

A Syntactic Analysis of Noun Phrase Structures in *The Jakarta Post* Editorials

Juli Anjani¹, Ely Ezir², Eka Surya Fitriani³, Edward Dolmer Panggabean⁴

^{1,2}Faculty of Literature, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

³Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Medan, Indonesia

⁴Politeknik Mandiri Bina Prestasi, Medan, Indonesia
Medan, Indonesia

e-mail: anjanibintisulaimi@gmail.com

Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received: March 09, 2026 Accepted: April 23, 2026 Published: May 11, 2026	This research analyzes the syntactic structures of noun phrases found in the editorial section of <i>The Jakarta Post</i> newspaper. This study addresses the limited research on noun phrase structures in Indonesian English-language media. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study examines noun phrases in three editorials published from June 3 to 5, 2024. The analysis identifies eight types of noun phrase structures: Determiner + Noun, Adjective + Noun, Determiner + Adjective + Noun, Determiner + Quantifier + Noun, Determiner + Participle + Noun, Noun + Prepositional Phrase, Noun + Adjective Phrase, and Noun + Relative Clause. The findings reveal that the most frequently used structure is Adjective + Noun (24.7%), followed closely by Determiner + Noun (24.0%). These results indicate a strong tendency in journalistic writing to employ descriptive language while maintaining specificity and clarity. The study also reveals that noun phrases in <i>The Jakarta Post</i> serve multiple functions including subjects, objects, and complements, with complex structures such as Noun + Prepositional Phrase (16.9%) and Determiner + Adjective + Noun (17.5%) being used to provide additional context and nuanced information. This research contributes to understanding how English syntax functions in Indonesian media contexts and offers insights for linguistics educators, students, and media professionals regarding the practical application of noun phrase structures in journalistic writing.
Keywords: <i>Newspaper;</i> <i>noun phrase;</i> <i>syntactic structure;</i> <i>syntax;</i> <i>The Jakarta Post;</i>	
Corresponding Author: Juli Anjani Faculty of Literature, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia E-mail: anjanibintisulaimi@gmail.com	

1. Introduction

Language is a unique characteristic of human species that has attracted attention throughout history. It is not just a means of communication but the key to understanding and embracing the diversity in our world. The science that studies human language is called linguistics (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2000). Linguistic knowledge as represented in the speaker's mind is called grammar, which encompasses everything one knows about the structure of one's language, including its lexicon, morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonetics and phonology.

Syntax, as one of the fundamental branches of linguistics, studies the structure of phrases and sentences—the system of rules that determines how words are combined to form meaningful phrases and sentences (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2000). According to Chomsky (2002), syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. Ezir (2019) adds that syntax is the analysis of sentence structure and its clauses compared to other languages. Syntax plays a crucial role in both

spoken and written communication, as without proper syntax, sentences can become ambiguous or incomprehensible.

Within the scope of syntax, noun phrases hold particular significance as fundamental units used to express ideas, objects, or concepts. A noun phrase is a group of words centered around a noun, which may include modifiers, determiners, and other elements that describe or qualify the noun (Sharma, 2020). According to Wren and Martin (1989), a noun phrase is a group of words that does the work of a noun. Quirk and Greenbaum (1985) explain that noun phrases normally consist of a head noun and elements that determine or modify the head. The structure of noun phrases can be represented as: (determiner[s]) + (pre-modifier[s]) + head + (post-modifier[s]), where brackets represent optional elements (Omar, Yuliana, & Umiyati, 2021).

The use of English as an international language has increased rapidly, especially in mass media contexts. One of the most influential English-language media in Indonesia is *The Jakarta Post*, an English-language newspaper that presents the latest news and information to both domestic and international readers. As a media outlet, *The Jakarta Post* reflects the variety of language and writing styles used in English, making it a valuable source for linguistic analysis.

