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Articles

English Noun Phrase Constructions in the Translated Version of Surah Mary (Maryam) of the Holy Quran

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Abstract. Noun phrases (NP) are often used in forming sentences in any written work as the subject or object of the sentence. However, less research has been done regarding the use of NP in the English translation of Al-Quran. This paper investigates the patterns of NP in the English translation of Mary (Maryam) of the holy Quran translated by Talal Itani. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the research analyzed 163 data found from 98 verses of translated Mary Surah (as instrument) syntactically. Three conclusions can be drawn from this study. Firstly, 38 NP patterns appear with the most frequently used NP pattern being determiner+noun 59 times (36.20%). Second, the NPs used were complex (6.75%), 152 simple NPs (93.25%), 97 specific NPs (59.51%), and 66 general NPs (40.49%). Last, some verses are only phrases and not clauses, so 1 verse consists of 1 complex NP. The implication of this finding will help EFL learners and prospective teachers understand the function and patterns of NP in making good English sentences. This study only focuses on identifying NP patterns, future researchers are suggested to research the function of English NP in each verse in the English translation of the Koran.

Keywords: *Al-Quran, Function, Mary, Noun Phrase (NP), Pattern, Syntax*

INTRODUCTION

Noun phrases (NP) are closely connected with grammar learning in language learning. NP is the common phrase used in constructing a sentence. NP can be the subject, object, and even complement in a sentence. A noun phrase is defined as "a structure headed by a noun, a pronoun, or any other word or structure that represents a noun; even an entire clause can function as a noun phrase" (Millaku, Millaku, & Kafexholli, 2022; Tufte, 1971, p. 41). A noun phrase is defined as "a word or group of words that functions exactly like a noun in a sentence, with a noun or pronoun as the head." A noun phrase can be a noun or a pronoun by itself, although it is most often a noun or a pronoun with pre-and/or post-modification." (Chalker & Weiner, 1994).

The study of English phrases remains difficult for Indonesian EFL learners (Nadirah, Tahir, & Asrifan, 2019). This may be due to the relationship between the use of noun phrases and whether the user is an L1 or L2 English speaker (Lan, Zhang, Lucas, Sun, & Gao, 2022). Those who are still learning to construct English sentences tend to experience difficulties because the NP structures of Indonesian and English are different (Simanjuntak, 2020). There are differences between English and Indonesian Noun Phrases, such as adjectives as modifiers, possessive adjectives or possessive nouns as modifiers, and possessive nouns as modifiers, nouns as modifiers, nouns as modifiers, and adverbs as modifiers (Susatyo, Hadi, & Roziqi, 2023). For example, generally, the English noun phrase that has the basic structure of determiner+adjective+noun becomes the black car. However, in Indonesian, the structure will be determiner+noun+adjective to make the car black or *mobil hitam itu* in Bahasa Indonesia. Indonesians usually put the headword noun first, followed by adjectives that modify it. This may be because Indonesian EFL learners prefer to translate from Indonesian to English. Translating is a challenging activity that takes time and effort to accomplish, especially when done by learners (Panjaitan et al., 2023). Laoli and Laoli (2023) found the problem of student errors in using noun phrases in writing descriptive text in class VIII SMP Negeri 3 Hiliserangkai. The research results indicate that the most dominant types of errors are misinformation, omissions, additions, and misorderings which result from interlingual and intralingual factors (Laoli & Laoli, 2023). Not only in Indonesia, was NP complexity in L2 also studied in Chinese EFL learners by Lu and Wu (2022). The findings demonstrated that Topic Comment unit-based measures did not adequately account for the variance in holistic writing scores and that NP complexity metrics did (Lu & Wu, 2022). Akinlotan and Housen (2017) investigated the use of Nigerian English NPs based on Syntactic function and length over genre in predicting the complexity of noun phrases. It can be concluded that noun phrases in language learning are quite problematic in several non-native English countries so they are interesting to discuss.

