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## CONTENT

### SECTION A: LANGUAGE

Pragmatic Analysis of Tones and Tonal Patterns in Igala Language <b>Abdul, Mohammed Adem</b>	<b>1</b>
Process Choice Analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 Inauguration Speech <b>Mohammed Maikiyari, Ph.D and Ramatu Tijani Oziti</b>	<b>12</b>
Quantifiers in English and Izhia: A Minimalist Investigation <b>Maria-Helen Ekah, Ph.D and Chibueze Egbe Aleke</b>	<b>26</b>
A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Images of Banditry in <i>Daily Trust Newspaper</i> Cartoons <b>Umar Uba Abubakar, Ph.D., Benjamin Iorbee, Ph.D and Queen Nguhemem Jebe-Tume</b>	<b>42</b>
Critical Discourse Analysis of Persuasion in Donald Trump's 2024 Victory Speech <b>Hauwa Giwa-Ali, Ph.D</b>	<b>60</b>
Political Discourse Analysis of Selected Plenary Speeches of Nigeria's Senate President Godswill Akpabio <b>Ahmad Musa Saleh and Abdul'aziz Bako, Ph.D</b>	<b>73</b>
Rethinking Social Order: Racism within and After Covid-19 Pandemic <b>Abaya, Henry Demenongo</b>	<b>84</b>
Irregularities In The Grammar of the English Language: Blindspots for Pedagogical Attention in ESL Classrooms <b>Cecilia Folasade Ojetunde, Ph.D and Osipeju, Babasola Samuel</b>	<b>105</b>
An Analysis of Lexical Cohesive Devices in Governor Ahmadu Fintiri's Inauguration Speech <b>Muazu Hassan and Hauwa Giwa-Ali, Ph.D</b>	<b>121</b>
Non-observance of Grice's Maxims: A Study of Some Selected Dialogues in the Play – Harvest of Corruption <b>Abdulkadir Adamu and Usman Maigari Malala</b>	<b>140</b>
The Morphology of Personal Names in English and Ebira Languages <b>Amina Salisu Aliyu, Ph.D, Ahmadu Mohammed Dauda, Ph.D and James Jarafu Jawur</b>	<b>153</b>
Impact of Gamification on Vocabulary Acquisition and Retention among Private Secondary School English Learners In Lagos State, Nigeria <b>Adedokun, James Adekunle and Olabode, Adeyinka Ayoola, Ph.D</b>	<b>169</b>

The Expansionist Approach to the Teaching of the English Grammatical Categories: Examples with the Naming Category <b>Khabyr Fasasi</b>	<b>187</b>
Digital Media Learning and Postmodernist Classroom Innovations in Nigerian Universities <b>Maggai Tsokwa and Fatima Inuwa</b>	<b>201</b>
The Pronunciation of the New English Native Speakers in Nigeria <b>Ngor, Cornelius Iko-awaji</b>	<b>210</b>
Lexico-Semantic Analysis of ASUU-FGN Impasse In Nigerian Newspapers <b>Awoniyi Olalekan Ogundeji and Happiness Uduk, Ph.D</b>	<b>222</b>
A Critical Stylistic Analysis of a Channels Television Show, 'Politics Today' <b>Waliyah A. Akeju and Muhyideen Kolawole Ayuba</b>	<b>237</b>
An Investigation on Functionality and Usage of Language Laboratories for Teaching Oral English in Colleges of Education in Bauchi State <b>Bakoji Mohammed Fema, PhD, Alhaji Abubakar, PhD and Fatima Mohammed</b>	<b>249</b>
A Pragmatic Investigation of the Speech of Former President Muhammadu Buhari on Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020 <b>Habu Yusuf</b>	<b>262</b>
Rhetoricity In Orality: An Analysis of Muhammadu Dan'Anace's "Shagon Mafara" <b>Garba Adamu, Ph.D and Ashiru Abdullahi</b>	<b>277</b>
A Semantic Analysis of Selected Mwaghavul Proverbs <b>Danji Sabo and Kyetu Mandyen Danlami</b>	<b>286</b>
Investigating Linguistic Features of North-East Nigerian Suicide Notes <b>Yunana Ahmed, Ph.D and Danladi, Daniel Boyi</b>	<b>300</b>
A Morphological Study of Derivational Patterns In Android Smartphone Terminologies <b>Ahmadu Mohammed Dauda, Ph.D and Abdulkarim Musa Yola</b>	<b>315</b>
Lexical choices and Ideology in Nigeria's Security and Development Discourse in the Nigeria's Media <b>Murjanatu Sulaiman-Shika</b>	<b>326</b>
Syntax and Semantics Interface <b>Mohammed Gambo, Ph.D</b>	<b>346</b>
Colonial Legacy in Tunde Kelani's <i>Saworoide</i> : Language, Power, and Resistance <b>Okunnuwa, Sunday J. Ph.D, Ibrahim, Wahab Adegbayi, and Sobande, Olukayode Olukemi</b>	<b>355</b>



