摘　要

　　名词短语是英语句子中非常重要的成分,是英语语法研究中的重要内容。而前置修饰语和后置修饰语是名词短语的重要组成部分,是名词短语研究中的重点。结构语法和转换生成语法对名词短语中的这些修饰语进行了一定的描述和分析,但他们对修饰语的研究主要局限在语言本身,忽视了语言外部的因素,特别是认知方面的因素,未能反映人们在使用语言时的认知过程。近来,已有一些语言学家和学者从认知的角度对修饰语进行了一定的分析和研究,取得了一些进展,但也存在不足。本文以英语名词短语中的修饰语为研究对象,从认知的角度提出了修饰语的定义,运用认知语言学的次范畴化理论对英语名词短语中的修饰语进行了较为全面的分析和解释,研究内容包括修饰语的功能, 使用限制, 前置修饰语与后置修饰语的区别及多层前置修饰语的排列顺序。这一研究旨在更深刻地认识修饰语的认知背景,为更好地掌握和使用名词修饰语提供参考。

　　本文从分析修饰语的功能入手,认为任何语言结构都因其特有的功能而具有了存在的价值。本文认为:英语名词短语中修饰语的功能是对名词所指的事物进行次范畴化。是将名词所指事物分成小类,即分成不同的次范畴。人们可以从不同的角度对事物进行多层次的分类,名词短语中的多层修饰语是对名词所指事物的多重次范畴化,名词短语中多层修饰语的排列顺序就决定于多重次范畴化的先后顺序。人们对事物的次范畴化是社会发展和人类认知深化的结果,故此名词短语中修饰语的使用和顺序排列均符合社会发展和人类认知的一般规律。

　　基于对修饰语的次范畴化理解,文章对英语名词短语中前置和后

置修饰语的使用规律和排列顺序进行了较为全面的研究,对普遍的语言事实做出了认知解释。

关键词：名词短语，修饰语，特点，顺序，次范畴化

Abstract

The noun phrase is a very important component of English sentence and a very important topic in the study of English grammar. Premodifiers and postmodifiers are important components of a noun phrase and an indispensable part of the discussion of the noun phrase. Structural grammar and transformational generative grammar have made some research on the modifiers in the English noun phrase. However, most of the researches are confined to the language itself and neglect external factors such as social development and human cognition. In recent years, some linguists and scholars have begun to do research on modifiers in noun phrases from a cognitive perspective, but limitations also exist in their studies. Guided by the theory of subcategorization in cognitive linguistics, this thesis has made a profound and comprehensive study of the modifiers in English noun phrases, focusing on the definition of modifiers, the function of modifiers, the constraints on modifiers, the differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers, and the ordering of multi-level premodifiers. The study aims to help to understand the cognitive background of the modifiers in the noun phrase and provide useful reference for understanding and using modifiers in the noun phrase. The thesis begins with the study of the function of modifiers and holds that a language structure has its value of existence for its specific function. The thesis points out that the function of the modifiers in English noun phrases is to subcategorize what the head word refers to, that is, to classify what the head word refers to into two or more than two

subcategories, and the multi-level modifiers in a noun phrase are the result of multi-level subcategorization of what the head word refers to, which fact indicates that the subcategorization can be carried out from different angles. The ordering of multi-level modifiers is determined by the order of the multi-level subcategorization.

Subcategorization results from social development and the extension of human cognition, which leads to the conclusion that the use and the word order of modifiers in a noun phrase conforms with the general law of social development and human cognition.

Based on the understanding of modifiers in noun phrases as subcategorization, the thesis has made a comprehensive study of the law of use and the word order of premodifiers in English noun phrases, succeeding in a cognitive account of the general facts concerning modifiers in English noun phrases.

Key Words: noun phrases, modifiers, characteristics, ordering, subcategorization

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Introduction

Background of Our Study

In English grammar study and research, noun phrase is a very important part of English sentence structure, and it can function as all the elements in a sentence except the predicate verb, so it becomes an indispensable component of English grammar study. Noun phrase can only be composed of a head word, or can have determiners and modifiers. In this paper, we specially study the modifiers in noun phrases, because modifiers are important and complex parts of noun phrases study. If there are more than one modifiers in a noun phrase, the study becomes more complicated. It renders noun phrases more complex. Thus, it plays a vital role in the application of language. Essentially, a modifier is a kind of subcategorization of what the head word refers to by language users. We can subcategorize various objects and organisms around us from many different angles, and the subcategorization is based on people's experience of the world. It is determined by people's mode of thinking, cognitive mode and experience structure. In the long period of time, many linguists at home and abroad have paid attention to the study of modifiers in English noun phrases. It has been at all times a difficult problem for linguists and its use hasn't been explained clearly and roundly thus far. As a matter of fact, in the course of studying modifiers in noun phrases, most of us have undergone some perplexing moments, due to many factors such as, a lack of systematic research, comprehension and mastery of the relationship

between modifiers and the head word, studying language only from language itself but not taking people's cognition into account. Therefore, it results in difficulty or errors in explaining the acceptability of modifiers and the ordering of modifiers. For example, most of us feel difficult in explaining the following examples and in assessing the right order of multiple modifiers:

[1] a.* a *found* purse

b. a *lost* purse

[2] a.* a *paid* physician

b. a *paid* escort

[3] a.* a *built* house

b. a *carefully built* house

[4] a *great powerful socialist* country

[5] a *big brown Australian hunting* dog

[6] a.* *foreign large financial* firms

b. *large foreign financial* firms

(The asterisk is used to indicate the unacceptability of a structure)

Occasionally, even though we know whether they are right or wrong, however, if asked further, we tend to fail to provide a reasonable explanation. When we encounter multiple premodifiers, we cannot always make a right decision on their arrangements, say nothing of the underlying reasons behind them. Therefore, when we study English, it is vital to embrace modifiers in English noun phrases in the whole process of English study and research. No natural spoken or written English is totally separated from noun phrases. We cannot grasp the language well if we don't give our attention to its study. For us, by understanding the

relationship between modifiers and the head word and the order of multiple modifiers, we can master the whole language more easily and successfully.

Meanwhile, in the process of many students' learning English, I am profoundly aware of the fact that the problem of the ordering of multiple premodifiers really puts a number of learners at a loss. English learners find it is not easy to arrange the order of multiple premodifiers correctly .In the linguistic field, quite a few teachers and researchers become aware of the importance and necessity of investigating the usage and the ordering of multiple premodifiers in English study and research. Different researchers adopt various approaches to explore the phenomena of noun phrases with modifiers. Each of the approaches has its influences on the language studies of the time, but they don't resolve the subject scientifically and not all things are considered in a comprehensive way. In traditional English teaching class, learners are instructed to remember some rules of the order of modifiers. They still cannot explain the fundamental reasons underlying them. In their researching work, languages are studied from language itself and they don't pay attention to human cognition. Comparatively speaking, the cognitive approach is a better choice because it reflects the cognitive processing of human beings, but we think there are limitations in the previous cognitive studies of modifiers in noun phrases.

Consequently, in my opinion, the importance and necessity of studying modifiers cannot be ignored. So the study of modifiers in English noun phrases attracts my interest and attention.

Objective and Significance of this Study

Based on the theory of subcategorization, the research has the

following objectives:

To discover the function of modifiers and the relationship between modifiers and the head word.

To find out the similarities and differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers.

To prove that the order of modifiers is governed by human cognition, it has something to do with people's ways of thinking, cognitive mode and experience structure.

On the one hand, through research on the relationship between modifiers and the head word, it succeeds in offering a new perspective to probe into modifiers' studying. This thesis adopts descriptive, analytic, explanatory methods to investigate modifiers in noun phrases by using cognitive theory. On the other hand, it has some practical significance in that this study can offer a new perspective on the way we store and process language and it can provide language learners with a new and better access to solve the difficulties that they meet with in their learning process. What's more, it can endow language learners with enlightenment. It is also expected to be helpful to English teachers. It tells language learners, as well as teachers, that we should not only describe the language phenomena but also try to explain them in a systematic way. Every aspect of languages can be explained by using appropriate theory. The cognitive theory of subcategorization is a better and more comprehensive way to investigate the modifiers in English noun phrases.

Organization of Our Thesis

Our thesis covers an introduction part, five chapters and a conclusion

part. They are as follows (1) Introduction, (2) Literature Review, (3) The Structure and Nature of Noun Phrases with Modifiers, (4) The Theoretical Framework of the Study, (5) Subcategorization and the Use of Modifiers in English Noun Phrases, (6) Subcategorization and the Ordering of Premodifiers in English Noun Phrases, and (7) Conclusion.

The introduction part explains background of our study, objectives of our study, significance of our study, as well as organization of our thesis.

Chapter 1 gives a detailed review of relevant research abroad, as well as at home, and launches some general comments on previous research results.

Chapter 2 makes an analysis of the structure and nature of noun phrases with modifiers, the realization of modifiers, and the relationship between modifiers and the head word.

Chapter 3 puts forward concrete theoretical framework of the study in detail.

Chapter 4 presents a comprehensive study of modifiers from the perspective of subcategorization, mainly focusing on the function of modifiers and the constraints on modifiers, as well as the differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers. Through a thorough study, this chapter reveals that there exist constraints on modifiers in English noun phrases and there are differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers. The modifiers should play the function of subcategorizing the head word.

Chapter 5 expounds the ordering of multi-level premodifiers. The ordering of multi-level premodifiers should comply with the general principles of subcategorization.

The last chapter makes a summary of the study. Then limitations of

our study and suggestions for further study are given in the final part.

Chapter 1   Literature Review: Different Approaches to the Study of Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

Noun phrases play an important role in English syntax. Quirk (1985:61) said: "The verb phrase and the noun phrase can be considered the most important phrasal categories for functional reasons. The noun phrase is important more because of its multiplicity of function." Modifiers as an important component of English noun phrases deserve our study. For several decades, different grammatical schools have paid attention to the study of modifiers in English noun phrases and have done some work on the modifiers. This chapter is to have a literature review of the previous approaches to the study of modifiers in English noun phrases.

1.1 Structural Grammar

Structural Grammar is an important theory in the development of the twentieth-century linguistics. The theories of structural grammar are quite different from the previous traditional grammar. Most of the structural grammarians leveled major criticism at traditional grammarians as they studied the language in a meaning-dependent, subjective, superficial, prescriptive, in short, unscientific way. The point of view of structuralists is that the study of language should be descriptive, instead of normative or legislative.