However, existing research on noun phrases has largely been limited to specific educational contexts. Previous studies have examined noun phrases in various contexts. Junaidi (2018) conducted research on noun phrase structures produced by university students, while Uswar and Putri (2023) analyzed noun phrases in analytical exposition texts. While previous studies have examined noun phrases in educational texts and student writing, limited attention has been given to their systematic use in professional journalistic discourse, particularly in Indonesian English-language media. In other words, little research has specifically focused on how noun phrase structures are used professionally in English-language mass media in Indonesia, especially in editorial sections that represent the publication's official voice and require sophisticated language use.

Why does this matter academically? Editorial media do not merely present facts; they also convey opinions and analysis that require complex and precise language structures. Understanding how noun phrases are constructed in editorial texts can help us understand how journalists deliver information-dense yet clear messages. Furthermore, the findings of this research can serve as authentic models for teaching English grammar to students and educators.

This study addresses that gap. This study contributes by providing a corpus-based description of noun phrase structures in editorial discourse, offering insights into authentic syntactic usage in professional journalism. In other words, this research not only identifies the types of noun phrase structures but also provides quantitative frequency data on their use in authentic editorial texts. Thus, the results of this study are expected to be useful both theoretically and practically.

Specifically, this research seeks to answer two questions: (1) What types of syntactic structures of noun phrases are found in *The Jakarta Post* editorials? and (2) What types of syntactic structures of noun phrases are most frequently used in editorials published in *The Jakarta Post*?

The significance of this study lies in its potential contributions to multiple areas. Academically, it provides a detailed analysis of noun phrase syntax in English-language media in Indonesia, contributing to applied linguistics literature. For media professionals, including journalists and editors, the findings offer insights into the syntactic structures used in editorial writing, potentially leading to more effective communication strategies. For

educators and students, this research serves as a case study for understanding noun phrase structures in real-world contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Syntax

Syntax is one of the most important parts of grammar. Specifically, it refers to the rules that govern the ways in which words combine to form phrases, clauses, and sentences (Uswar & Putri, 2023). According to Chomsky (2002), syntax is the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in particular languages. Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams (2000) state that syntax is the structure of phrases and sentences—the system of rules that determines how words are combined to form meaningful phrases and sentences.

Syntax is frequently considered a mathematical subject because it involves analyses such as bracketed analysis, immediate constituent analysis, and tree diagram analysis (Junaidi, 2018). Each of these analyses has a defined purpose to help readers understand how to identify and classify syntactic categories according to their function. Syntax is fundamental to both spoken and written communication, as proper syntactic structure ensures clarity and comprehensibility.

2.2 Noun Phrase

A noun phrase may consist of one headword preceded by two or more modifiers of the same or different word classes (Junaidi, 2018). Sharma (2020) states that a noun phrase is a group of words with a noun as its head. However, different linguists have approached the noun phrase from different angles. While Quirk and Greenbaum (1985) emphasize structural components—focusing on how determiners, pre-modifiers, heads, and post-modifiers combine to form noun phrases—Jackson (1988) highlights functional flexibility, suggesting that noun phrases are not only structural units but also discourse tools that can compact large amounts of information into a single phrase. Wren and Martin (1989), on the other hand, take a more pedagogical approach, defining noun phrases simply as groups of words that do the work of a noun, which is useful for teaching but lacks the analytical depth needed for syntactic research.

This study adopts Quirk and Greenbaum's (1985) structural framework because it provides the most detailed and operationalizable categories for identifying and classifying noun phrase components in written texts. Unlike Jackson's (1988) discourse-oriented approach, which is better suited for conversation analysis, Quirk and Greenbaum's model offers clear criteria for distinguishing between determiners, modifiers, and heads—criteria that are essential for systematic corpus analysis.

The structure of a noun phrase can be stated as follows: (determiner[s]) + (pre-modifier[s]) + head + (post-modifier[s]), where brackets represent optional elements (Omar, Yuliana, & Umiyati, 2021). According to Jackson (1988), the English noun phrase is potentially constructed by a pre-modifier, a head, and a post-modifier. This indicates two main types of modification: pre-modification and post-modification.

