

THE ROLES OF PAST PARTICIPLES IN NOMINAL MODIFICATION

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Abstract:

This study explores the roles of past participles in nominal modification within the perspectives of functional grammar, focusing on their usage in an accounting textbook. Past participles frequently appear in nominal groups, functioning as epithets, classifiers, or qualifiers, depending on their role in describing or categorizing the noun. Using a qualitative approach, this research analyzes data extracted from the textbook to classify past participles based on their functions and the frequency of usage in the text. Based on the data reveal that past participles predominantly function as qualifiers, providing detailed, context-specific information about the noun in post-modification. Classifiers are moderately frequent, categorizing nouns into specific technical subsets, while epithets are the least common, offering subjective or evaluative descriptions. The key finding in this study demonstrates that the types of process associated with past participle provide effective means of distinguishing its functional role in nominal modification. Past participles derived from mental processes tend to function as epithets, while those from material processes serve as both classifiers and qualifiers.



Keyword: nominal modification; past participle; process

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INTRODUCTION

Nominal modification plays a important role in forming the structure and meanings of nominal group, particularly in technical and academic texts. Within the framework of functional grammar, nominal groups are characterized by their hierarchical organization, consisting of a head noun and its modifiers, which can appear either before or after the noun. Among these modifiers, past participles hold a significant position due to their ability to provide detailed and concise descriptions. However, the functions of past participles in nominal modification often vary, depending on their role in relation to the head noun. They can act as epithets, classifiers, or qualifiers, each serving a distinct purpose in enriching the meaning of the nominal group.

In technical disciplines such as accounting, texts are frequently dense with nominal groups containing past participles. These modifiers contribute to the precision and clarity required in conveying specialized information. To delve deeper understanding of a nominal group structure, it is completely important to recognize

each component which constructs the structure. Past participle as one of the components in nominal group can be placed either before or after the head noun as modifier, such as in nominal groups *received account* or *discount received*. To help students understand the roles of past participles as modifiers in nominal groups, they deserve researching. This study aims to analyze the functions of past participles, clarify the meaning and usage of past participles in the accounting context, and enhance the students' understanding of nominal modification. The benefit of this study for students are to improve students' understanding of the roles of past participle in reading, produce clearer and more precise writing in formal and technical communication, and recognize the distinction between epithet, classifier and qualifier in the form of past participles, so that students are able to use past participles appropriately in different contexts.

This study serves as a continuation of my previous research on participles in nominal modification. My earlier study provided nominal modification using pseudo participial. The study was entitled On Pseudo Participial in Nominal Group (Dahlia, 2021), the objectives of the study was about identifying the formation and finding out the meaning of pseudo participial which its form is similar to past participles ending with -ed, however they have different word origin. Pseudo participial is derived from noun added -ed, whereas past participle is derived from verb added -ed/-en. In addition, this research is related to other studies on nominal modification, however, they did not fully explore the syntactic and semantic roles of past participles. The studies conducted by Ruan (2016), Tian and Zhang (2023), Nieto Cruz (2019) explored the internal structure of nominal modification in certain contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nominal Modification

Functional Grammar (FG) is a part of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Micheal Halliday. FG is a linguistic framework concentrating on how language is utilized in context to attain specific purposes and how different elements of language function to convey meaning. Language is organized hierarchically into different ranks: clause, group/phrase, word, and morpheme. Clause considered as the central unit of meaning. It consists of processes, participants and circumstances. Processes are the action or state in the clause, usually expressed by verbs; participants are the entities involved in the process; circumstances are additional information about the processes. The second rank is group or phrase, which consists of nominal groups, verbal groups, adverbial groups, prepositional groups, and preposition phrases. Nominal modification involves enhancing a noun by adding descriptive elements. Each element has a crucial role in structuring and meaning a nominal group. According to Eggins (2004), a nominal group is a component of a clause that includes nouns along with the words that accompany them.