The structural grammarians consider that the task of linguists is to describe the system of a language carefully and faithfully. Structuralists describe anything that native speakers of English actually use in natural or

practical conversations. Induction is its major method. In order to make correct induction, grammarians first need to make an objective description of language materials. This kind of description doesn't carry any subjective imagination. So from this angle, structural grammar is descriptive. Structural grammarians consider that every language has its own special structure. The classifying of grammatical categories by structural grammar is based on form and distribution, but not on meaning. In analyzing languages they emphasize more the structural relations between language units, but not the psychological and logical relations between them.

For structural grammarians, modifiers in English noun phrases are characteristic descriptions of what the head word refers to, which are used to express more concrete and complex ideas. They have paid much attention to the study of premodifiers in English noun phrases, especially the ordering of multiple adjectival premodifiers. Traditionally, linguists study the sequential ordering of multiple adjectival premodifiers by using a class-based approach. They propose various semantic classes, such as colour, size, shape or nationality and specify a sequential order among different classes. In 1959 Malkiel put forward that the order of adjectives is influenced by factors such as polarity; in 1978 Bache mentioned that it is also influenced by scope and collocation restrictions. Linguists (Goyvaerts 1968; Vendler 1968; Quirk and Greenbaum 1973; Bache 1978; Dixon 1982) performed manual analysis of small corpora and pointed out various tendencies, such as the tendencies that underived adjectives often preceded derived adjectives, the short modifiers preceded longer ones. For example, Goyvaerts(1968) proposed the order: quality> size/length/shape>old/new/young>colour>nationality>style>gerund>denominal; Quirk and

Greenbaum (1973) proposed the order:

general>age>color>participle>provenance>noun>denominal;

and Dixon proposed the order:

value>dimension>physical property>speed>human propensity>age>color.

Teyssier (1968) first proposed that adjectival functions (i.e. identification, characterization, and classification) affect adjective order.

F.g. Praninskas(1975:262) classified adjectives according to the semantic classes and made the following descriptions to the ordering of multiple adjectival premodifiers:

determiner	evaluating	volume	shape	condition	age	colour	source	headword
a/n	ugly	big	round	chipped	old	blue	French	vase

Quirk(1985) made a more detailed description of the English noun phrase. He said that just as the sentence may be indefinitely complex, so may be the noun phrase. He has analyzed the structure of the English noun phrase and has pointed out that many types of elements can be used as modifiers. He has made several distinctions to the features of the modification, such as restrictive and nonrestrictive modification, temporary and permanent modification. He has also made a description of the relative order of multiple premodifiers.

Following the study of foreign structural linguists, some Chinese linguists have also adopted their methods to the study of modifiers in English noun phrases, such as Zhang Zhenbang, Bo Bing.

It is true that structural grammarians have made some study on the modifiers in English noun phrases, especially the ordering of multiple adjectival premodifiers. They thought that the major work of grammarians is to analyze and describe the structure system of a grammar based on

language materials, without explanation and having not paid much attention to the study of meaning. Their studies have some influences on English study and teaching, but the description method cannot list all language facts. So it is also unscientific. For example, they have made arrangements on the multiple adjectival premodifiers according to their semantic classes. To the study of the ordering of multiple adjectival premodifiers, most of the earlier work is based on placing modifiers into broad semantic classes, thus more than ten classes are proposed, with some of them further broken down into subclasses, and specifying an order among these classes. But the classification is a little bit random, and it is impossible for us to list all the semantic types. And their studies only illustrate the general order of a series of adjectival premodifiers, in practical usage we cannot position them all in such a rigid way. For example, the same modifier can occur in different positions and denote different meanings and functions. So the theory of structural grammar doesn't give us much explanatory power. For example, why the adjective that denotes size should precede the adjective which denotes color? It also cannot explain examples such as *a big red lantern* and *a red big lantern*. Both expressions are right in special contexts. Structural grammar doesn't put forward an explanation to this phenomenon. No matter how comprehensive their descriptions are, their view on the function of modifiers doesn't reflect the process of human cognition correctly. They have failed to offer explanation to the ordering of multiple premodifiers. In order to explain the language, we should consider many other factors besides the language itself; otherwise our study will have limitations. Therefore, the structural grammar methods need improving.

1.2 Transformational Generative Grammar

With the publication of Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* in 1957, transformational generative grammar has brought quite an effect on language studies. In Chomsky's view, grammar should be formalized. Transformational grammar has made some heuristic study on the structure of English noun phrases, especially on the distance between some modifiers and the head word, which is an important contribution. For example, they have concluded an important generative rule of noun phrases, which is used to explain the following types of examples:

[7] a. a student *of physics at Cambridge*

b. * a student *at Cambridge of physics*

[8] a. the chairman *of the committee in the blue suit*

b. * the chairman *in the blue suit of the committee*

[9] a. We sold the box *of crackers with the green label.*

b. * We sold the box *with the green label of crackers.*

To explain the above examples, transformational linguist Andrew Radford (1988, pp.175-78) analyzed the logical relations between modifiers by using the following diagram:
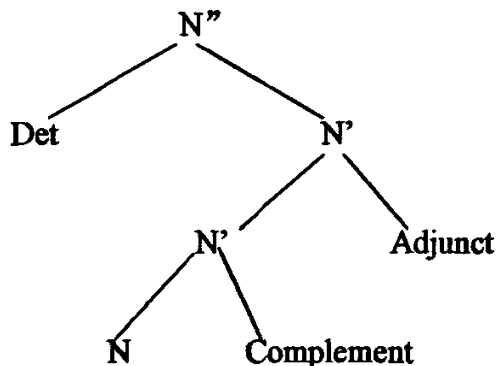
They have employed the traditional distinction between two different types of postnominal phrases, namely those which function as

complements and those which function as adjuncts. As we have already seen, determiners, adjuncts and complements differ from each other in the following ways:

(a) Determiners are sisters of N' and daughters of N"

(b) Adjuncts are sisters and daughters of N'

(c) Complements are sisters of N and daughters of N'

They have argued that Determiners, Adjunct PPs and Complement PPs should be generated by the following set of Phrase Structure Rules:

(i) N" →(D)   N' [Determiner Rule]

(ii) N' → N'   PP [Adjunct Rule]

(iii) N' → N   PP [Complement Rule]

For example: *a student of physics at Cambridge* can be generated as follows:
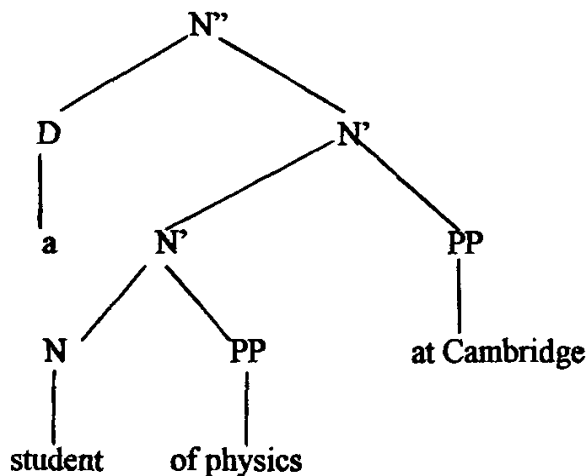
Transformational grammar has not only described postmodifiers but it has also described premodifiers. They argued that there are three structurally distinct classes of nominal premodifiers, namely Determiners, Complements and Attributes. A structure such as [10] could be generated by a set of Phrase Structure Rules such as below:
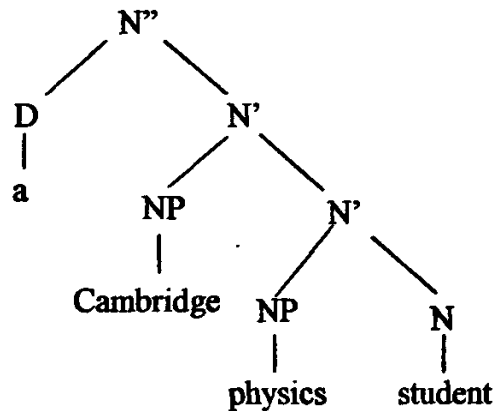
[10] a *Cambridge physics* student

(i) N" →(D)   N' [Determiner Rule]

(ii) N' →NP   N' [Attribute Rule]

(iii) N' →(NP) N [Complement Rule]

So example [10] has the structure below:

Transformational grammar's description of noun phrases' structure is very accurate. But this explanation is made by a tree structure (i.e. father node and sister node) and the explanation is processed in a language system, so it is weak. This kind of limitation is due to its over formalization. We should recognize that the ordering of complement and adjunct used as modifiers could be shown by a tree diagram, or we can describe the ordering of modifiers formally, but the tree diagram itself cannot explain the order of modifiers in a fundamental way. The tree diagram used here is just a kind of formalization. Actually, transformational grammarians explain the order of modifiers from the perspective of semantics, that is, they explain it according to the 'closeness' of modifiers with the head word. As Andrew Radford has said that complements are more closely linked to their head word than adjuncts. To the example of *a student of physics with long hair*, he explained that the

PP adjunct *with long hair* doesn't tell us anything about what the student is studying; it merely serves to give us additional information about the student (i.e. that he happens to have long hair). Andrew Radford also made a distinction between the Adjunct Rule and the Complement Rule, and he pointed out that the Adjunct Rule is recursive, whereas the Complement rule is not. Since the rule generating Adjuncts is recursive, it predicted that indefinitely many Adjuncts could be 'stacked' on top of each other. Moreover, he predicted that Attributes and Adjuncts could be stacked on top of each other in any order. The examples below are given by him:

[11] a. the student *with long hair in the corner*

  b. the student *in the corner with long hair*

[12] a a [*high quality*] [*middle class*] [*Cambridge*] student

  b a [*high quality*] [*Cambridge*] [*middle class*] student

  c. a [*Cambridge*] [*middle class*] [*high quality*] student

  d. a [*Cambridge*] [*high quality*] [*middle class*] student

  e. a [*middle class*] [*Cambridge*] [*high quality*] student

  f. a [*middle class*] [*high quality*] [*Cambridge*] student

But in ordinary use of English, we cannot arrange the order of multiple modifiers in such a random way. There are restrictions on the ordering of multiple modifiers.