## SECTION B: LITERATURE

- An Appraisal of Cult Symbols In The Selected Songs of American POP Artists  
**Tanimu, Abubakar (Prof) and Adekunle, Joseph** 365
- Enlightenment for Empowerment: A Feminist Reading of Safiya Yero'S Najah  
**Manta G. Yadok and Ishaya: Bilyaminu Salman** 380
- Arab-Muslim Immigrants and the Limits of Cultural Citizenship in H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy*  
**Olamiposi Oyeleye, Ph.D., Oladiran Damilola Peju, Ph.D. and PatrickbCharles Alex, Ph.D.** 395
- The Artist and Leadership Failure In Africa: A Study of Ngugi Wa Thiong'O'S Wizard of The Crow  
**Dr. Manasseh Terwase Iortyer, Prof. Jeff Godwin Doki and Bizuum Godwill Yadok** 411
- Narratives of Conflict: A Literary Exploration of Boko Haram's Impact in Politics and Security in Nigeria's Northeast Since 2009  
**Markus Ishaku** 421
- Literary Creativity and the Condition of the Nigerian Writer in the Age of Globalization and Capitalist Economy  
**Adebayo, Abidemi Olufemi, PhD and Bukola, Olubunmi Iyabo, M.A** 431
- Amali's Faces of Shame as Reflection of Leadership at the Altar of Ethics and Decorum  
**Isah Ibrahim PhD** 442
- Of Mothers as Mistresses: Jocasta Complex and Transference in Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's Season of Crimson Blossoms.  
**David Mikailu Ph.D.** 452
- Stylistic Explorations of Love: Conceptual Metaphor In Mariama Bâ'S So Long a Letter and Zaynab Alkali'S The Virtuous Woman  
**Anwar Danjuma, Maryam Mukhtar Abdullahi, Muntari Babangida and Sulaiman Harisu** 462
- The Influence of Nigerian Folktales on National Identity and Values  
**Jimoh, Olumide Yusuf, Ph.D. and Adedokun, James Adekunle** 474
- Discontents and the Quest for National Rebirth in Karen King-Aribisala's Kicking Tongues  
**Okache C. Odey** 487
- An Assessment of Performance of Bauchi State Senior Secondary School Students in Literature-In-English  
**Professor Asabe Sadiya Mohammed, Dr Alhaji Abubakar and Haruna Shuaibu Hardawa** 496



Betwixt And Between Colonial Hegemony and Contemporaneity: Examining The Voyage of Transmutation In African Drama

**Andrew Aondofa Nyikyaa** 508

Investigating the Educational Advisory Roles of Tera Proverbs

**Alheri Bulus** 527

## SECTION C: COMMUNICATION

The Media Influence on Economic Development Through Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

**DANGO, Salamatu Eshi and ABDULLAHI, Hussaina Abaji** 535

Social Media Discourse and Peace Negotiations in Contemporary Nigeria

**Peter Ochefu Okpeh, Ph.D., Theodore Shey Nsairun and Okpeadua Sony Okpeadua, PhD** 546

When Robots take over Journalism: systemic Considerations for Artificial Intelligence and Practical Realities in Nigerian Television Newsroom

**Maggai Tsokwa and Tebrimam Useni Andefatso** 560

Mitigating Fake News Through Media Literacy Education: The Perception and Experience of Masaka Market Traders in Karu

**Ben Ita Odeba, Ayuba Ummah Ibrahim and Desmond Onyemechi Okocha, PhD.** 574

An Assessment of Adherence to Journalism Code of Conduct among Journalists in Plateau State

**Dorcas Agabison, Prof. Greg H. Ezeah, Maggai Tsokwa and Orya Theophilus Tertsea** 597

An Assessment of the Two-Way Communication Model of Public Relations Used During the University of Jos School Fees Increase in 2023