A group refers to as nominal group when its main word, or head, is a noun. Gerot and Wignell (1994) defined a nominal group as a group of words centered around a noun, which serves as the head word, and includes all additional information related to it. Similarly, Eggins (2004) confirmed that a nominal group consists of words where the main word is a noun. Combination of head and a modifier makes Nominal group complicated. Moreover, it becomes more complicated with head and some modifiers. When the modifiers come before its head, they are labeled premodifiers, and modifiers follow its head, they are labeled postmodifier.

The functional elements in experience structure act as modifiers of the thing. The elements precede the thing called premodifier and the element follows the thing called postmodifier. The experiential pattern within a nominal group structure follows a left to right progression, moving from elements with lower identifying potential to those with greater identifying potential.

In Halliday's functional grammar, as explained by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), nominal group is analyzed through both experiential and the logical structures. Experiential structure defines the role of the noun and its accompanying components. Elements that appear before the noun, serving as premodifiers, are categorized deictic, numerative, epithet, and classifier, while the noun itself is referred to as the thing. Although different pairs of premodifiers may appear in varied sequences, there is a general structure pattern in which the modifiers that most closely resemble nouns are positioned closest to the head noun. In addition, the component after the noun functioning as postmodifier is called qualifier.

Hierarchical Organization of Nominal Group

<i>the</i>	<i>first</i>	<i>impressive</i>	<i>political</i>	<i>speech</i>	<i>made</i>
ϵ	δ	γ	β	α	
Deictic	Numerative	Epithet	Classifier	Thing	Qualifier
Premodifier				Head	Postmodifier

Table 1 Organization of Nominal Group

Premodifiers

Elements modifying a Head and placed before a Head are labeled premodifiers. The elements are as follows:

- a) Deictic has function to indicate whether the intended thing is specific or not specific. Deictic elements are classified into two types: specific and non-specific deictic.

Specific deictic: *this, these, that, those, the, my, your, our, his, her, its, their, Jane's, brother's*, etc.

Non-specific deictic: *each, every, both, all, neither, no, one, either, some, any, a(n), another, other*, etc.

- b) Numerative tells us 'how many', which is realized by numerals, such as one or first, or by such expression as many, several, few, etc. It can be quantity order, exact or inexact.

Two kinds of numerative:

Qualifying numeratives, also known as 'quantitatives' indicate a specific quantity by using cardinal numerals: one, two, three, etc. or an inexact numeral, such as few little, a bit of, several, a number of, many, much, a lot of, etc.

Ordering numeratives, also known as 'ordinatives' indicate a specific position in a sequence using ordinal numerals: first, second, third, etc. or an inexact place, such as subsequent, preceding subsequence, etc.

- c) Epithet has function to describe or to qualify the head noun. It can be expressed from the features of the thing itself or from personal attitude of the speaker or the writer toward the Thing. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explained that this can either be an inherent characteristic of the thing or a reflection of the speaker's subjective attitude toward it.

The word class which most often functions as Epithet is an adjective. There is another class of word can be functioning as epithet that is participles, which are derived from verbs added with suffixes -ing or -ed then known as -ing forms or -ed forms. Bloor and Bloor (2004) mentioned that epithets are typically expressed through adjectives or participles. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) stated that there are epithets formed from verb, for instance, a *bleeding* nose and a *wrecked* car. When serving as epithet, these forms typically carry the meaning of the finite tense they are most associate with. The present participle conveys the sense of 'which is (was/will be) ...ing', while the past participle implies 'which has (had/will have) been ... ed'. Here are the examples:

An interesting movie ('a movie which is interesting')

A renovated house ('a house which has been renovated')

d) Classifier categorizes the head noun into a specific subclass. It can be represented by a noun, a verbal noun, an adjective, or a participle. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) mentioned that the semantic relationship expressed by items functioning as classifiers are diverse, encompassing aspects such as material, scale and scope, purpose and function, status and rank, origin, and mode of operation. Classifier can help answer the question 'what kind' or 'what type'. As stated by Gerot and Wignell (1994) that the role of classifier to specify the type or category of a noun. For example, the different types of snakes can be distinguished using classifier: venomous or non-venomous snakes. Some linguists describe that Classifier can be represented by noun, adjective and participles. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) described that a classifier can be represented by different word classes including nouns, adjectives, and verbs in their participle forms. Lock (1996) also said that classifier can be realized by adjectives, nouns, or participles. Classifier also has words of the class *verb* which formed in past participles adding *-ed/d* to the base form of regular verbs and changing verbs of irregular verbs. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explained when functioning as Classifier, they typically have the sense of a simple past in passive 'which is ... ed', for instance, *spoken* language ('language which is spoken')

