

## PHRASE-STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH USED IN CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S "JANE EYRE"

MURODOVA MUKADAS IKROMOVNA

Teacher, Termez branch of Tashkent State Pedagogical  
University named after Nizami

TILLAYEV ZAFAR AKMALOVICH

Teacher, Termez branch of Tashkent State Pedagogical  
University named after Nizami

### ABSTRACT

Languages vary in the patterns they allow as grammatically complete, that is in' the kinds of sentences they use.

The syntactical description of any language is made scientifically possible by isolating certain recurrent units of expression and examining their distribution in contexts. The largest of these units are sentences, which can naturally be decomposed into their smaller constituent units — phrases.

English syntax is a many-layered organization of relatively few types of its basic units. A twofold or binary structure is one of the most striking things about its grammatical organization.

**KEYWORDS:** "endocentric" and "exocentric" constructions, syntactic construction, phrase-structure, "Jane Eyre".

### INTRODUCTION

According to the ways in which phrases are used and constituted, two main types of English phrases can be distinguished: headed (endo-centric) and non-headed (exocentric).

In recent years ideas of "endocentric" and "exocentric" constructions have reasonably received wide application.

The terms "endocentric" and "exocentric" for syntactic constructions were introduced by L. Bloomfield. In his book "Language\* we find the following explanation of these terms:

"Every syntactic construction shows us two (or sometimes more) "free forms combined in a phrase, which we may call the resultant phrase. The resultant phrase may belong to a form-class other than that of any constituent. For instance, John ran is neither a nominative expression (like John) nor a finite verb expression, (like ran). Therefore we say that English actor-action construction is exocentric: the resultant phrase belongs to the form-class of no immediate constituent. On the other hand, the resultant phrase may belong the same form-class as one (or more) of the constituents. For instance, poor John is a proper-noun expression, and so is the constituent John; the forms John and poor John have, on the whole, the same functions. Accordingly we say that the English character-substance construction (as in poor John, fresh milk and the like), is an endocentric construction".

Headed phrases have this peculiarity: all the grammatical functions open to them as phrases can also be exercised by one expression within them. They may be regarded as expansions of this expression, called the head of the group and it is possible to substitute the head for the group or the group for the head within the same grammatical phrase (i. e. in the same context) without causing any formal dislocation of the overall grammatical structure. For instance, in Fresh fruit is good the headed word-group fresh fruit serves as subject; in / like fresh fruit, it serves as objective complement. If we substitute the head expression fruit for fresh fruit in either case, the grammatical frame subject, verb, complement will remain formally undisturbed.

Fresh fruit is good. Fruit is good. I like fresh fruit. I like fruit.

All this nice fresh fruit is good. Fruit is good. Singing songs is fun. Singing is fun. I like singing songs. I like singing.

In these sets of examples, the head expressions fruit and singing are freely substitutable grammatically for the word-groups of which they are constituents. In both cases, then, the italicized word-groups are headed groups.

Syntactic relations in English may be signaled by the following devices:

a) Word-order, i. e. the position of words relative to each other in the utterance.

b) Prosody-combinations of patterns of pitch, stress and juncture.

Patterns of pitches and terminal junctures are called intonation patterns; patterns of stresses and internal junctures are often referred to as superfixes.

c) Function words — words with little or no lexical meaning which are used in combining words into larger structures (prepositions, conjunctions, relative pronouns).

d) Inflections which adapt words to fit varying structural positions without changing their lexical meaning or part of speech.

e) Punctuation in writing.

### PHRASE-STRUCTURE

It seems practical to classify phrases according to the character of their syntactical arrangement. We shall thus distinguish: 1) subordinate phrases, 2) co-ordinate phrases and 3) predicative (or "nexus") phrases. Every structure may be divided into its immediate constituents:

1) In terms of grammatical organization, subordinate phrases are binary structures in which one of the members is syntactically the leading element of the phrase. No matter how complicated this twofold or binary structure may be, it can always be divided into two immediate constituents, one functioning as head and the other as modifier.

