Research Article

THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES AND THE SUBORDINATE CLAUSES IN "DAVID COPPERFIELD" BY CHARLES DICKENS: A STUDY OF SYNTAX

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Abstract: The objectives of the research are to know the prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses in "David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens. The total sample data of this research are sixty each for two variables. The technique of collecting data of prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses is determining texts in the novel, collecting the selected sentences, and storing them in a table. The research methodology applied is qualitative, and the technique of data analysis is descriptive analysis and hierarchical structures of syntax. Three categories are used to analyze prepositional phrases: post-modifier of a noun (pN), post-modifier of an adjective (pAdj) and adverbial (pA) while to analyze the subordinate clauses, complement clauses (CC), adjunct or adverbial clauses (AC), and relative clauses (RC) are employed. The results of the research are: 1) Prepositional phrases that function as adverbial (pA) are found to be the most category used with 65%, and the preposition *of* is the most used among others with twelve times in total. 2) Subordinate clauses that function as adjunct clauses (AC) are found to be the most category used with 62%, and the subordinate conjunction *when* is the most used among others with eleven times in total.

Key Words: phrases; prepositional phrases; clauses; subordinate clauses; syntax

Introduction

Reading a novel as one of literary works can be a great way to improve reading skill of English as a foreign language for non-native speakers elsewhere in the world. In this case, English novels more specifically have become a popular choice among English learners to read while enjoying their weekends, waiting for a train to show up, or even while spending their free time during break or holiday, for instance. Thus, basically people can always have their novels and read them at any time and place no matter where.

Certainly, by reading an English novel, there are a bunch of benefits English learners will obtain from every single page of it. First, they will improve their English vocabulary by only reading the first page of the book as the kickoff. It will be surely important for them to know and understand new words and phrases which can be noted in their notebook to keep them being in their mind. Then, they will be gradually making progress with the ability of identifying with the contexts of the sentence in the story. It is proven that the more people read books, the faster they comprehend what the story is about. Lastly, by making a habit of reading English novels, the learners will gain more of the insights into English cultures, customs and even colloquial phrases used by the author through a variety of complicated plots and settings in the book. Those benefits can consequently help them with the improvement of their English reading skill.

However, there is another important thing to remember for English learners when reading a novel. When there are those benefits already mentioned above in the novels, there comes as well a challenge that often occurs as one of critical issues among English learners. Some novels are written based on the level of

the readers meaning that they range from easy to hard levels, but some are not, which could be extremely tough for some of them. Given those circumstances, novels have a number of complex sentences which come up into a long paragraph. It turns out that most English learners often experience difficulty to understand or imagine the situation of conflicts presented in that paragraph. That mostly happens because of their misinterpretation towards the contexts which is normally called as ambiguity.

Ambiguity is a term for wrong interpretation of readers when understanding sentences or contexts that have several possible meanings. It is critical when ambiguous sentences are found among paragraphs in the book. Learners will get confused and remain for a while in that page to think over what the author initially wants them to imagine. They will also end up meeting a great deal of difficulty to scratch the story beneath the surface because they find two or probably more potential meanings which could be related or not related to the story. It is also likely that the learners will stop or give up making effort to choose what is meant to be understood.

When choosing English literature, English learners should be ready with the commitment of finishing the book despite a number of pages within. It is often plausible that not even a single book can be read thoroughly if they have a lack of motivation of reading. Therefore, learner's motivation wields considerable influence over the success of completing the book and prevents them from surrendering in the middle of the process. The motivation might start from choosing an appropriate environment that can keep them stay on the track with their book.

Speaking of influential motivation, English learners could find a community of reading books in their area or city if any, which can be one of great options to always feel motivated to complete the book because they have friends with the same vision and mission. That similar objective will result in a more lasting encouragement for the learners, and they could exchange their related ideas and specific point of views when meeting up and discussing the problems they are facing together. On the spot, they can also create an open discussion regarding the literary work they have been reading altogether with strong commitment. The learners will end up consistently staying the course with their reading activities while making friends at the same time.