Head

The head in a nominal group refers to the main subject being discussed and can range from simple to complex in form. It is labeled as the thing, which is modified by either premodifiers or postmodifiers. The thing is represented by a noun. As stated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the thing serves as semantic core of the nominal group and can be a common noun, a proper noun or a (personal) pronoun.

Downing and Locke (2006) explained that the term 'entity' encompasses not only tangible things such as persons, objects, places, institutions and other collectives but also includes the names of actions (*swimming, laughter*), abstractions (*thought, excitement*) and phenomena (*thunder, success*), among others.

Postmodifier

The element comes after Head is labeled postmodifier, and according to Biber, et al. (1999) cited by Tian and Zhang (2023) explained that postmodifier typically includes, finite and non-finite clauses, prepositional phrases, and noun phrases in apposition. Among these prepositional phrases is the most frequent type of postmodifier across different registers and especially common in academic texts. Postmodifier provides additional information about the thing called qualifier. A qualifier is typically realized by a prepositional phrase or a relative clause. Nieto-Cruz (2019) stated that the qualifer is another experiential function of the nominal group, positioned as a postmodifier. It is realized through finite clause, non-finite clause, and prepositional phrase.

Gerot and Wignell (1995) described that modification occurring after the thing is known as a qualifier. Qualifiers addl defining or circumstantial information about the thing and are typically realized by a prepositional phrase or a relative clause. They also serve examples of embedding. For instance, in the phrases *a snake with rattles* or *a snake which has rattles* the qualifiers provide additional details about the noun. Sujatna and Wahyuni (2017) described that qualifiers are rank-shifted, meaning they originally belong to a rank higher than or at least equivalent to a nominal group. However, they are then downgraded and embedded within the nominal group, functioning as its constituent.

Past Participle

A past participle is a verb form commonly used to create perfect tenses, construct passive voice sentences, and modify nouns. There are two forms of past participle, regular forms and irregular forms. The regular form, the verbs are added with ending -ed, for examples: *require* becomes *required*, *fix* becomes *fixed*, *allow* becomes *allowed*. Irregular form, the verbs change in some ways, for examples: *write* becomes *written*, *pay* becomes *paid*, *spend* becomes *spent*.

Here are common uses of past participles in combination with auxiliary verbs:

- **have/had + past participle**, used to form perfect tenses.

Examples: *I have worked.*

They had come

- **am/is/are/was/were/been + past participle**, used to form passive voice.

Examples: *The phone is charged.*

The contract was signed yesterday.

The document has been revised.

Past Participles and Process Types

Past participles are derived from verbs. In Functional Grammar (FG), verbs are generally linked to processes, which are conveyed linguistically through a verb or verb phrase. Gerot and Wignell (1995) cited by Ismail and Dahlia (2024) stated that transitivity revolves around processes, which are expressed through verbs and classified into seven types: material process, behavioral process, mental process, verbal Process, relational process, existential Process, and meteorological process. However, the three primary process types are material processes, mental processes, and relational processes. According to Gerot and Wignell (1995), as cited by Rahayu and Efransyah (2020), material process refers to a process which entities perform physical actions. In material process, the participant performing the action (the subject) is called the actor, while the entity affected by the action (the object) is called the goal. Mental process refers to a person's conscious processing, which includes perception (sensing through the five senses), cognition (thinking), and affection (feeling). The participant experiencing the process is called the senser, while the entity being felt, thought about, or perceived is labeled phenomenon. A relational process is a process of being and having. It can be categorized into two types:

- 1) Identifying processes are used to define or identify something. The participants are token (the entity being identified) and value (the identity or role assigned).
- 2) Attributive processes are used to assigned a quality to something. The participants are carrier (the entity being described) and attribute (the characteristic assigned).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach using specialized corpus analysis to examine the structure, function and meaning of past participles as modifiers in an accounting text. The study is descriptive in nature, aiming to classify past participles as epithets, classifiers or qualifiers based on their meaning, function and process within nominal groups. The analysis is guided by the functional grammar framework, specifically Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

This study aims to investigate the roles of past participles in nominal modification within the framework of SFL. It seeks address the following three questions:

1. What roles do past participles serve as modifiers in nominal groups in accounting texts?
2. What processes are encoded past participles when acting as modifiers in nominal groups in accounting book?
3. Which role does the most frequently emerge when past participles as modifiers in accounting text book?