**James E. Amad, Evaristus J. Ugboma and Chidimma Precious Okechukwu** 616

An Assessment of the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Business Communication in Lafia, Nasarawa state and Makurdi, Benue state, Central Nigeria

**EIMOGA Audu** 632

## SECTION D: CREATIVE WORKS/BOOK REVIEW

Poems for Savannah Journal of Language, Literature and Communication Studies

**Ismail Bala** 647

The Loss-Land

**Fatima Inuwa** 652



Dustbins and Dreams <b>Abdulkadir Mubarak</b>	<b>657</b>
The Desperate: Desire of a Feminine Soul <b>Faith Nkeri Aliyu</b>	<b>664</b>
Gumakan Zamani: A Book Review <b>Mohammad Abubakar M.</b>	<b>667</b>



## The Expansionist Approach to The Teaching of The English Grammatical Categories: Examples With The Naming Category

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### Abstract

*Scholars agree that the grammar of any language is arguably the backbone of the language, one with which spoken and written competences in the language are chiefly measured. No wonder then that teachers, researchers and linguists pay serious attention to grammar. Consequently, several theories of grammar have emerged and several approaches to the teaching of grammar have also been documented, albeit not without their weaknesses. The paper presents and discusses the expansionist approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories above the word as a novel method of teaching the categories, especially in higher institutions. The approach works by expanding certain base categories in order to realise other higher and more complex categories as a means of demonstrating the connections and possible build-ups between functionally similar grammatical categories for better learning outcomes. While dwelling on the strengths of the approach, this paper presents a theoretical example of the expansionist approach using the naming category. The paper recommends the expansionist approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories larger than the word for co-ordinated and improved learning experiences among students especially in higher institutions.*

**Keywords:** Expansionism, grammatical theory, grammatical categories, teaching, noun, noun clause.

### 1.0 Introduction

The meaning of 'Grammar' has been described variously by scholars and, in all of these, a number of perspectives come to the fore. Grammar has been equated with the language user's competence, that is, the language user's knowledge of the language. Grammar has also been described as a collection of rules (often in the form of books) which determine the correctness and acceptability of language user's expressions. Grammar has also been perceived as the descriptions of the

linguistic structures of a language and, utterances are then judged as correct or not depending on their conformity or otherwise with the descriptions. Further, grammar is perceived as 'a body of prescriptive statements about acceptable and unacceptable usages in a particular language' (Lamidi, 2008: 21). Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams (2011: 294) view grammar as 'the knowledge speakers have about the units and rules of their language – rules for combining sounds into words... rules of word formation... rules for combining words into



phrases and phrases into sentences... as well as the rules for assigning meaning'.

From the above, it becomes clear that there are two general perspectives of grammar. The first perspective, which is broad, maintains that grammar encompasses all the knowledge: phonological, morpho-syntactic, semantic, and discourse knowledge a native speaker has about his or her language. The narrow perspective of grammar refers to a body of information about the morphology and syntax of a language. It is in this sense that we can say that grammar is a system in a language by which words are joined to form meaningful sentences.

Whether in the broad or narrow perspective, grammar is central and important in language learning. Savage (2010) maintains that grammar performs a number of important roles in learning a language, especially a second language: grammar enables competence in the basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; grammar motivates both teachers and students to learn the language effectively; and grammar enhances self-sufficiency in the students as they can self-correct their mistakes. Zhang (2009) maintains that grammar is the process through which communicative competence (the product) can be achieved.

This paper is concerned with the notion of grammar as an index of the language user's competence as well as 'descriptive statements about the structure of a language' (Lamidi, 2008: 21), since it focuses on the relationships among

grammatical categories that are structurally connected to form sentences and utterances, especially for pedagogical reasons. It is our belief that certain grammatical categories are similar in terms of functions and distributions within the sentences. These similarities form the basis for the expansionist approach to the teaching of grammatical categories especially to the undergraduate students of English. Grammatical categories at the lexical level have been traditionally classified into eight: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection (Lamidi, 2008). Yule (2010: 82 - 83) identifies eight parts of speech as nouns, articles, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns and conjunctions. It is from these lexical categories that higher grammatical categories emerge. In this paper therefore, the expression 'Grammatical categories' will incorporate word categories (noun, adjective, verb, adverb, pronoun, etc.), phrasal categories (adverbial phrase, noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase, etc) and clausal categories (adjectival clause, noun clause and adverbial clause). This is because certain nexus, perceived among the categories, is assumed to be important for the teaching and learning of the grammar of English. For instance, we perceive that noun, pronoun, noun phrase and noun clause are related in terms of functions and positional distributions within the sentence. It is the relationship such as the above that the expansionist approach explores in

the teaching of grammatical categories.

