

from: *EUROTYP Working Papers VII/22: The Noun Phrase Sketch Book*,
Konstanz, May 1994

Teaching Myself Noun Phrases

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References to Teach Yourself Books are a rare sight in typological publications; those with a professional interest in the structural comparison of languages prefer to tap other sources, if not always more reliable ones. However, to spurn the English Universities Press's mightiest venture because it primarily caters for the practical needs of the learner would be to underrate this plain and age-old (but now apparently ageing) genre of blends of didactic and descriptive grammar. Limited though the detail is which is sometimes provided on this or that point of potentially great theoretical interest, and however non-uniform its format, the great value of the Teach Yourself library is that it is a storehouse of basic information—information that is sometimes not easily obtained elsewhere.

The following notes document the idea that two Teach Yourself titles—and not necessarily two highlights of the series—gave me about the noun phrases of Scottish Gaelic and Samoan, languages about which I had little previous knowledge. Prone as the do-it-yourselfer is to get hold of the wrong end of the stick no matter how copious the instructions, he must be grateful for any expert guidance and correction; in the case of Gaelic the latter is amply provided in Robert Mullally's subsequent chapter.

Mostly my two sketches will only recap on what I have learnt, but here and there I have felt free to draw my own descriptive conclusions or construct rather than quote an example,

and to raise a query, hazard a guess, or add a comment, mostly to do
with the inevitability or otherwise of the make-up of the language I
was teaching myself.

I. (Scottish) Gaelic

0. Source: Roderick Mackinnon (1971): *Gaelic*. London, The English Universities Press (Teach Yourself Books).

1. Constituency, order, and selection

An NP may consist of a noun (nouns without definite article being indefinite), notably a proper name, a numeral, or a personal, relative, demonstrative, indefinite, or interrogative pronoun on its own, or may consist of constituents such as the following:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| (a) | DefArt N A Dem | an leabhar dearg seo
DefArt book red Dem
'this red book' |
| (b) | (PersPro) Dem | (e) seo
(3MascSgPersPro) Dem
'this one' |
| (c) | PossPro N | do leabhar
2SgPoss book
'your book' |
| (d) | Num N
Num N Num | (see below, §9) |
| (e) | N A | (see (a)) |
| (f) | N Gen | cat Sheumais
cat Seumas.Gen
'Seumas's cat' |
| (g) | N PP | an cat aig Màiri
DefArt cat at Màiri
'Màiri's cat'
cat aig Màiri
'a cat of Màiri's'
an cù agamsa [aig-am-sa]
DefArt dog at.me.Emphatic
'my dog' |

A demonstrative determiner requires the presence of the definite article, unless it combines with a personal pronoun:

- (a') *leabhar seo
book Dem

When two definite NPs are conjoined, both require the definite article, but a demonstrative occurs only once, taking both conjuncts within its scope:

- (h) Glan na poitean agus na panaichean seo
 clean DefArt pots and DefArt pans Dem
 'Clean these pots and [these] pans!'

No information is provided on whether possessive pronouns may combine directly with demonstratives, with possessives taking the place of the definite article in such combinations as in (i), or whether prepositional possessives are obligatory in the company of a demonstrative.

- (i) do leabhar seo [hypothetical]
 'this your book'

Possessives and definite articles are mutually exclusive.

While adjectives normally follow the noun (see (a) above), some—meaning 'good', 'bad', 'excellent', 'true', 'old', 'next'—precede it:

- (e') A N seann chù
 old dog
 'an old dog'

Greenberg No. 19: When the general rule is that the descriptive adjective follows [the noun], there may be a minority of adjectives which usually precede, but when the general rule is that descriptive adjectives precede, there are no exceptions.

Unlike a genitival phrase (f), an adnominal PP does not induce definiteness on its head, and thus does not require a definite article preceding the head noun (g).

2. Aspiration

Initial aspiration is one prominent kind of formal variation of nominal (and certain other) words in Gaelic; the other is inflection, partly making use of aspiration. Aspirable consonants are: b (giving bh, sometimes silent), c (ch), d (dh), f (fh, mostly silent), g (gh), m (mh, sometimes silent), p (ph), t (th, usually silent), sl/sn/sr/sV (shl/shn/ shr/shV). (Forms are generally given in Gaelic orthography, no matter how far removed from the sound of Gaelic.)

These formal variations are not presented in any systematic manner in this Teach Yourself book.

NPs are one domain of aspiration.

Thus, feminine singular nouns (a), unlike masculine ones (b), cause aspiration of postnominal attributive adjectives:

- (a) a' chaileag bheag bhàn
the girl (Fem) little fair-haired
- (b) an cat beag bàn
the cat (Masc) little white

Aspiration is sensitive to constituency rather than mere sequence, thus providing a test of NP-constituency: Adjectives following after feminine nouns are not aspirated when they are predicative.

- (c) Tha a' chaileag beag agus bàn
is the girl little and fair-haired
'The girl is small and fair-haired'

Plural nouns whose last vowel is i cause aspiration of post-nominal attributive adjectives when in the nominative or dative:

- (d) cait mhór-a
cat.Pl big-Pl
'big cats'
- (e) cearcan mór-a
hen.Pl big-Pl
'big hens'

The singular definite article causes aspiration of feminine nouns with initial b/m/p/c/g/f:

- (f) beinn
mountain
'a mountain'
a' bheinn
DefArt mountain

A head noun causes aspiration of a following genitive not preceded by the definite article when it is plural or a male proper name in the singular:

- (g) cinn chat
head.Pl cat.GenPl
'the heads of cats'
- (h) ceann cait
head cat.GenSg
'the head of a cat'
- (i) cat Sheumais
cat Seumas.Gen
'Seumas's cat'
- (j) cat Sìne
cat Sìne.Gen
'Sìne's cat'

Singular possessive pronouns cause aspiration of following nouns:

- (k) gam [=aig+mo] bhualadh
at+1SgPoss striking
'(someone is) striking me'

A prenominal adjective causes aspiration of its noun (see (e') in §1).

