297)			
a little woman (467)		another red one (297)			

\*Regarding the inappropriate morpho-phonemic form of "a doctors", see 5.10 for discussion.

## Three-Element Modifier Section

D3 S	Adv	D3 S	Nm
a long time ago (342)		*a little tinker toys (292) for discussion)	(see 5.10)

LONE NOUNS OR NOUN PHRASES  
IN ADJECTIVAL AND/OR ADVERBIAL CATEGORY

## Lone Nouns (zero modifier) Section

in May (31)	in school (114)	in college (476)
in trouble (261)	to recess (43)	to school (365)
about boys (136)	on something (54)	on kids or something (178)

## One-Element Modifier Section

D1	D1	D1
to her room (204)	to his arms (259)	like my mom (482)
for my mother (469)	to us girls (449)	
D2	D2	D2
to the doctor (51)	to the boys (450)	to the last (123)
with this stuff (81)	at the first (29)	at the last (29)
at the car (403)	at that paper (514)	at the university (177)
at the cashiers (466)	in the chest (58)	in the office (94)
in the winter (477)	in the bathroom (351)	in the basement (328)
D2		D2
through the heart (232)		against that chair (281)
D2	D2	
because of the hair and the face (483)		every night (404)

D3	D3	D3
like a mushroom (271)	like an ear (167)	of a ya (108)
O	Nm	C
in third grade (341)	to farm set (110)	seventeen years (405)
Pd	Lm	
at all of this (201)	last year (172)	
C		
for <u>seven hundred fifty dollars</u> (264)		

#### Two-Element Modifier Section

Pd D2  
all the time (140)

#### Three-Element Modifier Section

D3	Lm	S	Pd	C	Lm
about some other little details (336)			Probably twenty some years (406)		
D2	Nm	Nm			
by the county treasurer's office (465)					

### LONE NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES IN SEQUENTIAL SENTENCE-ELEMENT CATEGORY

#### Lone Nouns (zero modifier) Section

Speech (438)                      quintuplets (414)

#### One-Element Modifier Section

## One-Element Modifier Section (cont.)

D3	D3	D3	D3
a boy (32)	a girl and a boy (432)	*this a heart (65)	
a girl (33)	boy and a girl (422)	a girl (429)	
	D3		D3
*(I don't know) what those (61)		(She can guess) what kind (421)	
Nm	Lm		Nm
car tags (464)	twin boys (420)		school crossing (277)

## Two-Element Modifier Section

Pd	D1	D3	Lc
some of our relation a <u>pot of</u> gold (269) (397)			
D3	S	D3	Aps
a little girl (434)		a girl Vaughn (437)	

LONE NOUNS AND NOUN  
PHRASES IN SPECIAL SENTENCE CATEGORY

## REDUNDANT EXPRESSION

## Lone Nouns (zero modifier) Section

junior junior (440)	cabbage cabbage (390)
---------------------	-----------------------

## One-Element Modifier Section

Aps	Aps	Aps
you guys you guys (123)		**girls you know (177)

\*Regarding "this a heart", see 5.9 for discussion. "what those" might be "what are those" and the ARE is missed by the speaker, or it might be noun phrase in which the speaker used "those" as function noun.

\*\*See 5.86 for discussion of the structure of apposition.

## Two-Element Modifier Section

D1 S Aps

\*My little brother he always waits for my mother. (469)

## EXCLAMATORY EXPRESSION

## Lone Nouns (Zero modifier) Section

stuff (uh we said) oh boy (188) oh brother (245)  
(135)

## One-Element Modifier Section

Aps

\*you guys (70)

## Two-Element Modifier Section

D1 S

Well my little \_\_\_\_\_ (454)

## LONE NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES IN MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORY

## Lone Noun (zero modifier) Section

things (232) hot-dog (21) mother and father  
(401)

## One-Element Modifier Section

ø	ø	D1
_____ heart (76)	_____ dentine (277)	my mom (410)
D1	D3	O
my sister (105)	a girl (33)	third graders (191)

## Two-Element Modifier Section

## Two-Element Modifier Section (cont.)

D1	S	D2	Lm	D2	Nm
my	little brother	the same one	(515)	the	fire engine
	(155)				(217)
				the	tape recorder
					(331)