### **Theories and Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar**

From the earliest attempt to study and account for the grammar of the English Language, a number of grammar theories have been proposed and these theories have contributed immensely to the understanding of the grammar of English, even when each has shown varying degrees of inadequacies. Some of the prominent theories include the traditional grammar, structural grammar, transformational generative grammar and functional grammar. Scholars (Derewianka, 2001; Butt, Fahev, Feez, Spinks & Yallop, 2000; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Hughes & McCarthy, 1998), through articles, have provided overviews of these theories, dwelling on their theoretical underpinnings, strengths and weaknesses.

Aside the above general theories of grammar, a number of instructional strategies and approaches have been documented in the literature, approaches which are considered useful in the teaching and learning of language and, especially grammar. While some of these were not originally designed for pedagogical purposes, others were designed for teaching and learning while yet others were designed specifically for the learning of language (grammar). In general however, all of these approaches focus on how humans learn.

Behaviourism for instance assumes that imitation/repetition and reinforcement lead to mastery of knowledge received from the environment, and, learners demonstrate actual learning when the behaviour of the instructor is replicated in theirs (Wilson & Peterson, 2006). This approach favours drills and memorization. Constructivism on the other hand favours learning through discovery and experimenting with facts (Leonard, 2002) and argues that learners acquire knowledge of new things by relating novel concepts to their own prior knowledge and experiences. The approach is learner-centered, focuses on the process and sees the teacher as a facilitator.

The Universal Grammar (UG) associated with Noam Chomsky assumed that learning a foreign language is no different from learning the first language. UG argues that humans are born with certain linguistic structures that are common in all languages. Therefore, formal grammar instruction for second language learners is not necessary because they already have the basics (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004). Learners only need to be exposed to meaningful input in the target language. Similarly, Stephen Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory (SLA) maintains that ESL learners acquire language through exposure to the environment and comprehensible input in the target language (Krashen, 2003). In language acquisition, there is therefore no need for grammar instruction (Krashen, 2003). SLA distinguishes between language



learning and language acquisition. Language acquisition is unconscious and it results from exposing learners to meaningful input in the targeted language while language learning is conscious and it results from teaching language in an explicit manner. The theory is built on five hypotheses: Learning hypothesis; Acquisition hypothesis; Natural Order hypothesis; Input hypothesis and; Affective Filter hypothesis (Krashen (2003).

The Grammar-Translation Method (known as the classical, formal or traditional method) favours reciting and memorising rules as means of learning a language (Haussamen, 1997). It prioritises correction of spelling, punctuation, diction, drills and it is demonstrated in diagramming parts of language and worksheets. Focus-on-Form Method (also known as the Grammar-in-Context) argues that “students need to construct knowledge of grammar by practicing it as part of what it means to write” (Ehrenworth & Vinton, 2005: 10). Scholars argue that students learn and apply the structure of language through practice and that sentence manipulation through writing helps students to practically improve language proficiency.

The Direct Method (DM) of teaching is a monolingual approach which involves defining observed pictures and objects to explain meanings of words. It involves associating words with thoughts, concepts and events as a way to learn new words. It thrives on constant repetition and drills, oral practice, question-answer sequence and dictation while common words and

expressions are used and longer texts are read to enhance listening and speaking.

However, the Audiolingual Method ranks language skills according to their importance thus: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is strongly linked to structural and applied linguistics. One main goal was fluency in the language; therefore dialogues were prioritized in the classroom. Differences between the L1 and the target language were considered important since such differences make learning the target language difficult while similarities would make learning easy. Making errors (negative transfer) had to be avoided. The theory is influenced by the notion of stimulus-response in Skinner’s behaviourism.