The numerals '1' and '2' cause aspiration of the following noun:

- (l) dà fhear
two man

The vocative particle a causes aspiration of the following noun:

- (m) a Sheumais
Seumas

But aspiration also transcends the domain of NPs, taking place within PPs. Certain simple prepositions aspirate masculine singular nouns with initial b/m/p/c/g/f when these are definite:

- (n) am monadh
DefArt moor
- (o) air a' mhonadh
on DefArt moor
- (p) air monadh
on moor
- (q) air a' chat mhór
on DefArt cat big

- (r) air cat mór
on cat big

3. Inflection (and clisis)

Nouns, personal pronouns, the definite article, and monosyllabic adjectives inflect for two numbers, singular and plural.

Nouns also inflect for four cases, nominative, dative, genitive, and vocative (for the latter only proper names and nouns denoting persons).

This is at odds with a supposed universal:

If nouns inflect for any category,

personal pronouns will also inflect for this category.

However, personal pronouns do not get many opportunities to inflect for case, if any. In Gaelic the dative is only governed by certain prepositions, and personal pronouns do not combine with prepositions syntactically in the first place. There are possessive pronouns, though, which might be analysed as genitives of personal pronouns.

In the plural, dative always coincides with nominative. The vocative singular form of the noun, which also takes the prenominal particle *a* (unless the noun has initial /a/), is identical to the genitive (masculine) or the nominative (plus aspiration; feminine); in the plural, the vocative is identical to nominative singular aspirated (if NomPl=GenSg) plus suffix *-a*, or to nominative plural aspirated (if NomPl≠GenSg).

An apparent curio: When an adjective follows the genitive plural of a feminine noun whose nominative plural ends in *-an*, then genitive plural takes nominative plural form. Thus:

- (a) cearc
hen
- (b) (na) cearc-an
(DefArt.NomPl) hen-Pl
- (c) uighean chearc
eggs.NomPl hen.GenPl (GenPl=NomSg aspirated)
'hen's eggs'
- (d) uighean nan cearc
egg.NomPl DefArt.GenPl hen.GenPl (GenPl=NomSg)
'eggs of the hens'
- (e) uighean chearc-an mór-a

- egg.NomPl hen-GenPl[=NomPl] big-GenPl
 (f) uighean nan cearc-an mór-a
 egg.NomPl DefArt.GenPl[=NomPl] hen-GenPl big-GenPl

Case marking is generally by modification of stems (additions and changes of vowels), rarely by suffixation, by initial aspiration, or by addition or omission of initial /t/ when nouns are preceded by the definite article.

Nouns distinguish two genders, referred to as masculine and feminine, which distinction is relevant for the choice of case-number exponents and for the aspiration of nouns themselves or of co-occurring elements. The 3rd person personal pronoun distinguishes masculine and feminine in the singular.

The variety of inflection classes seems bewildering. The choice of inflectional exponents is partly conditioned by gender. And there would seem to be some interdependency between the various case-number choices.

Adjectives have two comparative forms, the first identical to genitive singular feminine:

- (g) beag— bige
 small smaller

Prepositions combine with personal and also possessive pronouns so closely that it may be more appropriate to analyse them as inflecting for person and number than as taking enclitic pronouns. At any rate, the form of prepositions varies with the various person-number forms, and the person-number exponents are sometimes fairly different from independent personal and possessive pronouns. *Aig* 'at' serves as an example of combinations of preposition and personal pronouns, to be compared to the pronominal paradigm given below in §6.

	Sg	Pl
1	agam	againn
2	agad	agaibh
3Masc	aige	aca
3Fem	aice	aca

Some simple prepositions seem to carry an inflectional/enclitic 3rd person singular masculine formative when governing a (dative, because aspirated) NP with the definite article:

- (h) le cù

- with dog
- (i) leis a' chù
with DefArt.DatSg dog.DatSg
- (j) leam; leat; leis, leatha
with.me; with.you; with.him, with.her

4. Agreement

The definite article agrees in case and number with its noun.

Monosyllabic attributive adjectives agree in number with their preceding nouns (by adding suffix *-a/-e* in the plural), polysyllabic ones don't.

If adjectives agree in only a single category, this will universally be
number, won't it?

Do monosyllabic adjectives in Gaelic also agree when PRE-nominal?

Probably not, thus conforming to the general rule that when adjectives
may be pre- as well as post-nominal, agreement is likelier in postnominal
position.

5. Noun formation

Much of verbal accident involves verbal nouns and infinitives formed from them by aspiration (Calum is at striking of the door 'Calum is striking the door').

6. Pronouns

Personal pronouns distinguish two numbers, three persons, and—in 3rd person singular only—two genders:

	Sg	Pl
1	mi	sinn
2	thu	sibh
3Masc	e	iad
3Fem	i	iad

2nd person plural also serves as polite/formal form of address, singular as well as plural.

The possessive pronouns are:

	Sg	Pl
1	mo	ar
2	do	ur
3Masc	a	an/am
3Fem	a	an/am

Like personal pronouns, possessives closely combine with preceding prepositions, both elements taking somewhat different forms from independent uses (e.g. *aig* + *mo* = *agam* 'at my').

Demonstrative pronouns show a three-way contrast of proximal (*seo* 'this'), distal (*sin* 'that'), and extra-distal (*(si)ud* 'that yonder'). They occur as determiners as well as independently. When referring to male or female animates, they may optionally be accompanied by a personal pronoun:

- (a) (e/i/iad) *seo*
(3Masc/FemSg/3PlPersPro) this
'this one, these ones'

There are interrogative pronouns for persons (*có*), things (*dé*, *cíod*), places (*càit*), times (*cuin*), manners (*ciamar*), and reasons/causes/ purposes (*carson*).