The complexity of English noun phrases has been discussed in many studies. A study by Junaid (2018) explored the students' ability and inaccuracies in constructing English noun phrases. The study found that students used 32 patterns of Noun Phrase formation, which included constructions of accuracy and inaccuracy caused by a variety of factors such as misuse of identifier, misuse of quantifier, misuse of a noun, omission of identifier, misordering, misuse of plural, misuse of singular form,

formation errors, errors in word choice, omission of relative pronouns, and errors in adjective use (Junaid, 2018). Jitpraneechai (2019) compared English argumentative essays written by Thai-speaking university students with native English speakers to examine the complexity of noun phrases in academic writing. Both groups of writers relied heavily on attributive adjectives, nouns as premodifiers, and prepositional phrases as postmodifiers, and there were no significant differences in the use of prenominal modifiers between the two groups of students, with the use of phrases, prepositions with abstract meaning, and some prepositional phrases as postmodifiers being the most significant difference between the two datasets (Jitpraneechai, 2019). Research about NP types and structures analysis in the Magazine by Omar, Yuliana, and Umiyati (2022) results in the statistical analysis of NPs and the three categories of NP, namely pre-modified noun phrases, post-modified noun phrases, and double-modified noun phrases. A similar study was also conducted by Brato (2020) who discussed the complexity of noun phrases (NP) in Ghanaian English in a real-time perspective representing the early and late stages of structural nativization in a dynamic model, NP complexity was measured using five criteria namely NP Pattern, premodifier complexity, premodifier and post modifier length and postmodifier complexity.

There are many studies on English noun phrases in terms of patterns or structure, function, type, and many other aspects seen from the perspective of many languages. The data taken is varied, some are taken from magazines, observations, student work results, books, and others. Of the many studies that discuss English noun phrases, the study that is most similar to this study is Nyame and Ebule (2022) which discusses the structure, classification, and functions of noun phrases in Nzema in the Holy Bible. There is a study similar to this research, conducted by Arsad, Asridayani, and Magria (2022) which discusses the syntactical analysis of noun phrases in Surah Al-Mulk. Another study was also conducted by Widaputri (2023) which discussed modifiers in NP with the translation of Surah Yusuf as the main data. However, there has been no study that investigates noun phrase patterns in Maryam surah in Al-Quran English translations. Thus, this research has the main objective of identifying patterns of noun phrases used in the translation of Maryam (Mary) surah. Apart from that, researchers also explored the types of noun phrases based on Swales and Feak (2012). Therefore, researchers formulated three questions that underlie the course of this study, namely **first,** how many patterns of noun phrases are used in the English translation of Mary Surah? **Second,** what are the most common noun phrase patterns used in the English translation of Mary (Maryam) surah? **Third,** what are the types of noun phrases used in the English translation of Mary?

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper investigates patterns and types of English noun phrases found in the English translation of Surah Maryam (Mary) by employing the descriptive qualitative method. The classification and interpretation of linguistic or visual material to make statements about the dimensions and structures of meaning implicit and explicit in the material and what is represented in it, as well as to discover and describe

problems in the field or structures and processes in routines and practices, is referred to as qualitative data analysis (Flick, 2018).

Data source

The main data expected in this study was document research in the form of English Translated Alquran specifically exploring the Mary Surah. The data from document-based research includes textbooks, newspapers, magazines, letters, movies, journals, and articles. Therefore, Mary Surah English translated by Talal Itani retrieved from www.ClearQuran.com (n.d.) became the data source of this study since it had adequate data source with a total of 98 verses. The expected specific data was the noun phrase (NP) of every verse in Mary.

Data collection and analysis

From 98 verses in Mary Surah, the expected data, 163 NP items was discovered. In collecting the data, the researchers first collected the raw data in the form of NP in the data source. Second, the data found were checked depending on the accuracy of the expected data. While checking, the unexpected data were removed. The unexpected data referred to similar findings, for example, the phrase The lord appeared more than once. Therefore, only one representative data was taken and other similar data were deleted. Third, the researchers analyzed the pattern of NPs found by breaking them down depending on the part of speech construction of the NPs and classifying the NPs depending on the types.

