Exposition and the Syntax of Hebrew Noun Phrases

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For almost four decades I have studied the syntax of Biblical Hebrew from the perspective of formal grammar as it relates to Biblical exposition. I have adopted a form of text-grammar as a model to define the syntactic structures of Hebrew, and I use this model in teaching Hebrew and Biblical exposition. This grammar attempts to provide a formal model of the interdependent linguistic systems of orthography, morphology, syntax, and text linguistics. For the purposes of this paper a text grammar is defined as a transformational grammar of clauses governed by a transformational grammar of text. It assumes without formal notation that a system of semantic restraints exercises governance over the text grammar. For those not familiar with text-grammars, a brief introduction follows.

Grammars and Language

A language is an encoding medium whereby one person may communicate a message to another.[1] The originator and recipient of such a message must agree on the form and meaning of the code, otherwise communication fails or is distorted--that is, both must use the same language. The message may be about anything in the realm of their common experience or thought, either actual or hypothetical.

A message or discourse in a natural language is commonly considered to be a string of words arranged in sequential patterns that form meaningful phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and so forth. The words themselves usually have structural forms that relate to such things as root, stem, and inflection (such as morphemes that encode gender, person, case, etc.). Actually this view is overly simple. The encoding system consists of several interrelated levels of signs and structures.

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[1] In this age of technology, it is recognized that men communicate with machines, and machines communicate with machines. Such communication usually takes place by means of artificial languages designed for these purposes. The languages used by humans on an every day basis are referred to as "natural languages" because they originated and develop naturally rather than by human design.

At the auditory or graphic level is a set of sounds (phonemes) or characters (letters) that approximately represent the sounds. A structural system is imposed upon this set of signs (phonemes or letters) that defines the combinational patterns (or forms) that these signs may assume. Such lawful forms define a set of higher-level signs known as morphemes. This constitutes the curriculum for the study of phonology and orthography.

A second structural system is imposed upon the morphological signs. This system defines the combinational patterns (or forms) that morphemes may assume. This set of lawful morphological forms comprises the structure of the words of a language. These forms provide a means for encoding grammatical and syntactical information (such as parts of speech and inflectional markers). These forms define a set of higher-level signs known as word-forms. Word-forms constitute the curriculum for the study of morphology. A technical description of these two structural systems is called the grammar of a language, or more precisely, a grammar of morphology.

A third structural system is imposed on these grammatico-semantic signs. This system defines the combinational patterns (forms) that these signs may assume, based on their grammatical values. This set of lawful forms defines the structure of the phrases and clauses of a language--a set of higher-level "syntactic" signs. This third structural system is referred to as the syntax of a language. The study of syntax is known as syntactics, and a technical description of the syntax of a language is called a grammar of the syntax of the language. The syntax of a language defines how a statement should be made without making direct reference to its semantic content, that is, without defining what is to be stated.

A companion to the syntactical system is a structural system that governs the combinational patterns (forms) that lexemes may assume. This structural system is called the semantics of a language, and a technical description of the system is called a semantic grammar of the language. The semantics of a language is very complex. It amounts to a symbolic model of the world of human experience and thought. It is the equivalent of a knowledgebase that is common to the users of the language. Research in the area of semantics has made much progress, but is still in its infancy. Theoretically the semantics

of a language would map the relationships of its lexemes that could be true in the world of experience and thought.

The two systems, syntax and semantics, must operate harmoniously together in order to produce meaningful clauses. A syntactic grammar without semantic restraints produces meaningless but grammatically correct clauses. A semantic grammar without syntactic restraints produces information without coherence. Such unrestrained grammars are interesting but useless for encoding meaningful statements. The harmonious operation of semantics and syntax within a given semantic domain produces a set of higher-level signs known as clauses.

A fourth structural system is imposed upon a set of semantico-syntactical signs (clauses) that governs the combinational patterns they may assume. This fourth system defines the structures of discourse (or text), and a technical description of this system is called a text-grammar of a language. A text-grammar also must operate in harmony with semantics in order to produce coherent discourse.