The relative pronouns are *a* 'who, which' (*an/am* after prepositions) and, when there is no overt head, *na*; the negative form is *nach*.

Indefinite pronouns appear to be numerous; they are: *càch* 'others', *càch-a-chéile* 'each other', *cuid* 'some, others', *cuideigin* 'someone', *feareigin/té-eigin* 'someone' (masc/fem), *rudeigin* 'something', *gin* 'anyone, anything', *càil* 'anything', *dad* 'anything', *rud sam bith* 'anything' and a few other combinations with *sam bith*, *uile* 'all', *a h-uile fear* 'everyone' (distributive), *na h-uile* 'everyone, all' (collective), *feadhainn* 'some'.

7. Article

There is a definite but no indefinite article.

There are languages with overt marking of indefiniteness only, but these seem rarer than languages with overt marking only of definiteness.

The definite article is prenominal. It introduces the NP and is contralateral with adjectives:

- (a) an cù mor
the dog big

Do article-words ever occur inside NPs (say, after the first NP-constituent) rather than at their margins?

The forms of the definite article are reminiscent of the relative and the possessive pronoun; they are:

Singular

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| am | / | __ MascSg nouns with initial b/f/m/p in the nominative |
| a' | / | (a) some simple Prep __ Masc nouns with initial
b/m/p/c/g (subject to aspiration) [= Dat] |
| | | (b) __ Fem nouns with initial b/m/p/c/g (subject to
aspiration) in the nominative and dative |
| na | / | __ genitive of feminine nouns |
| an | / | otherwise |

Plural

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|--|
| na | / | — | nominative and dative |
| nam | / | — | genitive of nouns with initial b/f/m/p |
| nan | / | — | genitive of other nouns |

The definite article induces the appearance of an initial t- on (a) masculine nouns with an initial vowel in the nominative singular; (b) masculine nouns with initial s followed by l/n/r or a vowel in the dative singular and the genitive singular (causing deletion of /s/); (c) feminine nouns with initial s followed by l/n/r or a vowel in the nominative singular and the dative singular.

- (a) aran
bread
an t-aran
DefArt t-bread
air an aran
on DefArt bread
- (b) an sruth
DefArt stream
leis an t-sruth
with DefArt stream
- (c) sràid
street
an t-sràid

DefArt street
 air an t-sràid
 on DefArt street

The definite article form *na* induced the appearance of initial *h*-on nouns with initial vowel.

8. Quantifiers

See §6, 'indefinite pronouns' (*cuid* 'some, others', *uile* 'all', *a h-uile fear* 'everyone' (distributive), *na h-uile* 'everyone, all' (collective), *feadhainn* 'some').

9. Numerals

Basic cardinal numerals are 1-10, 20, 1,000,000, and optionally 100 and 1,000. Others are formed by addition (low before high [!], high before low [see 41ff.]), multiplication (low before high), and division (50 being 'half-hundred'), as follows:

11	=	1 + 10	[mathematical operation unexpressed]
12	=	2 + 10, etc.	
21	=	1 on/after 20, etc.	
30	=	10 on 20	
31	=	1 + 10 on 20, etc.	
40	=	2 x 20	[mathematical operation unexpressed]
41	=	2 x 20 and 1, etc.	
50	=	2 x 20 and 10, or half-hundred	
51	=	2 x 20 and 1 + 10, etc.	
60	=	3 x 20	
70	=	3 x 20 and 10	
100	=	ceud [basic], or 5 x 20	
101	=	100 and 1, or 5 x 20 and 1	
200	=	2 x 100	
1,000	=	mìle [basic], or 10 x 100	
1,000,000	=	muillean [basic]	

Cardinal numerals '1' to '39' take *a* and some are aspirated when not accompanied by a noun; from '40' onwards numerals unaccompanied by a noun are identical to those with noun.

- (a) dà fhear
two man.Sg
- (b) a dhà
two

When accompanied by a noun, basic numerals precede it (see (a)); '1' and '2' cause aspiration of their noun ('1' only of such nouns as begin with aspirable consonants other than t/d/s); '1', '2', '20', '100', '1,000', '1,000,000' take nouns in the singular (dative in the case of '2', which might thus be taken for the dual, nominative otherwise; attributive adjectives of dative nouns with numeral '2' are nominative and aspirated, though).

- (c) aon fhear
one man.Sg
- (d) fichead fear
twenty man.Sg
- (e) ceud fear
hundred man.Sg
- (f) trì fir
three man.Pl
- (g) deich fir
ten man.Pl

In the case of complex numerals, the first constituent (possibly consisting of two numerals) precedes the noun and the second follows it; the numeral immediately preceding the noun determines its number and aspiration (as above). Postnominal *fichead* '20' preceded by *air* 'on/after' is aspirated; postnominal *deug* '10' is aspirated after prenominal *aon* '1' when the noun is feminine and does not end in d/t/s/l/n/r, always after prenominal *dà* '2', and in '13'-'19' when the noun's non-basic case-number form adds an *i* (!!!).

- (h) aon fhear deug
one man.Sg ten
- (i) dà fhear dheug
two man.Sg ten
- (j) trì fir dheug
three man.Pl ten

- (k) dà fhear air fhichead
two man.Sg on twenty
- (l) dà fhichead fear 's a dhà
two twenty man.Sg and two

With '3'-'10' and any complex numerals having these as their prenominal constituents, a few commonly counted nouns may remain singular:

- (m) trì bliadhna/latha
three year/day.Sg
- (n) sia mìle air fhichead
six mile.Sg on twenty
- (o) còig duine deug
five man.Sg ten

In addition to the normal cardinal numerals there are ten numerical nouns, used for persons only, and they all (except '1') govern the genitive plural:

- (p) dìthis mhac
two son.GenPl

Ordinal numerals are suppletively ('1st') or suffixally derived from cardinals. If complex, only the prenominal part is so derived, their pre- and postnominal ordering being the same as that of cardinals. Sometimes the preposition *thar* 'over' is used with ordinals as in (q).

