Determiner phrase structures have been the subject of great interest from the point of view of government and binding. The government and binding approach have been concerned not only with establishing whether the Determiner Phrase (DP) is an appendage of the Noun Phrase (NP) or a phrase of its own, but also with the constituents of determiner phrase constructions. This paper therefore, examines the structural forms and constituents of determiner phrase in the Igbo language with a view to throwing more light on the nature, form and manifestations of Igbo determiner phrase structures. By adopting the descriptive research method, the investigation reveals that determiners in the Igbo determiner phrase system are post-posed in nature. The study also shows that French, English and other Indo-European languages have their determiners pre-posed on the noun headword in their DP system. They do not have genitives and particularisers which are present in Igbo. Furthermore, Igbo determiners can co-occur in a determiner phrase structure but this feature is not so common in most Indo-European languages.

1. Introduction

While noun (N), verb (V), adjective (Adj), preposition (P) and adverb (Adv) are lexical categories, determiners (D) as well as auxiliary (Aux) are functional categories. They are so called because their members perform grammatical rather than descriptive functions. For instance, auxiliaries provide the verb with a time frame or notions such as possibility or necessity and a determiner specifies whether a noun is definite or indefinite in some languages, or how the noun relates to the context. The Determiner, functionally, isolates particular lexical items and by so doing, differentiates same from all other similar lexical items.

The determiner phrase (DP) is a syntactic category, a phrase that is headed by a determiner. Nordquist (2010) states that on the DP-hypothesis, the noun phrase is strictly speaking a determiner phrase and that NP designates subpart of the noun phrase often taken to be the complement of the determiner. This is contrary to the traditional view that determiners are specifiers of the noun phrase. The overwhelming majority of generative grammarians today adopt the DP hypothesis in some form or other. However, large numbers of both traditional and formal grammarians consider nouns, not determiners, to be the heads of noun phrases. Based on this background information, this paper investigates determiner phrase in the Igbo language. The first part of the paper is the introduction; the second and the third sections review the literature of previous works on the DP across world languages, while section four summaries the review of literature. In section five, Igbo determiner phrase was explored. Finally, section six presents the summary of the findings and conclusion.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Studies

Giorgi and Longobardi (1991) define noun phrase as a phrase whose head is a noun or a pronoun, saying that it is optionally accompanied by a modifier set. They say that it is the phrase that can function as the subject or object of a verb. Emenanjo (1978) says that a noun phrase in the Igbo language performs four major functions which include: adverbial and complement functions, subject and indirect object of a sentence. In his own analysis, Mbah (1999:54) says that NP ‘is a category headed by the noun’ and he gave the form as:

\[ NP \rightarrow \ldots N \ldots \]

From the above definitions we can deduce that NPs normally consist of a compulsory head noun, which is optionally modified. Modifier(s) may come before or after the noun headword. Possible modifiers in English, according to Giorgi and Longobardi (1999) include: determiners: articles (the, a), demonstratives (this, that), numerals (two, five, etc.), possessives (my, their, etc.), and quantifiers (some, many, etc.). Erichsen (2010) also identifies the following determiners in Spanish: articles (un: a and el: the), possessive adjectives (such as su: their) numbers (such as tres: three), demonstrative adjectives (such as este: that) and quantifiers (such as muchos: many). In the same vain, Lawless (2010) generally identifies two major classes of determiner in French and they include articles and adjectives. Furthermore, she identifies three forms of article which are: definite articles (le, la and les the), indefinite articles (un: a, une: an and des: some) and partitive articles (du, de, la and des some) and nine forms of adjectives which include: demonstrative adjectives (ce: this cet:that, cette: these and ces those), exclamative adjectives (quel, quelle, quels and quelles: what), indefinite adjectives: affirmative (autre: other, certain: certain, chaque: each and plusieurs...: several...) and negative: (ne...: no, aucun: not a single and nul, pas un...: not one...), interrogative adjectives (quel, quelle, quels and quelles which), numerical adjectives (un, deux, trois... one, two three...), possessive adjectives (Mon: my, ta: your, ses..., his) and relative adjectives (lequel, laquelle, lesquels and lesquelles which).

