The Structure of Noun Phrases in Efik

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Abstract
In this paper, we describe and analyse the internal structure of noun phrases (NPs) in Efik, a Lower-Cross language of the Niger-Congo family, spoken predominantly in Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. We examine Efik NPs from the structural and functional perspectives and noted the word order paradigms of NP constituents. We investigate the notion of headedness in relation to the various nominal modifiers that exist in the language. Our analysis is base principally on the X-bar scheme, and our basic assumption is that the structure of NPs in Efik provides an excellent window that reflects the entire grammatical structure of the language.

1.0 Introduction
Efik is the language of the Efik people who occupy mainly the coastal areas of the Cross River comprising Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South and Odukpani Local Government Areas. The language has been variously classified as a member of the lower-Cross subgroup of the Delta-Cross group of the Cross River sub branch of the Benue-Congo phylum. This subgroup is a major constitution of the Niger-Congo family (Greenberg 1963, Faraclas 1989, Williamson and Blench 2000, and Essien 2001). Faraclas (1989) records that Efik is spoken by about 360,000 speakers as first language, and over 2 million speakers as second language. By recent approximation, these figures stand at 750,000 L1 speakers and 3 million L2 speakers, given the continuous widespread use of the language in commerce and religion along the entire south-eastern coast of Nigeria. Data for this study were gathered from native speakers of Efik within the campus of the university of Calabar. Some data were obtained through observation of naturally occurring speech of Efik native speakers while others were prompted through oral interviews and participant observation.

The NP is a maximal projection with a noun as its head. The notion of the head plays a central role in the analysis of the phrase (of any kind). This is why Zwicky (1985:2) maintains that “the intuition to be captured with the notion HEAD is that in certain syntactic construct, one constituent in some sense ‘characterizes’ or ‘dominates’ the whole”. In Government and Binding theory, of which the X-bar scheme is a subset, the head is defined in configurational terms. According to Zlatic (1997), “… the head is a daughter constituent with the same feature specifications, one that immediately dominates an item of a terminal string”. This implies that the head of a phrase is a sister to the complement phrase, and both head and complement are daughters of N-bar. The head of a phrase determines the category of the entire phrase. We are aware of the controversy on the notion of headedness of noun phrases. Some scholars like Abney (1987) and Bowers (1987) have argued that the functional category, determiner (D or DET) is the head of the noun phrase, while syntacticians like Jackendoff (1977) and Payne (1993) still maintain that the noun is the head of the noun phrase. Others (Bernstein 1991, Radford 1993) have argued for a multi-headed construction, or what Payne (1993) calls ‘nominal hydra’. The details of these contentions are outside the scope of this paper. We, however, argue that the Efik NP is headed by a noun.

Dryer (2006) distinguishes three kinds of NPs in natural languages; (i) simple NPs, which contain only pronouns and nouns plus simple modifiers like articles, adjectives, demonstratives and numerals; (ii) complex NPs, which contain more complex sorts of modifiers like genitive or possessive modifiers and relative clauses; and (iii) various sorts of NPs which lack a head noun. In this paper, we are mainly concerned with a description of the constituent structure of simple NPs in Efik, however, minimal reference will be made to complex NPs as the need arises. In this regard, we divided the paper into the
following section: 2.0 An overview of the X-bar theoretical framework, 3.0 Word order typologies, 4.0 Internal Syntax of NPs, 5.0 the grammatical functions and distribution of NPs in different textual categories. 6.0 is the conclusion.

2.0 An overview of X-bar syntax

The X-bar theoretical framework is a system of grammatical analysis that attempts to refine the traditional account of phrase structure. According to the theory, X is a category variable which represents the conventional elements like noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition and so on. The basic requirement of this approach is the recognition of intermediate stages in the formation of phrases (Finch 2000:135). Radford (1997:92) argues that X-bar is used to designate intermediate projection that is larger than a word but does not project to even larger type of expression like a phrase. The X-bar (X') captures the endocentric relationship between the phrase and its head. It typically occurs in the structure of the form:

![X-bar structure diagram]

Here, X is dominated by X', which is in turn is immediately dominated by XP. X' is the immediate head of XP and X is the ultimate head of XP. SPEC is a sister to X' and X is a sister to COMP. In this way, COMP exists in a closer relationship to X than SPEC and SPEC has a closer ties to X' than COMP. SPEC and COMP occur in different structural positions within the phrase. XP is standardly referred to as the maximal category, X', the intermediate category and X is the lexical category. This theory allows for considerable economy in the formation of phrases. This is the theoretical orientation we have adopted in this work.