Nonetheless, since the English learners must finish the story in their novel all by themselves, it means that they should have enough ability to understand every single part of speech in that book. Words make the most significant aspect in reading novel. The mastery of enough vocabulary could be a very basic factor for them to be able to have because novels consist of hundreds or even thousands of words that might be familiar and unfamiliar to them. Words themselves include nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions and numerous types of adverbs which English learners should struggle with while reading their novel. If their basic of English words is weak, then it is not impossible that they will feel less desired and less excited about reading a novel.

As a matter of fact, as Meyer (2009:112) pointed out that the smallest constituent is the word, and the largest one is the sentence, and in between of the two consists of phrases and clauses. In that case, English words will then make up into phrases, clauses and sentences. A lot of learners could also find clauses and sentences extremely confusing and seemingly interchangeable. Also, the fact that clauses and sentences are totally different initiates the learners to try to look at them at the same way and probably ignore their actual differences. And yet, novels are in fact composed of dense and convoluted clauses and sentences, which are identical, within that hundred-page novel or other types of literature. However, the attempts will eventually produce no advantage if the learners know nothing about how to form a clause or a sentence in English at the very least before understanding them in a long paragraph while reading English novels.

As far as the constituent form is concerned above, syntax is the term at its most basic level for defining the smaller into larger units or constituents of words. It is where words up to sentences are discussed in more details later on. Aronoff and Rees-Miller (2002:200) argue that syntax is seriously concerned with the relationship between the finite and the infinite. That means syntax, as the branch of linguistics, focuses on how finite words can be combined with other finite words to create and produce abundant sentences. In every single sentence in a story or novel, there must have its own process and rules to follow when composing sentences which are not easily discovered by English learners. Once they have their own dictionary, for example, that could save up to thousands of words in that book, however, the regulation to form those words into sentences should be following what syntax has to say.

In syntax, rules of words, phrases, clauses and sentences are specifically explained for the English learners to understand how to connect and create a coherent and grammatical paragraph. It is particularly important for the learners to be able to comprehend which paragraphs are coherent and grammatical because that will help them in the end to improve their writing or other related skills in English. They also have to make sure that those paragraphs should be syntactically proper to read, such as in the novel. That is the reason why syntax plays a vital role in identifying meaning in contexts through a combination of words into phrases, clauses and then sentences.

After words, phrases become the second phase of forming units or constituents in syntax. Like other types of constituents, phrases also have a significantly essential part in sentences. Phrases are used to help English learners to form a larger description in a noun phrase in a subject, for instance. Besides, phrases are as well especially useful for exceeding the supporting part of the adjective through the extent of degree by using proper adverbs. In addition, phrases can also be formed to construct a place or time of a certain event as normally called as prepositional phrases.

Due to a large number of prepositions, prepositional phrases often tend to cause a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding when reading a novel to recognize. This type of phrases can be ultimately challenging for English learners to visualize the meaning of a sentence in a novel because there are loads of various prepositions as well as with different usage. For example, the preposition on has nearly twenty-five usages. As one of the definitions, on can be used to show that something is in a position above something else and touching it or that something is moving into such a position as in Your suitcase is on top of the wardrobe. Another definition is that on is used to show when something is repeated one of more times as in The government suffered defeat on defeat in the local elections. Hence, out of about twenty-five usages, even some of them could be rather tricky to understand.

In several sentences, there could also be structurally ambiguous when using prepositional phrases such as in He once shot an elephant in his pajamas. By using in as the prepositional phrase, that sentence shows a confusing interpretation whether that person who was wearing his pajamas was shooting an elephant or he was shooting an elephant which was wearing his pajamas. According to Yule (2010:98), he stated that phrases can also possess structural ambiguity which has two distinct underlying interpretations that have to be represented differently in deep structure. It shows the definition that structural ambiguity is possible to happen in a sentence that can have two possible meanings with the same surface structure to be interpreted by the English learners in the novel.