Transformational Grammar of Clauses

A transformational grammar of clauses consists of (1) a set of symbols representing the basic constituents of the language, (2) a set of phrase-structure rules that define the syntax of the kernel clauses of the language, and (3) a set of clause transformations that generate the surface structures of the clauses of the language. A kernel clause is a clause whose syntax is in its elementary form with its grammatical values initialized at their default value. That is, a kernel clause is in the declarative mode, the indicative mood, the active voice, the present tense, etc.

Clause transformations operate on the surface structure of kernel clauses to assign specific grammatical values to the clause and its constituents. To accomplish this task, a transformation may (a) rearrange the constituents, (b) change the grammatical values of the constituents, (c) change the syntactic role of the constituents, (d) add appropriate constituents, (e) delete redundant or unnecessary constituents, or (f) replace a constituent with a substitute. The following are the most common clause transformations:

Negation: the negation transformation adds a negative particle to the verb phrase, to the subject, or the object in order to express one of the nuances of negation.

Prominence: the prominence transformation moves a selected constituent to a position of prominence, usually first position.

Voice: the voice transformation rearranges the constituents and changes their grammatical values in order to change the clause from the active (default) voice to the passive, middle, or reflexive voice.

Mode: the mode transformation changes the surface structure of a kernel clause from that of the declarative (default) mode into that of the interrogative or exclamatory mode.

Deletion: the deletion transformation deletes redundant words or phrases within a clause whenever ambiguity would not result, and whenever the word or phrase is not marked for prominence or focus.

Substitution: the substitution transformation substitutes a pronoun or other substitute for a redundant constituent within a clause whenever deletion would result in ambiguity, but substitution would not.

A transformational grammar of clauses is capable of generating the surface structure of the clauses of a discourse. These clauses become the constituents of a transformational grammar of text that structures these clauses into coherent discourse.[2]

Transformational Grammar of Text

A transformational grammar of text (or discourse) consists of (1) a set of symbols representing the basic text constituents, (2) a set of phrase-structure rules that define the kernel sequences and interrelationship of the clauses of the text, and (3) a set of text transformations that generate the surface structures of the text of a given discourse in the language. It begins with a set of clauses generated by the associated clause grammar.

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[2] It is understood that these grammars are the structural tools of an intelligent user. Without input from an intelligent user they are incapable of generating meaningful texts.

The symbols of the text grammar are the same as for the clause grammar, except that the symbol for a clause may now represent a single clause or a defined cluster of clauses. Text transformations operate on the surface structure of the text to add elements of coherence and consistency of reference. In order to accomplish this task, the transformations may (a) rearrange the order of the clauses, (b) add the markers of determination, (c) further delete redundant or unnecessary constituents, or (d) replace a constituent with a substitute.

Determination: the determination transformation operates at the text level. It marks a noun or noun phrase as determinate if the noun or phrase has been previously used with the same referent.

Deletion: the deletion transformation deletes redundant constituents that have the same referent whenever the deletion will not result in ambiguity or confusion. Deletions at the text level account for all compound constituents.

Substitution: the substitution transformation substitutes a pronoun or other substitute for redundant constituents in different clauses. This is done whenever deletion would result in ambiguity or confusion, but substitution would not. The substitute retains the determiner of the original constituent if present.

A transformational grammar of text structures its constituent clauses into coherent discourse that is consistent with the grammatical and syntactical conventions of the language.

Exposition

The text-grammar described above operates in a generative mode to create discourse, making use of input data from an intelligent user. However, the processes of exposition (exegesis and discourse analysis) amount to the reverse operation of the rules that generate discourse--that is, using the rules as a tool of analysis rather than synthesis. This paper focuses on one small but significant constituent of discourse, the noun phrase, and how a transformational analysis of noun phrases contributes to exposition.