3.0 Word order typologies

English is clearly a head-first language since the head of the NP precedes its complement, while languages like Japanese and Korean are classified as head last because the head of the containing phrase follows its complement. Efik combines the features of head-initial and head-last languages in the relationship between head of NP and its complements. We identified three word order typologies in this respect in Efik:

(a) Prenominal modifiers
(b) Post nominal modifiers
(c) Neutral order

In the discussion that follows, we examine the set of NP modifiers and their order in relation to the head noun:

3.1 Prenominal elements

The constituents of the NP that precede it are as follows:
1. (quantifier) (ordinal numeral) (adjective) noun

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Each type is illustrated in the NPs in 2:

2(a) Úsúk ñdíyĕ íbàn
   Q beautiful-PL woman – PL
   ‘some beautiful women’

(b) Ákpá édíyĕ ánwan
   first beautiful-SG woman-SG
   ‘(the) first beautiful woman’

The prenominal elements in 2(a) and (b) are marked for number and agree in this feature with the following nouns. The quantifier specifies number properties to the noun it precedes. It does not have a descriptive content and mainly modifies mass nouns. Other types of quantifiers in Efik include the indefinite quantifiers; úwák ‘many’, and úbák ‘few’ and the universal quantifiers ófúrí ‘all’ and kpúkprú ‘every’. They all occur in the same structural position within the NP. Ófúrí ‘all’ and kpúkprú ‘every’ are morphologically the same in Efik. They both modify plural nouns or mass noun and show concord with agreement features with the head noun. This is a different role compared to English, where ‘every’ can only modify a singular head noun.

3(a) Kpúkprú ñdító
   Q children-PL
   ‘every children’

   In English, the universal quantifier, every modifies a specific definite singular referent, child. In Efik, it specifies a plural referent ñdító ‘children’, an attempt to substitute the plural noun in Efik with a singular form will lead to ungrammaticality:

(b) *kpúkprú éyén
   Q child-SG-NOM
   ‘every child’

There is a parametric variation involving quantifiers in English and Efik. In English, this quantifier is used with singular nouns and refers to a group which is understood as a whole. In Efik, it is used with plural nouns or mass nouns and emphasizes a group which is not taken as a unit. The word order rule for NPs in Efik stipulates that quantifiers generally must appear in the phrase initial position.

The second prenominal modifier is the ordinal number which is used to indicate the relative position of items in ordered sequence to show the relationship between one item and another. This modifier occurs in complementary distribution with the quantifiers in Efik. This is because while all quantifiers modify plural or mass nouns, ordinal numerals agree with the head noun mutually in definiteness or specificity though this feature is not grammatically marked as we can see in 2(b).

The adjective expresses an attribute or quality directly and occurs traditionally before nouns. The adjective inflects for agreement and number features with the head noun. An important requirement of the syntax of adjectives in Efik is that they inflect for plural to modify plural nouns, while singular adjectives modify singular nouns:

4(a) ányán ákpáráwá
   tall-SG youth-SG
‘(a) tall youth’
(b) ńyán mkpárawá
    tall-PL youth-PL
‘tall youths’

Here, the adjectives attribute the property of height to the youth, showing concord with the agreement features of the head noun. Observe that both adjective and noun indicate plurality by changing the pattern of the initial vowel to syllabic nasal. Dryer (2006) calls this kind of plural formation “broken plurals” because it alternates the form of the vowels to syllabic nasal consonants. Generally, the evidence in 4 shows that adjectives share properties with nouns as they inflect for number and person. Adjectives can modify nouns but nouns cannot modify adjectives. Nouns can modify nouns in a few instances especially those involving possession or genitive case as we shall see in our subsequent analysis.

In Efik, adjectives do not only perform traditional modifying functions but also exhibit certain syntactic behaviours like verbs. Such attributes include the adjectives ability to take inflectional properties which mark categories such as person, negation, tense and aspectual interpretation of sentences. Mensah (2007) refers to this sort of adjectives as verbal adjectives, and Dryer (2006) calls them ‘semantic adjectives. Let us consider the verbal properties of these adjectives in 5:

5(a) M- mmá - ń- sí- yĕ.                       (b) M- mmá - ń- sí- díá.
    1SG PAST 1SG ASP pretty 1SG PAST 1SG ASP eat
‘I used to be pretty’.                        ‘I used to eat (it)’.

6(a) ńyé- hĕ                                    (b) ń- díá- há
    1SG pretty NEG 1SG pretty NEG
‘I am not pretty’.                            ‘I am not eating’.

