Introduction

Verbs (V), nouns (N), adjectives (A) and prepositions (P) constitute the four major word classes. The present study deals with nouns and their projections (noun phrases). The general introduction in Chapter 1 provides a survey of the most distinctive syntactic, semantic and morphological characteristics of noun phrases, as well as a semantic classification of nouns.

Roughly speaking, the noun phrase consists of two subdomains: the lexical and the functional domain. The lexical subdomain consists of the head noun and its arguments and modifiers, which determine the denotation of the noun phrase; this domain will be called the NP-domain (or NP for short). The functional subdomain consists of the determiner and numerals/quantifiers, which determine the reference and/or the quantificational properties of the noun phrase; this domain will be called the DP-domain (or DP). The organization of this study reflects this division within the noun phrase.

Chapter 2 through Chapter 4 discuss the NP-domain: complementation and modification of nouns are discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, respectively, and Chapter 4 discusses so-called binominal constructions like *een emmer peren* ‘a bucket [of] pears’, that is, noun phrases that involve sequences of more than one noun.

Chapter 5 through Chapter 7 focus on the DP-domain. Chapter 5 starts with a discussion of the determiners, which can be divided into at least the following subcategories: articles, demonstrative pronouns and possessive pronouns. According to some researchers, the personal pronouns can also be considered determiners, and they will therefore be discussed in this chapter as well. Although there are good reasons to also consider relative pronouns as determiners, we will discuss these for practical reasons in Section 3.3.2 on relative clauses. Chapter 6 continues with a discussion of the numerals and quantifiers like *sommige* ‘some’ and *alle* ‘all’. Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion of the so-called pre-determiner elements *al* and *heel*, which may modify the determiner.

This study is concluded in Chapter 8, where we focus on the syntactic uses and the distribution of the noun phrase. Among other things, this chapter provides a discussion of *scrambling*, that is, the position of noun phrases in the so-called *middle field* of the clause.

Before we start our discussion, we want to emphasize that, as above, we will make a terminological distinction between noun phrases, NPs and DPs in this study. The first notion is used when we need not make a distinction between the NP- and the DP-domain. The latter two notions, on the other hand, are used when we focus on certain aspects of the NP- or the DP-domain in the sense defined above. See Section 1.1.2 for a more detailed discussion of these notions.