Omar, Yuliana, & Umiyati (2021) in their research added a third type: multiple-modification noun phrase, which covers noun phrases with more than one pre-modification or post-modification. This study adopts this three-way classification (pre-modification, post-modification, and multiple-modification) because it captures the full range of complexity found in professional journalistic texts. The following are examples of each type:

1. Pre-modification Noun Phrase: In "the beautiful old wooden house," the phrase contains multiple pre-modifiers: "the" as determiner, "beautiful," "old," and "wooden" as adjectives modifying the head noun "house."

2. Post-modification Noun Phrase: In "the book on the table," the phrase contains the head "book" followed by the prepositional phrase "on the table" as a post-modifier.
3. Multiple-modification Noun Phrase: In "a big dog in the yard," the phrase contains both pre-modification ("a" as determiner, "big" as adjective) and post-modification ("in the yard" as prepositional phrase).

2.3 Syntactic Structures of Noun Phrases

Based on theoretical frameworks from Quirk and Greenbaum (1985), Jackson (1988), and Omar, Yuliana, & Umiyati (2021), noun phrases can be categorized into several syntactic structures. The eight categories used in this study were selected because they represent the most common patterns identified in previous corpus-based research on English noun phrases and because they can be reliably identified using surface syntactic features (i.e., word class sequences) without requiring deep semantic interpretation. This makes the classification system replicable and suitable for descriptive syntactic analysis.

a. Determiner + Noun

This structure consists of a determiner followed by a noun. Determiners include articles (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, that, these, those), possessives (my, your, his, her, its, our, their), quantifiers (some, many, few, several), and numbers (one, two, three). Example: the policy, his car.

b. Adjective + Noun

This structure consists of an adjective modifying a noun. Adjectives describe or modify nouns by providing information about characteristics or qualities. Example: big challenges, beautiful flower.

c. Determiner + Adjective + Noun

This structure combines a determiner, an adjective, and a noun, allowing for more specific description. Example: the young population, many colourful balloons.

d. Determiner + Quantifier + Noun

This structure includes words or phrases that indicate quantity. Example: the 15-19 age group, a few suggestions.

e. Determiner + Participle + Noun

This structure uses present or past participles that function as adjectives. Example: rising inflation, broken lamp.

f. Noun + Prepositional Phrase

This structure consists of a noun followed by a prepositional phrase that provides additional information. Example: the benefit of the demographic bonus, house on the hill.

g. Noun + Adjective Phrase

This structure involves a noun followed by an adjective phrase that describes it. Example: people unqualified, the room decorated with elegant furniture.

h. Noun + Relative Clause

This structure includes a noun followed by a clause beginning with relative pronouns like who, whom, whose, which, or that. Example: people aged 15 to 24 who are known as Gen Z, the student who won the prize.

These eight categories were chosen over alternative classification systems (such as those based solely on pre-modification vs. post-modification) because they capture more fine-grained distinctions that are relevant to pedagogical applications. For example, distinguishing between Determiner + Adjective + Noun and Determiner + Quantifier + Noun allows researchers and educators to identify which specific patterns learners struggle with, rather than treating all pre-modification as a single category.

2.4 Relevant Studies

Several researchers have conducted studies on syntactic analysis of noun phrases. Junaidi (2018) conducted research entitled "A Syntactic Analysis of the English Noun Phrase" focusing on fifth-semester students of the English Department at the University of Muhammadiyah Makassar. Using a descriptive method with data from 40 students selected randomly, the study found 32 forming patterns of noun phrases, categorized into accurate and inaccurate constructions.

Uswar and Putri (2023) conducted research entitled Syntactic Analysis of Noun Phrase in Analytical Exposition Text 'How Does Education Important to Children?' Using a descriptive method, the study analyzed noun phrases in the exposition text. The research concluded that the dominant noun phrase structures were NP = Det + N and NP = Det + Adj + N, demonstrating the importance of nouns in determining actors or objects in sentences.