In the theory of transformational grammar, surface structure and deep structure are two important concepts. Some transformational grammarians in their influential works pointed out that the relative clause is the deep structure of some other modifiers and some modifiers derive from the relative clause. For example, they said that there exist some transformational relations between the type of *Be* relative clause and some

premodifiers, but it must satisfy the condition: the word after Be must be single adjective or participle in the *Be* relative clause. It can be explained by the following examples:

[13] a. A dog *that is snarling* is dangerous.

b. A *snarling* dog is dangerous.

[14] a. Actors *who are gifted* sometimes despise playwright.

b. *Gifted* Actors sometimes despise playwright.

From the above analysis, we can see that transformational grammar has made a comparatively detailed study on the modifiers, but its explanation doesn't correctly reflect human general cognition in using a language. Different structures are the need for people to express different meanings. Every language structure actively interacts with the ways in which we apprehend and interpret real world situations. People don't experience the process of generating sentences in conformity with grammaticality through transformation.

1.3 Cognitive Grammar

Cognitive linguistics refers to the approach to the study of language that has begun to emerge in the 1970s and has been increasingly active since the 1980s. From then on, a great amount of research has been generated under the name of cognitive linguistics. (Croft et al, 2004)

Cognitive linguistics, as presented in this paper, is an approach to language that is based on our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualize it. (Ungerer & Schimid, 1996)

Cognitive linguistics covers a wide range of topics. The English noun phrase is a phrasal proportion. Some linguists at home and abroad have

done research on the arrangements of multiple premodifiers in English noun phrases from a cognitive perspective. The major theory that has been proposed for this area is iconicity.

The iconicity of language has received considerable concern of many cognitive grammarians in recent decades. Among them are Benveniste (1946), Chafe (1970), Bolinger(1997), Croft(1990) and so on. Among their works, the most influential work is done by Haiman (1983,1985a,b).

Many scholars agree on three important principles of iconicity. They are the principle of sequence iconicity, the principle of proximity iconicity, and the principle of quantity iconicity. The principle that relates to the ordering of multiple premodifiers is the proximity principle. The principle of proximity iconicity states that elements that have a closer relationship with the head word must be placed nearer to it. Compare the following examples:

[15] a. the famous delicious Italian pepperoni pizza

b. *the Italian delicious famous pepperoni pizza

c. *the famous pepperoni delicious Italian pizza

d. *the pepperoni delicious famous Italian pizza

(F. Ungerer & H.J.Schmid, 2001: 251)

As the example shows, only the first version is acceptable while the other three (and all other possible combinations) are not. According to the explanation of iconicity, the reason is that only the first phrase follows the principle of iconic 'proximity', which states that elements which have a close relationship must be placed close together. Since *pepperoni* is an inherent component of this kind of pizza, this word must precede the noun directly; *Italian*, which denotes the place of origin, deserves the second

closest position, while the characterization of the pizza as *delicious* and its evaluation as *famous* take the positions which are more distant from the head word.

The iconicity theory can explain the ordering of multiple premodifiers in English Noun phrases to some degree, but it also has shortcomings. It is usually considered that the explanatory methods of iconicity lack concrete operation power. It is difficult to grasp the accurate relations between each premodifier and the head word, that is, we have not an objective and feasible judgement criterion on the 'closeness' of modifiers and the head word. Furthermore, it hasn't pointed out the fundamental function of modifiers. So the iconicity theory cannot resolve the problem in a fundamental way.

Besides the iconicity theory, the most recent cognitive research on the ordering of multiple adjective premodifiers has been done by the Chinese scholar Liu Bingquan (2006). He has discussed the general cognitive patterns of human beings as well as the relationship between such patterns and the linear procession of adjective premodifiers in English noun phrases. He also concludes that the grammatical patterns of languages are the reflection of human cognition and that a new explanative mechanism for English grammar could be set up by establishing an overall cognitive pattern of human beings. He regards that the general cognitive framework of human beings includes three cognitive processes: ① perceptual cognitive process; ②rational cognitive process; ③practice test process. At the same time, these three processes are enslaved to a general cognitive principle, that is: qualitative analysis has precedence over quantitative analysis. He regards that the general principles of human cognition can be

expressed by the following ten concrete principles, that is, when people are recognizing objects and organisms in the world they abide by the principles of:

①from the simple to the complicated

②from the lower to the advanced

③from the easy to the difficult

④from the concrete to the abstract

⑤from the exterior to the interior

⑥from the direct to the indirect

⑦from the phenomenon to the essence

⑧from the macro to the micro

⑨from the less information to the much more information

⑩from the general, universal to the concrete, special

He considers that language is the external representation of human cognition and the rules of human cognition are manifested by linguistic forms. Based on this point, Liu Bingquan has analysed the embodiment of human cognitive patterns on the ordering of multiple adjectival premodifiers in English noun phrases. For example: in *a weak small old man*, the ordering of the three premodifiers first illustrates the general principle of qualitative analysis to quantitative analysis, *weak* belongs to qualitative analysis, because it cannot be denoted with numbers; *small* and *old* belong to quantitative analysis because they can be denoted with numbers; the arrangement of *small* and *old* illustrates the cognitive process of from the simple to the complicated, because it is much easier to recognize the figure of a person than to know his age.

The explanation from a cognitive perspective is more progressive

compared with the previous studies. So it has a stronger explanatory power than the previous studies. Because the cognitive methods used above look into languages from the perspective of human cognition, it has broken a new path for language studies. But the methods used above are also complicated and it is not easy for us to remember so many detailed principles. Moreover they haven't pointed out the essence of modifiers from a cognitive perspective and their studies are only restricted to the ordering of multiple adjectival premodifiers. Because modifiers in English noun phrases have many kinds of realizations, including nominal premodifiers, participial premodifiers and so on. So their studies are not comprehensive.

1.4 General Comments

From the above literature review, we can see that different grammatical schools have done some research on one aspect or several aspects of modifiers in noun phrases and they have made some achievements in different aspects. The structural grammar and transformational grammar start from the inner part of language ignoring the relationship between the meaning and the outer world. Comparatively speaking, the cognitive approach is a better choice because it reflects the cognitive processing of human beings, but we think there are limitations in the previous cognitive studies of modifiers in English noun phrases. In this thesis, we will try to overcome the limitations and attempt to study modifiers more comprehensively from a cognitive perspective of subcategorization.

Chapter 2 A Structural and Functional Description of English Noun Phrases with Modifiers

Before we are to investigate modifiers in English noun phrases, it is necessary for us to make a description of the structure of English noun phrases and the realizations of modifiers. At the same time, we will make an analysis of the nature of modifiers. So we will give a definition to modifiers in noun phrases in this chapter. In the long time, grammarians haven't paid much attention to the definition of modifiers in noun phrases or the definitions have been given by grammarians just in a descriptive way. This thesis is also to give a short presentation of the previous definitions concerning modifiers and to put forward the definition adopted in this paper.

2.1 The Basic Structure of English Noun Phrases

The basic structure of English noun phrases can be stated as follows:

NP→(determiner[s]) + (premodifier[s]) + N +(postmodifier[s])

Where brackets represent optional elements. The elements of premodifiers and postmodifiers can usually be omitted without injuring the structure and basic meaning of the phrase.

Here the determiners are not included in our investigation, we are only to do some research on the two kinds of modifiers. Before we are to make an analysis of the two kinds of modifiers, it is necessary for us to make an understanding of the realizations of both premodifiers and postmodifiers.

2.2 Realizations of Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

According to the different positions of modifiers in noun phrases, modifiers can be divided into premodifiers and postmodifiers. Before we are to investigate the differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers, we will look into the realizations of premodifiers and postmodifiers respectively, which will help us to better grasp the differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers.

Generally speaking, separate words are usually used as premodifiers, phrases and clauses are usually used as postmodifiers. But it is not always the case, for example, sometimes separate words could be used as postmodifiers; at the same time, some phrases and sentences could be used as premodifiers. Some modifiers can be put both in the prehead position and posthead position respectively, but the modifiers used in different positions have different meanings.

2.2.1 Realizations of Premodifiers

The major types of premodifying items are listed in the following:

(a) ADJECTIVE

[16] He is a *courteous* man.

(b) PARTICIPLE

[17] This is a very *convincing* example.

[18] He is a *retired* worker.

(c) NOUN

[19] I hate *city* traffic.

In addition, there are some minor, ie less frequent and less productive, types of premodifiers:

(d) ADVERB AND OTHER PHRASES

[20] We have *round-the-clock* service.

[21] I have this strange *under-the-weather* feeling.

(e) SENTENCE

[22] He has asked *I don't know how many* people to the party.

2.2.2 Realizations of Postmodifiers

A prepositional phrase is by far the commonest type of postmodification in English (Quirk 1985:1274). Besides prepositional phrases, there are many other types of postmodifiers such as adjectival phrases, adverb phrases, nonfinite clauses, restrictive relative clauses, and even some postposed adjectives, etc. For example:

[23] the car *outside the station*

[24] the task *difficult to deal with*

[25] She has five children *to look after*.

[26] We must catch the morning train *leaving at 5:30*.

[27] Your letter *dated October 20th* has duly arrived.

[28] The woman *who is approaching us* seems to be somebody I know.

[29] The man *who came here* yesterday is my English teacher.

[30] The little girl had lost her way on her way *home*.

As is stated above, separate words are usually put in the prehead position. But it is not always the case. Some words must be put in posthead position, and some words could be put both in prehead and posthead positions. These words mainly refer to participles and some types of adjectives. For instance:

[31] the house *ablaze/* the third person *singular*

[32] They have provided us with everything *necessary*.

[33] a. the people *absent*

b. in an *absent* way

[34] a. We must get in touch with them in every *possible* way.

b. We must get in touch with them in every way *possible*.

[35] a. There is a *broken* window in the kitchen.

b. The window *broken* yesterday will have to be paid for.

[36] a. I'll never get married–I don't want to spend my life surrounded by *screaming* children.

b. The child *screaming* there is his son.

There are different reasons that lead to these phenomena. For example, predicative adjectives must be postposed, and some separate modifiers in fixed noun phrases that derive from old French should be postposed. The modifiers used in prehead and posthead positions have different meanings. We will make a detailed explanation to their differences later in terms of the theory used in our thesis.