More specifically, there have been scholarly attempts at researching into how specific areas of grammar can be presented to learners for maximum pedagogical rewards. Some of such studies include Li (2023), Alwiah, Akil & Muliati (2018) and Nhu and Huyen (2009). For instance, Nhu and Huyen (2009) adopt the theory of cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor to organize phrasal verbs according to the four particles “in”, “out”, “up”, and “down” to test the practicality of the cognitive approach to teaching phrasal verbs. In a quantitative research and two groups of students, the results show that conceptual metaphor can be used as an effective tool in teaching phrasal verbs at high schools. Li (2023) explores the lexical approach to teaching the transitivity of the English verbs. The study of transitivity engages in the analysis of voice and the classification of verbs

also relate to the characteristics of their corresponding transitivity and voice. Findings reveal that the lexical method may successfully integrate vocabulary with the relevant syntactic structures so as to make teaching and learning more concise and efficient.

Further, Alwiah, Akil & Muliati (2018) investigate the effectiveness of the use of the systemic approach to improve students' understanding on adjectives materials related to the use, usage, synonym, antonym, spelling, pronunciation, collocation, meaning, and order. Employing a quasi-experimental design and a sample of 40 students in two groups chosen from two classes by using purposive sampling technique, adjective tests were administered as instruments. Experimental group experienced improvement on their understanding on adjectives than the control group. The result showed that there was significant improvement between experimental and control group, which means that systemic approach that was applied in experimental group, can improve the students' mastery on adjectives material.

Like the approaches discussed above, the current study focuses on how to approach grammar during teaching and learning for fruitful results. This study further specifically concentrates on the teaching of the English grammatical categories especially above the word, with specific reference to the naming categories. L2 learners of English especially find it difficult to cope when learning such grammatical categories as phrases and clauses. It is

assumed that the expansionist approach as we shall present in this paper will help learners understand these seemingly complex grammatical categories. This paper therefore contributes to the research on pedagogical grammar by specifically proposing the expansionist approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories above the word as a novel method of teaching the categories, especially in higher institutions.

## **2.0 The Expansionist Approach to the Teaching of the English Grammatical Categories**

From experience as a teacher of the English language for decades, I have discovered that when teaching the grammar of English, students often find a disconnection between word categories and larger grammatical categories. While they often sail smoothly when learning the basic parts of speech such as the noun, verb, pronoun and adverb, it often becomes very difficult for these students to come to grasp with the lessons in phrases and clauses. This difficulty could be largely attributed to the complex structure of the larger categories, among other factors. Classroom attempts to make the students learn these higher categories and master their structures and functions have seen the teacher often going back to recall lessons in the word categories as a way-in to master the larger categories.

It soon occurred to us that to be able to learn the larger grammatical categories, students must be properly exposed to the lexical categories and the connections





among the word, phrasal and clausal categories. They must be made to realise that words are used to build phrases and clauses in a systematically structured order. Aside this realisation, they must be practically exposed to the processes involved in using word categories to build phrasal and clausal categories. Students must be made to recognise content words apart from function words and, especially the important roles of content words in building larger structures. Further, students must be able to identify the various elements in a larger category in terms of their roles within the larger category. Indeed, the foregoing knowledge is important to students of grammar so that, if there is a need for it, they can easily contract the larger and expanded category (return it to its original word/base category). The research proposes expansionism, a grammatical approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories which demonstrates how lower grammatical categories (noun, etc) can be used to build higher grammatical categories (noun phrase, noun clause, etc) by laying bare the connections between the categories which perform similar grammatical functions and occupy similar syntactic positions in sentences.

The expansionist approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories, which the researcher proposes in this paper, rests on a number of assumptions. One, it is assumed that the term 'grammatical categories' is not limited to the description of only the word categories such as the noun, verb, adjective, adverb and conjunction but

that the term includes phrasal categories (such as noun phrase, verb phrase, adjectival phrase and adverbial phrase) and clausal categories (such as noun clause, adjectival clause and adverbial clause). Two, we assume that each lower or base category (content word, especially) can indeed be expanded, broadened or 'fleshed out' into a phrasal and clausal category. In other words, we assume that all structural categories such as noun phrase and adjectival clause are indeed expansions of the base/word categories such as noun and adjective from which they derive their names. Therefore, when expansion occurs, the word is grammatically expanded in structure, broadened or 'fleshed out'. The expansion process for each category however depends on the permissible structures within a specific category. For instance, the permissible pattern of expansion for the noun includes pronoun (replacing the noun with appropriate pronoun in terms of person, gender and number), noun phrase (modifier-head-qualifier), and noun clause (that-clause and, modifier-head-qualifier). Despite the expansion however, both the word and its expanded form(s) still maintain similar syntactic position in sentences and perform similar grammatical function. For students to perceive the semantic similarity in the expansions, the role of context becomes very important.