In 5(a) and 6(a), the adjective yĕ ‘pretty’ occurs with a set of preverbal and post-verbal morphemes, which are otherwise associated with verbs as illustrated in 5(b) and 6(b) respectively. The adjective shows capability of co-occurring with the first person singular prefix, the tense prefix, the aspectual marker prefix in 5 in addition to the negative suffix in 6 to form agglutinative structures or what Spencer (1991:38) calls “long polymorphic words in which each morpheme corresponds to a single lexical meaning or grammatical function in such a way that a single word can encode a meaning which would require a simple sentence”. In this way, these adjectives have the same syntactic behaviour like verbs.

Adjectives can also function as sentential predicates and complements of the verbs in Efik, to complete the meaning of a sentence:

7(a) Mmá óró é- yĕ.
    woman DET 3SG pretty
‘The woman is pretty’.

(b) Été óró é- dí íbák.
    man-SG DET 3SG is wicked
‘The man is wicked’.

In 7(a), yĕ ‘pretty’ is used as sentential predicate and in (b), the adjective íbák ‘wicked’ functions as the complement of the verb dí ‘is’ and modifies the noun été ‘man’. We agree with Struckmeier & Kremers...
(in prep) that the functions of these adjectives depends on the syntactic structure of the phrase, not in that of the subject.

Efik adjectives can also follow nouns, where nouns modify adjectives without possessive meaning, especially in personal names:

8(a) \( \text{ékprî été} \)
small man
‘(a) small man’

(b) \( \text{été ékprî} \)
man small
‘father’s namesake’ (lit. little father)

9(a) \( \text{ákámbá été} \)
big man
‘(a) big man’

(b) \( \text{été ákámbá} \)
man big
‘grand father’s namesake’ (lit. big father)

It is important to note that it is not all adjectives that can be used postnominally in Efik. This property is restricted to adjectives used to express genealogical terms. In 8(b) and 9(b), the nouns agree with the modifier adjectives in the feature of number. However, while the nouns show definiteness, the adjectives indicate referentiality. In Efik, the notion of \( \text{ékprî} \) ‘small’ and \( \text{ákámbá} \) ‘big’ are used to express genealogical relationship, where children are named after their ancestors, parents and other important members of the extended family.

In Efik, an adjective can also function as the subject of the sentence, thus taking the position of the NP by functioning as a noun or pronoun. We shall analyse this in the subsequent section. The adjective generally expands the head noun into various strings of projection. Using Mrazovic & Vukadinovic (1990:304) order of semantic classes of adjectives found in a prenominal position, we establish the following co-occurrence restriction for Efik:

10(a) (referential) (qualitative) (classification)
The following sentence can be used to represent the order:

(b) \( \text{Ákání́ ányán óbúbít ífú-ífú ébòt.} \)
old tall black lazy goat
‘old tall black lazy goat’.

The NP in 10(b) in a projection of the head \( \text{ebot} \) ‘goat’. It comprises three premodifying adjectives; referential, \( \text{ákání́} \) ‘old’, qualitative, \( \text{ányán} \) ‘tall’ and \( \text{óbúbít} \) ‘black’ and classificational \( \text{ífú-ífú} \) ‘lazy’. Mrazovic and Vukadinovic’s (1990) first order of adjectives, quantificational is mainly realized as a quantifier in Efik. The most recursive of this order of adjectives is qualitative; whose continuous application can further expand the head noun into a range of a complex NP.

Apart from word order, we also wish to pay attention to the pattern of tones within the NP. Heath (2000) maintains that sequence of words within a NP requires N to drop its tone before its modifiers, while some other sequence allows N to express its regular tones. In Efik, the morphosyntactic structure of
certain adjectives or ordinal numeral plus noun requires tone dropping or raising which only affects the head noun:

11(a)      ébót  
     goat  ‘(a) goat’

(b)      ákámbá ébòt  
   big-SG goat-NOM  ‘(a) big goat’

(c)      ákpá ébòt  
 NUM goat-NOM  ‘(the) first goat’

12(a) èkpàt  
     bag  ‘(a) bag’

(b) óbúbít èkpàt  
   black-SG bag-NOM  ‘(a) black bag’

(c) údiáná èkpàt  
 NUM bag-NOM  ‘(the) second bag’

When adjectives or ordinal numerals occur with a NP, they induce the phenomenon of tone dropping or raising, where a HH or LL is altered to HL as we can see in the underlying representation in 11(a) and the surface forms in 11(b) and (c). The implication is that the tone of the head noun is dependent on the tone of its modifiers. This externally induced tone dependency is asymmetrical and recursive because the adjective and numeral modifiers can together trigger the same process as in 112:

12 (a) ákpá ákámbá ébòt  
   first big goat  ‘(the) first goat’

(b) údiáná óbúbít èkpàt  
   second black bag  ‘(the) second bag’

The attributive adjectives post-modify the head nouns in 12 (a) and (b) respectively. Generally, the pattern of tone in the underlying forms is determined by the tone pattern in the surface forms (Ekere 1997:46).