2.3 The Structural Relations Between Premodifiers in Noun Phrases

What we have talked above is the noun phrase with only one premodifier. Usually, there are more than one premodifiers before the head word, and these premodifiers will be arranged in different ways. When a head word has more than one premodifier, there arises the question of their relative order. The ordering of multiple premodifiers has been the major concern in the study of English noun phrases. We define these premodifiers as "complex premodifiers" or "multiple premodifiers", which may be classified into two types according to the structural relations between premodifiers. They are: subordinate relation and coordinate relation.

2.3.1 Subordinate Relation

Subordinate relation is that the premodifiers are added to the head word according to their position sequence. From the perspective of expressing function, the head word should first combine with its nearest premodifiers, and then other premodifiers are added in turn. The preceding premodifier is subordinate to the following premodifier and the preceding premodifier modifies the whole noun phrase with the following premodifier. Each premodifier is a characteristic description to the head word from different angles. These premodifiers are in different levels, and we can call them multi-level premodifiers, so there exists the question of the order of them. Usually, the order between the premodifiers could not be changed at random. It can be described by the following figure 3-1:
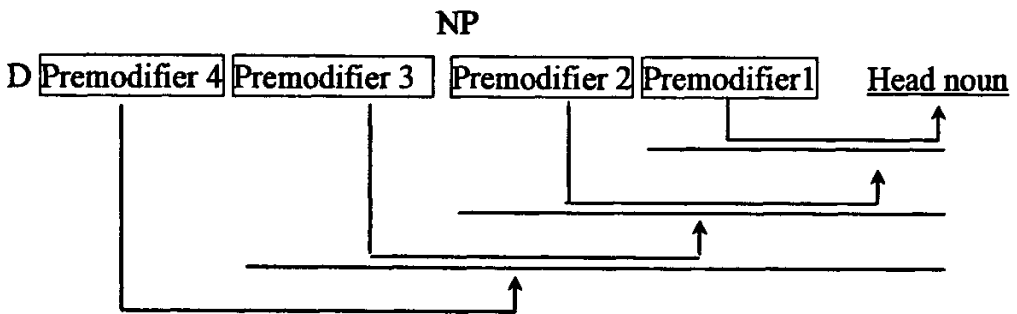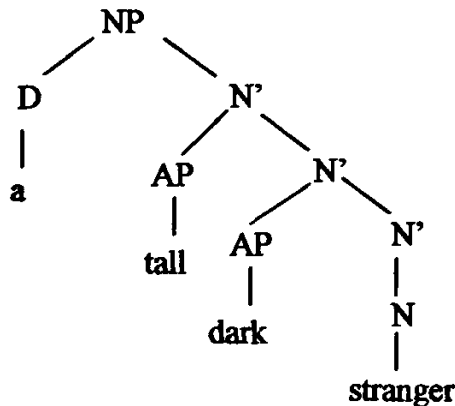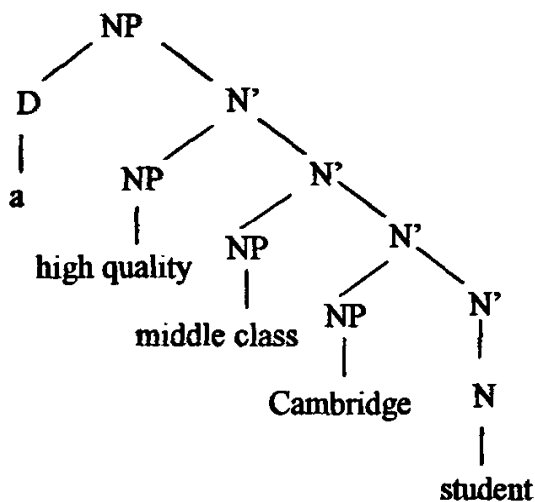
Figure 3-1

Examples: [37] a *tall dark* stranger

Figure 3-1

Examples: [37] a *tall dark* stranger

25

[38] a *high quality middle class Cambridge* student

```
                      NP
                   /       \
                D           N'
                |        /      \
                a      NP         N'
                       |       /      \
                   high quality NP      N'
                                |    /     \
                          middle class NP    N'
                                       |   /    \
                                  Cambridge  N
                                             |
                                          student
```

The number of logical relationships increases dramatically with each additional premodifier. Thus, noun phrases with four-word premodifiers can manifest more complex logical relations among constituents. For example:

[39] an *old green electrical passenger* train

```
                   NP
                /       \
             D           N'
             |        /      \
             an      AP         N'
                     |       /      \
                    old    AP         N'
                           |       /      \
                         green   AP         N'
                                 |       /      \
                            electrical  AP         N
                                        |          |
                                    passenger    train
```
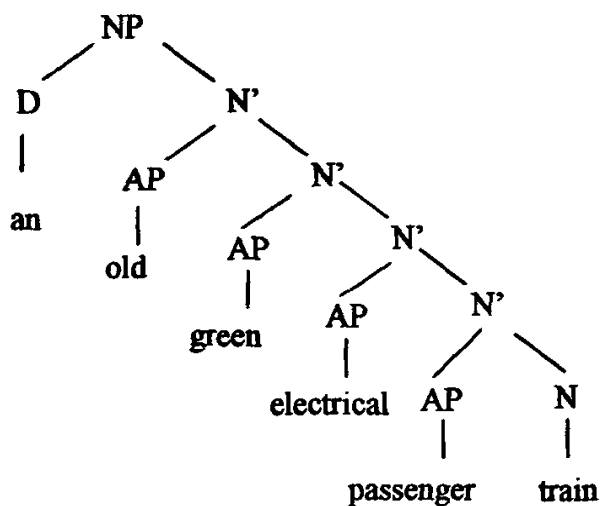
2.3.2 Coordinate Relation

Coordinate relation refers to such a situation in which more than one premodifiers are used to modify the head word, and the premodifiers are at

the same level. In order to make the logical relations among premodifiers explicit, we often use coordinated premodifiers, with each one directly modifying the head word. The two premodifiers are connected by *And* or *Or* or by using a comma. There are four cases. One is that the two premodifiers are used to identify two different (mutually exclusive) referents. For example:

[40] *spoken* and *written* styles

[41] *British* and *American* spelling

The second case is that the two premodifiers are used to identify a single referent. For example:

[42] *strict* and *systematic* discipline

[43] *complex* and *technical* legislation

[44] *precise* and *effective* solutions

[45] a *charming , attractive* lady

[46] a *likable, intelligent and ambitious* boy

In the third case, either one, or both, of the two premodifiers can be applied to a given referent:

[47] *racial* or *religious* cohesion

[48] *familiar* or *preplanned* activities

In the fourth case, though, the coordinator connects two premodifiers that are mutually exclusive, but only one can characterize a given referent:

[49] *dead* or *dying* larvae

Or-coordinated adjective "adjective or adjective" are much less common than *and*-coordinated adjectives.

2.4 The Function of Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

Having understood the realizations of modifiers and the structural relationship between premodifiers and the head word, it is necessary for us to know the nature of modifiers, that is, what is a modifier? Grammarians at home and abroad haven't attached much importance to the definition of modifiers in noun phrases. Just a few of them refer to it briefly.

2.4.1 Previous Definitions of Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

Quirk et al (1985:1239) proposes that the premodification comprises all the items placed before the head word other than determinatives, notably adjectives (or, rather, adjective phrases) and nouns:

some furniture

some expensive furniture

some very expensive furniture

some very expensive office furniture

some very very expensive office furniture

and the postmodification comprises all the items placed after the head word, notably:

prepositional phrases: the car outside the station

nonfinite clauses: the car standing outside the station

relative clauses: the car that stood outside the station

complementation: a bigger car than that

Zhang Zhenbang (1999:675) proposes that modification is an important method of expressing meanings, by using various kinds of modification we can make sentences express vivid, impressive and complex ideas:

some intelligent students

some intelligent college students

some very intelligent medical college students

The definitions given above haven't pointed out the function of modifiers from a fundamental way, and the definitions are not given from a cognitive perspective. They haven't taken human's cognition into consideration, so we need to improve them.

2.4.2 The Definition Adopted in This Paper

Based on the previous definitions on modifiers and by careful observation of the language, we define modifiers in noun phrases from a macroscopic perspective as follows: a modifier is a kind of subcategorization of what the head word refers to according to various characteristics of the head word by language users. Syntactically, a modifier is a word or phrase or relative clause that is subordinate to the head word. Here we need to particularly point out the definition of the word 'characteristics'. The content of 'characteristics' in a broad sense refers to any kind of features, including internal and external characteristics, such as appearance, shape, size, age, various properties and states of what the head word refers to. The characteristics can be static or dynamic, temporary or permanent. There always exist various semantic relationships between a modifier and the head word.

In this chapter, we define modifiers from the cognitive perspective. Compared with the previous definitions, our definition of modifiers correctly reflects the general human cognition in using a language and it has strong power in interpreting the uses of modifiers in English noun phrases. It can be regarded as a sort of analysis and study of language

phenomena from a macroscopic perspective. Our major objective in this paper is not only to investigate the nature of modifiers but also the ordering of multi-level modifiers in English noun phrases. Before we make cognitive analyses of modifiers, we will first provide the theoretical background of our study in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Language is not only the tool but also the result of human cognition, the structure and function of which are the result and reflection of human cognition. Modifiers in English noun phrases, as part of language, are also the product of human cognition. This chapter is to deal with the theoretical background of this thesis from a cognitive perspective in terms of subcategorization. In order to have a good understanding of subcategorization, it is also necessary for us to know the theory of category and categorization. Because the theory of subcategorization is based on category and categorization, it is the product of the development of categorization.

3.1 Category and Categorization

The world consists of an infinite variety of objects with different substances, shapes and colors. We are surrounded by a variety of different phenomena. But all the objects and phenomena have their characteristics, so people know these objects and phenomena according to these characteristics. Similar members consist of a category.