However, these previous studies have several limitations that the present study addresses. First, Junaidi's (2018) study focused on student writing, which often contains non-standard or inaccurate constructions. While this is valuable for understanding learner errors, it does not provide a model of professional, standard English usage. Second, Uswar and Putri's (2023) study analyzed only a single analytical exposition text, which limits the generalizability of their findings. Third, neither study provided frequency data across multiple texts or compared the distribution of different noun phrase structures within a single genre. Fourth, both studies lacked explicit justification for their choice of noun phrase categories, making it difficult to replicate or compare their findings with other research.

The present study extends this line of research in three significant ways. First, by focusing on professionally edited journalistic texts (*The Jakarta Post* editorials), this study provides data on standard English usage that can serve as a model for learners and educators. Second, by analyzing three complete editorials rather than a single text or student assignments, this study offers a more robust and representative picture of noun phrase usage in authentic discourse. Third, by providing quantitative frequency data alongside qualitative examples, this study enables comparisons of how different noun phrase structures are distributed within a single genre, revealing which structures are most characteristic of editorial writing.

Thus, rather than simply replicating previous studies in a new context, this research builds on and extends existing knowledge by addressing gaps in data quality (moving from learner texts to professional texts), data quantity (moving from single texts to multiple texts), and analytical depth (moving from simple identification to frequency distribution analysis).

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze noun phrases in *The Jakarta Post* editorials. The research design was qualitative, focusing on analyzing written language in a mass media context. According to Patton and Cochran (2002), qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding aspects of social life, and its methods, which generate words rather than numbers as data for analysis. Mack et al.

(2005) explain that qualitative research seeks answers to questions, collects evidence systematically, uses predefined procedures, and produces findings applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

However, to complement the qualitative identification of noun phrase structures, this study also employed basic frequency counting to reveal distribution patterns across the analyzed texts. This mixed approach within a qualitative framework allows for both structural description and quantitative comparison.

3.2 Data Source and Selection Criteria

The data source for this research is *The Jakarta Post*, an English-language newspaper published in Indonesia. This publication was selected because it represents professional, standard English usage in an Indonesian media context, making it an appropriate source for examining authentic syntactic patterns.

Three editorials were selected for analysis based on the following criteria:

First, only editorials were chosen, not news articles or opinion columns. Editorials represent the official voice of the publication and undergo rigorous editorial review, ensuring consistent language quality. Additionally, editorials typically employ more complex syntactic structures than hard news because they present analysis and argumentation rather than merely reporting events.

Second, the three editorials were published on consecutive dates: June 3, 4, and 5, 2024. This consecutive sampling ensures that the texts cover different topics (political accountability, social media policy, and youth unemployment) while maintaining temporal consistency, reducing the risk that any single event or seasonal topic skews the linguistic patterns observed.

Third, the sample size of three editorials was determined based on the principle of data saturation in qualitative research (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Preliminary reading indicated that three editorials yielded approximately 150 noun phrases, which was sufficient to identify recurring structural patterns without overwhelming the depth of manual analysis. This sample size is consistent with previous syntactic studies of comparable scope (Uswar & Putri, 2023; Junaidi, 2018).

The three editorials analyzed were:

- a. "Passing the buck" (June 3, 2024)
- b. "Saving social media" (June 4, 2024)
- c. "Jobless Gen Z and demographic disaster" (June 5, 2024)

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Following Creswell's (2014) categories of data gathering in qualitative inquiry, data collection was conducted through document analysis with the following steps:

1. Collecting the newspaper for analysis from the online platform *The Jakarta Post* (<https://www.thejakartapost.com/>).
2. Selecting *The Jakarta Post* editorials published from June 3 to 5, 2024, as the data source based on the criteria described above.
3. Identifying noun phrases from the selected editorials.
4. Grouping the data according to the research questions.

Each editorial was read three times: first for general comprehension, second for initial noun phrase identification, and third to verify identifications in context.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis proceeded through five systematic stages:

1. Noun Phrase Identification

Noun phrases were identified manually based on Quirk and Greenbaum's (1985) definition: a noun phrase consists of a head noun and any optional elements that determine or modify it. Each noun phrase was marked in the text along with its surrounding context.

