Postmodifying Clauses in the English Noun Phrase: A Corpus-Based Study (Language and Computers)

By Pieter de Haan

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This book reports on the results of a project whose aim was to give a detailed description of a number of syntactic properties of postmodifying clauses in the English NP, and study the way in which some of these properties are related to each other in a variety of text tyoes. The study is based on an examination of the Nijmegen Corpus, which consists of slightly over 130,000 words of running text. The structure of the NP is described basically in terms of four constituents: Determiner Premodifier Head Postmodifier No fewer than 2,430 occurrences of postmodifying clauses in NPs were analysed. A numerical coding scheme was designed, in which 26 different variable features were encoded, describing the properties the postmodifying clauses. These were processed and statistically analysed. The book discusses the methodology adopted and the results of the statistical analyses. Among the properties described are the function of NPs with postmodifying clauses, the structure of these NPs, the realisation and reference of the heads of these NPs, the specific types of postmodifying clause, the actual link words used, the clause patterns occurring in the postmodifying clauses, and the verb phrases in the postmodifying clauses.

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Postmodifying Clauses in the English Noun Phrase: A Corpus-Based Study (Language and Computers) By Pieter de Haan Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #6876816 in Books
- Published on: 1989-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .55" w x 5.98" l, .80 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 244 pages

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