Human beings observe the similarities between different things and then classify the world according to the similarities. This kind of process is called categorization. "For the linguists, categorization is an important issue because it underlies the use of words and the use of language in general. Since producing and understanding language undoubtedly involve cognitive process, categorization is necessarily something that takes place

in our minds, and the categories resulting from it can be understood as mental concepts stored in our mind" (Ungerer and Schmid, 2001:37). Categorization is an important part of human cognition and an advanced cognitive activity. It is a mental process of classification and is also the basis of constructing category. It is based on experience, interactivity, generalization and induction and it is also the basic ability of human thought, language, reasoning, and creating. Categorizing ability plays an important part in our daily life. Without such kind of ability we cannot play a role in the world, in the social life and in the spiritual life. When we are classifying the concrete objects, we neglect the differences between them, emphasize their similarities, generalize them and form the category and concept. These categories and concepts are stored in our mind and thus form the mental lexicon. If we give some form to the mental lexicon, it becomes an outer language symbol. Suppose we human beings have no such kind of abilities, the world before us will be a scene of no order. So category is the result and production of categorization. Categorization is not only the starting point of the formation of concept, word meaning and language using but also the core content of cognitive linguistics.

However, objects and organisms in the world can be classified into different categories, such as animals, plants, furniture, clothes etc. Moreover, the same object can belong to different categories. For example, 'a Pekingese' at the same time belongs to categories of Animal, Canine, Dog and Pekingese. They have formed different levels of category.

But how does our mind make the most effective classification and organization of the organisms and objects of the world? Cognitive linguists have found the important level of categories—basic level category, that is,

our mind recognizes objects and organisms from the basic level categories. For example, when a person asks you the name of a picture with a desk painted on it, generally you will not answer 'This is an object' or 'It is a piece of furniture', but 'This is a desk'. So if there is no special reason, we always discuss realities from basic level categories.

The basic level category is considered as very important and basic, which is determined by the following factors:

(1) The members of it have the similar gestalt characteristics and can be recognized by people most quickly;

(2) It is expressed by the relatively short, simple, ordinary and neutral words and is acquired and understood earliest by children;

(3) It is the level from which people organize their knowledge;

(4) It has the distinctive features from other levels and can be clearly perceived by people;

The basic level category is the important starting point and the cognitive reference point of people's cognition. Based on the basic level categories, categories can be developed upwards to superordinate categories and downwards to subordinate categories. The former lacks unitary gestalt characteristics and it is the generalization and induction from the basic level. It is a parasitic category. It needs higher and more abstract generalization ability; the latter is a subdivision and subcategorization of the basic level categories. It also requires more complex and high-level cognitive ability. These two levels come into being later than the basic level category and they are extensions of the basic human faculty of categorization. When we want to be more specific, we use subordinate category terms, and this phenomenon is called

subcategorization.

3.2 Subcategorization and its Relationship with Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

Subcategorization, as a cognitive activity of human beings, is a kind of subclassification of objects and organisms in the world from different angles. As a result, one thing is subcategorized into two or several kinds of things that exist dependent on each other and subordinate to that kind of subcategorized category. For example, there are many kinds of dogs, flowers, cars, boats, beds and tables, and all of them can be understood in terms of cognitive categories. We use subordinate terms like *poodle* or *terrier* and not basic level terms like *dog* when we want to be more specific. This specificity determines the way in which we categorize on the subordinate level.

Subcategorization plays a more and more important role in the language system. It makes language expressions rich and colorful. It is the product of social development and human cognition. Because with the development of society, many new things appear constantly, including new ideas, new products, new inventions and so on. People's area of cognition becomes larger and larger. In order to express these new things, we need new language expressions to designate them. But it is impossible for us to create new words for all new things, because it doesn't comply with the principle of language economy and the need for memory convenience. So, based on old experiences people make use of the existing words to express these new things and more complex ideas, and many compounds and composite terms are thus formed to express these new subordinate

categories. One of the most important ways is to use modifiers before or after the head word. For example, people come to know that not only the things with legs, faces and backrest can be called *chairs*, but objects which are used for people and other objects to sit on could also be called *chairs*. So expressions such as *bean-bag chair, sling chair,* even *electric chair* have appeared. At this time, the functional feature of chairs becomes more prominent and important than their physical feature: a chair is an object for people to sit on. There appear more and more things that can be called *chairs*, for example: *doll's chair, cat's chair, marble chair.* The occurrences of these new ways of expressions are due to people's cognitive ability of subcategorization by using modifiers before or after the head word. So the importance of subcategorization shouldn't be ignored.

In a word, subcategorization is the result of social development and human cognition. The structure of *modifier+head word+modifier* is one kind of manifestation of subcategorization in English language. When people want to make more specific classification of things around them, we often use this kind of method. Furthermore, we can put more modifiers before or after the head word when we want to be more specific. The more specific the classifications of the objects and organisms are, the more modifiers are used in a noun phrase. We can make subcategorizations of the head word from different angles and the subcategorization could be made at different levels. That is, any number of modifiers can be added at successive levels: *cats>black cats>big black cats> ugly big black cats> ugly big black cats with long whiskers.* The addition of each modifier results in a higher-order type specification. These phenomena are all manifestations of subcategorization in English language.

Cognitive linguistics provides us with a new approach to the study of modifiers in terms of subcategorization. In the following chapters, we are to study modifiers more comprehensively by using this cognitive theory.

Chapter 4   Subcategorization and the Use of Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

In this chapter, we will make a detailed explanation for the use of modifiers in English noun phrases, including the function of modifiers, the constraints on modifiers and the differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers in terms of subcategorization.

4.1 Subcategorization and the Function of Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

When we study a language phenomenon, the first thing we need to make clear is its function in the language system. As we all know, every language structure has its particular function. Otherwise, it will lose its value of existence. In previous grammar studies, modifiers in English noun phrases are considered to be descriptions of the designated objects or organisms of the head word, and they are used to express more abundant content and complex ideas. This kind of saying hasn't any explanatory power and it is just a way of description. It doesn't solve the question of modifiers' function in a fundamental way.

In this thesis, we will study the function of modifiers from a cognitive perspective. In macroscopic point of view, we consider that modifiers are subcategorizations of what the head word refers to from different angles. In other words, modifiers in English noun phrases play the function of subcategorization. For example: the modifier *intelligent* in *an intelligent boy* is a subcategorization of *boys* from the angle of the brains of boys.

Since a modifier is a kind of subcategorization, there must exist at least two subcategories which are produced contrastively dependent on each other. As with the example *an intelligent boy*, the dependent subcategory can be *a stupid boy*. More examples are: *a beautiful wife* compared with *an ugly wife*; *a red purse* compared with other subcategories such as *a blue purse, a black purse* and so on. Here we need to specially point out that the subcategorizations made by modifiers refer to the class of things designated by the head word, but not a particular object or organism. The subcategorization of the head word made by a modifier is not influenced by its preceding determinatives. So the subcategorization made by *beautiful* in *Tom's beautiful wife* doesn't mean that Tom has two wives, but means that wives can be subcategorized into beautiful wives and ugly wives in the real world according to the appearances of wives.

4.2 Subcategorization and Constraints on Modifiers in English Noun Phrases

As we have stated before, the modifiers play the function of subcategorizing the head word. So there must be constraints on the acceptability of modifiers. That is to say, not all words can be used as modifiers in English noun phrases. If a word hasn't the function of subcategorizing the head word, it can't be used as a modifier. For instance, the use of adjectival past participles (Abbreviated as APP below) as premodifiers in English noun phrases is a difficult problem that has been studied by many linguists at home and abroad. In the past, grammarians have made some explanation on their uses from many angles by using the methods of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, so the study is very

complicated. And the explanation is not very clear either. From the previous studies, it seems that it is difficult to grasp the use of APP as premodifiers. Today, with the development of cognitive linguistics, many new theories and methods appear. The development of cognitive linguistics has provided new methods and approaches to language study. And recently, some scholars have begun to apply cognitive theories to this field. Here in this paper, we think the theory of subcategorization is a better and comprehensive way to explore the mystery of modifiers. Let us see the following examples:

[50] a.* a *built* house

   b.   a *carefully built* house

[51] a.* a *powered* engine

   b.   a *diesel-powered* engine

[52] a.* a *legged* spider

   b.   a *long-legged* spider

[53] a. a *bearded* man

   b. a *white-bearded* man

(Quirk, 1985:1329)

We can say [50b], [51b] and [52b], [53a] and [53b], but we cannot say [50a], [51a] or [52a]. These constrains can be explained in terms of subcategorization. According to social convention and people's general cognitive models, all of the houses are undoubtedly built by human beings. There doesn't exist another instance. In other words, the modifier *built* in *a built house* hasn't the function of subcategorizing the head word. So we cannot say *a built house*, but *a carefully built house* is acceptable, because there coexist in our mind other subcategories of houses such as *a badly built*

house, a well built house and so on. When we say *a carefully built house*, our mind will automatically think of the opposite or other relative types of concepts such as *a badly built house*. Of course, we don't need to refer to these opposite or related types of concepts at the same time, and they exist in our mind; similarly, all engines work by power, and there doesn't exist engines that can work without power, that is, the modifier *powered* in *a powered engine* has not the function of subcategorization, so we cannot say *a powered engine*; but there are different subcategories of engines, some powered by diesel, some powered by gasoline or other things, so we can say *a diesel-powered engine* or *a gasoline-powered engine*. According to our common knowledge, all spiders have legs and we usually don't subcategorize spiders according to whether they have legs or have no legs, so we cannot say *a legged spider*; but we can make a subcategorization of *spiders* according to whether they have short legs or long legs, because there surely exist spiders with short legs and long legs in the real world, so *a long-legged spider* is acceptable; In [53] both *a bearded man* and *a white-bearded man* are acceptable, since not all men have beards and even fewer have white ones, that is, we can make subcategorizations of *men* according to whether they have beards or have no beards, whether they have white beards or black beards and so on. The acceptable modifiers in the above examples all have the function of subcategorizing the head words. But the unacceptable modifiers don't have the function of subcategorizing the head words. So the acceptability or unacceptability of these forms can be easily illustrated by the theory of subcategorization. We can give more examples:

[54] a. *uninvited* guests

b.* *invited* guests

[55] a. *an undetermined* boundary

b. * *a determined* boundary

[56] a. *newly-born* children

b. * *born* children

Of course, the theory of subcategorization is not only restricted to the explanation of APP as premodifiers, it can be applied to other kinds of modifiers, such as adjectival premodifiers, nominal premodifiers, participles, ect. including postmodifiers. For example:

[57] a. *hard* coal

b. *soft* coal

[58] a. a *goods* train

b. a *passenger* train

[59] a. *exploiting* classes

b. *exploited* classes

[60] a. the girl *in red*

b. the girl *in purple*

The four noun phrases above are all acceptable, because each premodifier in them has the function of subcategorizing the head word. The existence of *hard coal* is dependent on *soft coal*, and the two premodifiers *hard* and *soft* realized by adjectives are subcategorizations of the head word. The two premodifiers expressed by nouns in example [58] are subcategorizations of the head word from the functional aspects of what the head word refers to. The two premodifiers realized by participles in example [59a] and [59b] are subcategorizations of the head word from the angle of the social class of what the head word refers to. As we have

said, not only premodifiers but postmodifiers also have the function of subcategorizing the head words. In example [60], the two postmodifiers realized by prepositional phrases are subcategorizations of the head word from the angle of the color of girls' clothes, besides these two subcategories, there are other kinds of subcategories which are produced from the same angle, such as *a girl in blue, a girl in green* and so on. From the above analyses, we can see that the acceptability of modifiers in noun phrases lies on whether the modifiers have the function of subcategorizing the head word. So when the head words are proper nouns, which denote unique things in the world, then we can not subcategorize them by using modifiers. For example, we cannot say *a small Shanghai* or *a big Shanghai*, because there doesn't exist two Shanghais in the world. But we can say *Old Shanghai* and *New Shanghai* if we subcategorize the city according to its history of development, and in fact they refer to two different states of the same referent.