3.2 The Postnominal elements

Elements that post-modify the head of a NP in Efik include the following:

13 N (Poss) (Cardinal numeral) (Dem/Det)

The order above reveals that possessives, cardinal numerals, quantifiers and demonstratives/determiners are the postnominal modifiers of NPs in Efik. In what follows, we examine each of these post nominal modifiers in the order in which they relate with the head noun as presented in 13. There are two types of possessive elements in Efik, the possessive adjective and the possessive pronoun as we can see in 14.

14(a) Mmótó       été       mí  
   car        father       PRO  ‘my father’s car’

(b) Úfọk       Mensah  
   house       M.  ‘Mensah’s house’
The possessive adjective in 14(a) is clearly derived from a noun étê ‘father’ and has a specific definite referent unlike the descriptive adjective, which is mainly a prenominal element. The possessive adjective occurs postnominally and agrees with the head noun in number feature. It does not inflect for number as the descriptive adjective does. The possessive pronoun also inflects for the number feature in agreement with the head.

The cardinal numeral in Efik occurs as a post modifying element within the NP. It indicates the number or specific definite referent a NP denotes:

15(a)  Mmôtó ítión
car five
‘five cars’

The cardinal number agrees with the noun in marking plurality. Unlike in English where quantifiers and numerals share the same position slot syntactically. In Efik, quantifiers occur prenominally while numerals occur either postnominally (in the case of cardinal number) or prenominally (in the case of ordinal number) within the NP. We agree with Essien (1990:138) that if the noun that is modified by a numeral with a NP in a structure like 15(a) is already known to the discourse participants, it can be deleted leaving the numeral with the unexpressed NP, which is understood in the context of conventional experience. In this way, numerals have pragmatic relevance in Efik.

The determiner specifies definite or indefinite reference to the noun within the NP. In Efik, there are no indefinite articles like a or an but there is the definite article oro ‘the’ which has a demonstrative function. In some literature (Ekefre 1986), it is considered as both demonstrative and a definite article, but it is best suited as a demonstrative because it belongs to the demonstrative paradigm as we can see in 16 Therefore, only two types of determiners can be identified in the language; demonstratives and numerals. There is a three-way opposition of demonstratives in Efik. Using Zlatic (1997) classification, we list them as follows:

16 (a)  étê -‘this’
man DEM
‘this man (here)’
(b)  órò -‘that/the’
Man DEM
‘that/the man (there)’
(c)  étê ókò
man DEM
‘that man (over there)’

The three specifications relate directly to the semantic notions of proximity, further away and remote respectively. This implies that they are determined by spatial orientation, that is, the location of object in relation to the speaker. This goes to show that demonstratives have deictic functions and they occur in complementary distribution:
They are all marked for number and agree in this feature with the head noun. They indicate specific referents in relation to the head noun. While the use of émi and ókò requires the speaker and addressee to have visual orientation of the object being referred to, the use of órò does not require any proximity with the object of reference.

We agree with Zlatic (1997:45) that “… for expressing the indefiniteness of singular NPs, some languages use the numeral one, from which an indefinite article has been derived historically”. Efik is one of such languages. The most common lexical device that is used in expressing indefiniteness is the use of numeral kiet ‘one’. It is both a cardinal number and an indefinite article, which inflects for case, number, person and agreeing in these features with the head noun.