Adjuncts serve to describe, to qualify, to select, to complete, to extend or in some other way to affect the meaning of the head, e. g. fresh air, stone wall, writing a letter, perfectly right, awfully tired, etc.

2) Co-ordinate phrases consist of two or more syntactically equivalent units joined in a cluster which functions as a single unit. The units so joined may be any of the parts of speech or more complex structures taking part in grammatical organization. The joining may be accomplished by word order and prosody alone, or with the help of conjunctions, e. g. girls and boys, pins and needles, sooner or later, now and then, etc.

3) Predicative (or "nexus") phrases are such structures in which the Syntactic functions of the component parts differ from the function of the phrase, as a whole, e. g. the lesson over, circumstances permitting, this done, for them to come, on him to do, etc.

Subordinate phrases may be best enumerated when we arrange them according to their leading member: noun phrases, adjectival phrases, verb phrases, adverbial phrases, and pronominal phrases (pronominal phrases are most suitably included in the noun or adjective groups to which they are evident parallels). As has been pointed out, their immediate constituents are head word and modifier (adjunct). The term head word (= head) means the word that is modified.

The distributional value of nouns in adjunct groups may be illustrated as follows:

adjective -f **noun**: fine weather, beautiful picture, sunny smile. **noun** -f- **noun**: world peace, space flight, peace movement, morning star, gold watch.

**pronoun or numeral** + **noun**: my friend, his duties, our achievements, five days.

adverb + noun: the then methods, the above examples. participle I -f- **noun**: playing children, amusing thing. participle II-) -**noun**: the departed guests, the returned soldiers, the desired channel of conversation, the faded flowers.

In terms of position of the determinant, noun-phrases may be classified into: 1) phrases with proposed modifier, 2) phrases with postponed modifier.

#### Phrases with Proposed Modifier

In noun-phrases with proposed modifiers we generally find adjectives, pronouns, numerals, participles, gerunds and nouns in the possessive case. Here belongs also promodification of nouns by nouns (so-called noun-adjunct-groups).

With his own hands he put flowers about his **little house-boat** and equipped the punt in which, after lunch, he proposed to take them on the river (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Many a time had he tried to think that in **old days** of thwarted **married life**; and he always failed (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Val had just changed out of **riding clothes** and was on **his way** to the fire — a bookmaker's in Cornmarket (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Jolly Forsyte was strolling down High Street, Oxford, on a November afternoon (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

After **a few morning consultations**, with the **pleasant prospect** of no surgery in the: evening Andrew went on **his** round (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

And beneath it lay the **family's Christmas treat** — **three** small oranges (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

A proposed determinant may be extended only by an adverb, e. g. extremely hot weather.

That was a **typically French way** to furnish a room.

In premodification of nouns by nouns the noun + adjunct may be extended by words of different parts of speech, e. g. long playing **microgroove full frequency range recording**.

The -s is appended to a group of words if it forms a sense-unit, e. g. the **man of property's** daughter, **Beaumont and Fletcher's** plays, **the King of Denmark's** court.

The division into immediate constituents in cases like the man of **property's daughter** is not **the man! of property's**, but **the man of property's\***

Further familiar examples are:

He said it in **plenty of people's** hearing. The test of **a man or woman's** breeding is how they behave in a quarrel (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Very rarely an ambiguity may arise from constructions of this type, as in the well-known puzzle:

The son of Pharaon's daughter was the daughter of Pharaon's son.

In patterns with the possessive case we find the following types of noun phrases with proposed modifiers: the young man's gifts, his sister's letter, two year's child, the rising sun's rays, the retired officer's son, the Foreign Minister's information, Scrooge's niece's sister.

There are also noun phrases with the extended head-noun where the latter is not a single word but a word-group.

Familiar types of such phrases as observed in Modern English usage are:

new iron bridges, this little girl, five little boys, advancing French students, retired British soldiers, Peter's young brother, all these days, Peter's other invention, last two days, these two days, Shelly's two poems, little smiling faces, these smiting girls, two running boys, this opened box, two opened boxes, Britain's repeated attempts, old friend's help, new flight plans, these sugar sacks, four medicine bottles, shining gold coins, broken wine glasses, Peter's gold watch.