Thirdly, the base category which attracts the expansion still remains the Headword (the most important word) within the expanded category. And lastly, the expanded form can be contracted. In this way, a

noun which has been expanded into a noun phrase and then a noun clause can be contracted and returned to its base form by contracting the expansion, following the same pattern of expansion in reverse form: noun clause to noun phrase to noun (or pronoun). In similar veins, other grammatical categories can be expanded following the permissible pattern and they can also be contracted following the same pattern in reverse form.

### The Expansionist Approach: Examples with the Naming Category

**Table 4.1: Expanding an Animate Singular Noun in the Subject Position**

S/N	Categories	The Sentence		
		Subj.	Verb	Comp.
1	Noun	<b>Aishah</b>	is	my daughter
2	Pronoun	<b>She</b>	is	my daughter
3	Noun Phrase	<b>The girl</b>	is	my daughter
4	Noun Phrase	<b>The little girl</b>	is	my daughter
5	Noun Phrase	<b>The little girl on the field</b>	is	my daughter
6	Noun Clause	<b>The girl who is beautiful</b>	is	my daughter
7	Noun Clause	<b>The girl who came late</b>	is	my daughter

In the above table, the proper noun **Aishah**, taken as the name of a girl is the base category. It comes at the beginning of the sentence and functions as the subject. The pronoun **She** in the second sentence is the first instance of the expansion of the noun, a replacive expansion since **She** is an alternative way of representing the noun, **Aishah**. Pronouns are generally used in the absence of nouns.

This section presents the expansionist approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories using the naming category as an example. The naming category in this paper refers to the nominal categories. These include the noun, pronoun, noun phrase and noun clause. The approach of expansionism is represented in the tables below and, each table is followed by a practical discussion of the process. Table 4.1 explains the expansion of an animate singular noun in the subject position.

In the third sentence, the noun is further expanded into a noun phrase, **The girl** and, into another noun phrase, **The little girl**, in the fourth sentence. A girl named **Aishah** can be referred to as **She**, as **The girl**, as **The little girl**, and as **The little girl on the field** depending on the interest of the speaker. To turn a noun (**Aishah**) to a noun phrase involves the addition of words around



the noun through the process of expansion. In this way, determiners may precede the noun as we have in example 3. Adjectives/ intensifiers, etc, may appear between the determiner and the noun as we have in example 4. Other grammatical categories such as prepositional phrases, adverbs, etc, can appear after the noun as we have in example 5 (where the prepositional phrase, **on the field** appears after the noun). The expansions formed in examples 3 to 5 are called noun phrases because they are headed by noun (**girl**) and they do not have a verb at all or they do not have a finite verb (verbs showing tense/time). In the expansion, while the items that appear before the noun are called modifier (or pre-modifier) and those that appear after the noun are called qualifier, the noun itself, being the most important item in the expansion is called the Head (or Headword).

The last two examples are expansions of the base word (the noun) into noun clauses. They follow a similar process as with the noun phrases but each has a finite verbal element in it, which qualifies it as a noun clause. When a noun is expanded into a noun clause, determiners and adjectives may precede the noun, adjectives/descriptives and intensifiers may come in between the determiners and the noun, and certain other grammatical categories such as the relative clause can appear after the noun. In sentence 6 above, we have a determiner (**The**) as

modifier, the noun (**girl**) as the Headword and the relative clause (**who is beautiful**) as qualifier. A similar pattern is what we observe in sentence 7.

With regard to the nominal, the recognition and classification of modifier-head-qualifier is very important to expansionism for reasons: it shows that both the modifier and qualifier are attachments before and after the head respectively and, that in case the expansion is contracted; both the modifier and the qualifier will eventually give way. Therefore, the headword which is the base category (e.g. noun) gives its name to the expansion (noun phrase or noun clause).

The variation in the length of the three noun phrases and the noun clauses shows that the length of the structures does not really matter in determining what a noun phrase or noun clause may be. All of these different stages of expansion notwithstanding, it is to be noted that the base form and its expanded realisations in successive sentences occur at exactly the same position in the sentence(s) and perform the same grammatical function (Subject of the verb). The context is what makes us to agree that semantically, all of the items: (**Aishah, She, The girl, The little girl, The little girl on the field, The girl who is beautiful and The girl who came late**) are similar in meaning. The next table presents an expansion of an inanimate plural noun.