It can be concluded that not all words can be used as modifiers to a given head word. There are constraints on the modifiers in English noun phrases. In a word, the modifiers must have the function of subcategorizing the head word.

4.3 Subcategorization and the Different Features of Premodifiers and Postmodifiers in English Noun Phrases

Quirk (1985:1242) has proposed that modification in noun-phrase structure may be seen as permanent or temporary, such that items placed in premodification positions indicate permanent features. We agree with Quirk on this point, but he hasn't done much work to explain the different

features between premodifiers and postmodifiers. And his explanation has not been carried out from a cognitive perspective.

In this thesis, we think that no matter what kind of items the modifiers may be, premodifiers are relatively permanent subcategorizations of the head words. To postmodifiers, there are two situations, that is, the postmodifiers can express permanent or temporary subcategorizations of the head words. When the postmodifiers are used to describe concrete actions or processes, they are usually temporary subcategorizations of the head words in special contexts; when the postmodifiers are used to describe the interior characteristic facts of the head words, they are usually permanent subcategorizations of the head words. From the perspective of cognition, we think that there are fundamental differences between premodifiers and postmodifiers. To premodifiers, the head word placed in the last position, it implies that the cognitive process expressed by premodifiers is very important. And it is only after the whole cognitive process is finished, the entire concept can be acquired. So the premodifiers have a close relationship with the head word. But to postmodifiers, the head word is placed in the most front position, there is already an entire concept in our mind without the postmodifiers. So the relationship between postmodifiers and the head word is not so close as the relationship between premodifiers and the head word. We know that sometimes the same modifier can occur both in prehead and posthead positions. Generally speaking, the same modifier put in the prehead pisition is a permanent subcategorization of the head word, but the same modifier put in the posthead position tends to refer to a temporary subcategorization of the head word. In the following sections, we will make a detailed study of the

different features between premodifiers and postmodifiers in terms of subcategorization.

4.3.1 Subcategorization and the Feature of Premodifiers in English Noun Phrases

Generally speaking, premodifiers indicate relatively permanent characteristics of the head words. Or we can say that the subcategorizations of the head word made by premodifiers usually have permanent characteristics. Let us first look at some typical examples in which the premodifiers are expressed by single words:

[61] her *beautiful* daughter

[62] a *grants* committee

[63] the *automobile* association

[64] a *small round* table

[65] *black leather* jacket

[66] a *large antique brown German* beermug

First of all, we consider that no matter how many premodifiers there are in a noun phrase, the premodifiers in the above examples are all subcategorizations of the head words from different angles. The premodifiers are all relatively permanent characteristics of the head words. It means that the features of what the head words refers to by these premodifers will remain the same all the time or will not change easily. The appearance of a person may be ugly or beautiful, whether a person is ugly or beautiful, this characteristic of him or her will not change so easily. So the premodifier *beautiful* in [61] is a relatively permanent subcategorization of the head word *daughter*. The property or function of

an organization in our society usually doesn't change, once it has been set up, it will remain its special function to our society all the time. So the premodifiers in [62] and [63] are permanent subcategorizations of the head words respectively from the functional aspect. In normal conditions, the color, shape or size are all permanent characteristics of objects and organisms in the real world, to say nothing of the history, nationality or material of things, thereby we can explain that the multiple premodifiers in example [64], [65] and [66] are all permanent subcategorizations of the head words.

The premodifiers in the above examples are realized by adjectives or nouns which denote the permanent characteristics of the head words. Now we will give some examples in which the premodifiers are realized by participles:

[67] an *interesting* story/a *promising* student

[68] the *eating* table/the *writing* desk

[69] a *retired* worker/a *married* man

Quirk argues (1985:1325) that the possibility of premodification by participle depends on the potentiality of the participle to indicate a permanent or characteristic feature. This basically conforms to our theory in this thesis. The two premodifiers in example [67] have already become adjectives like other ordinary adjectives, so their permanent characteristics to the head words could be shown easily. The two premodifiers *eating* and *writing* in example [68] indicate the functions of the head words, but the functions of things generally will not change, so they show the permanent characteristics of the head words. As we can easily see, the two *–ed* participial premodifiers in example [69] also become adjectives and denote

relatively permanent states of the designated persons of the head words, so they are permanent subcategorizations of the head words.

The following examples can better testify the permanent subcategorial characteristics of premodifiers:

[70] a. a <u>lost</u> purse

    *b. a <u>found</u> purse

The noun phrase in [70a] is acceptable, while [70b] is unacceptable, because when a purse was found after its losing, it hasn't the feature of *found* any more, but in the whole period time of its losing the purse maintains the feature of *lost*. In other words, *lost* is a permanent subcategorization of the head word in *a lost purse*, but *found* doesn't express the permanent feature of the head word, so we cannot say *a found purse*.

It is easy to tell the permanent characteristics of the above participial premodifiers. But the premodifiers in the following three examples are different from those above discussed participial premodifiers.

[71] an *approaching* train/a *barking* dog

[72] ? The *approaching* train is from Liverpool.

[73] ? The *barking* dog is my neighbour's.

If we consider that the premodifiers in [71] refer to a particular train or dog, we cannot explain their permanent subcategorizations of the head words. But if we think that there always exist trains that are approaching to certain places and barking is dogs' frequent behavior in the real world. Then, it can be considered that they refer to the permanent characteristics of the classes of things designated by the head words, and thus they are permanent subcategorizations of the head words. No matter whether they

refer to the past, present or future situations, they refer to habitual and permanent phenomena in our society. The indefinite article favours the habitual or permanent, the definite article the specific or temporary (Quirk 1985: 1326). Thus some people find [72] and [73] strange, especially in British English. We usually say *the approaching train* or *the barking dog* only in special contexts in which the train or dog has been referred to in the preceding contexts, and these expressions are used to repeat the preceding referents. The expressions such as *an approaching train* and *a barking dog* are conventional expressions, but *the approaching train* or *the barking dog* are unconventional expressions and usually requires special contexts.

Now we are going to investigate the less frequently used types of premodifiers which are denoted by phrases and even sentences. Let us see the following examples:

[74] *round-the- clock* service

[75] a *tongue-in-cheek* remark

[76] a *come-and-fight-me* attitude

[77] a *do-it-yourself* job

[78] today's *meet the people* tour

[79] six *do-nothing* months

Today there is an obvious tendency in English, that is, premodifiers are expressed by longer and more complex linguistic forms in newspapers and periodicals. At first, they are usually used to express special ironical or humorous effects in newspapers and periodicals provisionally, in other words, they are used to express pragmatic effects. With the frequent uses of them, they have become slang or fixed expressions to some extent. For example, *do-it-yourself* as in *a do-it-yourself job* is so often used that it has

passed out of the area of slang. The uses of these premodifiers become frequent and thus permanent phenomena, thus their permanent subcategorizations of their head words can be illustrated in this way. More examples are given below:

[80] his *never-too-old-to learn* spirit

[81] a *never- to- be- forgotten* day

[82] a *dearly- paid- for* mistake

[83] the *far-and -wide discussed* new product

In a word, the premodifiers are permanent subcategorizations of the head words or the phenomena expressed by noun phrases with premodifiers are quite familiar or universal in our daily lives, thus to some degree we can say that these familiar or universal phenomena have become permanent in our real world.

4.3.2 Subcategorization and the Feature of Postmodifiers in English Noun Phrases

As is stated before, postmodifiers are often used to describe concrete actions, processes and facts. The postmodifiers are usually temporary subcategorizations of the head words in special contexts, but they can also express permanent subcategorizations of the head words when they refer to the interior or inherent characteristics of the head words. Let us see the following examples:

[84] the girl *who is standing in the corner*

[85] the man *who came yesterday*

[86] the problem *discussed at the last meeting*

[87] a book *on grammar*

[88] a girl *who fears no difficulties*

[89] a room *facing the south*

It is obvious that the postmodifiers in the first three examples are temporary subcategorizations of the head words, while the postmodifiers in the last three examples are permanent subcategorizations of the head words. The temporary characteristics of postmodifiers usually relate with special contexts and particular time. Generally speaking, when the postmodifiers are used with tense, they usually indicate temporary characteristics of the head words. And the postmodifiers in [84], [85] and [86] belong to such kind of instances. But the present tense usually denotes habitual property or phenomenon, so the postmodifier in [88] is a relatively permanent subcategorization of the head word and it denotes permanent characteristics of the head word. As we have stated before, single words are usually used as premodifiers. But in some circumstances, single words can be used as postmodifiers. There are three cases where single words are used as postmodifiers:

Firstly, single words are used as postmodifiers when the head word is realized by a word made up of "any-/every-/some-+body/-one/-thing/-where". For example:

[90] Anybody *younger* would have done better.

[91] There is nothing *wrong* in what she said.

Secondly, single words are used as postmodifiers when they are adjectives borrowed from French, for example: *the president elect, heir apparent, blood royal.*

The above two types of postmodifiers by single words result from their respective special reasons, namely requirements of the head words

and influences from the French language. But they still denote the relatively permanent features of the head words like premodifiers.