Respondents

Since this study is based on corpus research, the data are sourced from a textbook titled Accountancy; the authors are G. Radhakrishnan, S. S. Kumaran, N. Moorthy, and N. Rama. The text book was published by Tamilnadu Textbook Corporation in 2004. The writer chose this textbook as the data source because she was teaching accounting students in her college. This selection to support her teaching process and help students gain a deeper understanding of the roles of past participles as modifiers in nominal modification, which they frequently encounter in their textbook.

Research Instruments

In this study, the research instrument refers to the methodological tools and frameworks used to analyze past participles as noun modifiers in an accounting textbook. Since corpus-based research does not involve traditional instruments like survey and interview, the instrument is primarily the analytical framework and data extraction tools.

1. Analytical Framework

This study applies Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to classify past participles as:

- ✓ Epithets
- ✓ Classifiers
- ✓ Qualifiers

2. Data Extraction Tools

To identify past participles in the corpus, the study employs manual identification: sentences containing nominal group with past participles as modifiers are extracted from the textbook, while past participles as verbs or verbal groups are excluded.

3. Data Categorization and Analysis

After the data are extracted, they are classified based on their functions in the nominal group.

- ✓ Frequency Analysis: counting occurrences of epithet, classifier, and qualifier
- ✓ Contextual interpretation: determining whether the past participles describe a subjective quality, a categorical type, or defining characteristic.

Research Procedures

In doing this research, library research was conducted to acquire the theories and references to support the analysis. The collected data were analyzed in accordance with theories chosen, and then were described based on Functional Grammar points of views to gain more specific comprehension about the roles of past participles in nominal modification.

The required data were taken from a selected textbook. There were procedures of analyzing data, for the details as follows:

Step 1: Data Collection

- ✧ The accounting textbook was selected based on the relevance, authenticity, and linguistic richness.
- ✧ Sentences containing noun modification with past participles serving as modifiers were extracted.
- ✧ Verbs in past participle forms functioning as elements in verbal groups were removed.

Step 2: Data Identification

Each data extracted was identified the position. They are placed before or after the head noun.

Step 3: Data Classification

From the position, they were classified into their functions: epithet or classifier, and qualifier.

Step 4: Data Analysis

Accordance with the functions, they were analyzed the meanings and the processes encoded them.

Step 5: Data Interpretation

Based on the theories chosen, each function was interpreted to obtain the precise meaning.

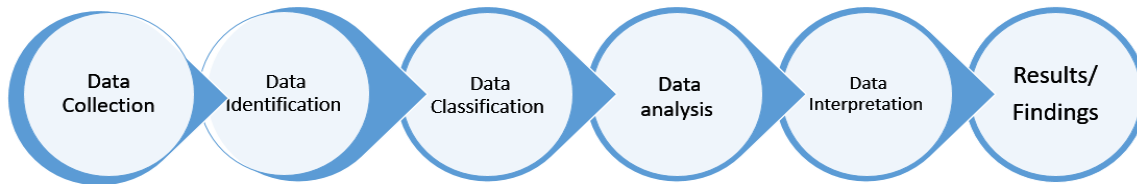


Figure 1 Flowchart of the research

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As modifiers in nominal modification, past participles convey functions, meanings, and process types, as follows:

1. As Epithets

Data 1: Whenever necessary additional pages may be inserted, completed accounts can be removed and the accounts may be arranged and rearranged in the **desired order**.

