In this study, it has been attempted to present a discussion of the comparative structure of the noun phrase in English and Marathi with emphasis on characterizing the essential structural nature of the two systems and the similarities and dissimilarities between them. The attempt has been to account for the comparative picture in terms of the categorical structures, the scope and nature of the transformational operations, and the overall characteristic tendencies in the two languages in manipulating the constituents of the noun phrase to obtain various kinds of strings. The insight obtained through a study of this kind, it is hoped, can be helpful in the preparation of teaching materials, pedagogical contrastive grammars, remedial course materials or, with further work, translation algorithms.

There are several differences in the noun phrase structures of English and Marathi. For instance, Marathi lacks the articles and the predeterminers of English. The constituent Neg of the English determiner is absent in Marathi. In Marathi, Neg always remains in the verb phrase. The categories Quantifier and Cataphoric are not quite the same in the two languages. On the transformational level, Marathi makes all its adjectival modifiers precede the head noun, regardless of the internal structure of the modifier. Moreover, Marathi, characteristically, forces all its modifiers to assume an adjectival
form, which is not true of English. This explains the general absence of the 'nominal modifier + head noun' construction in Marathi. There are two sources available for nominalization in English, gerundive and infinitival; Marathi has only one source, i.e. the infinitival.

The differences between Marathi and English are, of course, within the framework of an overall similarity in their categorical structure, inventory of categories, and the possibilities of sentence embeddings. Both Marathi and English distinguish R-Relatives and NR-Relatives, with almost the same restrictions on their occurrences. Both of them obtain their adjectival modifiers from embedded sentences by similar transformational operations.

It is true that value judgements like 'simple' and 'complex' with respect to languages are frowned upon, but a comparative study of this kind may reflect on such implications in terms of (i) rules that are required to characterize the categorical structures, including sub-categorization, and (ii) rules involved in transforming deep structures into surface structures, including statements of syntactic restrictions on lexical insertion. The more the variety of restrictions on these rules, the more complicated the structure will be. Conceptually, it is not difficult to see that a language which either preposes or postposes modifiers in relation to
the head is simpler than a language which sometimes obliga-

torily preposes and sometimes obligatorily postposes the

modifiers under a variety of conditions. From this point of

view, the Marathi noun phrase structure is 'simple' as compa-

red to the English noun phrase structure. It is, however, true

that the question of 'simple' vs. 'complex' is not relevant

either to the performance or the competence of the native

speaker, even though it may be relevant to a comparative study.

It, however, does become somewhat relevant to second/foreign

language learning, and to the consideration whether the

learner is proceeding from an internally less differentiated

system to an internally more differentiated system, in terms

of categorization, sub-categorization, extent of transforma-

tional operations and the variety of restrictions on them.

The complexity of the English noun phrase, in compa-

rison with Marathi, can be seen in the following respects:

1. The determiner system of English is more complex

than the determiner system of Marathi. English has

a system of articles. There is a multiplicity of

selectional restrictions on articles. The articles

have definite, indefinite, specific generic refer-

ences. Pronouns and the constituent WH behave like
determiners in both the languages. But the consti-
tuent Neg behaves like determiner only in the
English noun phrase. The English 'negative articles' such as no and not do not have any equivalents in Marathi. English requires additional rules for the fusion (or restrictions thereon) of the genitive with the determiner.

2. English has significant syntactic differences between cardinals, on the one hand, and multiplicatives and fractionals, on the other. The category Predeterminer in English accounts for the items like both, half, all, multiplicatives and fractionals. In Marathi, these items are analysed as part of the category QUANT. There is not a single quantifier in English that occurs with a particle. But Marathi does have certain quantifiers which appear with particles like ch, hi and tari. In English, there seems to be a restriction on the occurrence of the constituents of the category Quantifier: QUANT follows ORD and precedes CHIEF.

The English aggregative all, which belongs to the category Predeterminer, has optionally different positions, obviously to be taken care of by additional transformational rules.

3. Proper names in both the languages do not accept determiners and plural forms. But in exceptional
circumstances Proper names may accept determiners or plural forms. In that case they are transforms of the constructions involving Proper names without determiners or plural forms.

English has four more sub-classes of Pronouns which Marathi does not have. They are: Relative Pronouns, Possessive Pronouns, Negative Pronouns and Demonstrative Pronouns. English has Reflexive pronominal forms for all the three persons and number. But Marathi has only one Reflexive form (i.e. swatha) for all the persons and number.

4. English has a multiplicity of restrictions on the position of the participial and other adjectival modifiers. These restrictions relate to the determiner of the embedding phrase and the internal structure of the adjectival and participial features of the participating verb. Thus the English noun phrase in its expansion is neither exclusively left-branching nor exclusively right-branching. Marathi for all practical purposes (i.e., disregarding the optional and infrequent occurrence of the relative clause in the post-nominal position) is strictly left-branching.
There are numerous examples of the nominal modifiers (i.e. the 'noun modifier + head noun' constructions) in English. Marathi generally forces all its modifiers to assume an adjectival form. However, Marathi has borrowed some nominal phrases and compounds from Sanskrit and has framed some nominal compounds on the model of English.

5. English has two forms of nominalized verbs, the gerundive and infinitival. There are several restrictions on the English verbs as far as the nominalization process is concerned. Apart from the differences in their selectional criteria, the gerundive itself has further restrictions as to the acceptance of adjectives vs. adverbs as modifiers, and fusion with the determiners vs. absence of such fusion for genitive subjects.

Marathi has only one form of nominalized verb, the infinitival.

These are some of the major observations about the similarities and dissimilarities between the English and Marathi noun phrase structures. Several others are implied in the sections on the Marathi noun phrase and the comparative structure.

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