The linguistic features of proposed modifiers give every reason to subdivide them into: 1) determiners, 2) Quantifiers and 3) Qualifiers.

Determiners are all the words that in noun-phrases occupy the position of the article. These are:

a) The articles: the, a/an;

b) Demonstrative pronouns: this, these, that, those;

c) Possessive conjoint pronouns: my, your, his, her, its, our, their;

d) Pronouns: which, whose, each, every, some, any, no, either, neither, much, many, more, most;

e) Nouns or noun-groups with the -s morpheme, e. g. her brother's arrival, my friend's son, etc.

f) Such pronouns as all and both that occur before the, e. g. all the students, all the boys, etc. or, say, the pronouns what, such and same

that may occur in either position: what a boy, no such mistakes, the same mistake, and such a day.

Pronouns used in a position after the determiners and articles (so-called post-determiners) will not belong here either, e. g. some other day, every other day, etc.

Phrases with Postponed Modifiers

In structures of modification the use of separate words as post-positional modifiers is rather limited. In most cases we find here word-combinations. There are different kinds of modifiers in postposition:

- a) Adjectives;
- b) Adjectival word-combination;
- c) Participles and participial phrases as heads;
- d) Prepositional groups;
- e) Infinitives And infinitival phrases;
- f) Noun word-groups without prepositions
- g) Conjunctive groups;
- h) Adverbs;
- i) Numerals;
- j) Subordinate clauses.

The usual place of adjectives is now and has been since the Old English period before the head-word. But to this rule there are a certain number of exceptions.

Post-position of such modifiers is very frequent in groups that go back, directly or indirectly, to Norman French legal terms, such as: heir male, heir female, heir apparent, issue male, cousin-german, the bride elect, life matrimonial, money due, court martial, proof positive, finances public, finances private, Postmaster general. French influence makes itself evident in the post-position of other adjectives, e. g. the art military, the sum total, sign manual, occasions extraordinary, from times immemorial.

Grammar is not very much receptive to foreign influence but we still find a number of examples of foreign borrowings appearing in some patterns of modification structures.

To Latin influence are due some cases of post-position in grammatical terms, e. g. verb passive, third person singular, etc. An adjective is very often placed after thing, and especially the plural things; this is probably due to the analogy of something new, etc., where word-order is occasioned by the close coalescence of some and thing.

The same word-order is not infrequent with matters, especially with long adjectives.

When participles have become completely adjectivized, they are generally placed before the substantive, e. g. at a given point, a well known writer, an interesting remark, a charming girl. When the verbal character of the participle is present in the mind of the speaker or writer, especially when the time of the action and the agent is thought of, there is a tendency to place it after the noun, and this order is also found from rhetorical reasons, where the verbal character is not very prominent, e. g.

The bias of those concerned had vitiated the conclusions drawn. ■ There are some standing phrases in which the participle is always placed after the noun modified: generations unborn, a child unborn, reformers born, actress born and bred, no more than the babe unborn, two days running, for the while being, for the time being. Born may also be preposed, e. g. a born poet.

Adjectives in -able and -idle are not infrequently placed after the noun, e. g. the thing possible; her fingers glittered with rings innumerable.

Poets sometimes for metrical reasons place an adjective after the noun, where ordinary prose prefers the opposite order. Some phrases of that kind have become common and are little felt as poetic in origin, e. g. thing immortal, mistress good, vision beatific, and the orders bright.

Two modifiers are sometimes placed one before the other after the noun, e. g. glim of purest ray serene, the only thing imaginable, and the best analysis possible.

Post-position is rendered necessary in combinations likely + infinitive, e. g. She was the last person likely to be found in the garden. The length of the attributive group also accounts for post-position in the case of two adjectives being co-ordinated and often contrasted by means of a conjunction, e. g.