Noun Phrases

All phrases may be regarded as having originated as the result of a transformation on a part of speech with a dependent clause. This is expressed formally as

$$X|S(X) \cdot T^d \rightarrow X + \text{Modifier}$$

where X may be a noun (N), an adjective (A), an adverb (D), or a verb (V), or a phrase of any of these parts of speech. S(X) represents a clause containing X as a constituent, and T^d is the deletion-substitution transformation.[3] The expression is interpreted to mean "part of speech X, such that clause S about X is true, transforms into a phrase consisting of X with a modifier." The modifier is derived from the content of S(X), ranging anywhere from being a significant constituent of S to being nearly the entire clause.

This assumption defined in the above formal expression is significant for the expositor. It assumes that a phrase is the surface structure encoding of the deep structure dependency of S(X) on X, and that the phrase sufficiently reflects the significant content of S and the type of dependency of S on X. Furthermore, it assumes that the content of S is contained the preceding context, or is in the body of common knowledge understood to be part of the context, or is new information, so that it provides the needed distinction or enhancement of X.

This assumption also provides the grammar and syntax with the necessary restraint of coherence. If the dependent clause S(X) is true about X, then any resulting phrases will be semantically coherent, and is consistent with the context.

The above formal expression defines the general syntactic structure of all phrases. This paper is limited to a discussion of Hebrew noun phrases, that is, to the following form of the general expression:

$$N|S(N) \cdot T^d \rightarrow N + \text{Modifier}$$

It is helpful to study the syntax of Hebrew noun phrases according to the various types of clause that the dependent clause S(N) may be.

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[3] This transformation deletes redundant constituents, or replaces them with an appropriate substitute.

The Dependent Relative Clause

The most self-evident example of this structure is where the dependent clause is any type of clause that is so complex that few of its constituents can be deleted or undergo substitution. Such a clause is linked to the noun (phrase) it modifies by means of אֲשֶׁר.

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יָבִ֙יאוּ֙ לְב֣וּשׁ מַלְכ֔וּת אֲשֶׁ֥ר לָֽבַשׁ־בּ֖וֹ הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ
וְס֗וּס אֲשֶׁ֙ר רָכַ֤ב עָלָיו֙ הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ
וַאֲשֶׁ֥ר נִתַּ֛ן כֶּ֥תֶר מַלְכ֖וּת בְּרֹאשֽׁוֹ׃

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Let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn,
and a horse on which the king has ridden,
which has a royal crest placed on its head. (Esther 6:8)

This example has two noun phrases with dependent clauses. The first is:

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לְב֣וּשׁ מַלְכ֔וּת אֲשֶׁ֥ר לָֽבַשׁ־בּ֖וֹ הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ

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[lit. a royal robe such that the king wore it]

This phrase is derived from the following untransformed form of the dependent clause in which the redundant element לְב֣וּשׁ מַלְכ֔וּת has been replaced by a pronoun substitute:

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לְב֣וּשׁ מַלְכ֔וּת אֲשֶׁ֥ר לָֽבַשׁ בִּלְב֣וּשׁ מַלְכ֔וּת=וֹ הַמֶּ֑לֶךְ

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[lit. a royal robe such that the king wore ~~the royal robe~~ = it]

The second phrase has two dependent clauses modifying the word *horse*. The two dependent clauses are linked by Waw conjunctive. The first is:

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ס֗וּס אֲשֶׁ֙ר רָכַ֤ב עָלָיו֙ הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ

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[Lit. a horse such that the king rode on it]

This phrase is derived from the following untransformed form of the dependent clause in which the redundant element הַסּוּס has been replaced by a pronoun substitute:

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ס֗וּס אֲשֶׁ֙ר רָכַ֤ב עַל הַסּוּס=יו הַמֶּ֔לֶךְ

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[Lit. a horse such that the king rode on ~~the horse~~ = it]

The second is:

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ס֗וּס אֲשֶׁ֙ר . . . וַאֲשֶׁ֥ר נִתַּ֛ן כֶּ֥תֶר מַלְכ֖וּת בְּרֹאשֽׁוֹ׃