The types of NP refer to the generic types specific and general noun phrases (Swales & Feak, 2012), and complex and simple noun phrases. Next, the data analyzed were tabulated depending on each category and then descriptively analyzed. One approach to qualitative data analysis is to reduce large data sets or data complexity through data coding. This means finding labels that allow grouping several elements (statements or observations) under one concept so that we have a more or less limited number of codes (or categories) for a variety of phenomena through qualitative content analysis (Flick, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researchers described the findings of this study. 163 noun phrases of the English translated of Mary Surah were found using NP criteria as elaborated by Chalker and Weiner (1994) that a noun phrase is defined as "a word or group of words that functions exactly like a noun in a sentence, with a noun or pronoun as the head. A noun phrase can be a noun or a pronoun by itself, although it is most often a noun or a pronoun with pre-and/or post-modification." (Chalker & Weiner, 1994). A common noun or noun phrase might represent an entire class or just one thing, person, quantity, or idea (Swales & Feak, 2012). Noun phrases can be more or less complex (Berlage, 2014).

Table 1. Complex vs simple noun phrases

complex	11	6.75%
simple	152	93.25%
total	163	100.00%

Table 1 shows the pattern types of 163 noun phrases based on the level of pattern complexity. Based on this table, 11 NP (6.75%) were classified into the complex category and 152 NP (93.25%) belonged to the simple category. The categorization depended on the definition of simple and complex noun phrases. A simple noun phrase consists of one or more nouns with a determiner, such as articles such as *a, an, the,* or demonstrative pronouns such as *this, that, these,* and *those*. In the data, a simple noun phrase is represented by the phrase *a sign,* for example. There is only one main headword, namely *sign.* Another example is *a disobedient rebel* which refers to one rebel as a headword who is disobedient. A complex noun phrase is made up of a noun and one or more modifiers, which could be an adjective, another noun, a prepositional phrase, or a relative clause. An example taken from the data is the phrase *a mention of the mercy of your Lord* where 3 nouns construct this noun phrase. *Your lord* modified *the mercy.* Then *the mercy of your lord* modified *a mention.* So, it can be concluded that any number of nouns that modify the noun in front of them can be counted into one complex noun phrase.

Table 2. Specific vs general noun phrases

specific noun phrase	97	59.51%
general noun phrase	66	40.49%
total	163	100.00%

Table 2 shows the pattern types of 163 noun phrases based on the broadness level. Based on this table, 97 NPs (59.51%) were categorized into the specific category and 66 NPs (40.49%) into the general category. The categorization depended on the definition of specific and general noun phrases. A specific noun phrase relates to an individual, place, object, or idea, whereas a general noun phrase refers to a group of individuals, places, things, or ideas. Apart from that, the specificity or generality of a noun phrase is also influenced by the pre-medifier and determiner that modify it. This is in line with the statement that determiners are words used at the start of a noun phrase to indicate whether it is specific or general (British Council, n.d.). Specific determiners include the article *the*; possessive adjective *my, your, his, her, its, our, their*; and demonstratives *this, that, these, and those.* In the data, specific noun phrases for example *the most merciful, my bones, our mercy,* and *those who disbelieve.* The use of a specific determiner determines the noun being described refers to a specific possessor, for example, *my bone* refers to the bone of mine. General determiners include *a/an* for singular nouns (example: *a son*), no determiner for plural nouns (example: *animals*), and general determiner *any* or *another* (example:

any human). General NP in the data the phrase *a son,* for example, refers to an unspecified son whether the son of Mary or other people.