When learning English for the first time, English learners might think or assume that English language only has simple sentences. However, when it comes to a novel, the sentences are no longer simple but complex. Learners will find that a sentence can be attached to another sentence, or it can also be inserted inside another sentence. This process is known as conjoining, it is where there are two sub-sentences of equal importance attached together to form a single one as Aitchison ever quoted (2010:99). His statement means that the process of conjoining will create a simple sentence into a complex one without underestimating one clause or the other. Both clauses in the complex sentence basically have the same significance despite being put together. For this reason, the clause that is attached or inserted can be defined as subordinate clause or indirect clause. This complex sentence can in fact be widely found and uncovered in a novel such as in David Copperfield. Based on the background above, the writer intended to conduct a research with the title: "The Prepositional Phrases and the Subordinate Clauses in "David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens: A Study of Syntax".

Method

In this study, the writer presented the qualitative methodology that would be employed to answer the research questions presented in chapter one. The qualitative method was chosen because the research is conducted to analyze a novel as one of literary works.

According to Kornuta and Germaine (2019:54), qualitative methodology is employed through real experience of a person to seek the comprehension of the themes, patterns, or causal explanations as normally called as naturalistic inquiry. It can be seen that the methodology can be used to analyze human's

daily activities and life. It is important to understand that qualitative methodology is always suitable to research upon a novel or English literature to find out the theme or the events of the story inside the story.

In addition, Creswell (2014:184) argued, "Qualitative methods rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse designs." The theory above presents the definition of qualitative methodology as to the needs of texts and images as the data for analysis. Phrases and sentences then become the main resource of the research to carry out. The methodology also requires some steps to complete the data analysis in order to make sure that the research is consequently conducted based on what has been carefully planned in the first place.

This study also employs descriptive method that the analysis does not need hypotheses while developing the concepts and collecting the facts. Based on Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012:399), narrative research allows the research to use a methodology that is based on the story telling of people's lives and experiences with the world around them. It is defined that descriptive analysis is employed to describe the happenings or events of someone's life in a story of literary works, such as novels, poems and other types of literature.

In this thesis, the research uses content analysis. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), there are three particular ways how to apply content analysis: conventional, directed, or summative. It is said that content analysis basically is a technique to make the inference valid, so the data can be investigated repeatedly based on the contexts. The point of arranging the scientific research must be carried out by systematic and logical processes and steps. This helps the study by providing the reliable data to make the report scientifically and arrange the description in the correct sequence. The following is the steps to conduct the content analysis: identifying problems, finding references, determining focuses and sub-focuses, questioning research, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, making a research report.

Results and Discussion

The following is the tables of research findings for prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses based on their respective categories.

Table 1. Data of Prepositional Phrases as Post-modifier of a Noun

No.	Phrases	Preposition	Page	Chapter
1.	of my own life	of	5	1
2.	of this world	of	6	1
3.	of hers	of	7	1
4.	with this odd request	with	8	1
5.	of the fire	of	11	1
6.	on my mind	on	15	2
7.	of the touch	of	15	2
8.	of Peggotty's forefinger	of	15	2
9.	of its being roughened	of	15	2
10.	with their long necks	with	16	2
11.	with his ill-omened black eyes	with	21	2
12.	of refreshments	of	28	3

No.	Phrases	Preposition	Page	Chapter
13.	of six feet high	of	29	3
14.	in a white apron	in	30	3
15.	of his house	of	32	3
16.	of hot water	of	32	3
17.	of the sea	of	34	3
Percentage (%)		**28%**		

The table 1 shows the data analysis of prepositional phrases which function as post-modifier of a noun (pN) with 28% out of the total samples. It is concluded that the word *of* becomes the most dominant preposition which is used twelve times compared to other prepositions in this category. The preposition *of* is mostly used to show possession, belonging and origin.

Table 2. Data of Prepositional Phrases as Post-modifier of an Adjective

No.	Phrases	Preposition	Page	Chapter
1.	of her	of	8	1
2.	by Miss Betsey	by	11	1
3.	in herself	in	11	1
4.	in proportion	in	32	3
Percentage (%)		**7%**		

The table 2 shows the data analysis of prepositional phrases which function as post-modifier of an adjective (pAdj) with 7% out of the total samples. This becomes the least category of prepositional phrases since many adjectives found in the book are not specifically attached to their collocated prepositions. Instead, most of them are only independent adjectives.