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(a) úfọk kíét
    house Det
    ‘a/one house’
(b) été kíét
    house Det
    ‘a/one man’
```

A further evidence to show that kiet ‘one’ is merely a lexical device used in handling indefiniteness is the fact that it can be replaced by ndomokiet ‘any/none’ which parallels the behaviour of English ‘any’ in negative sentences:

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(a) Bassey é- nyéné úfọk kíét.
    B. 3SG have house DET
    ‘Bassey has a/one house’.
(b) Bassey í- nyéné -ke úfọk ndómökíét.
    B. 3SG have NEG house DET
    ‘Bassey doesn’t have a/any house’.
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Indefiniteness can also be expressed contextually, that is driven by information structure through pragmatic competence, rather than syntactic considerations. For instance, the sentence in 19(a) and (b) can be grammatical and acceptable without the use of kíét ‘one’ and ndómökíét ‘any’ respectively. This is possible if the speaker and listeners have background knowledge about the subject of the verb, Bassey.

### 3.3 Neutral order

The third category of word order pattern within the NP is the neutral order which involves a single noun, not modified by elements preceding or following it. A detailed analysis of this typology is provided under simple NPs in the subsequent section. In analyzing the pattern of word order in Efik NPs, we can conclude that Efik has a rigid word order in the relation between the head noun and its modifying elements. The elements do not permit permutation or scrambling among themselves. This implies that the order is not free or flexible and to use Chomsky’s (1981) term, it is “fully configurational”.

### 4.0 Internal Syntax of NPs

The head of a phrase is key element of a phrase, whose category determines the category of the entire phrase. Other elements that co-occur with the head either specify, expand or/and assign some
properties to it. In the following analysis, we examine the structure of NPs with reference to the relationship between head and other internal constituents such as complements, adjuncts and determiners.

4.1 Simple NPs

The simple NP is built around a single noun. Going by Radford’s (1988) notion of distribution of equivalence, a single N can have equivalent grammatical status as a string of elements that may constitutes a NP. The argument is that a single N may constitute a NP in addition to being a N. This evidence goes to justify the claim that only the head (N) is an obligatory constituent of the NP. The modifiers (complement, adjuncts and determiners) are optional elements. Let us consider the examples in 20:

20  

(a) (Ọbọñ) é- dí ándíkpép.  
King 3SG be teacher  
‘(The) king is (a) teacher’.

(b) (Ọbọñ ńnyín) é- dí ándíkpép.  
King 3PL 3PL be teacher  
“Our king is (a) teacher”.

(c) (Óbúfá ọbọñ ké Bakassi) é- dí ándíkpép.  
new-SG king PREP B. 3SG be teacher  
“The new king of Bakassi is a teacher”.

The expressions which are enclosed in parenthesis in 20(a) – (c) have been identified as the NPs in the respective sentences. In 20(a), oboñ ‘king’ has the same grammatical value or what Radford (1988) calls distributional equivalence with ọbọñ ńnyín ‘our king’ and óbúfá ọbọñ ké Bakassi ‘The new king of Bakassi’ in 20(b) and (c) respectively, in spite of the fact that it is just a single N. In this way, a single N is raised to the status of a NP. The implication of this analysis is that a word like ọbọñ ‘king’ in 20(a) has two levels of category in this context. First as a lexical category and then as a phrasal category. This evidence has also brought about a redefinition of the concept of the NP from its traditional understanding as a group of words or elements with N as head (Klammar 1977) to “a phrase containing a head noun (irrespective of whether or not it also contains nominal modifiers of one sort or another” (Radford 1988).

We can therefore propose the following rule to generate a simple NP:

21 \[ N^{II} \rightarrow N \]

Where \( N^{II} \) dominates \( N^{I} \), which is its immediate head, while \( N \) is its ultimate head. Simple NPs may contain more than just a noun. They usually have two or more constituents which may as it were project into larger phrases. In the discussion that follows, we examine NPs that take determiners, complements and adjuncts. We consider the interrelationship between these constituents and the head. A NP that contains these constituents will have the schematic structure (after Radford 1988 and Aarts 2001) in 22:
We can use the expression in 23 to capture the tree structure in 22:

23. a member of senate from Cross River