Table 3. Noun phrase patterns (N=163)

No.	Structure	Quantity	Percentage
1	adjective-noun	3	1.84%
2	adjective-noun-preposition-determiner-noun	1	0.61%
3	determiner-adjective	6	3.68%
4	determiner-adjective-noun	14	8.59%
5	determiner-Adjective-noun-Preposition-determiner-noun	1	0.61%
6	determiner-adjective-noun-preposition-noun	1	0.61%
7	determiner-adjective-noun-preposition-possessive adjective-noun	1	0.61%
8	determiner-adjective-pronoun-preposition-pronoun	1	0.61%
9	determiner-noun	59	36.20%
10	determiner-noun- Prepositional phrase	1	0.61%
11	determiner-noun-adverb-adjective	1	0.61%
12	determiner-noun-noun	2	1.23%
13	Determiner-noun-preposition-adjective	1	0.61%
14	determiner-noun-preposition-adjective-noun	2	1.23%
15	determiner-noun-preposition-Adjective-noun-adjective	1	0.61%
16	determiner-noun-preposition-determiner-noun	7	4.29%
17	determiner-noun-preposition-determiner-superlative adjective-adjective	5	3.07%
18	determiner-Noun-Preposition-noun	12	7.36%
19	determiner-noun-preposition-pronoun	4	2.45%
20	Determiner-Noun-Pronoun-verb	1	0.61%
21	determiner-noun-pronoun-verb-adverb-verb-preposition	1	0.61%
22	determiner-preposition-determiner-noun	1	0.61%
23	determiner-pronoun-verb	1	0.61%
24	determiner-relative pronoun-verb	3	1.84%
25	determiner-relative pronoun-verb-adjective	1	0.61%
26	determiner-relative pronoun-verb-noun	1	0.61%

27	Noun	12	7.36%
28	noun-conjunction-noun	1	0.61%
29	noun-Noun-determiner-noun	1	0.61%
30	Noun-Preposition-determiner-noun	2	1.23%
31	Noun-Preposition-Noun	2	1.23%
32	noun-relative pronoun-verb-determiner-noun	1	0.61%
33	pronoun	7	4.29%
34	Pronoun-Adjective	1	0.61%
35	pronoun-noun	1	0.61%
36	pronoun-noun-preposition-conjunction-adjective-adjective	1	0.61%
37	pronoun-noun-preposition-pronoun	1	0.61%
38	pronoun-verb-preposition-noun	1	0.61%
	Total	163	100.00%

Table 3 presents the patterns of noun phrases found in the translation of Surah Maryam. Of the 163 data found, 38 phrase patterns formed noun phrases in translated verses of the Koran. The most frequently used pattern is *determiner-noun* with an appearance of 36.20% of the total data (59 times). Then the *Determiner + Adjective + Noun* pattern with a frequency of occurrence 14 times (8.59%) is followed by a *Noun* with a frequency of occurrence 12 times (7.36%). Followed by 7 occurrences (4.29%) in the *Pronoun* and *Determiner+Noun+Preposition+Determiner+Noun* patterns. The following was a description of the frequency of occurrence of patterns that appeared five or more than five times:

Determiner-adjective

the Most Merciful (18:1)
the Unseen (61:4)

The data above were examples of noun phrases that appeared with a *determiner+adjective* pattern. An adjective becomes a subject or object when it is modified by adding a determiner or article or suffixes. The phrase *the Most Merciful* acted as a subject in the sentence "...**the Most Merciful** will lead him on..." (75), so this phrase could act as a noun. Apart from that, the determiner changed the adjective merciful into a noun which meant referring to Allah in Islam, which meant the expression of Allah's infinite and boundless mercy. *The unseen* is a noun phrase made up of a determiner *the* and an adjective *unseen*. The adjective *unseen* is the head of the noun phrase in the grammatical structure of the phrase *unseen*. The determiner *the* is a premodifier. In this case, the phrase the *unseen* referred to the complement of the prepositional phrase of the sentence "...promised by the Most Merciful to His servants in **the Unseen.**" (61).