- (q) an tritheamh salm thar an fhichead
DefArt three.Ordinal psalm over DefArt twenty
'the 23rd psalm'

10. Attribution: Adjectives

Adjectives stack freely:

In Samoan, for instance, they don't (see below), and one would want to predict when they do and when they don't. Any correlates (David)?

- (a) an cat beag bàn
the cat little white
- (b) an cù mor dubh

- the dog big black
 (c) cat beag bòidheach
 cat little pretty
 (d) Màiri bheag bhan
 Mary little fair-haired
 (e) latha briagha blàth
 day beautiful warm

Assuming that these examples give co-occurring adjectives in their most natural order, there appear to be these position-classes:

N	SIZE	COLOUR	(a, b)
N	SIZE	EVALUATION	(c)
N	SIZE	PHYSICAL-PROPERTY	(d)
N	EVALUATION	PHYSICAL-PROPERTY	(e)

Overall perhaps:

N SIZE EVALUATION PHYSICAL-PROPERTY COLOUR

In English, for example, the corresponding adjectives would occur in the same preferred order in instances (a/b/e), and in reverse order in (c/d), pointing to this overall scheme:

EVALUATION PHYSICAL-PROPERTY SIZE COLOUR N

the little white cat(a')
 the big black dog(b')
 a pretty little cat(c')
 fair-haired little Mary(d')
 a beautiful warm day(e')

Comparing pre- and postnominal adjective ordering across languages, there are four possibilities or regular correspondences (A1 etc. being the semantic classes such as SIZE, COLOUR etc. occupying particular positions relative to one another and to the noun):

(I)	A1 A2 A3 ... N	mirror-image of (II)
(II)	N ... A3 A2 A1	mirror-image of (I)
(III)	N A1 A2 A3 ...	N-fronting from (I)
		mirror-image of (IV)
(IV)	... A3 A2 A1 N	N-backing from (II)
		mirror-image of (III)

Taking into account languages with both pre- and postnominal adjectives, there are these further possibilities:

(I) A1 (N) A2 (N) A3 (N) ...

(II') ... (N) A3 (N) A2 (N) A1

Which of these possibilities are really represented?

(I) English, German ...

(I') French, Italian ...

(II) Indonesian, Thai ...

(II') unattested?

(III) Gaelic and other Celtic?, Semitic

(IV) unattested?

Examples, with A1=EVALUATION, A2=SIZE, A3=COLOUR:

E: a beautiful big red ball

G: ein schöner großer roter Ball

F: un joli gros ballon rouge

I: una bella grande palla rossa

In: bola merah besar tjantik

Both arrangements (I) and (II), mirror images of one another, can naturally be accounted for on the principle that particular classes of adjectives are predisposed to occur closer to or more distant from nouns on account of their semantics. ('The nounier the meaning of an adjective, the closer it will be to the noun.') But how is one to account for (III)? Is there a different ordering principle at work here? Or do we have basically the same relative ordering of semantic adjective classes as in (I), only with the noun fronted in surface structure?

References

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Cf. also Greenberg No. 20: When any or all of the items—demonstrative, numeral, and descriptive adjective—precede the noun,

they are always found in that order. If they follow, the order is either the same [N fronting?] or its exact opposite [mirror image]. [Mirror image of N Dem Num A, viz. A Num Dem N, unattested, like (IV) above.]

11. Attribution: NPs

Genitives follow their head nouns; so do attributes in the form of PPs. While genitives induce definiteness on their heads, PPs do not.

While the attribution of NPs is recursive, there is a hitch to the case marking: when governing a genitive, a noun cannot be in the genitive, despite being itself an attribute; it is in the nominative instead.

- (a) spòg cat Sheumais
 *spòg cait Sheumais
 paw.Nom cat.Nom (*cat.Gen) Seumas.Gen
 'the paw of the cat of Seumas'

12. Attribution: Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow head nouns.

13. Classification

There is a construction with two nouns adjacent to one another and without any relational marking (such as genitive or preposition) of the second:

- (a) cupa tì
 cup tea
 'a cup of tea'

14. Apposition

The appositum follows the head noun, and agrees with it in case, unless the head is in the genitive, in which case the appositum is nominative:

- (a) Seo mac Sheumais, am bàrd
 this son Seumas.Gen, DefArt poet.Nom

'this is the son of Seumas, the poet'

Interestingly, in German it is also heads in the genitive which license apposita (optionally) not to agree; but rather than being in the basic nominative, non-agreeing apposita are here in the dative:

- (a) Das ist der Sohn Jakobs, unseres größten Dichters/
unserem größten Dichter
this is the son Jakob.Gen, our.Gen greatest.Gen poet.Gen/
our.Dat greatest.Dat poet.Dat

15. Coordination

The coordinative conjunction *agus* joins constituents of any kind, including NPs; it occurs between the constituents it joins.

There is a special coordinative conjunction *is*, used for things which habitually go together and probably limited to joining NPs:

- (a) aran is im is càise
bread and butter and cheese

II. Samoan

0. Source: C. C. Marsack (1962): *Samoan*. London, The English Universities Press (Teach Yourself Books);
4th, corrected impression, 1975.

1. Constituency, order, and selection

An NP may consist of a noun, notably a proper name, or a personal, relative, demonstrative, or interrogative pronoun on its own (perhaps introduced by the particle 'o, on which see below, §2), or may consist of constituents such as the following:

- ('o) Art N
- ('o) Poss N
- (po/pe) Qu N
- ('o) Quant N
- ('o) Dem N / ('o) DefArt N Dem
- ('o) N e Num / (*'o) Num N
- ('o) N A
- ('o) N PP
- ('o) N RelClause
- ('o) NClass N
- ('o) N ('o) NP

Articles (definite and indefinite) and possessive and interrogative pronouns represent the hard core of the determiners. They are mutually exclusive.