<i>the</i>	<i>desired</i>	<i>order</i>
premodifier		head
deictic	epithet	thing

Based on the experiential structure, in the nominal modification *the desired order*, the word *order* functions as the head since it is the noun being modified, whereas *the* and *desired* serves as modifiers. Because *the* and *desired* appear before the head noun *order*, they are classified as premodifiers.

Based on the logical structure, the past participle *desired* functions as an epithet because it is placed before the thing *order*, and conveys subjective or evaluative quality. The nominal group *the desired order* can be defined as the order which is wanted or hoped for, reflecting a subjective preference of a person.

The past participle *desired* is derived from the verb *desire*. It refers to a mental process involving cognition or emotion aspect. The use of *desired* in this context pertains to thinking or intending about how the order should be arranged.

Data 2: To make the accounting information useful to various **interested parties**, the basic assumptions and concepts discussed earlier have been modified.

<i>various</i>	<i>interested</i>	<i>parties</i>
premodifier		head
Numerative	epithet	thing

Based on the experiential structure, in the nominal modification *various interested parties*, the word *parties* functions as the head since it is the noun being modified, whereas *various* and *interested* serve as modifiers. Because *various* and *interested* appear before the head noun *parties*, they are classified as premodifiers.

Based on the logical structure, the past participle *interested* functions as an epithet because it is placed before the thing *parties*, and conveys subjective or evaluative quality. The nominal group *various interested parties* can be defined as various parties who have an interest or concern, reflecting subjective preferences of parties.

The past participle *interested* is derived from the verb *interest*. It refers to a mental process involving cognition or emotion aspect. The use of *interest* in this context implies that the parties cognitively or emotionally engaged with accounting information.

2. As Classifiers

Data 1: This amount together with the **unspent** amount will bring up the cash in hand to the amount with which he originally started i.e., the imprest amount.

<i>the</i>	<i>unspent</i>	<i>amount</i>
Premodifier		Head
Deictic	Classifier	Thing

Based on the experiential structure, in the nominal modification *the unspent amount*, the word *amount* functions as head since it is the noun being modified, whereas *the* and *unspent* serve as modifiers. Because *the* and *unspent* are placed before the head noun *amount*, they are classified as premodifiers.

Based on the logical structure, the past participle *unspent* functions as a classifier because it is placed before the thing *amount*, and categorizes the noun *amount* by specifying a particular type of amount, the amount that has not been spent. It distinguishes this amount from spent amount or allocated amount. The nominal group *the unspent amount* can be understood as the amount which hasn't been spent.

The past participle *unspent* is derived from the verb *spend*, it is associated with a material process representing a physical action. *Unspent* indicates that the action of spending has not been occurred.

Data 2: A voucher is a **written** document in support of a business transaction.

<i>a</i>	<i>written</i>	<i>document</i>
premodifier		head
deictic	classifier	thing

Based on the experiential structure, in the nominal modification *a written document*, the word *document* functions as the head since it is the noun being modified, whereas *a* and *written* serve as modifiers. Because *a* and *written* are placed before the head noun *document*, they are classified as premodifiers.

Based on the logical structure, the past participle *written* functions as a classifier because it is placed before the thing *document*, and categorizes the noun *document* by specifying its form, document that has not been written. It distinguishes this document from oral or digital document. The nominal group *a written document* can be understood as a document which is written.

The past participle *written* is derived from the verb *write*, which is associated with a material process representing a physical action. *Written* indicates that the document has undergone the action of being written down.

3. As Qualifiers

Data 1: Receipt is an acknowledgement for *cash **received***.

<i>cash</i>	<i>received</i>
Head	Post-modifier
Thing	Qualifier

Based on the experiential structure, in the nominal modification *cash received*, the word *cash* functions as head since it is the noun being modified, whereas *received* serves as a modifier. Because *received* appears after the head noun *cash*, it is classified as a postmodifier.

Based on logical structure, the past participle *received* functions as a qualifier because it is placed after the thing *cash*, and provides additional descriptive information about the head noun *cash*, specifying that it is cash that has been received. The qualifier *received* clarifies the type of cash. The nominal group *cash received* can be interpreted as cash which is received.

The past participle *received* is derived from the verb *receive*, it is associated with a material process representing physical action. The qualifier *received* indicates that the cash has undergone the action of being transferred to someone.