He expressed his feelings in language softer and more pensive than we should have expected.

Other examples are: a. laugh musical but malicious; calculations quick and anxious passed through his brain.

Post-position is very frequent, though not compulsory, with last, next and previous, e. g. September last; December next, etc.

The post-position of adjectival word-combinations is fairly common in patterns like the following: people worthy of our epoch, -a man worthy to be praised, a thing easy to please, a man careful of others.

You won't go back there in the meantime, wilt you? This he said with an anxiety strange to himself (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

- Next **come** word-combinations with two or more coordinated adjectives, e. g.

They went side by side, hand in hand, silently toward the hedge, where the may-flower, **both pink and white**, was in full bloom (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

In patterns like the given above the post-position of noun-adjuncts is optional as conditioned by considerations of style.

Participles and participial phrases in post-position are also common and may be illustrated by such noun-phrases as:

She could only think of people **connected with them as counting money, dressing magnificently and riding in carriages** (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

A heavy snow was falling — a fine picking, whipping snow, **borne forward** by a swift wind in long, thin lines (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

It was to John like a ray of sunshine **piercing through a fog** (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

The wind was in the north; it was cold, clear; very bluesky, heavy ragged white clouds **chasing across**; the river blue, too, through the screen of goldening trees; the woods all rich with colour, **glowing, burnished** — an early autumn (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre"). A major point or linguistic interest is presented by noun-phrases with infinitival noun-modifiers. Modification structures of this type may express different types of attributive relations.

The multiplicity of ways in which infinitives may be combined in such patterns permits a striking variety of phrases to be built in present-day English. Variation in grammatical content, their potential polysemy in actual usage merit our special consideration as relevant to the problem of modality, in particular. The necessary meaning, of the phrase is generally signalled by contextual indications, linguistic or situational. Transformational analysis, most efficient on different levels of language learning, will always help here to distinguish the grammatic meaning as implicit in the phrase in the given syntactical environment.

	Considered in form noun-phrases with infinitival noun-modifiers may be
N to V	Characterized as follows:
N to	The thing to do
VP	An example to follow the decision to leave to-morrow

The order to stay here

In terms of meaning, it is important to distinguish: 1) noun-phrases with a verbal noun as head which can be transformed into so-called "equational" sentences, by which we mean structures of the type X is Y where the two members are reversible:

My decision is to leave to-morrow. To leave to-morrow is my decision.

Val resisted a **desire to run** his arm through hers (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

An impulse **to unbosom** himself almost overcame him — but not quite (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

2) noun-phrases with adjectival abstract nouns as heads, e. g.: readiness to help, anxiety to find out, eagerness to please, etc. Such modification structures are generally referred to as transforms of corresponding adjectival word + combinations. Cf. ready to help, anxious to find out, eager to please, etc.

3) noun-phrases of the type the house to let, thing to do, an example to follow, the book to read, generations to come, etc.

In modification structures of this type the infinitive is, in fact, a transform of the subordinate clause.

It is also important to observe at this point that the grammatical content of the phrase may vary depending on the immediate lexico-grammatical context in which it occurs. Compare the following:

(a) (he chapter **to follow** - the chapter which follows generations **to come** - generations that will come

She was the **first to come** and **the last to go away** -\* - She was the first who came and the last who went away.

(b) The thing **to do** - the thing which must (may) be done; a book **to read** - a book which must (may) be read.

Phrases of this type are fairly common as stylistic alternatives to predication expressed by finite verbs. Their progressive development in Modern English has contributed to the extension of synonymy on the syntactic level.

Further examples are:

"And here is Irene **to think of** (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre") (-Here is Irene of whom I must think). There they were, kept from violence by some secret force. No blow-possible, no words.**to meet the case** (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre") (--...which could meet the case).

Irene slipped her arm through his.

Let's walk on; I understand. No miserable explanation **to attemptt** She had understood! (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre") (--no explanation which he could attempt).

Walking info the centre of the great empty drawing-room he stood still.