In principle they might also co-occur, as in, say, Italian. Are there any other differences between Samoan and its kind (English, German, ...) and Italian and its kind that go with that one, implying it or being implied by it? Or do languages have complete freedom of choice between allowing and disallowing articles to co-occur with possessives or interrogatives?

A possessive pronoun, though precluding an overt contrast between definite and indefinite, does not seem perforce to render an NP referentially definite—witness (a), with the translation provided, not containing an indefinite article:

- (a) O la'u uō mai Niu Sila
'o 1SgPoss friend from New Zealand
'a friend of mine from New Zealand'

Of quantifying words and indefinite pronouns, presumably also performing determiner function, *isi* 'the one/other' (also meaning 'some, others') does combine with the definite article, which it follows, and *so'o* 'any' obligatorily co-occurs with the indefinite article, which it precedes:

- (b) ('o) DefArt Quant N
 O le isi ofu e mumu 'o le isi e samasama
 'o DefArt one frock Pres red 'o DefArt one Pres yellow
 '(The) one frock is red, the other is yellow'
- (c) Quant IndefArt N
 so'o se nu'u
 any IndefArt village
 'any village'

Presumably, when a possessive pronoun co-occurs with a quantifying word, the former precedes the latter, as in (d) (constructed):

- (d) ('o) Poss Quant N
 'o o'u tele maile
 'o 1SgPoss many dog
 'my many dogs'

The typical modifiers, such as attributive adjectives, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, and presumably appositives, are postnominal (and so is the quantifier *uma* 'every, all'), with adjectives preceding prepositional phrases and relative clauses when they co-occur:

- (e) ('o) N A PP RelClause
 i ni nu'u moni o Samoa
 at IndefArt village(s) real of Samoa
 'at some real Samoan villages'
 ... le mamā o nu'u sa ia va'ai i ai
 ... DefArt clean of village(s) Past 3SgPro see Prep which
 'the cleanliness of the villages which he saw'

If determiners and modifiers are contralateral (i.e. occur on different sides of the noun), is there a universal tendency for determiners to be prenominal and for modifiers to be postnominal?

Modifiers do not interfere with the determiner part. In particular, attributive NPs, marked by prepositions such as *o*, *a*, or *mai*, do not preclude a definite article:

- (f) 'o le va'a o Ioane
 'o DefArt boat of John
 'John's boat'

Demonstratives may function as typical determiners, occurring in prenominal position and being mutually exclusive with articles (no information on their relationship with possessive pronouns); but they may alternatively take postnominal position, and then require the presence of a definite article:

- (g) 'o lenei fale
 'o Dem house
 (h) 'o le fale (le)nei
 'o DefArt house Dem
 'this house'

Could this conceivably be the other way round?
 Dem *(DefArt) N; (*DefArt) N Dem

Cardinal numerals either appear postnominally, like modifiers, and then require the marker *e* (which looks like the verbal particle for present/vague-future tense and the preposition 'by'), or prenominally, like determiners, and then preclude the NP marker 'o. As one expects, they co-occur with possessive pronouns or perhaps other determiners when in postnominal position:

- (i) ('o) Poss N *e* Num
 o ō na ofutino *e* lua
 'o 3SgPoss shirt *e* two
 'his two shirts'

It is not clear from the information provided whether prenominal numerals and determiners are mutually exclusive. Prenominal numerals do occur with a postnominal attributive NP:

- (j) ('o) Num N PP
 ... to'atolu tagata o le 'auva'a
 ... Pers.three person of DefArt crew
 '... three members of the crew'

When postnominal, numerals follow after attributive adjectives:

- (k) ('o) N A e Num
 ... talo tetele e tusa ma le tolu sefulu
 ... taro(s) big.Pl e like.Sg and DefArt three ten
 '... about 30 big taros'

Numerals generally tend to be intermediate between determiner and modifier function. Are demonstratives the second-most likely elements to vacillate between the two functions?

In the absence of relevant examples it is hard to know how more complex, let alone mega NPs would look like—for instance, ones with a numeral, a demonstrative, and an adjective after the noun (e.g. 'these two big houses'), or ones in addition containing a classifying noun or an attributive NP ('John's two bottles of this expensive beer').

2. 'o and e

A particle 'o (or also o, without glottal stop) introduces NPs when they are used outside sentences, when they form a close appositum (see below), when they are governed by certain prepositions or preposition-like words, when they precede the verb (the normal order of subjects and objects being postverbal), and when they consist of a 3rd person personal pronoun regardless of its pre- or post-verbal position.

The vocative particle *e* follows NPs used to address people (*Samoa e* 'Samoans!')

3. Inflection: Number

There is no noun inflection other than for number.

Generally with nouns, inflection for anything (case, ...) implies inflection for number.

There are three numbers: singular, dual, plural.

Nouns lack a dual, and in fact only a few of them inflect for singular and plural. Such singular-plural pairs differ segmentally (partial reduplication, prefixation) and/or suprasegmentally (vowel length), with the plural being frequently longer but sometimes shorter than the singular:

Sg	Pl	
lo'omatua	lo'omā tutua	'old woman'
tamaloa	tamaloloa	'man'
to'alua	ta'ito'alua	'spouse'
matua	mā tua	'parent'
tuafafine	tuafā fine	'brother's sister'
tamaitiiti	tamaiti	'child'
taule'ale'a	taulele'a	'young man'

All number-inflecting nouns rank high on the animacy scale, as is to be expected, and include close-kin nouns supposedly topping it.

The reliable distinction of the singular and plural of nouns is, however, guaranteed by articles which regularly accompany them (definite: *le* Sg, \emptyset Pl; indefinite: *se* Sg, *ni*/ \emptyset Pl).