**Table 4.2: Expanding an Inanimate Plural Noun in the Subject Position**

S/N	Categories	The Sentence		
		Subj.	Verb	Comp.
1	Noun	<b>Stones</b>	are	hard
2	Pronoun	<b>They</b>	are	hard
3	Noun Phrase	<b>All the stones</b>	are	hard
4	Noun Phrase	<b>All the stones in the sand</b>	are	hard
5	Noun Clause	<b>All the stones that we saw</b>	are	hard
6	Noun Clause	<b>All the stones which rolled down the hill</b>	are	hard

In the table above, the inanimate plural noun, **Stones**, as seen in the first sentence is expanded by replacing it with an appropriate plural pronoun '**They**' in the second sentence. Both **Stones** and **They** occupy the subject position. The noun, **Stones** becomes a noun phrase in sentence 3 by being expanded on the left with the help of the modifier, **All the**, which comes before it. In the fourth example however, the noun, **Stones**, is expanded on both sides by both the modifier (**All the**) and the qualifier (**in the sand**).

In sentences 5 and 6, the headword, **Stones** is further expanded on both sides. In these expansions, **Stones** is pre-modified

by **All the** while it is qualified by relative clauses (**that we saw** in sentence 5 and **which rolled down the hill** in sentence 6). The last two sentences are therefore noun clauses since the noun-head carries clausal attachments. Structurally, only sentence 3 has a modifier-head structure while sentences 4, 5 and 6 have modifier-head-qualifier structures. While the base, **Stones** and the expanded forms are obviously functionally and structurally similar as shown in the table, it is the context that makes us to see that the items are semantically similar in meaning. Table 4.3 presents the expansion of a singular noun in the object position.

**Table 4.3: Expanding a Singular Noun in the Object Position**

S/N	Categories	The Sentence			
		Subj.	Verb	Obj.	Adv.
1	Noun	I	saw	<b>Yomi</b>	in the mall
2	Pronoun	I	saw	<b>Him</b>	in the mall
3	Noun Phrase	I	saw	<b>the handsome boy</b>	in the mall
4	Noun Phrase	I	saw	<b>the very handsome boy</b>	in the mall

5	Noun Phrase	I	saw	<b>the most handsome boy in my class</b>	in the mall
6	Noun Clause	I	saw	<b>the boy who won the game</b>	in the mall
7	Noun Clause	I	saw	<b>the boy who would be appointed the next class captain</b>	in the mall

In Table 4.3, the animate singular noun of masculine gender, **Yomi** is expanded in the second sentence as **him** (a pronoun) through a replative expansion. This is further expanded in sentences 3, 4 and 5 as noun phrases. In 3, the noun phrase has the modifier-head structure (**the handsome + boy**). The same structural pattern is repeated in 4 but with an intensifier, **very**. In 5, the noun phrase is further expanded with the addition of a qualifier, **in my class**.

In sentence 6, the noun **boy** is pre-modified by **the** while it is qualified by the relative clause **who**

**won the game**. Therefore, the phrases we have in 3, 4 and 5 are now expanded as a clause in 6 because the new structure has its own finite verb, **won**. This similar pattern is observed in sentence 7 where article **the** is the pre-modifier, **boy** remains the headword, and **who would be appointed the next class captain** is the relative clause. Sentence 7 is another noun clause produced as a result of the progressive expansion of the singular noun, **Yomi**. In all of these, the context helps us to link the expansions to the initial singular noun.

**Table 4.4: Expanding the Noun as Complement of Subject**

S/N	Categories	Subj.	Verb	Compl.
1	Noun	She	is	<b>Sirleaf</b>
2	Noun phrase	She	is	<b>the President</b>
3	Noun phrase	She	is	<b>the President of Liberia</b>
4	Noun phrase	She	is	<b>the first female President of Liberia</b>
5	Noun clause	She	is	<b>the President who turned Liberia around</b>
6	Noun clause	She	is	<b>the President that the people supported after the war</b>

Noun as complement of subject can also be expanded progressively as observed in the table above. The noun, **Sirleaf** in sentence 1 is the complement of the subject. In sentences 2, 3 and 4, the noun has been expanded to form noun phrases

of various structural patterns. In sentence 2, we have the modifier + head pattern and, in sentence 3 and 4, we have the modifier + head + qualifier pattern. The expansion continues to generate clauses in sentences 5 and 6, where we have

relative clauses in the modifier + head + qualifier pattern.