Determiner-adjective-noun

> *the best outcome* (76:5) ⇒ "… with your Lord, and **the best outcome**." (76)
> *Our clear revelations* (73:1) ⇒"When **Our clear revelations** are recited to …" (73)

The data above were examples of noun phrases that appeared with a *Det+Adj+N* pattern. The phrase *the best outcome* is a common pattern in English, which is to use the definite article to refer to a specific outcome. In this case, *the best outcome* refers to the outcome that is most desirable or favorable. Meanwhile, the phrase *Our clear revelations* follows a common pattern in English, which is to use a possessive pronoun followed by a noun phrase to indicate that the noun phrase belongs to the people who are being referred to by the speaker. In this case, the possessive pronoun *Our* indicates that the noun phrase *clear revelations* belongs to the people who are speaking.

Determiner-noun

> *the sinners* (86:1) ⇒ "And herd **the sinners** into hell, like animals to water."
> *his father* (42:1) ⇒ "He said to **his father**, "O my father, why …"

The noun phrase pattern Det-N occupies the most used position in the data collected, appearing 59 times (36.20%). This is similar to one of the results of Junaid's (2018) study, which states that a higher percentage of students' accuracy was in constructing the Noun Phrase using the identifier+Head pattern. Most English noun phrases follow the Modifier + Head structure, with the modifier typically coming before the noun's primary word (Ramadhan & Jumanto, 2022). The first representative phrase taken at random is the phrase *the sinners*. It uses the definite article to refer to a specific group of people. In this case, what is meant by *sinners* is all people who have sinned. Then the second phrase is the phrase *his father* which follows a common pattern in English, which is to use a possessive pronoun *his* followed by a noun *father* to indicate that the noun belongs to the person referred to by the pronoun. In this case, *his father* refers to the father of the person who is speaking.

Determiner-noun-preposition-determiner-noun

> *the trunk of the palm tree* (25:1) ⇒ "… shake **the trunk of the palm tree** towards you"
> *the messenger of your Lord* (19:1) ⇒ "… I am only **the messenger of your Lord**,.."

The two samples above represented the NP pattern of Det-N-Prep-Det-Noun that formed in the data seven times (4.29%). In the first phrase, *the trunk of the palm tree*, 2 main NPs form it, namely *the trunk* and *the palm tree*. However, the head of the phrase is located on *the trunk* and then the Prepositional Phrase (PP) of *the palm tree* modifies the main noun *the trunk*. So, the second noun phrase helps to specify which trunk is meant. So, readers can understand that *the trunk* is *the trunk of the palm tree*, not the trunk of the coconut tree or the trunk of other trees. Then the next example is the phrase *the messenger of your Lord*. This phrase is formed from two noun phrases, namely *the messenger* and *your lord*. The headword of this phrase is *a messenger* and is modified with PP *of your lord* consisting of Prep+NP. This is to specify which *messenger* is intended in that verse.

Determiner-noun-preposition-determiner-superlative adjective-adjective

> *a fast to the Most Gracious* (26:2)
> *a promise from the Most Merciful* (78:2)

The first phrase that represents the pattern Det+N+Prep+Det+superAdj+Adj was *fast to the most gracious*. This phrase is a simple noun phrase consisting of a determiner *a*, a noun *fast*, and a prepositional phrase *to the Most Gracious*. The determiner *a* indicates that the phrase is referring to any member of the group of fasts, while the noun *fast* is the head noun of the phrase. The prepositional phrase *to the Most Gracious* modifies the head noun *fast*. While the second phrase is *a promise from the Most Merciful* which is a simple noun phrase consisting of a determiner *a*, a noun *promise*, and a prepositional phrase *from the Most Merciful*. The determiner *a* indicates that the phrase refers to any member of the group of promises, while the noun *promise* is the head noun of the phrase. The prepositional phrase *from the Most Merciful* modifies the head noun *promise*.

Determiner-noun-preposition-noun

> *a man of truth* (41:2)
> *a sign for humanity* (21:2)

The first phrase discussed is *a man of truth*. The phrase *a man* is a noun phrase that consists of a determiner and a head noun. The determiner *a* indicates that the phrase refers to any member of the group of men. The head noun *man* is the noun that is being modified by the phrase *of truth*. Then the second phrase is *a sign for humanity*. The phrase *a sign* is a noun phrase that consists of a determiner and a head noun. The determiner *a* indicates that the phrase refers to any member of the group of signs. The head noun *sign* is the noun that is being modified by the phrase *for humanity*. The phrase *for humanity* itself is a prepositional phrase that consists of a preposition and a noun phrase. The preposition indicates that the noun phrase is related to the head noun *sign*. The noun phrase *humanity* is the noun phrase that is related to the head noun *sign*.

