CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to make a study of English nominal modification, a basic part of the English language.

The survey presented in the foregoing pages has shown the development of syntactic explanations of nominal modification in English. The traditional type of grammar which gives a very narrow kind of treatment does not help much even in distingishing the modifying elements from the nouns in English sentences. The modifiers of nouns, according to the traditional theory, are only the words called "adjectives," an idea which is too simple to be true. What really appears in English nominal structures is many kinds of words and word groups, as pointed out, later, by the structuralists. Structural grammar gives a clear explanation of the structure of English nominal modification. The modifiers and headwords are clearly distinguished according to the position of each word in the structures. Almost every part of speech in English can occur as modifiers of nouns. Nominal modifiers are explained as being of two main types; prenominal and postnominal modifiers. The words in English that can occur as prenominal modifiers are single word adjectives, some adverbs, nouns, possessive nouns, $\left\{-ing\right\}$ and $\left\{-ed\right\}$ verbs. The postnominal modifiers are some locative adverbs, appositive nouns, phrases and clauses. In addition, the order of different types of modifier that occur in the same nominal construction is clearly shown. The structural

grammar treatment is clear in giving the picture of the surface structure of nominal modification, and it makes one familiar with every type of noun modifier in English sentences. Although this type of grammar is not complete, it gives a firm background for another step in the development of the theory of English nominal modification -- transformational generative grammar-which treats nominal modification in a deeper way. This grammar tries to reason how those types of words become modifiers of the noun. The derivational source of each modifier is mentioned. Most of the noun modifiers in English are explained as having been derived by series of rules from simple sentences that are embedded in the deep structure and appear in the surface structures as modifying words, phrases or clauses. The T-G grammar treatment of nominal modification is clear and logical.

By studying the theories of the three grammatical systems we can get a picture of what the structure of nominal modification in English is. For example, in a construction like a good man, good is classified as an adjective (traditional grammar). An adjective is a kind of word that can be a noun modifier. It precedes the noun it modifies, and so acts as a prenominal modifier (structural grammar). Good is derived from a proposition whose subject is identical to the noun in the deep structure. The main verb is the verb to be and the complement (or predicate) is an adjective. This proposition is transformed to a single word adjective modifier of the subject noun (T-G grammar).

The development of the theory of the structure of nominal modification is clear enough for one to be able to understand and analyze most of the complicated nominal constructions in English. Having this ability, one might also be capable of making use of the nominal constructions one already understands. Instead of using many simple sentences that sometimes seem too disjointed to represent a mature style of writing, one might try to transform those sentences into word or word group modifiers, and embed or subordinate them to other sentences. One can see that subordinated structures that work as modifiers help to limit, restrict, specify and modify the noun in Englsih sentences. The writer uses the structure of modification to combine for economy and to clarify relationships. In order to illustrate this process, suppose that one wants to talk about a book, and has already got the following information.

The name of the book is THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD.

It is a detective story.

It is a very exciting story.

I read it last week.

These sentences can be rewritten as one sentence by the use of the processes of nominal modification.

The book I read last week, THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD, is a very exciting detective story.

The following are sentences that might be written as

separate sentences:

>We are offered a penny for our thoughts.
>
>We consider what we have been thinking.
>
>Many things have been is our minds.
>
>From these many things we can select a few.
>
>The things we select do not compromise us too nakedly.

The skillful writer would subordinate some materials, selecting the ideas he wanted to stress and subordinating the others to it. He might write something like the following sentence, from which the above ideas were taken:

>When offered a penny for our thoughts, we find that
>we have recently had so many things in mind that we
>can easily make a selection which will not compromise
>us too nakedly.

The whole has been shortened, sharpened, and clarified with a complex of modifiers.

It is a fact that a knowledge of only the structures of nominal modification is not enough to allow one to understand most of the complicated sentences in English even though nominal modification does appear very often in English sentences. However, the modifying elements of the verb phrase are also important and always appear together with nominal phrases in English. Therefore, a further study of other kinds of phrases besides the nominal is recommended.

From the above examples, one can see that modifying elements

allow the mature user of language to express complicated thought relationships clearly, efficiently and accurately.

The following examples will illustrate a sentence that uses various kinds of nominal modifiers.

The law, which is like a shield, protects the people.

This dependent (nonrestrictive) clause (<u>which is like a shield</u>) can be still further reduced to the level of a modifying phrase, thus giving it even less emphasis:

The law, like a shield, protects the people.

The idea of protecting can be run down the scale of modification, using the levels of independent (restrictive) clause, phrase, or single modifier:

The law is like a shield <u>which protects the people</u>.

The law is like a shield <u>protecting the people</u>.

The law is like a <u>protecting</u> shield over the people.

The study of the levels of modification (word, phrase, clause) and of subordination or reduction of predication is also important for another reason. Many a student who has to use clause modifiers has not learned when not to use them. The result may be an awkward, wordy sentence like the following.

The reason that I gave for doing so slowly this job which needed to be done was that the workman who usually did his job was prevented from doing it by circumstances over which he had no control.

The cure for this kind of writing is to reduce predication: the reason that I gave is changed to my reason; this job which needed to be done becomes this necessary job; the workman who usually did this job can be expressed by the regular workman; by circumstances over which he had no control becomes the single adverb unavoidably.

The revised version of the sentence will then be:

My reason for doing this neccessary job so slowly was that the regular workman was unavoidably prevented from doing it.

Nominal modification is not the most important part of the language, but it is essential in studying English. It enables one to understand and even analyze the long and complicated sentences that do appear in English. In writing and speaking it is possible that many persons might prefer to use only simple, clear sentences that have the same capacity to communicate instead of the complex ones. However, this study of nominal modification seems to be worth-while for the student of English if for no other reason than that it can improve his more passive skills of reading and understanding.