Other words in the NP which likewise have two forms depending on whether the nouns they accompany are singular or plural are possessive and demonstrative pronouns and (many) adjectives.

Also, verbs have singular and plural forms which show whether their subject NPs are intended to be singular or plural. (Verbal number distinction seems to pertain to intransitive subjects as well as to transitive ones, to the extent that the latter exist, and not to direct objects.)

Really no ergative pattern here, as commonly found with verbal number?

The dual is limited to personal and possessive pronouns, with the dual morpheme being transparently related to the numeral *lua* 'two'. Words which agree with dual pronouns in number take plural form.

Is it predictable whether duals trigger plural or singular agreement on targets themselves lacking a dual? Perhaps duals transparently based on the numeral 'two' always take plural agreement.

4. Agreement

Within the NP, articles, possessive and demonstrative pronouns, and many adjectives agree in number with the nouns they determine or modify, and so does the personal relative pronoun, with only a handful of nouns themselves overtly distinguishing number in the first place.

Agreement in animacy, contrasting persons and non-personal referents, is shown by cardinal numerals, the quantifying words 'many' and 'few', the interrogative for 'how much/many', the relative pronoun, and a few adjectives, without nouns themselves showing a corresponding morphological contrast. Also, when occurring with NPs referring to persons, the general-purpose preposition *i* takes the form *īā* or (with pronouns) *īā te*.

5. Noun formation

Compounding is a very productive means of forming nouns. There are four types of compound nouns: N+N, N+V, V+N, N+A. The first element is always the head, even though this is a verb in V+N (cf. English *pickpocket*).

N+N:	fuā +moa	egg+hen	'hen's egg'
N+V:	potu+moa	room+sleep	'bedroom'
V+N:	fai+lauga	make+speech	'orator'
N+A:	fale+sā	house+holy	'church'

Head nouns precede their modifiers, such as adjectives, also in syntactic construction, and it is not always clear whether a combination of noun and adjective (or also of noun and noun) is morphological or syntactic.

As to derivation, action (and similar) nouns are formed from verbs by suffix *-ga*:

asiasi 'to visit'	–	asiasiga '(a) visit'
moe 'to sleep'	–	moega 'sleep; bed'

Collective nouns are productively formed by prefixing *'au* 'group, bunch' to nouns or also verbs:

fa'i 'banana(s)'	–	'aufa'i 'bunch of bananas'
va'a 'ship(s)'	–	'auva'a 'crew'
siva 'dance' (V/N)	–	'ausiva 'company of dancers'

6. Pronouns

Personal pronouns distinguish three persons, inclusive and exclusive for 1st person, and three numbers. There is no genuine 3rd person pronoun for reference to non-persons; either no overt pronoun at all

or the general noun *mea* 'thing(s)' is used for this purpose. Most personal pronouns come in two sets: short forms (used at the beginning of the sentence and between verbal particle and verb, and prohibiting the NP marker 'o) and long forms (used elsewhere). Here is the paradigm:

	Sg		Du		Pl	
	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>short</i>
1 Incl			tā ua	ta	tatou	
1 Excl	a'u	ou	mā ua	ma	matou	
2	'oe	e	oulua	lua	outou	tou
3	ia	na	laua la		latou	

Unless they are sentence-initial (here accompanied by 'o), the 1st and 3rd person dual and plural forms are preceded by the particle *i*.

Noun inflection implies pronoun inflection, though not necessarily for the same categories.

If pronouns and nouns do share an inflectional category, 3rd person pronouns have a pivotal role: 1st and 2nd person pronouns may not share an inflectional category with nouns (first of all with those ranking high on the animacy scale) unless 3rd person pronouns (personal and/or demonstrative) also inflect for this category.

That is, an inflectional category may extend from 1st/2nd person pronoun to 3rd person pronoun only or to both 3rd person pronouns and to nouns; or it may extend from (high-animacy) nouns to 3rd person pronouns only or to 3rd person pronouns and 1st/2nd person pronouns; or it may extend from 3rd person pronouns anywhere.

Any counterexamples?

None from Samoan, trivially where number inflection extends from 1st and 2nd person pronouns via 3rd person 'personal' ones (with no non-'personal' ones existing) to high-animacy nouns.

Possessive pronouns show the same paradigmatic distinctions as personal pronouns, and there is some formal resemblance and occasional even identity. Apart from distinguishing the number of the possessor, possessive pronouns also vary in accordance with the number of the noun they accompany, with the plural-noun forms dropping the initial *l* that is present with all singular-noun forms:

- (a) 'o la'u ta'avale
'o 1SgPossSg car(s)
'my car'
- (b) 'o a'u ta'avale

'o 1SgPossPl car(s)
'my cars'

And possessive pronouns show, after initial *l*, the vowel contrast between *a* and *o* that is reminiscent of the prepositions *a* and *o* which encode different kinds of attributive NPs (see below, §11):

(c) 'o lo'u tamā
'o 1SgPossSg father
'my father'

There are interrogative pronouns and adverbs for persons (*ai* 'who'), things (*o le a* and *o a* 'what' (Sg/Pl)), places (*o/i fea* 'where'), times (*a fea* and *ana fea* 'when' (future/past)), manners (*fa'a pe fea* 'how'), reasons and causes (*aiseā* 'why'), and quantities (*fia* 'how much/many'), which may or sometimes must be preceded by the particle *po* or sometimes *pe* (plus perhaps 'o). In determiner function occur (*po*) *o le fea* and *o fea* 'which' (Sg/Pl), and *pe fia* 'how much/many' (with prefix *to'a* when applied to persons):

(d) po o fea sikaleti
Prtcle which cigarette(s)
'which cigarettes?'
(e) pe to'afia tagata
Prtcle Pers.how.many people
'how many people?'