In the above we observe that all the complements in sentences 1 to 6 refer back to the subject by completing the sense of the subject. It is to be noted that the base form, **Sirleaf** and its expanded realisations in successive sentences occur at exactly the same position in the

sentences and perform the same grammatical function: Complement of the Subject. Further the role of context will easily make learners recognize that all the complements in sentences 1 to 6 are semantically similar. The next table presents an expansion of the noun as complement of object.

**Table 4.5: Expanding the Noun as Complement of Object**

S/N	Categories				
		Subj.	Verb	Obj.	Compl.
1	<b>Noun</b>	They	made	Sirleaf	<b>President</b>
2	<b>Noun phrase</b>	They	made	Sirleaf	<b>their President</b>
3	<b>Noun phrase</b>	They	made	Sirleaf	<b>their most honoured President</b>
4	<b>Noun clause</b>	They	made	Sirleaf	<b>the President who they will honour forever</b>
5	<b>Noun clause</b>	They	made	Sirleaf	<b>the President whose leadership they will support</b>

The first sentence in the table above presents the noun **President** used as complement of the Object, **Sirleaf**. The complement is expanded as **their President** in sentence 2 and, as **their most honoured President** in sentence 3. These two expansions result in noun phrases in the structure of modifier + head. In the last two sentences, further expansions result in noun clauses in

the pattern of modifier + head + qualifier. In each case, the complement performs the same grammatical function by referring back to the object (Sirleaf) to give additional information about it. They occur at the same position in the sentences and they share semantic similarity. Contextually, each of the complement can replace another

**Table 4.6: Expanding a Singular Noun as Complement of Preposition**

S/N	Categories	The Sentence		
		Subj.	Verb	Adverbial
1	<b>Noun</b>	You	can rely	on <b>Aaliyah</b>
2	<b>Pronoun</b>	You	can rely	on <b>her</b>
3	<b>Noun Phrase</b>	You	can rely	on <b>the girl</b>



4	<b>Noun Phrase</b>	You	can rely	on <b>the wise girl</b>
5	<b>Noun Clause</b>	You	can rely	on <b>the girl who is very intelligent</b>

In the above table, all the highlighted elements in sentences 1 to 5 are complements of the preposition 'on' before them. They occur within the adverbials (as prepositional phrases) and function as prepositional complements. In the first sentence, only the noun **Aaliyah** appears as complement of preposition 'on'. However, a replative type of expansion occurs in the second sentence by the use of **her**, a pronoun. This is further expanded in sentences 3 and 4 with the noun phrases **the girl** and **the wise girl** respectively. The expansion continues in sentence 5 with the noun clause **the girl who is very intelligent** functioning as the complement of the preposition 'on'.

It should be reiterated that in this table, as in the others before it, the noun can be replaced by the appropriate pronoun, can be expanded into a noun phrase and noun clause. All of them perform a similar function and occupy similar position in the sentence. It must also be understood that the process of expanding the noun as done in the above table can be reversed: noun clauses and noun phrases can be contracted to become nouns and pronouns. Therefore, if a larger grammatical structure can be replaced by a pronoun or noun, the structure is most likely going to be a noun phrase (if it has no finite verb) or noun clause (if it has a finite verb).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study presents and discusses the expansionist approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories above the word as a novel method of teaching the categories, especially in higher institutions. The expansionist approach benefits from the notion of context to show semantic similarity among expanded structures and, it rests on a number of assumptions. One, the term 'grammatical categories' incorporates word, phrasal and clausal categories. Two, each lower category can be expanded into phrasal and clausal categories. Three, the expansion process for each category is informed by the permissible structural combination within the specific category. Four, the base category which attracts the expansion still remains the most important word within the expanded category. And lastly, the expanded form can be contracted. While exploring the strengths of the approach, the paper specifically presents theoretical examples of expansionism using the naming categories (noun, pronoun, noun phrase and noun clause) to demonstrate the connections among these categories and to show how the base category can be used to build higher, more complex categories of contextually and functionally similar structures in sentences for better learning outcomes. The approach, as demonstrated in this paper, will





facilitate easy learning of noun phrases and noun clauses among students since the students will easily see the patterns of build-ups, the connections and positional relationships among the four naming categories. The paper recommends

the expansionist approach to the teaching of the English grammatical categories larger than the word for co-ordinated and improved learning experiences among students, especially in higher institutions.

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