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[Lit. a horse . . . such that a royal crest was placed on its head]

This phrase is derived from the following untransformed form of the dependent clause in which the redundant element הַסּוּס also has been replaced by a pronoun substitute:

סוּס אֲשֶׁר . . . וַאֲשֶׁר נָתַן כֶּתֶר מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשׁ הַסּוּס = וֹ:

[Lit. a horse . . . such that a royal crest was placed on the head of ~~the horse~~ = it]

This is important for exposition, because a proper analysis of the syntax avoids mistakenly understanding the royal crest to be on the head of the horse's rider.

An interesting variation of this type of dependent clause is the clause in which verb is a participle and the subject is the head noun (phrase) being modified. In this case, אֲשֶׁר is also deleted, and the participle is fronted and transformed into its adjectival form, which then exhibits grammatical concord with the head noun (phrase) for number, gender, and determination.

אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמּוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:
the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
from the house of bondage (Deut. 8:14)

This phrase is derived from the following untransformed form of the dependent clause in which the redundant element יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ also has been deleted as redundant:

אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ ~~אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ~~ [+ ה ·] מוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

[Lit. the LORD your God such that the LORD your God brought you out of the land of Egypt,
from the house of bondage]

The Dependent Copulative Clause

Most of the simple noun phrases are derived from dependent copulative clauses. Dependent copulative clauses account for all appositives and for all adjectival and adverbial modifiers, as well as a few other types of modifiers.

אִשָּׁה אַלְמָנָה
a widow woman (1 Kings 7:14)
[derived from: a woman ~~such that the woman is~~ a widow (classification clause)]

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נַעֲרָה בְתוּלָה

a young virgin woman (Deut. 22:23)

[derived from: a young woman ~~such that the young woman is~~ a virgin (classification)]

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

the LORD our God (Deut 6:4)

[derived from: the LORD ~~such that the LORD is~~ our God (identity clause)]

זָהָב טָהוֹר

pure gold (Exod. 25:11)

[derived from: gold ~~such that the gold is~~ pure (predicate adjective clause)]

מְקוֹם־שָׁם קֶבֶר

A place there for burial (Ezek. 39:11)

[derived from: a place ~~such that the place is~~ there;

a place there ~~such that the place there is~~ for burial][4]

[predicate adverb clauses]

צוּר כֵּאלֹהֵינוּ

A rock like our God (2 Sam. 2:2)

[derived from: a rock ~~such that the rock is~~ like our God (comparative copulative)]

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Genitive Noun Phrases

A noun with a dependent clause that defines a relationship between that noun and another noun or noun phrase very often is transformed into a genitive noun phrase--that is, the transformation establishes a genitive relationship between the two nouns that clearly implies the relationship defined in the dependent clause. Dependent clauses that can be transformed into genitive noun phrases express relationships between the two nouns that can usually be represented by the word *of* in English.[5]

In the *genitive of subject* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the subject of the dependent clause. The construct noun[6] (*nomen regens*) is a verbal noun derived from the verb of the dependent clause.

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[4] The word קֶבֶר here is an adverbial accusative.

[5] As in the case of dependent copulative clauses, the genitive transformation functions because the expression of the relationship between the two nouns would be redundant and thus undergoes deletion.

[6] All the examples given here employ the construct form of the head noun; however, if the head is a noun phrase, the genitive relationship is expressed by the preposition לְ.

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מַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיהֶם

The works of their own hands. (Jer 1:16)

Dependent clause: Their own hands made the idols.[7]

בְּאַהֲבַת יהוה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֹלָם

Because of the LORD's love for Israel forever. (1 Kings 10:9)

Dependent clause: The LORD will love Israel forever.[8]

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In the *genitive of object* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the object of the verb in the dependent clause. The construct noun (*nomen regens*) is a verbal noun or a participle derived from the verb of the dependent clause.