The demonstrative pronouns distinguish distal and proximal, and singular and plural:

	Sg	Pl
Proximal	lenei	ia, nei
Distal	lea, lenā	na

They occur as NPs of their own or also as determiners, in the latter case preceding the unarticulated or following the articulated noun, as mentioned earlier (§1).

The relative pronouns for personal reference are *le* and *e* (Sg/Pl) when not governed by a preposition and *ai* when governed by a preposition, and *ai* or, in an instrumental relation ('with which'), *a'i* for non-personal reference. (Recall that *ai* and *o le a* are the interrogative pronouns for persons and things respectively; also, the singular definite article is *le*.) See further §12.

7. Articles

There is a definite as well as an indefinite article, with the non-zero indefinite plural form presumably being more accurately characterized as an indefinite pronoun; curiously (and uniquely?), the indefinite article also has diminutive forms:

	Sg	Pl
Definite	le	Ø
Indefinite		
Normal	se	Ø/ni
Diminutive	si	nai

Are the odds in favour or against a language having articles (definite, indefinite, both)? Presumably heavily against.

Do all languages overtly distinguish definite and indefinite, one way or another? As to ways other than articles, all pertaining to NPs in core rather than peripheral grammatical relations, there are verbal inflection, special case marking of definite objects, limitations of certain relations (especially subject) to definites (topics), special syntactic constructions (voice and other) to take care of definite-indefinite distribution, constituent order, and no doubt others.

Does the presence of articles correlate with fairly rigid order at clause level?

All nouns other than proper names (of persons, places, months) take articles, including abstract and generic ones.

The definite article is used under various circumstances where other languages, such as English, would require the indefinite article (e.g. 'What is that? — *The* dog'; 'There is *the* boat coming'). Perhaps it is specific reference rather than definiteness that is crucial here.

8. Quantifying words and indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns in determiner function (*isi* 'one, other, some'; *sina* 'some'; *so'o* 'any') and some quantifying words (*tele* 'many', *nai* 'few') precede their nouns. *So'o* obligatorily co-occurs with the indefinite article, which it precedes, as mentioned above:

- (a) *so'o se nu'u*
 any IndefArt village
 'any village'
- (b) *so'o se tasi*

any IndefArt one
'anybody'

The quantifying words 'many' and 'few' resemble numerals insofar as they take the personal prefix *to'a* when determining personal nouns, but they do not share the numerals' positional versatility (see below, §9).

The quantifier *uma* 'all, every' occurs in adjectival position:

- (c) 'o Samoa uma
'o Samoan(s) all
'all Samoans, every Samoan'

It is unclear whether it is mutually exclusive with any of the genuine determiners.

There appear to be no negative indefinite pronouns: in clauses such as 'there is no N ...', negation is on the verb and the noun takes the indefinite article.

9. Numerals

Basic cardinals, unexcitingly, are 1-10, 100, and 1,000. Others are formed, unremarkably, by multiplication (20 being '2 [times] 10' etc., 200 being '2 [times] 100' — low before high, as one expects), without morphological expression of the mathematical operation, and addition (11 being '10 (plus the) 1' — high before low, not unexpectedly either), with optional expression of the operation. An example:

- (a) fa afe lime selau lua sefulu (ma le) ono
4 [times] 1,000 [plus] 5 [times] 100 [plus] 2 [times] 10 (and
DefArt) 6
'4526'

As to the positional possibilities of cardinal numerals see §1 above.

Cardinals show animacy agreement: when applied to persons, they add the prefix *to'a*. Complex cardinals add personal *to'a* to all of their parts or only to the first (see above, §4 Agreement):

- (b) 'o maile e fa
'o dog(s) e four
(c) 'o teine e to'afa
'o girl(s) e Pers.four

- (d) 'o tagata e to'atolusefulu ma le (to'a)tolu
 'o person(s) e Pers.3.10 and DefArt (Pers.)3
 '33 persons'

Ordinals (except 'first') are formally identical to cardinals; syntactically they behave like plain adjectives, though.

Multiplicative numerals are formed by prefix *fa'a*, and distributive numerals by prefix *ta'i*. When applied to persons, the personal prefix is the first to be added to the numeral stem:

- (e) Ua o mai tagata ta'ito'atasi
 Perf come.PlSbj people Distrib.Pers.one
 'the people came one by one'

10. Attribution: Adjectives

Attributive adjectives are in postnominal position, and those which have singular and plural forms thereby help signal the NP's number:

- (a) 'o le teine puta
 'o DefArt girl fat
 'the fat girl'
- (b) 'o teine puputa
 'o girl(s) fat.Pl
 'the fat girls'

Greenberg No. 40: When the adjective follows the noun, the adjective expresses all the inflectional categories of the noun. In such cases the noun may lack overt expression of one or all of these categories.

Only the ordinal adjectives *mua'i* 'first' and *ulua'i* 'last' precede their nouns (and follow articles), but are less commonly used than synonyms which follow nouns:

- (c) 'o le ulua'i tagata
 'o DefArt first person
 'the first man'

Greenberg No. 19: When the general rule is that the descriptive adjective follows [the noun], there may be a minority of adjectives which usually precede, but when the general rule is that descriptive adjectives precede, there are no exceptions.

Apparently, when two adjectives are used with a single noun they need to be conjoined with *ma*, and the second takes a definite article (see below, §15).

No adjective stacking, then. Is this an unpredictable peculiarity of Samoan?

Some adjectives show an animacy contrast (e.g. person vs. animal): e.g. *puta* 'fat (person)' vs. *peti* 'fat (animal)'.