On the other hand, Emenanjo (1978) outlines the components of NP as follows: N (A P Nm Q D RC). Where the letters stand for noun, adjective, pronominal modifier, numeral, quantifier, demonstrative and relative clause and ‘()’ for optionality. Noun phrases are very common cross-linguistically.

Determiners as we have seen from the above explication are one of the elements that are found within the domain of the NP. Erichsen (2010) gives the definition of determiner (determinante in Spanish) as a type of word that refers to a noun and determines which object, person or other entity the noun represents. In his work, Spanish Language Guide, he identifies that Spanish determiners are usually a type of non-descriptive class of adjective, and that with the exception of numbers; determiners have little meaning apart from the nouns they refer to. Determiners do not have complements, specifier or adjuncts of their own. In some languages like Spanish, French, English, determiners are usually placed before the noun, in other words, they are pre-posed before the noun headword while in others like, Igbo, Yoruba, Igala, etc.
they are post-posed. For instance, in both Spanish and English, determiners invariably precede the nouns they refer to. It is possible to use more than one determiner within a single noun phrase in most languages. Lawless (2010), writing on French determiners defines determiner as the grammatical term that refers to a word- either an article or a certain type of adjective, which introduces and simultaneously modifies a noun, hence, the use of the term, *les adjectifs determinants* for determiners in French. Determiners introduce and modify nouns in the language and are also known as non-qualifying adjectives, which are much more common in French than in English. Some sort of determiner is nearly always required in front of each noun in French. On the major differences between qualifying and non-qualifying forms of adjectives, Lawless says that it has to do with usage: while qualifying adjectives qualify or describe a noun, non-qualifying adjectives introduce a noun and may determine or specify it at the same time. In addition, qualifying adjectives in French may be:

a. *placed before or after* the noun they modify
b. *modified by a comparative or superlative adverb*
c. *used in conjunction with one or more other qualifying adjectives to modify a single noun and*
d. *separated from the noun they modify by other words*

On contrary, non-qualifying adjectives always directly precede the noun they modify, cannot themselves be modified, and cannot be used with other non-qualifying adjectives (although they can be used with qualifying adjectives).

Example:
1. *Ma belle maison* - My beautiful house

What gave rise to the postulation of a determiner phrase instead of a noun phrase is the claim that noun phrases can be headed by elements other than nouns - for instance, pronouns (*They came*) or determiners (*I'll take these*). The idea that noun phrases preceded by determiners are determiner phrases is known as the *DP hypothesis*, (see Lawless 2010). In support of the DP hypothesis, Kornai and Pullum (1990) have it that a simple noun phrase as

2. *the sick* is headed by a determiner (specifically an article) *the*.

They go further to counter the former notion that *the*, in such structure is a type of noun specifier. Their argument is that the head is the determiner which projects into a determiner phrase (DP or DetP). And just like every other head, determiners also project their properties to the phrase and so a plural determiner will head a plural determiner phrase. The word *sick* is the noun phrase (NP) which is the complement of the determiner phrase. In line with this view, Nordquist, (2010) puts it that a determiner may impose restrictions on its NP complements, particular in terms of number: singular determiners take singular NP complements and plural determiners take plural NP complements. They join the more recent league of linguists that suggest that D in such instance be treated as the head of the noun phrase.
According to Szabolcsi, (1994), in as much as the DP hypothesis goes very well with the theory of generalized quantifiers, which is the prevailing theory of the semantics of determiners; in some versions of the Minimalist Program, the DP is itself the complement of a phrase head, n, from which it inherits the ability to agree with its complement and assign case.

2.2 Empirical Study
Having studied the role of nouns in performing adjectival function with respect to the Igbo language, Mbah (2006:112) posits that “any lexeme in Igbo which helps to pin-down the lexical item described could be called determiner, i.e. determining the noun out of several other similar nouns.” He, therefore defines determiner phrase as that phrase which describes a category (by quantifying, modifying or qualifying such) so as to differentiate such category from other similar identical items. Abney (1987) raises the view of Determiner Phrase Hypothesis. According to his proposal, the traditional structure for noun phrases (NPs) in generative grammar, represented in Figure 1, was neither empirically nor theoretically accurate.