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חֲמַס אָחִיךָ

Violence against your brother (Obad 10)

Dependent clause: You did violence against your brother.[9]

שֹׂנְאֵי בָצַע

haters of covetousness. (Ex 18:21)

Dependent clause: The people hate covetousness.

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In the *genitive of possession* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the owner or possessor of the construct noun (*nomen regens*).

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בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ

The house of the king. (1 Kings 9:10)

Dependent clause: The king has a house.

חָכְמַת שְׁלֹמֹה

The wisdom of Solomon. (1 Kings 5:10, Heb. 4:30 Eng.)

Dependent clause: Solomon has wisdom.

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In the *genitive of material* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the material of which the construct noun (*nomen regens*) is composed or made.

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[7] The predicate (made idols) was transformed into a construct verbal noun (works) governed by the subjective genitive (their hands).

[8] Note that the verb (love) was transformed into a verbal noun governed by the subjective genitive (the LORD); the verbal noun continues to govern an accusative object and an adverb.

[9] The verb חָמַס (*did violence*) was transformed into a construct verbal noun governing its object in the genitive. Note that English requires the preposition "against" instead of the expected "of."

כְּלֵי כֶסֶף וּכְלֵי זָהָב

Articles of silver and articles of gold. (1 Kings 10:25)
Dependent clause: Some articles were made of silver and some of gold.

אֲרוֹן עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים

An ark of acacia wood. (Ex 25:10)
Dependent clause: The ark was made of acacia wood.

In the *genitive of characteristic* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names a quality or attribute of the construct noun (*nomen regens*). This genitive is frequently translated into English as an adjective.

גִּבּוֹר חָיִל

A mighty man of power. (1 Sam 9:1)
[or a powerful mighty man.]
Dependent clause: The mighty man has power.

אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל

A wife of virtue. (Prov 31:10)
[or a virtuous wife]
Dependent clause: The wife has virtue.

מֹאזְנֵי צֶדֶק

Balances of justice. (Lev 19:36)
[or just balances]
Dependent clause: The balances weigh according to justice.

In the *genitive of purpose* or result the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the purpose or result of the construct noun (*nomen regens*).

צֹאן טִבְחָה

Sheep for slaughter. (Psa 44:23)
Dependent clause: The sheep were raised and kept
for the purpose of slaughter.

In the *genitive of kind* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the genus or kind of the construct noun (*nomen regens*).

עֲצֵי שִׁטִּים

Wood of acacia. (Ex 37:10)
[or acacia wood]
Dependent clause: The genus of the wood is acacia.

In the *genitive of source* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the source of the construct noun (*nomen regens*).

דְּבַר־יְהוָֹה

The word of the LORD. (Jer 1:2)
Dependent clause: The LORD spoke (or inspired) the word.

In the *genitive of name* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) gives the name of the construct noun (*nomen regens*).

נְהַר־פְּרָת

The river Euphrates. (Gen 15:18)
Dependent clause: The name of the river is the Euphrates.

אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

The land of Egypt. (Ex 7:19)
Dependent clause: The name of the land is Egypt.

הַר הַכַּרְמֶל

The mountain of Carmel. (1 Kings 18:19)
[or Mt. Carmel]
Dependent clause: The name of the mountain is Carmel.

יָם־כִּנֶּרֶת

The sea of Kinnereth. (Num 34:11)
Dependent clause: The name of the sea is Kinnereth.

In the *genitive of extent* the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names the limit or extent of the construct noun (*nomen regens*).

מֵי אָפְסַיִם

Water (up to the) ankles. (Ezek 47:3)
Dependent clause: The water reached up to Ezekiel's ankles.

מֵי מָתְנַיִם

Water (up to the) waist. (Ezek 47:4)
Dependent clause: The water reached up to Ezekiel's waist.

In the genitive of time the genitive (*nomen rectum*) names a point of time for the construct noun (*nomen regens*).

עֵת עֶרֶב

At the time of evening. (Gen 24:11)
Dependent clause: The time was evening.