11. Attribution: NPs

Attributive NPs are placed after their heads and are marked by prepositions such as *o*, *a*, *i*:

- (a) 'o le va'a o Ioane
'o DefArt boat of John
'John's boat'
- (b) i fa'ato'aga a Ioane
in plantation(s) of John
'in John's plantations'
- (c) o fuā moa i le faleoloa
o egg(s) in DefArt store
'(some) eggs in the store'

The choice between *o* and *a* depends on the head noun (or on the semantics of the relationship: 'passive'/inalienable vs. 'active'/alienable?):

- o* if head noun is land, country, village;
house, boat, or part thereof;
people, relative (except husband, wife, child);
body or body-part;
mind, feeling;
garment actually worn;
- a* if head noun is property;
food;
animal;
language, speech;
conduct, manner.

Attribution is recursive:

- (d) mo le manuia o tagata o le 'aiga

for DefArt benefit of people of DefArt family
 'for the benefit of the members of the family'

12. Attribution: Relative clauses

Relative clauses follow their heads (and attributive adjectives and presumably postnominal determiners, if present). The personal relative pronouns *le* and *e* introduce the relative clause and are always preceded by the NP marker 'o; personal (preposition-governed) as well as non-personal *ai* follows the verb of the relative clause:

- (a) ... tagata 'o e sa 'ou vala'au
 ... people 'o Rel Past 1SgPro invite
 '... the people whom I invited'
- (b) 'o le tama sa 'ou va'ai i ai
 'o DefArt boy Past 1SgPro see Prep Rel
 'the boy whom I saw'
- (c) 'o le tusi sa 'ou mana'o ai
 'o DefArt book Past 1SgPro want Rel
 'the book which I wanted'

However, relative pronouns are often omitted.

13. Classification

Classification differs from attribution in that the nouns classified (typically denoting the contents of receptacles) follow the nouns used as mensural classifiers (typically denoting receptacles), which otherwise show normal noun behaviour, without taking a preposition:

- (a) 'o se fagu pia
 'o IndefArt bottle beer
 'a bottle of beer'
- (b) 'o se pusa fa'i
 'o IndefArt case banana(s)
 'a case of bananas'
- (c) ... fagu pia e lua
 ... bottle(s) beer e two
 'two bottles of beer'
- (d) ... ato fa'i e tolu
 ... basket(s) banana(s) e three
 'three baskets of bananas'

Note that the numeral belonging with the mensural-classifying noun occurs after the noun classified; I assume that in attributive constructions the numeral would occur right after the head (e) rather than after the attributive noun (e').

- (e) i fa'ato'aga e lua a Ioane
in plantation(s) e two of John
'in John's two plantations'
- (e') i fa'ato'aga a Ioane e lua
in plantation(s) of John e two
'in John's two plantations'

14. Apposition

In close apposition, as when a name follows a title, the second part is introduced by the NP marker 'o, one of whose functions (surprisingly) is to mark NPs occurring outside syntactic constructions or in preverbal position:

- (a) 'o le tupu 'o Siaosi
'o DefArt king 'o George
'King George'
- (b) i le va'a o le "Tofua"
with DefArt ship 'o DefArt Tofua
'with the ship "Tofua"'

When the appositum is less closely bound up with the preceding head noun, it is without the marker 'o:

- (c) 'o Siaosi le tupu
'o George DefArt king
'George, the king'
- (d) 'o Ioane le Papatiso
'o John DefArt Baptist
'John the Baptist'

There is, however, an example with the proper name as second constituent and introduced by 'o, as in close apposition, even though the construction would otherwise seem comparable to that in (d):

- (e) o le tala i le perofeta o Ioane
'o DefArt story of DefArt prophet 'o John

'the story of the prophet John (John the prophet)'

15. Coordination

The word used to conjoin NPs is *ma*, placed in between the conjuncts, or in between the next-to-last and the last if there are more than two:

- (a) O lo'o 'a'ai Malia ma Ioane i fa'i
Cont.Pres eat.Pl_{Sbj} Mary and John Prep banana
'Mary and John are eating bananas'
- (b) Ua o mai le tulafale ma isi
Perf come.Pl_{Sbj} DefArt orator and others
'The orator and some others have come'
- (c) ... taro, fa'i, ma 'ulu
... taro, banana(s), and breadfruit
'[he grows] taro, bananas, and breadfruit'

Note that the verb is plural (singular would be unreduplicated 'ai 'eat' or different stem *sau* 'come'), as with ordinary plural subjects.

However, *ma* is not exclusively a conjunction. It also serves as a preposition meaning 'with', though excluding instrumental readings (which are covered by the general-purpose preposition *i*), and is also used to encode the beneficiary with a few verbs (such as 'give' and 'take'). When used as a preposition introducing a prepositional phrase that belongs with a subject, the verb is singular (*sau*, the plural being *o mai*), unlike in (a/b):

- (d) Ua sau le tama ma se 'aufa'i
Perf come.Sg_{Sbj} DefArt boy with IndefArt stalk.banana
'The boy has come with a bunch of bananas'
- (e) Ua 'ou sau fa'atasi ma le teine
Perf 1SgPro come.Sg_{Sbj} together with DefArt girl
'I came (together) with the girl'

What would be good to know is whether the supposedly coordinate construction in (a/b) can be split up, with the first conjunct moved in front of the verb, and whether the verb would then be plural or singular:

- (a') 'O Malia o lo'o 'a'ai / 'ai ma Ioane i fa'i
'o Mary Cont.Pres eat.Pl_{Sbj} / eat.Sg_{Sbj} and/with John Prep
banana

'Mary and John are eating bananas; Mary is eating bananas with John'

Ma is also used to conjoin adjectives as well as numerals (see above, §9); it has to be noted, though, that the second conjunct here requires the definite article:

- (f) 'O le tufuga poto ma le malosi
Cont.Pres DefArt carpenter clever and DefArt strong
'The carpenter is clever and strong'
- (g) 'o maile e sefulu (ma le) tasi
'o dog(s) e ten (and DefArt) one
'18 dogs'

And *ma* can also be used to conjoin verb phrases and probably entire sentences. However, the preferred sentential conjunction appears to be *fo'i*, which follows the verb of the second conjunct.