Table 3. Data of Prepositional Phrases as Adverbial

No.	Phrases	Preposition	Page	Chapter
1.	by anybody else	by	5	1
2.	upon the light	upon	6	1
3.	on it	on	6	1
4.	by his marriage	by	7	1
5.	on the ground	on	7	1
6.	to herself	to	10	1
7.	at the window	at	10	1

8.	by the low glimmer	by	11	1
9.	from actual remembrance	from	15	2
10.	to me	to	15	2
11.	by needlework	by	15	2
12.	of the geese	of	16	2
13.	outside the side gate	outside	16	2
14.	after me	after	16	2
15.	at night	at	16	2
16.	by wild beast	by	16	2
17.	of lions	of	16	2
18.	at the sunlight	at	18	2
19.	at the open door	at	18	2
20.	through the porch	through	18	2
21.	into the church	into	18	2
22.	by the parlour	by	19	2
23.	on the threshold	on	20	2
24.	in her arms	in	20	2
25.	to my aid	to	20	2
26.	at this minute	at	21	2
27.	in the garden	in	21	2
28.	on her knee	on	28	3
29.	to London	to	28	3
30.	by the same conveyance	by	28	3
31.	by a very civil woman	by	30	3
32.	at the door	at	30	3
33.	on Ham's back	on	30	3
34.	in this hospitable manner	in	32	3
35.	in a kettleful	in	32	3
36.	at this point	at	33	3

37.	to me	to	33	3
38.	to bed	to	33	3
39.	in the depths	in	34	3
Percentage (%)		**65%**		

The table 3 shows the data analysis of prepositional phrases which function as adverbial (pA) with 65% out of the total samples. This becomes the most dominant category of prepositional phrases in the book. Adverbial is used to describe locations or places, time as well as positions. In this table, the preposition *by* becomes the most dominant. Not only can it be used to express passive voice in sentences but also positions and transportation.

Table 4. Data of Subordinate Clauses as Complement Clauses

No.	Clauses	Subordinate Conjunctions	Page	Chapter
1.	that my aunt didn't shake him	that	14	1
2.	that my mother cried too	that	27	2
3.	that I was sure	that	32	3
4.	where her father's grave was	where	34	3
5.	what I am	what	38	3
6.	that it was the late Mr Gummidge	that	39	3
7.	that she should ask me	that	42	4
8.	what I should have done	what	56	4
9.	what the tunes were	what	58	5
Percentage (%)		**15%**		

The table 4 shows the data analysis of subordinate clauses that function as complement clauses (CC) with 15% out of the total samples. This category of subordinate clauses becomes the least among the others. The word *that* becomes the most dominant subordinate conjunction with five times used in this table, and it mostly functions as the object of another clause or simply as a complement.

Table 5. Data of Subordinate Clauses as Adjunct Clauses

No.	Clauses	Subordinate Conjunctions	Page	Chapter
1.	because nothing can show better than my history	because	5	1
2.	until she had had her cry out	until	8	1
3.	since we have lived here	since	10	1
4.	if any two people can be equally matched	if	11	1

5.	if there had been light enough	if	12	1
6.	until he was again sent for	until	13	1
7.	if I looked at him any longer	if	18	2
8.	because she looked so curiously at me	because	19	2
9.	while she was hugging me	while	20	2
10.	before the door was shut	before	21	2
11.	before he reappeared	before	22	2
12.	as they strolled along	as	23	2
13.	when I glanced at him	when	24	2
14.	when he was gone	when	25	2
15.	when I had gone to bed	when	26	2
16.	if we had been going to London	if	28	3
17.	because he had never come to our house	because	29	3
18.	when there comes stormy weather	when	35	3
19.	unless she confessed	unless	36	3
20.	when Mr Peggotty came home about nine o'clock	when	37	3
21.	if she were swallowing something	if	40	3
22.	when we were left alone	when	43	4
23.	when we were sitting by the fire	when	44	4
24.	before we were married	before	46	4
25.	when my mother and I had lived alone together	when	48	4
26.	while I have got it fresh	while	49	4
27.	when the lessons are done	when	50	4
28.	when we got there	when	52	4
29.	when I became quiet	when	53	4
30.	as if it had been her honest face	as if	55	4
31.	as if he saw something new there	as if	58	5
32.	until we got to Yarmouth	until	59	5
33.	if I throw my head back	if	60	5