Noun

> *Animals* (86:2) ⇒ "... like animals to water." (86)
> *Incitement* (83:3) ⇒ "... exciting them with incitement?" (83)

The two nouns above were nouns in the data. A single noun could be considered a noun phrase. This was by the statement that a noun phrase is defined as "a word or group of words that functions exactly like a noun in a sentence, with a noun or pronoun as the head." A noun phrase can be a noun or a pronoun by itself, although it is most often a noun or a pronoun with pre-and/or post-modification." (Chalker & Weiner, 1994). Most languages' prevalent noun phrases feature a single word that can be either a noun or a pronoun (Dryer, 2007). This finding is consistent with the findings of Arsad, Asridayani, and Magria (2022), who discovered that the dominating form of noun phrase found in Surah Al-Mulk is a noun phrase consisting of one word (N/Prop) as the sentence's subject. While traditional grammar describes pronouns as words that replace nouns, a more accurate description of most pronouns is that they replace noun phrases (Dryer, 2007). Noun phrases animals in the descending data, construct a prepositional phrase like animals to water and

modify it to explain the clause in front of it. Then the incitement phrase is located after the preposition where the preposition is followed by a noun or gerund.

Pronoun

> *I* (5:4) ⇒ "… **I** will stone you. … " (46)
> *She* (16:3) ⇒ "… So **she** pointed to him…." (29)
> *They* (29:2) ⇒ "**They** will have no power of intercession, … " (87)

The pronouns *I, she,* and *they* above are examples of several pronouns found in the data. In this context, these pronouns act as subjects in sentences and clauses in verse translation. One singular pronoun can be considered as a noun phrase. This finding is consistent with the findings of Arsad, Asridayani, and Magria (2022), who discovered that the dominating form of noun phrase found in Surah Al-Mulk is a noun phrase consisting of one word (N/Prop) as the sentence's subject. It is in line with the statement that many languages' most common noun phrases contain a single word that can be a noun or a pronoun (Dryer, 2007). "Noun phrases are any structures headed by a noun, or by a pronoun, or any other word or structure that stands in for a noun. Thus, even an entire clause may function as a noun phrase" (Millaku, Millaku, & Kafexholli, 2022; Tufte, 1971, p.41)

CONCLUSION

To answer the three questions underlying this research, the researchers drew several conclusions. Firstly, there are 38 patterns of noun phrases that construct NP in 136 NP data from 98 verses of Surah Maryam. Second, the most frequently used pattern is *determiner+noun* with a frequency of occurrence of 59 times (36.20%). Then the *Determiner + Adjective + Noun* pattern with a frequency of occurrence 14 times (8.59%) is followed by a *Noun* with a frequency of occurrence 12 times (7.36%). Followed by 7 occurrences (4.29%) in the *Pronoun* and *Determiner+Noun+Preposition+Determiner+Noun* patterns. As well as other pattern findings that can be seen in Table 3. Thirdly, 2 types of NP are explored, namely complex vs simple and specific vs general. The results showed that 11 complex NPs (6.75%), 152 simple NPs (93.25%), 97 specific NPs (59.51%), and 66 general NPs (40.49%) were found.

Then as an additional finding, because the data used is a translation of the holy book, so, there are cases suggested here verses are translated in a non-clause or incomplete sentence model so that 1 verse only consists of phrases. The results of this study imply EFL students and future English teachers understand the functions and patterns of NP in constructing English sentences. This research has sufficient data. However, the research cannot be very representative of the complex NP pattern data because the comparison of the numbers is quite significant with the amount of simple NP pattern data. Apart from that, this research also does not include an analysis of the function of the NP of each sentence. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to conduct research focusing on these two things.

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