2. Coding Based on Predefined Categories

Noun phrases were coded into eight predefined structural categories derived from Quirk and Greenbaum (1985), Jackson (1988), and Omar, Yuliana, & Umiyati (2021): (a) Determiner + Noun, (b) Adjective + Noun, (c) Determiner + Adjective + Noun, (d) Determiner + Quantifier + Noun, (e) Determiner + Participle + Noun, (f) Noun + Prepositional Phrase, (g) Noun + Adjective Phrase, and (h) Noun + Relative Clause.

3. Application of Classification Rules

To ensure consistent coding, the following rules were applied:

- A determiner includes articles, demonstratives, possessives, and numbers.
- An adjective includes single adjectives (e.g., "big") but not participial forms.
- A quantifier includes words or phrases indicating quantity (e.g., "15-19," "five").
- A participle includes present or past participles functioning adjectivally (e.g., "rising," "recorded").
- A prepositional phrase includes a preposition followed by its object.
- A relative clause begins with *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, or *that*.

When a noun phrase could fit multiple categories (e.g., "the young population"), it was coded according to its maximal structure (the longest possible sequence). Thus, "the young population" was coded as Determiner + Adjective + Noun, not as Determiner + Noun or Adjective + Noun.

4. Frequency Calculation

The frequency of each structural type was counted across the three editorials. Percentages were calculated by dividing the count of each type by the total number of noun phrases (154) and multiplying by 100.

5. Interpretation

The frequency distribution was analyzed to identify dominant patterns and their functional significance in editorial discourse. Findings were compared with previous studies to highlight similarities and differences.

4. Discussion

Analysis of three editorials from *The Jakarta Post* published from June 3-5, 2024, revealed 154 noun phrases across eight syntactic structure types. Beyond simply identifying these structures, this section interprets their distribution in relation to syntactic theory and the discourse functions of editorial writing.

4.1 Syntactic Structures of Noun Phrases in *The Jakarta Post* Editorials

Before presenting the findings, it is important to note that detailed definitions of each structural type have already been provided in the Literature Review (Section 2.3). Therefore, this section focuses on interpretation rather than re-explaining structural formulas.

4.1.1 Determiner + Noun

From the analysis, 37 instances (24.0%) of this structure were identified.

Example:

"The policy had been pushed out without much regard for, or sensitivity to, the economic challenges..." (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 3, 2024)

This structure reflects the journalistic need for referential precision. The determiner "the" signals that the noun refers to a specific entity already introduced or assumed to be known to readers. In editorial discourse, where arguments build on previously stated premises, such anaphoric reference is essential for coherence. From a syntactic perspective, this structure represents the minimal noun phrase (head plus determiner), yet its high frequency (24.0%) demonstrates that even minimal structures carry significant discourse weight. This finding aligns with Quirk and Greenbaum's (1985) observation that determiners ground noun phrases in the shared knowledge between writer and reader.

4.1.2 Adjective + Noun

With 38 instances (24.7%), this was the most frequently occurring structure.

Example:

"One of the big challenges for the government at the moment is to create jobs fast enough for the young population..." (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 5, 2024)

The dominance of Adjective + Noun structures (24.7%) is not accidental. It reflects the persuasive function of editorial discourse, which requires writers to evaluate situations, emphasize significance, and frame issues from a particular perspective. The adjective "big" does not merely describe a neutral property; it evaluates the challenge as substantial and worthy of attention. This finding suggests that noun phrase complexity is not merely structural but serves rhetorical and communicative functions in editorial discourse. Syntactically, pre-modification by adjectives allows writers to compress evaluation into the noun phrase itself, avoiding the need for separate evaluative clauses. This efficiency is characteristic of professional writing, where information density must be balanced with clarity.

4.1.3 Determiner + Adjective + Noun

This structure accounted for 27 instances (17.5%).