No.	Clauses	Subordinate Conjunctions	Page	Chapter
34.	while I wrote the letter	while	62	5
35.	if I had any doubt of him	if	63	5
36.	until her basket was removed	until	65	5
37.	until my seven shillings were spent	until	66	5
Percentage (%)			**62%**	

The table 5 shows the data analysis of subordinate clauses that function as adjunct clauses (AC) with 62% out of the total samples. This category of subordinate clauses becomes the most dominant among other categories of subordinate clauses. The word *when* is the most dominant subordinate conjunction with eleven times used to describe time of two events that often happen one after another.

Table 6. Data of Subordinate Clauses as Relative Clauses

No.	Clauses	Subordinate Conjunctions	Page	Chapter
1.	who was very handsome	who	6	1
2.	that could have belonged to nobody else	that	7	1
3.	who are remarkable in this respect	who	15	2
4.	who makes me shiver	who	16	2
5.	which I didn't divine then	which	30	3
6.	who had died very poorly	who	33	3
7.	where she left me	when	41	3
8.	with which Miss Murdstone embellished herself	which	45	4
9.	that stood in my eyes	that	47	4
10.	which I had access	which	51	4
11.	to which I was escorted by Miss Murdstone	which	54	4
12.	that were rolling about	that	57	5
13.	which was an awful speculation	which	64	5
14.	where we could get some milk	where	67	5
Percentage (%)			**23%**	

The table 6 shows the data analysis of subordinate clauses that function as relative clauses (RC) with 23% out of the total samples. It is neither the most dominant nor the least type of subordinate clauses. The most significant relativizers or subordinate conjunctions used in the book are *which* and *who*. However, it is also found that the subordinate conjunction *who* is used not only for human beings but also animals.

Table 7. Recapitulation of Data Analysis

Variables	Category	Percentage	Most Dominant	Least Dominant
Prepositional Phrases	pN	28%	of	upon, from, outside, after, through, into
	pAdj	7%		
	pA	65%		
Subordinate Clauses	CC	15%	when	since, as, unless
	AC	62%		
	RC	23%		

To sum up, the most dominant category of the first variable in this data analysis is prepositional phrases that function as adverbial (pA), and *of* is found to be the most dominant preposition which syntactically functions as head of a noun and modifies constituents of noun phrases. For the second variable, subordinate clauses that function as adjunct clauses become as well the most dominant category with *when* as the most used subordinating conjunction among others. In syntactic analysis, both adverbial and adjunct clauses basically have the same function. They are added to provide various kinds of information or to specify other phrases and clauses in a sense of describing time, place, manner or reason.

Conclusions

Based on the research findings and discussion of analyzing syntactically sixty sample data each for variable 1 (prepositional phrases) and variable 2 (subordinate clauses) in the novel "David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens, it is concluded that: 1) In the case of category, prepositional phrases that function as adverbial were found to be the most with thirty-nine in total, however, the category that functions as post-modifier of an adjective was found to be the least with only four in total. Besides, in the case of preposition, of (post-modifier of a noun) was found to be the most used with twelve times in total, however, the prepositions on, in (post-modifier of a noun), of, by (post-modifier of an adjective), upon, from, outside, after, through, into (adverbial) were found to be the least with only once used. 2) In the case of category, subordinate clauses that function as adjunct clauses were found to be the most with thirty-seven in total. However, the category that functions as complement clauses was found to be the least with only nine in total. Besides, in the case of subordinating conjunctions, when (adjunct clause) was found to be the most used with eleven times in total, however, the subordinating conjunctions where (complement clause), since, as, unless (adjunct clause) were found to be least with only once used.

Acknowledgements

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