A wife! Somebody **to talk things over with**. One had a right! Damn it. One hadaright! (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre"). (- somebody with whom he could talk things over).

Sisters were teasing and unsympathetic beings, a brother worse, so-there was no one **to confide in** (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre"). (-... no one whom he-could confide in).

"What a dreadful thing **to say**, my dear! \* ended Aunt Juley: "that about not going home. What did she mean? (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre"). (-How could she say such a dreadful thing?).

Examples of nouns modified by absolute phrases are:

A girl, her face beaming  
N A stream, the water green-blue

By craning his head he could just see Fleur, standing with her back to that piano still grinding out its tune, **her arms tight crossed on her breast, a lighted cigarette between her lips**, whose smoke-half veiled her face (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Next come noun-phrases with infinitival modifiers introduced by the preposition **for**:

N	for	N	to	V	a task for Peter to do
N	for	N	to	VP	a thing for Peter to do with no delay
N	for	NP	to	V	a thing for this young boy to do
N	for	NP	to	VD	exercises for this young boy to do regularly
N	for	I <sub>n</sub>	to	V	a problem for you to solve
N	for	I <sub>n</sub>	to	VD	the text for you to read carefully
N	for	N's		Ving	the place for Peter's experimenting
N	for	N		Ving	an excuse for Peter coming
N.	for	NP's		Ving	an excuse for this boy's coming
N	for	NP		Ving	the reason for this boy returning

Noun-phrases with infinitive II are clauses with simple predicates. Compare the following:

Ex: This was such a marvelous thing she has said, such a marvelous thing, to have said that the little girls rushed away in a body, deeply, deeply exitedwild with joy.(Charlotte Bronte "Jane Eyre")

There are also patterns with prepositionless noun-modifiers in post-position. Noun-phrases of this kind are comparatively rare. Examples are: thtngs colour bright, gloves the same size, a boy the same age, etc.

Several times he had crossed in front of them before he saw with delight a sudden narrow rift — a tall thing of beauty the colour of iris flower, like a glimpse of Paradise, remote, ineffable (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Now everything, her hair, her face, even her eyes, was the same colour as the shabby ermine (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Adverbs are relatively rare as noun-modifiers, seldom constituting, as W. Francis points out, more than 2 per cent of the single word modifiers of nouns in ordinary prose. When they occur in this role, adverbs always come immediately after the noun which is the head. The adverbs that function as noun-modifiers are mostly those of the then- and there-classes, e. g. the then methods, the there

house, the weather here. Examples of binary structures with noun as head and adverb as modifier are the following:

Here, under pretext of minutely examining Number 35, called 'Rhythm', a misnomer so far as she could see she kept watch on the door opposite (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

A reddish, fitful light was coming from a window above (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Among post-positional modifiers we also find appositive phrases. The IC's of such noun-phrases have one and the same referent. And this is to say that they imply one person or thing and as such they can be transformed into mutually reversible sentences:

Fleur is Soames's daughter Soames' daughter is Fleur Young Roger is the lawyer the lawyer is young Roger The city is Chicago Chicago is the city

Closely related to ordinary appositive groups of the above given type are such grammatical idioms as: a slip of a girl, a jewel of a cup, a jewel of a nature, a doll of a baby, a deuce of a journey, a duck of a boy, etc.

Her life was like the past of this old Moorish city, full deep, remote — his own life as yet such a baby of a thing, hopelessly ignorant and. innocent (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Well she was. Getting an old woman. Swithin and he had seen her 1 crowned — slim slip of a girl, not as old as Imogen (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

...He would get the country into a mess, and make money go down before he had done with it. A stormy petrel of a chap! (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Being in a hell of d shape (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Her husband was something of a brute (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck of a boy (Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre").

Consider also such standardized appositive phrases as:

We were all of us happy.

We were most of us busy.

We were none of us pleased.

They neither of them wanted to stay here.

Among post-positional modifier we also find such of-phrases as: the sense of beauty, the sense of smell, love of life, the reading of books> the feeling of safety, etc.

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