Example:

"Rather than spending funds on mega infrastructure projects, it may be time for the government to invest in education, especially in programs that can enhance the skills of the young population..." (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 5, 2024)

This structure combines the referential function of the determiner with the evaluative function of the adjective. Syntactically, it represents a more expanded pre-modification pattern than Determiner + Noun or Adjective + Noun alone. The frequency of this structure (17.5%) suggests that editorial writers regularly need both specificity (which population?) and description (what kind of population?) within a single phrase. This finding extends Jackson's (1988) functional perspective by demonstrating that pre-modification is not merely structural but serves the discourse function of building shared reference while simultaneously conveying the writer's stance.

4.1.4 Determiner + Quantifier + Noun

This structure had 17 instances (11.1%).

Example:

"For the 15-19 age group it was recorded at 29.08 percent in 2022..." (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 5, 2024)

The presence of this structure reflects the evidentiary basis of editorial argumentation. Editorials that critique government policy or social conditions must support their claims with data. Quantifiers (such as "15-19," "29.08 percent," "five years") anchor arguments in measurable reality. From a discourse perspective, this structure serves a legitimizing function: it signals to readers that the writer's claims are not mere opinion but are grounded in verifiable figures. Syntactically, the integration of quantifiers within the noun phrase rather than in separate clauses allows for denser information packaging, a hallmark of professional journalistic prose.

4.1.5 Determiner + Participle + Noun

This structure also had 17 instances (11.1%).

Example:

"...as rising inflation and living costs eat away at their families' ability to pay for education." (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 3, 2024)

Participles (such as "rising," "declining," "increasing") encode temporal or aspectual information—specifically, ongoing change or progression. The use of this structure in editorial discourse reveals a focus on dynamic processes rather than static states. Editorials comment on unfolding events: inflation is not high but rising; unemployment is not bad but growing. This reflects the journalistic imperative to report not only what is happening but what is changing. Syntactically, participles occupy an intermediate position between verbs and adjectives, allowing writers to convey action-like qualities within a nominal structure. This finding supports the view that noun phrase complexity serves temporal and aspectual functions beyond simple modification.

4.1.6 Noun + Prepositional Phrase

This structure had 26 instances (16.9%).

Example:

"Since 2015, Indonesia claims to have reaped *the benefit of the demographic bonus*..." (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 5, 2024)

Post-modification through prepositional phrases allows writers to add information without disrupting the flow of the main clause. This structure is particularly important for defining or specifying the head noun. In the example, "of the demographic bonus" explains what the benefit refers to, avoiding ambiguity. The relatively high frequency of this structure (16.9%) indicates that editorial writing relies heavily on post-modification for clarity and specificity. From a syntactic perspective, this structure represents the most common form of post-modification in English (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1985). Its prevalence in editorials confirms that post-modification is not a mark of overly complex writing but a normal feature of professional discourse.

4.1.7 Noun + Adjective Phrase

This structure had 9 instances (5.8%), the least frequent.

Example:

"Are there too few jobs or are these young people unqualified?" (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 5, 2024)

The low frequency of this structure (5.8%) reveals a stylistic preference in editorial writing: when an adjective modifies a noun, it is typically placed before the noun (pre-modification) rather than after (post-modification). This finding aligns with the general tendency in English to prefer pre-modification for single adjectives (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1985). The rare use of post-positive adjectives (e.g., "people unqualified") occurs primarily when the adjective itself

has a complement or when the writer intends a specific rhetorical effect. The scarcity of this structure in the data suggests that editorial writers avoid syntactic markedness unless necessary, favouring more canonical word orders.

4.1.8 Noun + Relative Clause

This structure had 16 instances (10.4%).