## Three-Element Modifier Section

D2 Pd Ch

\*those all real diamonds (384) (See 5.9 for discussion)

THE CATEGORY OF NOUNS OR  
PRONOUNS WITH POST-NOMINAL MODIFIERS

## SUBJECT SLOT

## One-Element Modifier Section

Aps

you two (48)

## Two-Element Modifier Section

P

P

Nobody in the family but him  
likes it. (422)

## OBJECT SLOT

## One-Element Modifier Section

Inf

C1

We have something to do. (111)You tell us all that you  
learned. (364)

C1

You know something we don't know. (360)

## Two-Element Modifier Section

D3

C1

My grandma knew a man that was a millionaire. (394)

## Two-Element Modifier Section (cont.)

Pa P

You heard everybody talking through that man. (308)

## Three-Element Modifier Section

D3 Adj C1

I have some relation overseas that way ways (always) rich.(398)

D3 P C1

I knew a guy in Manhattan or Topeka that has thirty-four million. (393)

D3 A C1

\*I have a a old sister who is sixteen. (407)

## COMPLEMENT SLOT

## One-Element Modifier Section

Adv

Adv

\*There is two alike. (130)There is nothing so. (230)

## Two-Element Modifier Section

D3 P

a house with that \_\_\_\_\_ (226)

## Three-Element Modifier Section

D3

P

Pa

If it is a man or a boy or a lady or a girl in the car driving. (402)

D3 C1 Inf

She is the one that picked us to come down here. (304)

C

Adj P

My little bitty baby is sixteen years apart from my old my older sister. (408)



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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE STRUCTURE OF NOUN PHRASES  
IN THE SPEECH OF FIFTH GRADE GIRLS

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to describe the structure of noun phrases used by a select group of fifth-grade girls. In 1964, in a research project at Kansas State University, seeking norms for the speech of children, Dr. Leo Engler and Dr. Elaine Hannah had recorded some thirty-six hours of the speech of children at the first, third and fifth grade levels in public schools of Manhattan, Kansas. The recordings were transcribed and subjected to linguistic analysis. This thesis is concerned exclusively with Manuscript XI A Fifth Grade Girls of the Engler/Hannah data, and deals only with the nominal constructions found therein.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is two-fold: first, to analyze morpho-syntactically the noun phrases used by the girls in their spontaneous speech and to learn something of their ability to use and expand modification patterns of English nominals, and second, to contribute to the theory of orders of modifiers with noun heads in English and to the methodology of analysis of these constructions.

Procedure: A classification system was devised for the study enabling the investigator to identify and classify the noun phrases in the corpus according to syntactic slot in which each occurred, type of modifier, and its position in its phrase. The results of this classification were tabulated so as to show the distribution and frequency of each type of modifier used by the girls.

Results: By means of this procedure, 237 nominal constructions were identified in the total of 577 utterances in the manuscript examined. These selected nominal constructions were classified into eight categories with five sections each; thus, a workable system for examining each type of modifier in the nominal construction was prepared and appended to the study. Of the 237 nominal constructions, 40 consisted of lone noun heads and 197 were noun phrases. Of the 197 phrases, 140 have one modifier each, 44 have two modifiers each, 12 have three modifiers each, and only one noun phrase contains four modifiers. The girls used a total of 268 modifiers in the two hours of speech examined, of which 187 were determiners, and 17 were adjectives of size. It was observed that the fifth-grade girls followed the order system used by speakers of General American in placing modifiers, and there was no evidence in the material studied to show that they place modifiers randomly. In the material examined, there were three instances where the girls used structures containing two post-nominal modifiers each. In every instance, the girls followed the General American system of placing the prepositional phrase (or single word modifier) immediately after the noun head, and then the modifying relative clause.

Conclusions: The procedure and classification system devised for this study seem to be eminently workable, and these fifth grade girls seem to be in complete control of the "standard" dialect system of construction of nominals and of orders of placement of modifiers in nominal constructions, though they seldom use a nominal construction of more than determiner plus adjective of size plus noun head.