![Fig 1](image)

One of the problems noted for the structure in (Fig. 1) was how to represent the range of prenominal elements with a single specifier position provided. That is, NPs containing more than one element preceding the noun, such as

3. those two men, cannot receive a straightforward representation in the structure (Fig.1).

Abney’s claim is that noun phrases (NPs) are embedded under a higher functional projection (Determiner Phrase, DP), a syntactic structure that can be easily correlated with the higher functional projections (Complementizer Phrase (CP) or Inflection Phrase (IP), depending on the analysis) that dominate the Verbal Phrase (VP). This assumption enables Abney to explain several semantic and syntactic parallelisms between nominal phrases and clauses and to accommodate in the standard X-bar theory the full range of prenominal elements in structures such as Fig 2:

![Fig 2](image)
Under the above approach it is assumed that DP is the extended projection of N, as the CP is the extended projection of V. Both D (determiner) and C (complimentizer) turn their complements into arguments and both seem to contain a number of associated functional categories that mediate between the lexical head (N or V) and the highest functional category (D or C). The presence of these functional categories provides us with the extra positions needed to represent all the prenominal elements in the DP.

The existence of functional categories inside DPs has been corroborated in numerous analyses since the emergence of the DP hypothesis. Szabolcsi (1994), for instance, presents evidence in support of a richer structure for DPs in Hungarian. The idea that DPs contain intermediate functional projections between determiner and noun has been further confirmed by Ritter (1991) regarding Hebrew. In Romance linguistics, a good number of proposals have also argued for the presence of different functional categories within DP to account for the properties of Romance DPs. For instance, Picallo (1991) argues for the existence of gender phrase to accommodate the order of arguments with respect to the noun in Catalan DPs; Bernstein (1993, 2001a) claims that a similar functional category, the Word Marker Phrase, could be useful to explain data regarding nominal ellipsis in Romance languages. From a theoretical point of view, the empirical evidence for the existence of DP reinforces the parallelism between nouns and verbs since it shows that the internal structure of nominal phrases resembles the internal structure of clauses in its functional configuration.

Willson (1998) observes that the word order in Marshallese determiner phrases is unusual when considered against the word order in Marshallese sentences. While most sentences have an SVO syntactic order, suggesting that Marshallese is a head initial language; DPs seem to have a complement-head order, suggesting that the language is head final:

4a pinjel eo  
   pencil the  

b leddik ro  
   girl the PL

Willson (1998) argued that the complement-head word order of determiner phrases must be derived. Given that Marshallese complementizer, prepositional and noun phrases are all head initial, he said that the most likely explanation is that the word order of the Marshallese DP is derived. His argument is that the syntactic structure of Marshallese DPs can be accounted for by movement of the NP from a complement position to the specifier of DP.

Similarly, most Nigerian languages like Igala, Yoruba, Tiv, etc., behave like Marshallese with respect to the arrangement of their determiners. Let us consider the following illustrations from these Nigerian languages below:

Igala

5a uni ki rura  
   house that beautiful  
   “the/that beautiful house”
The above information were elicited from the following respondents: Mr., Sunday Ayegba, Mrs. Chinenyi Okoye, and Mr. David Waya for Igala, Yoruba and Tiv languages respectively. From the examples above, it is observed that Nigerian languages do not have the definite article the and thus substitute the demonstrative, that for the. Again, their determiners are post posed before the head. In other words their phrases observe the X... structure.

Erichsen (2010) observes that the possessive case of English and Spanish differ not minding many other structural correlation between the two languages. Unlike the suffixation of ‘s’ in English while using a name or noun to refer to the person or entity that is in possession, the prepositional phrase of de followed by the noun is used in Spanish, as in:

8. el libro de Juan. “John's book”

Generally, Spanish possessive determiners behave like adjective, and as such, they need to match the noun they refer to in number and gender.

On the co-occurrence of determiners in Igbo, Mbah (1999) states that in as much as two or more determiners may appear in a single noun phrase, there are syntactic rules governing their co-occurrence and arrangement. These rule are:

a) two pronouns cannot co-occur contiguously within an S-domain.
b) the quantifier is always final within an N structure.
c) two quantifiers cannot co-occur as complements of the same head.