However, the third type of postmodifiers which are expressed by predicative adjectives is not the same as the previous two. They are temporary or occasional subcategorizations of their head words. So they usually occur in postpositive positions. For instance:

[92] Can you see the house *ablaze* far away?

[93] All the persons *present* at this meeting are famous scholars from all over the country.

In every language, most of the language phenomena are universal, but there are also some particular phenomena which need our special attention. To find out these language facts will help us to grasp the language better. Related to this thesis, there exist some particular phenomena that will be dealt with carefully in the following sections. But we don't mean that these phenomena couldn't be explained in terms of subcategorization. On the contrary, these phenomena can help to prove our theory perfectly.

4.3.3 Subcategorization and the Differences of the Same Modifier Used in Different Positions

In English there are some *-ed* participles which can be both used as premodifiers and postmodifiers. When the *-ed* participles are used as premodifiers, they usually denote the permanent characteristics of the head words; when they are used as postmodifiers, they usually denote the temporary characteristics of the head words. Because the *-ed* participial premodifiers usually refer to the interior characteristics of the head words, but the *-ed* participial postmodifiers usually refer to special actions,

processes and facts in special contexts. Let us look at the following examples:

[94] a. the language *spoken*

 b. *spoken* language

[95] a. the people *concerned*

 b. a *concerned* expression

[96] a. jobs *wanted*

 b. *wanted* person

[97] a. the chance *given*

 b. at the *given* time

From the above examples we can see that some -*ed* participles can occur in different positions, and the same -*ed* participle used in different positions has completely different meanings and different subcategorial characteristics. The above four -*ed* participles used in prehead position indicate the property or state of the head words and they are permanent subcategorizations of the head words. For example, the noun phrase *spoken language* like *written language* refers to the inherent property of a language form; the noun phrase *a concerned expression*, which exists dependent on other expressions like *a frightened expression*, also denotes a permanent property; *wanted person* denotes the feature of a person who has committed a crime but has not been arrested yet and it is distinct from *prisoner*; *at the given time* denotes a period of time but not a point of time and it has become a fixed expression. The premodifiers in the above four examples express relatively permanent characteristics of the head words. Maybe, someone will doubt the permanent characteristics of *a concerned expression*, but we know that although a person himself cannot have a

concerned expression permanently to him, but a particular look can of course be permanently associated with such a value. The four *-ed* participles used in postpositions indicate the feature of passivity or the results of certain actions. They are usually used in special contexts, so they are temporary subcategorizations of the head words. For example, *the language spoken* refers to the language which was spoken by somebody at some particular time; *jobs wanted* refers to jobs which are needed by someone in a special time; *the people concerned* refers to the people who were affected by/connected with something in a special situation; *the chance given* denotes the chance which was given by somebody or organization in a special time. In the long use of time, the *-ed* participles used as premodifiers have become steady features of the head words, whereas the *-ed* participles used as postmodifiers denote temporary features of their head words. The uses of *-ed* participial postmodifiers usually need concrete contexts and they often denote the results of certain actions.

The distinction between premodifiers and postmodifiers in the above examples is very obvious. They have absolutely different meanings and their different subcategorial characteristics are very obvious. To some extent, the noun phrases with premodifiers in the above examples have become fixed expressions or semantic units and have become permanent phenomena in our society. But the noun phrases with postmodifiers should be used in special contexts. The distinction of the same word used as premodifiers and postmodifiers is obvious in the above four examples. However, it is not so obvious in the following examples:

[98] a. The only *navigable* river...

b. During the drought the only river *navigable* was the Merced.

[99] a. the *visible* stars

b. the stars *visible*

[100] a. He was an *insane* man.

b. He was a man *insane.*

At first sight, it seems that the meanings of the two noun phrases in each group in the above three examples are the same. But if we think them over, we will find there exist differences between them and the same modifier used in different positions has different subcategorial characteristics.

The premodifiers in each group are permanent subcategorizations of the head words. For example, *the only navigable river* refers to the usual phenomenon in a certain place, while *the only river navigable* refers to such a situation in which the temporal state of the river is caused by drought or some other similar reasons and this kind of state is a temporary phenomenon; *the visible stars* refers to a certain kind of stars which can be seen by people in ordinary nights, while *the stars visible* refers to the stars that can only be seen in a special time; *an insane man* refers to the relatively permanent state of the man, while *a man insane* means that the man is angry for one particular thing at a particular time. Through a comparative analysis of the same words used as premodifiers and postmodifiers, we can conclude that premodifiers tend to expess relatively permanent subcategorizations of the head words, while the subcategorizations made by postmodifiers refer to temporary characteristics of the head words. We can better illustrate this point by the following facts. For example, we can say: *the involved /concerned/ interested party* or *the party involved/concerned/interested*, but we can only say *the people involved/concerned/interested*. Why the modifiers

involved, concerned, and *interested* can be placed either before or after the head word *party,* but they can only take the posthead position when the head word is replaced by a different noun, such as *people*? In other words, why can we make a temporary or permanent subcategorization of *party* by using the same modifier? We believe that it *is* the result of social development and change. In the past, people usually used *the party involved/concerned/interested* to refer to the two parties in a contract or an agreement. At first, this phenomenon doesn't occur very often in our society and they are not so frequent actions in the real world. With the development of economy and society, this action has become a more and more frequent phenomenon in our society. When discussing and signing a contract there are always two or more parties attending, and thus this kind of action has become a frequent, universal and important phenomenon in our society. And this phenomenon has become steady and permanent in our society, so the expressions of *the involved /concerned/ interested party* are more often and widely used. But the expressions of *the people involved /concerned/interested* usually refer to the people in any situations, so their temporary characteristics are obvious.

4.3.4 Subcategorization and the Differences Between Restrictive Relative Clauses and Adjectival Premodifiers

Some grammarians of transformational generative linguistics consider that the restrictive relative clause with an adjective as its predicate is the deep structure of the same adjectival premodifier. In other words, adjectival premodifiers derive from restrictive relative clauses. But in cognitive linguistics, it is regarded that every language structure has its meaning and function. The productions of different structures are the results of human' s necessity to express different meanings. In this thesis,

we think that adjectival premodifiers are not derived structures. The adjectival premodifiers are different from relative clauses with adjectival predicates. Let us examine the following examples:

[101] a. Plays *which are controversial* rarely appear on Broadway.(Jacobsen and Rosenbaum)

  b. *Controversial* plays rarely appear on Broadway.

[102] a. Actors *who are gifted* sometimes despise playwright. (Jacobsen and Rosenbaum)

  b. *Gifted* actors·sometimes despise playwright.

It seems that the meanings expressed respectively by premodifiers and postmodifiers in each group are basically the same. But actually there exist differences between adjectival premodifiers and relative clauses in the aspect of subcategorial characteristics. The adjectival premodifiers usually denote steady, inherent and permanent characteristics of the head word, but the postmodifiers realized by relative clauses have the temporary characteristics to some degree. And the use of postmodifiers often needs special contexts, so they are temporary subcategorizations of the head words. For example, we can say *controversial plays* and *gifted actors* without any contexts, but we normally don't say *plays which are controversial* or *actors who are gifted* without special contexts. Furthermore, the postmodifiers tend to have the function of emphasis and they are structures with the characteristic of markedness. This conforms to the principle of *end -focus* in English. In a word, the adjectival premodifiers don't derive from the restrictive relative clause, but produced by the different requirements of speakers and writers.

From the above analyses, we have got a better understanding of the

different features of premodifiers and postmodifiers. To sum up, both premodifiers and postmodifiers are subcategorizations of the head words from various angles. Modifiers in noun phrases have a permanent and temporary distinction, such that items placed in premodification position are typically given the status of permanent characteristics, and items that placed in postmodification position can express temporary or permanent characteristics of the head words. According to cognitive linguistics, syntax does not involve any transformation. Every language structure is the product of the necessity for people to express different meanings. Adjective premodifiers do not derive from relative clauses. They are produced by the different requirements of speakers and writers.

Chapter 5   Subcategorization and the Word Order of Premodifiers in English Noun Phrase

As is mentioned above, from the macroscopic point of view, all premodifiers have the function of subcategorization and are subcategorizations of the designated objects or organisms denoted by the head words. Since the premodifiers are subcategorizations of what the head words refer to, when there are more than one premodifiers co-occuring in a noun phrase, there is a problem of how to arrange them. We cannot arrange them at random. We have already analyzed the structure of noun phrases with premodifiers. There are two relations between premodifiers, that is, coordinate relation and subordinate relation. The premodifiers with coordinate relation are subcategorizations of the head words at the same level, so there doesn't exist the question of hierarchies between coordinate premodifiers. When two or more premodifiers co-occur at the same level, they are usually arranged on the principle of "short one before long one". For example: *a safe, economical, smooth-riding car, a rainy, cloudy, freezing day.* But we cannot arrange the ordering of premodifiers with subordinate relation by using the same method. The ordering of premodifiers with subordinate relation is determined by the hierarchies of subcategorization which should comply with the general principles of human cognition.

Here, we are only to make an investigation into the ordering of premodifiers with subordinate relation in terms of subcategorization in the following sections. Before we are to do some research on this question, we

should first make clear the general principles of human subcategorization which govern the ordering of premodifiers with subordinate relation.

5.1 The General Principles of Subcategorization

When we are categorizing organisms and objects around us in the world, we first classify them into different categories according to their most essential properties. Based on this general principle, one category is separated from other categories by their most distinctive features. Similarly, when people are making subcategorizations of things, they still observe this principle, that is, the subcategorizations of objects and organisms are processed on the principle of "the more essential before the less essential". The most essential feature of an object is the most interior feature, and the nonessential features of an object are the external features. The premodifier that refers to the most essential feature of the head word is the first level of subcategorization, so it is placed nearest to the head word.

The structure of modifier + head word is one kind of embodiment of subcategorization in English. As language is the product of human cognition, and the structure of a language is the reflection of human cognition. When there are more than one premodifiers in a noun phrase at different levels, we consider that the premodifier which is closest to the head word is the first level of subcategorizations of the head word. And the more essential of the feature of a modifier, the less distance the modifier has with the head word. The ordering of premodifiers is based on the general principles of human cognition.