The head of the NP is clearly N, *member*, which is premodified by a DET. *Of senate* functions as the complement of the N *member*. *From Cross River* is the adverbial complement or adjunct. The complement and adjunct post modify the N, *member*. The DET, complement and adjunct, though exist in sisterhood relationship within the entire phrase are optional constituent of the NP. The DET and N¹ are sisters and daughters of N¹¹, while N and complement are sisters and daughters of N¹. From the tree structure in 24, DET functions as the Spec because it precedes the head of the containing NP, the head precedes the complement while the complement precedes adjunct. The relevant rules that can generate these constituents will specify the ordering of elements within the entire phrase bearing in mind that a complement exists in a much closer relationship with the head than an adjunct. Given this assumption, we can now fit in our NP in 23 into the tree diagram in 24 as follows:

In Efik, however, there are parametric variations between head-complement and head-determiner relationships. We needed to understand the rationale in English to serve as a reference point for our
analysis in Efik. Let us first examine two types of complex NPs; the one with a complement and another with adjunct as modifiers in 25(a) and (b) respectively:

25 (a) Átá-ífiọk íkọ-mmákárá
         expert English
  ‘(The) professor (of) English (language)’.

(b) Átá-ífiọk ótódé Lagos
         expert PREP Lagos
  ‘(The) Professor from Lagos’

In 25(a), the head of the NP átá-ífiọk ‘expert’ is post modified by the nominal complement íkọ-mmákárá ‘English (language)’ while in (b), the same N is post modified by the adjunct ótódé Lagos ‘from Lagos’. Following Radford (1988), we can propose the relevant rules to generate the corresponding complement and adjunct.

26(a) N¹ → PP (complement rule)

(b) N¹ → PP (adjunct rule)

As we proposed earlier, these rules can predict the relative ordering of the elements within the phrase. They can specify that complement follows the head while adjunct follows the complement. In other words, it is evident that the N átá-ífiọk ‘expert’ in 25(a) is complemented by an attributive NP which post modifies it. This is because the form of the preposition is covertly implied while in (b) it is modified by an adverbial element with the PP overtly present. We now turn to examine another important constituent of the NP, the DET within the context of 25(a) and (b) in which it was a null element.

27 (a) Átá-ífiọk íkọ-mmákárá órò
         expert English DET
  ‘The professor of English (language)’

(b) Átá-ífiọk órò ótódé Lagos
         expert DET PREP Lagos
  ‘The professor from Lagos’

An important requirement of the syntax of DET in Efik is that it follows complements and precedes adjuncts. A reverse ordering will lead to ungrammaticality.

28 (a)* Átá-ífiọk órò íkọ-mmákárá
         expert DET English

(b)* Átá-ífiọk ótódé Lagos órò
         expert PREP Lagos DET

It is important to note that the DET rule in English, which is stated as follows: NP → D N¹ cannot be applicable in Efik. This is because in Efik, DET generally post modifies the N within the NP. Where the NP contains a constituent like the complement, the DET post modifies both the N and the complement but where an NP contains a N and an adjunct, the DET postmodifies only the N. This will lead us to formulate a different rule for DET in Efik, which is as follows. N¹ → N DII (Determiner rule). If we
collapse 27 (a) and (b) into a single NP, it will yield the structure in 29. We have adopted the revised model of X-bar theory (Hageman 1994, Finch 2000, Carnie 2006) to account for the status of DET which post modifies both the N and complement of a NP. Unlike in English where, for instance the DET in 23 functions as a specifier within the NP. In the Efik structure in 27, it forms its own category D$^{1}$ intermediate bar stage D$^{1}$ and a head of its own, D and not the head of the NP:

29. Átá-ífọ́k iko-mmákárá órò ótódé Lagos
   expert English DET PREP L.
   ‘The professor of English from Lagos’

The PP ótódé Lagos ‘from Lagos’ originates post nominally as an inner argument of D$^{1}$, which combines with NP, and a subsequent merger with DP attracts the D head, deriving D-N word order. This accounts for the reason the D is said to be the head of NP (Jackendoff 1977 and Payne 1993).

4.2 Gerund NPs

Gerund NPs are those that are formed from verbs or verbal elements. They can take direct objects, and can be modified by verbs, nouns, preposition or adverbial complements:

30 (a) Úkpép-ńwèd é- dí étí ùtòm.
   teaching 3SG be good work
   ‘Teaching is a good profession’.

   (b) Únám-útóm ké éyò fọn -ké.
       working PREP sun 3SG good NEG
       ‘Working under the sun is not healthy’.

   (c) Ìdídí nwán é- dí ŋkpo ŋtáñ-ídém.
       being woman 3SG be something pride
       ‘Being a woman is a thing of pride’.

In the structure in 30, the gerunds úkpép-ńwèd ‘teaching’ únám-útóm ‘working’ and ñdídí nwán ‘being a woman’ are the respective NPs in (a) – (c). They are derived from verbs kpép-ńwèd ‘teach something’, nám-útóm ‘do work’ and dí nwán ‘be a woman’ respectively. The NPs are derived from these verbs through nominalization. In 30(a), the head of the NP takes a direct object. In (b), the NP takes an adjectival complement, and in (c) a nominal complement.