(Adapted from Mbah 1999:107)
With these rules, he faults Emenanjo (1978) which claims that two quantifiers can co-occur within an NP in Igbo, illustrating with:

9. ụlọ ọcha ọma anyị atọ niile ịhụ dum
   all those our three beautiful white houses

He argues that the use of the two co-occurring quantifiers (niile and dum) is a meaning repetition and as such, the structure is ungrammatical.

Emenanjo (1978) observes that the arrangement of co-occurring determiners in a given phrase determines the meaning of the phrase. He illustrates with the following examples:

10a ụlọ ọma ịhụ niile
    house beautiful that all of

   “the whole of that beautiful building”

b ụlọ ọma niile ịhụ
    house beautiful all of that

   “all those beautiful buildings”

2.3 Summary of Literature Review
From the foregoing, we can say that determiner is any element that determines the meaning of a lexical item and by so doing, isolates it from all other similar lexical item. According to Szabolcsi (1994), determiners govern the referential or quantificational properties of the noun phrase they embed. Determiner hypothesis is the idea that NPs preceded by determiners are DPs. The arrangement of a determiner and its NP complement still conforms to the X-bar syntax parameter (...X...). Languages of the world have peculiar ways of organising their phrases. While some are head initial (X...), others are head final (...X) and Igbo belongs to the first group. Whether head initial or head final, we have seen that DP is common with all languages of the world, except proven otherwise and that NP is the domain of DP.

3. Igbo Determiner Phrase
According to Erichsen (2010), Determiners signal nouns in a variety of ways: they may define the relationship of the noun to the speaker or listener (or reader); they may identify the noun as specific or general; they may quantify it specifically or refer to quantity in general. There is an agreement between the Igbo determiners and the nouns they refer to. The Igbo determiner system is post-posed after the noun headword, hence the structure X... This explains why we have structures like:

11a. mmadụ ə atọ → mmadụ atọ (for numbers)
    persons three three persons

b. mmadụ ə ahụ → mmadụ ahụ (for demonstratives)
    person that that person
However, in some cases, Igbo determiners may seem to appear pre-posed before the noun headword. In such cases, identifying which out of the two lexical items is the head is always the issue. Example:

c. otu ⊔ mmadụ → otu mmadụ
   one person  one person

d. ijeri ⊔ mmadụ → ijeri mmadụ
   billion persons  billion persons

e. ọtụtụ ⊔ mmadụ → ọtụtụ mmadụ
   most/many persons  most/many persons

Yet, a determiner like ufọdụ may have structures like:

f. ufọdụ ⊔ mmadụ → ufọdụ mmadụ
   some persons  some persons and

g. mmadụ ⊔ ufọdụ → mmadụ ufọdụ
   persons  some  some persons

In the Igbo language, both structures are accepted as grammatical. This is an exceptional case because we can say

h. ọtụtụ ⊔ mmadụ → ọtụtụ mmadụ
   many persons  many persons but not
   *mmadụ ⊔ ọtụtụ.

The exception notwithstanding, the syntactic structure of Igbo determiner system is thus: X...

The Igbo determiner system is made of the following:

1. Numerals
2. Quantifiers
3. Particularisers
4. Genitives
5. Demonstratives
6. Adjectives

**Numerals**

In Igbo, we have ordinary and cardinal numerals. Examples of cardinal numerals include: otu, abụọ, atọ, etc., while ordinary numerals include: nke mbụ, nke abụọ, nke atọ, etc, while cardinal numerals are used to indicate the number of the noun headword, the ordinary numerals are used to show position; examples:
Cardinal Numerals

9 a. otu + nwoke → otu nwoke
   one  man  one man

   b. akwụkwọ + iri abụọ → akwụkwọ iri abụọ
      book twenty twenty books

c. iko + agwa + isii → iko agwa isii
   cup beans six six cups of beans

Ordinary Numerals

12a. Onye + nkuzi + nke ise → onye nkuzi nke ise
    person  teacher the fifth  the fifth teacher

   b. akpa + nke iri na asaa → akpa nke iri na asaa
      bag the seventeenth the seventeenth bag

   c. oche + nke anọ → oche nke anọ
      chair the fourth the fourth chair

From the above we can see that apart from otu in (7a) every other determiner in Igbo
is post-posed. We can also see that the ordinary number is introduced with nke.