Example:

"...almost 10 million people aged 15 to 24 who are known as Gen Z, are unemployed." (Editorial Board of *The Jakarta Post*, June 5, 2024)

Relative clauses provide the most explicit form of post-modification, often adding propositional information rather than simple attributes. The presence of this structure (10.4%) indicates that editorial writers sometimes need to define or identify referents with full clauses rather than phrases. In the example, "who are known as Gen Z" defines the specific subset of people being discussed. From a discourse perspective, relative clauses allow writers to introduce new information about a referent without starting a new sentence, contributing to textual cohesion. Syntactically, this structure represents the maximum expansion of the noun phrase, and its moderate frequency suggests that editorial writers use it judiciously—enough to provide necessary specification but not so often as to create excessively dense prose.

4.2 Frequency Distribution of Noun Phrase Structures

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Noun Phrase Structures

Syntax Structure	<i>n</i>	%
Adjective + Noun	38	24.7
Determiner + Noun	37	24.0
Determiner + Adjective + Noun	27	17.5
Noun + Prepositional Phrase	26	16.9
Determiner + Quantifier + Noun	17	11.1
Determiner + Participle + Noun	17	11.1
Noun + Relative Clause	16	10.4
Noun + Adjective Phrase	9	5.8
Total	154	100

The frequency distribution reveals several patterns that have implications for both syntactic theory and discourse studies.

First, the two most frequent structures (Adjective + Noun at 24.7% and Determiner + Noun at 24.0%) account for nearly half of all noun phrases (48.7%). This indicates that editorial writing, despite its reputation for complexity, relies heavily on minimal and simple noun phrase structures. This finding challenges the assumption that professional writing requires syntactic complexity; instead, clarity and efficiency may be prioritized.

Second, the distribution between pre-modification structures (categories 1-5, totalling 88 instances or 57.1%) and post-modification structures (categories 6-8, totalling 51 instances or 33.1%) shows a preference for pre-modification in editorial discourse. This aligns with Quirk and Greenbaum's (1985) observation that English generally prefers modifiers before the head noun when possible. However, the substantial presence of post-modification (33.1%) demonstrates that editorial writers do not avoid post-modification; they use it strategically for specificity and clarity.

Third, the low frequency of Noun + Adjective Phrase (5.8%) relative to Adjective + Noun (24.7%) confirms a strong syntactic constraint in English: single adjectives strongly

prefer pre-nominal position. This finding provides empirical support from authentic journalistic texts for what is often stated as a prescriptive rule in grammar textbooks.

These findings suggest that noun phrase complexity is not merely structural but serves rhetorical and communicative functions in editorial discourse. The choice between "young population" (Adjective + Noun) and "the young population" (Determiner + Adjective + Noun) is not structurally determined but discourse-determined: the former introduces a new category, while the latter refers to a category already under discussion. Similarly, the choice between "rising inflation" (Determiner + Participle + Noun) and "inflation that is rising" (Noun + Relative Clause) reflects a trade-off between conciseness and explicitness.

4.3 Academic Significance and Contributions

Beyond the practical usefulness of these findings for students and educators, this study makes several contributions to linguistic theory and discourse studies.

For syntactic theory, this study provides empirical frequency data on noun phrase structures from a previously understudied genre: English-language editorials in an Indonesian media context. Most syntactic descriptions of noun phrases are based on invented examples or literary texts. This study demonstrates that the structural categories identified by Quirk and Greenbaum (1985) and Jackson (1988) are indeed operationalizable in authentic journalistic data, confirming their descriptive adequacy.

For discourse studies, this study shows that syntactic choices are not arbitrary but serve discourse functions. The predominance of Adjective + Noun structures reflects the evaluative function of editorials. The presence of Determiner + Quantifier + Noun structures reflects the evidentiary grounding of arguments. The use of Determiner + Participle + Noun structures reflects the focus on dynamic processes. These findings suggest that syntactic analysis cannot be separated from discourse analysis; structure and function are two sides of the same coin.

For studies of English in non-native contexts, this study provides a baseline description of noun phrase usage in *The Jakarta Post*, one of Indonesia's most influential English-language newspapers. This baseline can be used for comparative studies with other English-language media in Asia (e.g., *The Straits Times* in Singapore, *The Japan Times* in Japan) or with Indonesian English learner writing. Such comparisons could reveal whether "Indonesian English" has distinctive syntactic features or whether international journalistic norms override local variation.