עֵת צָהֳרַיִם

At the time of noon. (Jer 20:16)
Dependent clause: The time was noon.

In the *cognate genitive of comparison* the genitive noun (*nomen rectum*) is the plural of the construct noun (*nomen regens*). This is an idiom that expresses the superlative degree of comparison with respect to members of the class named by the nouns.

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שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים

The song of songs. (Song 1:1)
[or the best song]
Dependent clause: The song is the best of all songs.

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אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים

The God of gods and Lord of lords. (Deut 10:17)
Dependent clause: God is the superlative of deity and sovereignty.
[This is not to be understood in a polytheistic sense,
but in the monotheistic sense of common knowledge.]

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The genitive phrase may be used to express any relationship that can be stated about any two nouns or noun phrases.

Exegetical Method

The expositor is responsible for identifying the content of the dependent clause(s) that underlie the modifier(s) in a noun phrase. The identity of the dependent clause is found in the preceding context, in the body knowledge common to the writer and his audience, or it is new information supplied by the writer. A proper identity of the dependent clause prevents the expositor from placing the crest on the head of the rider rather than on the head of the horse (Esther 6:8). For example:

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לְךָ לְבַדְּךָ ׀ חָטָאתִי וְהָרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי
לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדָבְרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְשָׁפְטֶךָ׃

Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil in Your sight –
That You may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge. (Psa. 51:4, Heb. 6)

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In this passage, the noun phrase of interest is הָרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ, "the evil in Your sight." According to the accents and syntactical position, the phrase בְּעֵינֶיךָ "in Your sight" modifies the noun הָרַע "the evil," and not the verb. Therefore the underlying

dependent clause states something like the following: "David's deed was evil in God's sight"—that is, it was something God regards as evil, and so as a personal offense. This is distinguished from the alternative that the omnipresent God witnessed David's deed, as bad as that would be. This is supported by the immediately preceding context of the first line of the verse: "Against You, You only, have I sinned," and by the last two lines of the verse that vindicate God's justice in judging David. The Apostle Paul quoted these two lines to prove the same point (Romans 3:4): Every sin is a personal offense against God.

Here are some long noun phrases full of interesting exposition:

יְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר אֵין־בָּהֶם כָּל־מוּם וְטוֹבֵי מַרְאֶה
וּמַשְׂכִּילִים בְּכָל־חָכְמָה וְיֹדְעֵי דַעַת וּמְבִינֵי מַדָּע
וַאֲשֶׁר כֹּחַ בָּהֶם לַעֲמֹד בְּהֵיכַל הַמֶּלֶךְ
וּלֲלַמְּדָם סֵפֶר וּלְשׁוֹן כַּשְׂדִּים׃

Young men in whom *there* was no blemish, but good-looking,
gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand,
who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace,
and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.
(Daniel 1:4)

וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא
יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן
אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת׃
נֹצֵר חֶסֶד לָאֲלָפִים
נֹשֵׂא עָוֺן וָפֶשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה
וְנַקֵּה לֹא יְנַקֶּה
פֹּקֵד עֲוֺן אָבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים
עַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁים וְעַל־רִבֵּעִים׃

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed,
"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious,
longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,
"keeping mercy for thousands,
forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,
by no means clearing *the* guilty,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children
to the third and the fourth generation." (Exodus 34:6-7)

Conclusion

Every noun phrase is derived from a clause that is dependent on the head noun of the phrase, and that restricts the range of meaning of the head noun. This knowledge is important for careful exposition of Scripture. The content of such clauses is contained in the preceding context (either directly or indirectly), in the common knowledge the author assumed his audience had, or is new information. The expositor's duty is to accurately identify the content of such dependent clauses, and to use that knowledge in his exposition. Often this task is trivial and self-evident, but at times it makes the difference between truth and error; so it should not be ignored or treated lightly. This exegetical tool keeps exposition tied to the text and helps prevent importing fanciful fallacies.

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