Structurally, the head of infinitival NPs can only occur in phrase initial position. In the majority of cases, single nouns (which are usually compounded) constitute the heads of these NPs. These NPs do not identify any doer of action specified by the verbs but merely identify an action that can be complemented by verbs.

5.0 Grammatical functions of NPs

NPs traditionally function as the subjects of verbs. From a semantic perspective, the subject is the element that names or identifies the doer of the action described by the verb.

31(a) Ákámbá óbúbít ébuá mi é- féhé ítọk.
   big black-SG dog PRO 3SG run-PROG race
   ‘My big black dog is running’.
In 31(a), the NP ákámbá óbúbít ébuá mi ‘my big black dog’ functions as the subject of the verb féhé ‘run’ which is intransitive in English but correspondingly transitive in Efik because it can carry the cognate object ítok ‘race’. An important aspect of the syntax of Efik verbs is their ability to carry double subjects. The prefixing morpheme /é-/ which is attached to the verb féhé ‘run’ also functions as the subject of the verb. This prefix can substitute for the entire NP in 31(a) if the notion of background knowledge is already established. In this sense, it conveys a pragmatic conceptualization:

(b) É- féhé ítok
3SG run-PROG race
‘It is running’.

Kari (2003) refers to a subject of the verb like /é-/ in 31(b) as the unemphasized subject while the NP in 31(a) is the emphasized subject. The two subjects do not occur in complementary distribution. However, the occurrence of the prefixal subject can render the emphasized subject redundant only within the context of a defined pragmatic knowledge of this emphasized subject.

Apart from nouns and NPs, verbals can also constitute the subjects of verbs. Since verbals are formed from verbs, they can take direct objects and can be modified by adjectives, prepositions, and nouns. This kind of NPs is called gerund phrases, which constitute NPs consisting of verbals, their complements and objects.

In Efik, adjectives can also function as the subject of verbs:

32(a) Ímọ́ ké é- tük úbúené.
rich PROG 3PL cheat Poor
‘(The) rich are cheating (the) poor’.

(b) Áfiá é- dí úyái.
white 3SG be beauty
‘(Being) fair is beautiful’.

In 32, ímọ́ ‘rich’ (people) and áfiá ‘fair’ (complexioned or white) are the respective subjects of the verbs. Tük ‘cheat’ and dí ‘be’. In (a) where the adjective is used in this way, there is always an understood deleted noun òwó ‘person’ that follow the adjective and which the adjective modifies. The interpretation of such a sentence is equally of pragmatic interpretation. However, in (b) where the referent of the adjective does not have a human attribute, it does not require pragmatic competence to understand the sentence. On the whole, the last two evidences have been a violation of the claim by Aarts (2001), that subjects are usually noun phrases, and in a straight forward run-off-the-mill sentences, i.e, those that are used to make a statement, the subject is the first NP we can come across. These are certainly not universal principles of subjects in the grammar of natural languages as we have seen in Efik.

The NP can also function as the direct or indirect object of a verb:

33(a) Bassey á- wák nwèd órò.
B. 3SG tear book DET
‘Bassey tears the book’.

(b) Bassey ọ- nọ Ẹtìm ọkúk.
B. 3SG give E. money
‘Bassey gives Ẹtìm money’.
The NP nwèd órò ‘the book’ is the direct object in 33(a) while the NP Etim is the indirect object in 33(b). In the two examples, we observe as follows: that direct and indirect objects exist in closer relationship with the verb, and that indirect objects precede direct objects where the two are constituents of the VP. Verbs that take direct objects are basically transitive and those that take both direct and indirect objects are ditransitive.

An important requirement of a direct object is that it assumes the position of the subject in an ergative construction. If we convert 33(a) to an ergative sentence, it will yield 34:

34 Nwèd órò á wák –ká.
book-SG-DAT Det 3SG tear EGR
‘The book is torn’.

The object complement or the internal argument of the verb in 33(a) assumes a subject position in 34. This is as a result of verbal derivation, in which the suffix /-ká/ connected to the verb, has extended the verb root to derive the resultant form by ergativity. According to Essien (1983), the derivative suffix does not perform the function of the subject but merely indicates the absence of an explicit agent. When the object complement in 33(a) assumes the status of the subject in 34, the verb obligatory attracts the ergative suffix. Etim, who is the subject in 33(a) is deleted in 34.

In Efik, both the direct and indirect objects can assume the position of the subject in cleft construction. If we convert 33 into cleft sentences, we will have 35:

35(a) Nwèd órò ké Bassey á wàk.
Book-DAT DET CLF B.-NOM 3SG tear-PAST
‘It is the book that Bassey tore’

(b) Etim ké Bassey ọ nó ókúk.
E. CLF B. 3SG give money-INSTR
‘It is Etim that Bassey gives money’