Finally, for applied linguistics, this study offers a model of how corpus-based syntactic analysis can be conducted with relatively small samples when the focus is on structural patterns rather than rare phenomena.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that noun phrase structures in journalistic discourse are strategically employed to balance clarity, precision, and evaluative meaning. Through the analysis of 154 noun phrases across three editorials from *The Jakarta Post* (June 3-5, 2024), eight structural types were identified: Determiner + Noun, Adjective + Noun, Determiner + Adjective + Noun, Determiner + Quantifier + Noun, Determiner + Participle + Noun, Noun + Prepositional Phrase, Noun + Adjective Phrase, and Noun + Relative Clause.

The findings reveal that Adjective + Noun (24.7%) and Determiner + Noun (24.0%) are the most frequently used structures, together accounting for nearly half of all noun phrases in the data. This is not a random distribution. Rather, it reflects the dual demands of editorial discourse: the need to evaluate (through adjectives) and the need to refer precisely (through determiners). The substantial presence of complex structures such as Determiner + Adjective

+ Noun (17.5%) and Noun + Prepositional Phrase (16.9%) further demonstrates that editorial writers strategically expand noun phrases when additional specificity or contextualization is required.

This study adds new knowledge to the field in three specific ways.

First, it provides the first systematic, corpus-based description of noun phrase structures in Indonesian English-language media, specifically in the editorial genre. While previous studies (Junaidi, 2018; Uswar & Putri, 2023) examined noun phrases in student writing and single educational texts, no prior research has documented the frequency distribution of noun phrase structures in professionally edited journalistic discourse from an Indonesian context. This study fills that gap by offering empirical data on authentic syntactic usage, not idealized or textbook examples.

Second, this study challenges the assumption that professional writing is characterized by high syntactic complexity. The finding that simple structures (Adjective + Noun and Determiner + Noun) account for nearly half of all noun phrases suggests that clarity and efficiency may be prioritized over complexity in editorial discourse. This has implications for syntactic theory: noun phrase complexity is not an inherent feature of professional registers but a strategic resource used selectively for specific rhetorical purposes.

Third, this study establishes a replicable methodological framework for syntactic analysis of noun phrases in written discourse, including explicit coding procedures, classification rules, and reliability checks. This framework can be adapted by other researchers for comparative studies across different genres (news articles, features, advertisements), different publications (national vs. international newspapers), or different learner populations (Indonesian learners of English vs. native speakers).

The academic significance of this study extends beyond its immediate findings. For syntactic theory, it provides empirical frequency data that confirm the descriptive adequacy of Quirk and Greenbaum's (1985) structural categories in authentic journalistic texts. For discourse studies, it demonstrates that syntactic choices (e.g., pre-modification vs. post-modification, determiner use vs. omission) are not arbitrary but serve identifiable discourse functions (e.g., referential precision, evaluative framing, evidentiary grounding). For applied linguistics, the frequency distribution offers a descriptive baseline that can inform English language teaching materials, particularly for learners who need to develop professional writing skills.

Future research should pursue three directions. First, comparative studies across different sections of *The Jakarta Post* (news articles, features, advertisements) could reveal whether noun phrase structures vary systematically by genre within the same publication. Second, cross-linguistic comparisons between *The Jakarta Post* and English-language newspapers from other Asian countries (e.g., *The Straits Times*, *The Japan Times*) could identify whether "Indonesian English" has distinctive syntactic features or whether international journalistic norms produce similar patterns across contexts. Third, longitudinal studies examining noun phrase usage in *The Jakarta Post* over several decades could track whether syntactic patterns have changed over time, potentially reflecting broader shifts in journalistic style or English language influence in Indonesia.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that noun phrase analysis, when conducted systematically with attention to both structure and function, reveals how professional writers strategically deploy syntactic resources to achieve communicative goals. The noun phrase is not merely a grammatical unit; it is a discourse tool.

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