Having understood the general principles of human subcategorization and its relationship with the ordering of multi-level premodifiers, we will

ask what kind of premodifiers are the most essential subcategorizations of the head words, and what kind of premodifiers are not essential subcategorizations of the head words? That is, how to decide the relationship between premodifiers and their head word? There are so many kinds of words that can be used as premodifiers. Actually, the study of cognitive linguistics is based on meaning, the distance between premodifiers and the head word is determinded by their meaning relations. So it is necessary for us to make a classification of premodifiers according to their relationship with the head word in meaning.

5.2 Classification of Premodifiers Based on Semantic Relationship Between Premodifiers and the Head Word

Although the semantic relationship between premodifiers and their head word is very complicated and the function of premodifiers to their head word is multi-facet, all in all, according to their semantic relationship, premodifiers can be classified into the following three categories: subjective premodifiers, objective premodifiers and premodifiers of mixed characteristics.

Subjective premodifiers are modifiers that express people's subjective impressions on or evaluations of things, which are the exterior and nonessential characteristics of what is denoted by the head noun. Subjective premodifiers are realized usually by gradable adjectives; they can be modified by such adverbs as *very* and *rather*; they have comparative and superlative forms. For example:

[103] a. the most *famous* singer

b. very *close* friends

c. a rather *interesting* story

Different from subjective premodifiers, objective premodifiers are modifiers which indicate the inherent properties of what is denoted by the head noun. Objective premodifiers are realized usually by nouns, nominal adjectives and nominal participles; they are non-gradable, do not have comparative or superlative forms, and cannot be modified by *very* or *rather*. Premodifiers denoting material, provenance, style and function of the head word belong to premodifiers of this type. For example:

[104] a. a *silken* handkerchief

b. a *British* ship

c. the *carved* idol

d. a *writing* desk

Besides the above two subclasses, there is a third subclass of premodifiers which stand between subjective premodifiers and objective premodifiers. Premodifiers of this third type have characteristics of both subjective premodifiers and objective premodifiers. They indicate features which are somewhat interior but gradable to some extent. So they are called premodifiers of mixed characteristics. Premodifiers denoting size, shape, age and color belong to the premodifiers of this type. For example:

[105] a. the *smallest* country in the world

b. a very *long* bridge

c. a (very) *red* flower

Based on the classification of premodifiers above, the next section is to discuss the ordering of premodifiers in terms of subcategorization.

5.3 Word Order of Premodifiers in English Noun Phrases

Languages are expressed in linear order from left to right, when

people are describing a language phenomenon, they usually describe them from left to right. Contrary to this, in this thesis we will study the ordering of premodifiers from the premodifier which is nearest to the head word to the one which is farthest away from the head word, that is, from right to left. Because according to the theory of subcategorization, the premodifier which is nearest to the head word is the most essential subcategorization of the head word and it has a closer relationship with the head word in meaning compared with the more distant premodifiers, thus it is the first level of subcategorization. The premodifier which is farthest away from the head word is the last level of subcategorization of the head word and it has a less close relationship with the head word compared with other co-occuring premodifiers.

According to the general principles of the ordering of premodifiers and the classification of premodifiers that we have made in this thesis, we consider that objective premodifiers are placed nearest to the head word, subjective premodifiers are placed farthest away from the head word and between them are premodifiers of mixed characteristics. In other words, the nearer the premodifiers are to the head word, the more objective characteristics they have; the farther the premodifiers are to the head word, the more subjective characteristics of they have. We can illustrate the ordering of the three types of premodifiers by the following diagram: subjective premodifiers + premodifiers of mixed characteristics + objective premodifiers+the head word

For example:

[106] a *beautiful small round old wooden writing* desk

There are six premodifiers in [106]. It seems that it is difficult to

explain their arrangement, but if we first classify them into the above discussed three subclasses of premodifiers, the problem will become much easier. Among the six premodifiers, *writing* and *wooden* belong to objective premodifiers, *old, round* and *small* belong to mixed premodifiers, while *beautiful* is a subjective premodifier. The order of these premodifiers agrees with the "subjective+mixed+objective" general law. In this example, there are two objective and three mixed premodifiers. They are also arranged in accordance with the general law. Between *wooden* and *writing*, *writing* is the more objective, because it indicates the functional aspect of the head word. When people make a desk, the first thing they consider is its function. The function of an object is the most important thing to people. As looked from the physical characteristics of objects, the social value of an object depends on its value of usefulness to people's life, so *writing* is the most essential characteristics, that is to say, *writing* has a more objective feature compared with *wooden*, so it is the first level of subcategorization of the head word and must be placed nearer to the head word than *wooden*. Among *small, round* and *old, old* is more inherent than *round*, because the character of *old* has something to do with the interior character of the head word while *round* denotes an exterior feature. However, *round* denotes a more objective feature than *big*, because the character of *round* of an object can be measured by scientific apparatus, while to tell whether an object is big or small carries some subjective judgements. In a word, the ordering of premodifiers abides by the principle of human subcategorization: the more objective the feature is, the earlier it comes in the process of subcategorization. We will explain the ordering of premodifiers in detail in the following discussion. Let us look at the

following examples:

[107] *true life* stories

[108] a *black leather* jacket

[109] *red address* book

[110] *thick winter* overcoat

There is a common feature in these examples: the two premodifiers in each phrase are realized by an adjective and a noun, and the nominal premodifiers are nearer to the head word. As we have said, nominal premodifiers belong to objective premodifiers and they denote interior, therefore objective characteristics of the head word, so they are the first level of subcategorizations of the head word. Thus nouns tend to occur closer to the head word than adjectives. There is an overall tendency for noun-like premodifiers to occur closer to the head word than adjectival and participial premodifiers. For instance:

[111] a *blue plastic* sheet

[112] *mature rice* grain

[113] an *experienced woman* worker

[114] *increased disease* incidence

In the following examples, the participles denote more objective features and therefore they are the first level of subcategorizations of the head word and stand closer to the head word than the adjectives.

[115] *considerable fertilizing* value

[116] *traditional feeding* programs

[117] *rare shopping* trips

[118] *ancient stuffed* armchair

Next come another four examples. Superficially they are the counter

examples of the four examples above, because here participles occur before adjectives. Yet, as a matter of fact, the ordering of the premodifiers here follows the general rule, because the adjectives in these examples are nominal adjectives and very objective in nature. They are non-gradable, more objective than the participles before them. So they naturally make the first-level subcategorization and stand closer to the head word than the participles.

[119] *increased nutritional* support

[120] the *estimated average* magnitude

[121] the *invited local* authorities

[122] *breathtaking natural* beauty

The ordering of premodifiers in the above examples is obvious. Because the differences between these premodifiers are very clear in terms of subjective or objective characteristics. But when there are more than one adjectives co-occuring in a noun phrase, how to decide their arrangements? Let us look at the following examples:

[123] a *pretty tall* girl

[124] a *weak young* man

[125] a *valuable old* desk

[126] a *comfortable big* room

The premodifiers in the above four examples are all adjectives. The premodifiers *tall*, *young*, *old* and *big* in [123], [124], [125] and [126] denote mixed features of what their head nouns refer to. They are more objective than *pretty*, *weak*, *valuable*, and *comfortable* respectively. So they make the first-level subcategorization and stand closer to their head words.

Generally speaking, the ordering of premodifiers cannot be changed at ranbom, but in special contexts the ordering of some premodifiers can be changed. For example, we usually say *a beautiful young lady*, but the expression of *a young beautiful lady* is also acceptable in special contexts. It seems that the latter expression violates the general principles of human cognition, but in fact, it doesn't, because the order of subcategorization is determined by the purpose of the speaker in communication. For example, in the situation of a beauty contest, we usually say *a young beautiful lady*, because in such a situation, *beautiful* has become the most important aspect of ladies and ladies are subcategorized first from this angle. The premodifier *young* denotes the age of ladies; it is not as important as *beautiful* in this situation, so it is the second level of subcategorization, which is made on the basis of the first level of subcategorization.

From the above discussion, we can see that the cognitive analysis of the ordering of premodifiers is possible from the angle of subcategorization. Analyzing the ordering of premodifiers from this angle reflects people's cognitive processing in using a language and it has a strong power in interpreting the ordering of premodifiers. In a word, we cannot arrange the order of premodifiers in noun phrases at random. The ordering of premodifiers should accord with the general principles of human cognition.

Conclusion

The noun phrase is an important component of the English sentence, and modifiers in noun phrases are a heated topic of linguistic discussion. This thesis has made a cognitive study of modifiers in English noun phrases in terms of subcategorization. Different from earlier studies, ours is a more in-depth discussion and a more comprehensive exploration in this field. In the thesis, we have mainly discussed the following aspects: the cognitive definition of modifiers, the function and characteristics of modifiers and the ordering of premodifiers. On the basis of the preceding discussions, we can draw the following conclusions.

1. Most of the previous studies on the modifiers in noun phrases do not reflect the process of human cognition. In recent years, some linguists have begun to do research on modifiers from a cognitive perspective, but we think there are limitations in their studies. Some linguists at home and abroad have adopted the theory of iconicity to do analysis on the ordering of premodifiers. But these studies are only confined to the ordering of adjectival premodifiers. They have not pointed out the essential function of modifiers and nor have they explained the constraints on the use of modifiers in noun phrases, so their studies are not comprehensive.

2. In this thesis, the modifier is defined from the cognitive perspective as the subcategorization of what is denoted by the head word from various angles by language users. Since modifiers are subcategorizations from different angles, if a word does not have the function of subcategorization, then it cannot be used as a modifier of the head word. The

subcategorization made by modifiers must be meaningful, that is, it should conform to the general principles of human cognition. The result of subcategorization is the co-existence of at least two subcategories.

3. The order of premodifiers is not arranged at random. It is determined by the hierarchy of subcategorization. And the hierarchy of subcategorization conforms to the general principles of human cognition.

Our discussion aims to provide a comprehensive account of modifiers from the perspective of cognition, but the problem of modifiers is too complicated to be solved in such a short paper as this thesis. As a first tentative attempt at the comprehensive study of modifiers in terms of subcategorization, our discussion is certainly not mature. Some related aspects like the ordering of postmodifiers has not been dealt with in detail. More efforts are required in my future studies.

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Appendix

本人在读研期间发表的与硕士学位论文相关的学术论文如下：

1. "英语名词前置定语语序的象似性"，《湖南师范大学社会科学学报·学术专刊》， 2005 年第 2 期。

2. "次范畴化与英语名词短语中前置修饰语的研究"，《湖南农业大学社会科学学报》， 2006 年第 6 期。

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