Data 2: Thus there will be a gap of some days between the entry for issue of cheque in the cash book and the entry for *payment **made*** in the pass book.

<i>payment</i>	<i>made</i>
Head	Post-modifier
Thing	Qualifier

Based on the experiential structure, in the nominal modification *payment made*, the word *payment* functions as the head since it is the noun being modified, whereas *made* serves as a modifier. Because *made* appears after the head noun *payment*, it is classified as a postmodifier.

Based on the logical structure, the past participle *made* functions as a qualifier because it is placed after the thing *payment*, and provides additional descriptive information about the noun *payment*, specifying that it is payment that has been made. The qualifier *made* clarifies the type of payment. The nominal group *payment made* can be interpreted as payment which was made.

The past participle *made* is derived from the verb *make*, it is associated with a material process representing a physical action. The qualifier *made* indicates that the payment has undergone the action of being made.

Distribution of Past Participles in Nominal Modification

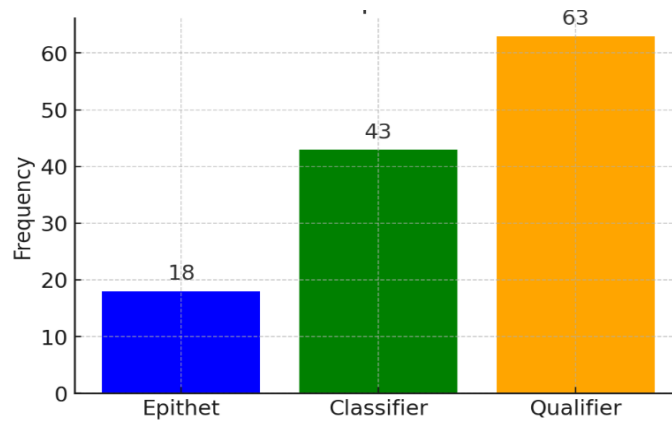


Figure 2 Distributions of Past Participles in Nominal Group

From the specialized corpus analysis of 124 data, that is accounting textbook. The chart represents the distribution of past participles as modifiers in nominal modification, categorized the functions into epithets, classifiers, and qualifiers. Here is an analysis of the data:

1. Qualifiers are the most frequent with 63 occurrences.

The highest frequency belongs to qualifiers, which suggest that past participles are dominantly used to provide extra specifying details about the head word in the accounting textbook.

2. Classifier is the second frequent with 43 occurrences.

The second highest category is classifiers, indicating that past participles function to categorize the head noun into its subclass or specific types rather than just describe them. It is common in technical or academic text, such as accounting, where precise classification is required.

3. Epithet is the least frequent with 18 occurrences.

Epithet occur the least, showing that past participles are less commonly used for subjective description in accounting language. As known that accounting text prioritizes objective and technical accuracy.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of past participles in nominal modification reveals that their functions vary based on the role they play in describing or categorizing the noun. Past participles can function as epithets, classifiers, or qualifiers. As epithets, past participles express subjective or descriptive qualities of the noun, often evaluative in nature. As classifiers, past participles categorize the noun into specific subsets or technical types, providing objective distinctions. As qualifiers, past participles act as post-modifiers, adding additional identifying or contextual information about the noun. When past participles are employed as epithets, they are encoded by mental processes, reflecting more subjective and abstract application, while past participles serve as classifiers and qualifiers, they are encoded by material processes, reflecting action-oriented usage and more concrete application. Based on the data analyzed, qualifiers are the most frequent role of past participles, indicating their prevalent role in providing precise detailed information in nominal modification. Classifiers are the next most common, reflecting the need for technical categorization, particularly in academic or specialized texts. Epithets, being more descriptive and subjective, are the least frequently observed among the analyzed data. This distribution underscores the importance of qualifiers in achieving clarity and specificity, especially in academic and technical writing contexts, such as the accounting textbook used in this study. For

further study, there are wide areas that could be explored, for instance comparing the use of past participles with another textbook from a different field to gain deeper understanding of their functions and meanings, and investigating corpus data from general English sources to contrast the roles.

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