Quantifiers
Quantifiers are used to show quantity. Examples of quantifiers are: niile, ufọdu, dum,
onye as in:

13 a. unu + niile → unu niile
    you all all of you

   b. umụ + akwụkwọ + dum → umụ akwụkwọ dum
      children book all all the students

   c. ọtụtụ + umụ + nnụnụ → ọtụtụ umụ nnụnụ
      a lot of children bird a lot of birds

Particularisers
The following are the particularisers in Igbo:

14  a. nke a
    this very one

   b. ndi a
    these very ones
Obasi: The Determiner Phrase in Igbo

Genitives
Genitives are formed using proper pronouns and possessives. They are used to show possession in Igbo. Igbo genitives agree with the noun both in number and person. Examples of Igbo possessives are:

15  a. m  my (1st person singular)
    b. anyị  our (1st person plural)
    c. gị  your (2nd person singular)
    d. unu  your (2nd person plural)
    e. ya  his/her/its (3rd person singular)
    f. ha  their (3rd person plural)
as in:

g. ego  m  → ego m
       money  my  my money

h. ego  unu  →  ego unu
       money  you(pl.)  your money

Demonstratives
Demonstratives are determiners that point to a particular noun. The demonstratives are used to indicate closeness and farness in Igbo. We have only two demonstratives in Igbo and they are a and ahụ. They indicate nearness and farness respectively.

Examples:
16  a. ite  a  →  ite a
      pot  this  this pot (nearness)

    b. ite  ahụ  →  ite ahụ
      pot  that  that pot (farness)

Adjectives
These are the group of words that denote the state or attributes of nouns in a construction. They provide additional information to the noun. What is obtainable in
English, French, Spanish and other Indo European languages is that there is a particular part of speech that performs the function of adjective in the languages but in Igbo, adjectives are a few and they go in pairs. For example:

17 a ukuw – nta “big” vs. “small”  
 b ocha – oji “white” vs. “black”  
 c òma – ajọ/ọjọ “good” vs. “bad”  
 d ọhuru – ochie “new” vs. “old”

Generally, what determines the function of words in the Igbo language is the position of the word in constructions. In some cases, nouns and adverbs perform the functions of adjectives in Igbo.

Examples:

18 a ego ñ-igwe → ego igwe  
 money metal coin  
 b ije ñ-nwayọ → ije nwayọ  
 walk slow slow walking  
 c ewu ñ-ọjii → ewu ọjii  
 goat black black goat

The syntactic structure of Igbo allows more than one determiner in describing a noun. In other words, more than one determiner may co-occur within the same NP, for instance:

20a. ulọ nke mbụ “the first building”  
 building the first  
 b. ulọ nke mbụ ya “the first of his buildings”  
 building the first his/her  
 c. ulọ nke mbụ ya niile “all of his first buildings”  
 building the first his/her all of  
 d. ulọ nke mbụ ya niile ahụ “all those his first buildings”  
 building the first his/her all of that  
 e. akwuọkwọ m ahụ “that book of mine (my book)”  
 book my that

4.1 Summary of the Findings and Conclusion
In summary, from our exposition of Igbo DP, the DP takes the form X... And the following are determiners in Igbo: (Numeral) (Quantifier) (Particularizers) (Genetive) (Demonstrative). The parenthesis with which they are enclosed shows that they are optional entities, in other words, all of them may not be found within an NP. In the Igbo noun phrase, we have the headword modifier by some adjectives. The Igbo DP system, determiners are post-posed after the noun headword. Also in Igbo DP, it is
true that we have cardinal and ordinal numerals, but the distinction is not there except in *Otu* for cardinal and *mbụ* for ordinal numerals.

In conclusion, all the entities in Igbo DP system (Numerals, Quantifier, Particularizers, Genetive, and Demonstrative) can co-occur in the same structure (see example 20a-e). This notwithstanding, there are rules that guide them. It was also observed that the definite article *the* is absent in Igbo and some other Nigerian languages and this makes it difficult to render some English sentences in these languages. Again, it is evident that the DP system of Igbo and some Nigerian languages which include Yoruba, Tiv and Igala is more or less post-posed as against the pre-posed nature of determiners in most Indo-European Languages’ DP system.

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<td>Mr. David Waya</td>
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