This type of transformation involves the movement of the subject to that of a prepositional complement and the promotion of the direct object in 33(a) to the subject position in 35(a). Clefting are usually treated like bi-clausal constructions where the lower clause is affected by relativization. This grammatical function changing rule is made possible by the introduction of the cleft marker ke ‘it is/that’ which also functions as the complementizer. The movement has also affected the traditional word order in the language from SVO in 33 to SOV in 35 where the verb now functions as the complement of the N, Bassey.

The NP can also function as an object of a preposition in Efik:

Police 3PL arrest thief PREP school
‘Police arrested a thief in the school’.

In 36, ínọ ‘(a) thief’ is the indirect object of the verb múm ‘arrest’. Úfọk-ńwèd ‘school’ is the object of the preposition ké ‘in’, which together form the complement of the noun ínọ ‘thieves’. The object of the preposition also functions as the adverbial complement because it specifies the point or location in which
the action of arrest had taken place. The subject NP and the object NP agree in terms of number and person with the verb, which is indicated by the concord prefix é-. In terms of argument structure, the NP úfọk-ńwèd ‘school’ has the thematic role of location while bódisi ‘police’ is the agent and the internal argument of the verb and ino ‘thieves’ the patient and the external argument of the verb múm ‘arrest’.

The NP can also function as a subject complement where it predicates a description of the subject of the sentence:

37(a) Ekei é- dí ándí kpép.
   E. 3SG be teacher
   ‘Ekei is a teacher’.

(b) Nkese é- ké- dí ékpó.
   N. 3SG PAST be ghost
   ‘Nkese was a ghost’.

In 37, ándí kpép ‘teacher’ and ékpó ‘ghost’ are identified as the subject complements. They follow the linking verb dí ‘be’ and rename or describe the identity of the subject. The subject complements also completes the meaning of the linking verb. Efik NP can also be used as the object complement of the sentence. It predicates the description of a direct object:

38(a) É- mèk ényé ádáibuòt.
    3PL elect-PAST 3SG leader
    ‘They elected him leader’.

(b) É- kòt éyén Mensah.
    3PL call child-SG M.
    ‘They named (their) child Mensah’.

The direct objects ényé ‘him’ and éyén ‘child’ receive the actions described by the respective verbs mèk ‘elect’ and kòt ‘name’ in 38(a) and (b). The object complement NPs, ádáibuòt ‘leader’ and Mensah, therefore, follow the direct objects, rename them and specify what they have become.

NPs in Efik can also function as adnominal adjuncts. In which case, the modifier of the noun is also a noun:

39(a) Éká mí ọ -bọk éféré ndék íyák.
    mother-3SG DET 3SG cook PROG soup fresh fish
    ‘My mother is cooking fresh fish soup’.

(b) Eyamba á- diá édésí ísip.
    E. 3SG eat PROG rice coconut
    ‘Eyamba is eating coconut rice’.

Íyák ‘fish’ in 39(a) and ísip ‘coconut’ in (b) modify the nouns éféré ‘soup’ and édésí ‘rice’ respectively. They are both extra nuclear elements within the sentences in the sense that removing them will not alter the well-formedness or grammaticality of the sentences. Efik NPS can also be used as adverbial adjuncts as we can see in 40:
40(a) Koko á- má ó- kót ŋhwéd mkpọñ.
K. 3SG PAST 3SG read book yesterday
‘Koko read a book yesterday’.

(b) Mkpọñ, Koko á- má ó- kót ŋhwéd
yesterday K. 3SG PAST 3SG read book
‘Yesterday, Koko read a book’.

In 40, the N mkpọñ ‘yesterday’ is an adverbial complement. It does not give any additional information about the action described by the verb, which is one of reading, but merely specifies the period of time in which the action was carried out. The same element can be moved to the initial position of the sentence to show its flexibility without necessarily affecting grammaticality as we can see in 40(b). It is also important to note that it can be deleted and a well-formed sentence remains given that the past tense morpheme /-ma/ can equally signal past time reference which, however, may not be explicitly stated.

6.0 Concluding remarks
In this paper, we examined the internal syntax of NPs in Efik, taking into perspective the various types of modifying elements and their positional order in relation to the heads of the NPs. We investigated the grammatical affinity that holds between syntactic constituents such as complement, adjunct and determiner with the head of the NP and proposed an analysis of the relevant grammatical functions of NPs in Efik using X-bar syntax as our theoretical prerequisite. Our basic assumption is that NPs have similar structures like simple clauses, which are essentially subject and predicate phrases (Carnie 2002). They have some properties in common such as agreement features, inflection properties, nominal distribution, complementation and adjunction. In this way, the structure of Efik NPs reflects the grammatical structure of the Efik language. We have also gained sufficient insights into variation in form and position which nominal modifiers exhibit as well as word order parameters of nominal syntax.

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